

**The Sultan-Caliph and the Heroes of Liberty: Heroism,
Revolution, and the Contestation of Public Persona in the
late Ottoman Empire, c. 1900-1918**

by
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Abstract

Drawing on a variety of Istanbul-based print media sources in Ottoman Turkish (*Osmanlıca*), this thesis argues that the symbolic politics of public persona played a pivotal role in certain registers of the cultural transition from Hamidian to CUP rule in the late Ottoman Empire. This process was manifested through the anthropomorphic representation of heroism and villainy, concepts that were informed by and tethered to imaginings of “saviourhood”—i.e., whether certain figures were seen as contributing to or working against the maintenance of the health and fate of the empire in the face of foreign imperialism and separatist nationalism. Moreover, it draws on the category of heroism to demonstrate that the veneration of the ruling members of the Ottoman dynasty (*Osmanlı Hanedanı* or “the House of Osman”), both past and present, continued to influence forms of identification with the Ottoman state in the wake of the Ottoman revolution of 1908.

Keywords: Late Ottoman Empire; Public Persona; Imperial Heroism; Ottoman dynasty; Ottoman Revolution of 1908; Ottoman Material Culture

For my family, from the shores of Lake Winnipeg, under the big blue sky.
Their love is all of my poetry, and I am a coin in the palms of their hands.

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“He looked at least seven feet long. His covering had fallen off, and his body emerged from it pitiful and appalling as from a winding sheet. I could see the cage of his ribs all astir, the bones of his arm waving. It was as though an animated image of death carved out of old ivory had been shaking its hand with menaces at a motionless crowd of men made of dark and glittering bronze. I saw him open his mouth wide—it gave him a weirdly voracious aspect, as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him.”¹

-Joseph Conrad (1857-1924), *Heart of Darkness*

“Behold, I teach you the overman!”²

- Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

“They called me Mr. Glass.”³

-Samuel L. Jackson (1948—), *Unbreakable* (2000)

“God damn him, Enver Pasha killed Enver Bey.”⁴

-Attributed to Süleyman Nazif (1870-1927)

“Nobody can cope with sultans; they possess power of sanctity that creates miracles, and their breath melts stones and mountains.”⁵

-İsmail Ağa (d. nineteenth century)

¹ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Matt Kish ill. (Portland and Brooklyn: Tin House Books, 2013), 152.

² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, Adrian Del Carlo and Robert B. Pippin eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006), 6.

³ Kristen Seas, “The Post-Oedipal Desire for the Superhero Narrative in M. Night Shyamalan’s *Unbreakable*,” *Extrapolation* 53 (2012): 33.

⁴ Quoted in Edhem Eldem, “Enver, before he Became Enver,” in *İkinci Meşrutiyet’in İlanının 100üncü Yılı. 100th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Constitution*, Bahattin Öztuncay ed. (Istanbul, Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, 2008), 92.

⁵ Quoted in Cengiz Kırılı, “Coffeehouses: Public Opinion in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire,” in *Public Islam and the Common Good*, Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman eds. (Brill: Leiden and Boston, 2004), 85.

Chapter 1. Introduction: Heroic Persona and the Late Ottoman World

“Seeing Yavuz Selim’s [r. 1512-20] imaginary wings above their heads, in the near future this army will stick their bayonets into proud England’s life vein and at that time the flow of blood will bring the ruby-red birth of the great salvation day of Muslimhood into being.”¹

In the December 1915 issue of *Harp Mecmuası*, an Ottoman Turkish journal reporting on the Syrian front of the Great War (c. 1914-1918), an anonymous journalist informed his Istanbul-based readership of the inevitable victory of the Ottoman army against the forces of Great Britain. In his view, this victory was secured not by superior strategy, but on account of the army being led by the example of Sultan Selim I (r. 1512-20), the Ottoman emperor who had conquered Egypt, geographical Syria, and the Hijaz region of Arabia from Mamluk rulers 397 years earlier. While historic examples of martial valor were not without precedent in Ottoman wartime discourses,² why might this writer evoke the legacy of a sixteenth-century sultan in his prediction of British defeat?

By drawing on the shared memory of a heroic Ottoman conqueror whose achievements testified to the glories of the empire’s past, the article’s anonymous author illuminated the possibility of a future Ottoman victory on the same ground where Selim I had defeated the armies of the Mamluk Sultanate in 1517. His example thus speaks to the degree to which heroic persona could shape the political outlook of educated Ottomans in the empire’s last decades.³ Yet heroism has yet to receive significant attention from historians of the late Ottoman Empire (c. 1789-1922) in spite of its role in shaping the

¹ “Başlarının üstünde Yavuz Selim’in hayali kanatlarını gören bu ordu yakın bir istikbalde süngüsünü mağur İngiltere’nin can damarına saplayacak ve o zaman akan kanlar Müslümanlığın büyük kurtuluş gününün yakut doğuşunu vücuda getirecek”; “Niçin Çıkıyor?,” *Harb Mecmuası* 1, Teşrinisani, 1331 (Rumi) [November 1915 Gregorian], 3.

² See for example Gottfried Hagen, “The Prophet Muhammad as an Exemplar in War: Ottoman Views on the Eve of World War I,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 22 (2000): 145-172.

³ This example is by no means singular or anomalous, as a number Ottoman sultans including Osman I (r. 1299-1326) Osman II (r. 1618-22), and Selim I—whose conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate earned him the retrospective title of “kahraman Selim”—were singled in out in *Harp Mecmuası* as heroic figures whose legacies and accomplishments informed the Ottoman experience in the Great War; see for example Ahmet Refik, “Kahire Yollarında,” *Harb Mecmuası* 4, Istanbul, Kanunısani 1331/Rebiülevvel 1334 (Hicri) [January 1916], 59.

ways that Ottomans made sense of their shared imperial world. In light of this oversight, this thesis is concerned with the nature of public persona in the late Ottoman Empire as it was manifested by discourses of heroism (*kahramanlık*). Thus, it queries the ways that the symbolic projection of self, as mediated through culture and social interaction, worked to uphold relations of power, create frameworks of meaning, and shape understandings of the Ottoman world itself. In particular, I am concerned with how the politics of public persona played out in print media culture and memorabilia during the revolutionary transitional period between the so-called “Hamidian” (c. 1876-1908) and “Second Constitutional” (c. 1908-18) eras (c. 1908-1911).⁴ Indeed, this was the point at which the symbolic order of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909)’s regime was deconstructed, subordinated, and replaced with that of the Committee of Union and Progress (or *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, hereafter CUP),⁵ an upstart revolutionary organization that overthrew the sultan’s government on July 24th 1908 and later forced Abdülhamid II to abdicate on 27th April 1909 in the wake of the counterrevolutionary movement that began in opposition to the original CUP coup.⁶ While the sultanate was not abolished by the CUP, and Sultan Abdülhamid II himself was allowed to remain in place as “constitutional monarch” until the counterrevolutionary forces were defeated by the Ottoman *Hareket Ordusu* (“Action Army”), the Ottoman revolutionary milieu nevertheless recalls that of France in 1789 and Russia in 1917, whereby cartoons, pamphlets, and scandalous literatures directed at royal personalities contributed to, and

⁴ By using the term “print media culture” I do not intend to imply that Ottoman print culture was a uniform entity in this or any other period. Even in the last decades of the empire, print culture was produced in a multitude of languages (Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Armenian, various iterations of Greek, Kurdish, Albanian, etc.) that coexisted in different mixtures depending on the particular locality in question. For a study of linguistic affiliation and readership in late Ottoman Istanbul, see Johann Strauss, “Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th-20th Centuries)?,” *Middle Eastern Literatures* 6 (2003): 39-76.

⁵ At the same time, the end of the Hamidian era freed-up public discourse to a vast plurality of voices that included a vocal and influential intellectual circle around Şehzade (“Prince”) Sabaheddin Efendi (1879-1948) as well as a plethora of commentators from among the different ethnic and religious communities of the empire; on this subject see Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

⁶ In the words of Bedross Der Matossian, the Counter Revolution of April 1909 was “not a spontaneous outburst by dissatisfied elements in Istanbul” but “was organized by oppositional elements mainly represented by conservative religious circles within the empire” as well as the Ottoman First Army Corps; Bedross Der Matossian, “From Bloodless Revolution to Bloody Counterrevolution: The Adana Massacres of 1909,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 6 (2011): 153. See also, Aykut Kansu, “The Monarchist *Coup d’État* of April 13, 1909, *Politics in Post-Revolutionary Turkey, 1908-1913* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2000), 77-126.

were themselves the products of regime change.⁷ I thus treat the 1908 Revolution as a moment of cultural upheaval in which heroism and villainy (its antithesis) played a considerable role.

By exposing the sultan to public scrutiny through the loosening of his censorship policies, the revolution effectively forced his image into the purview of the media. Thus from the standpoint of the sultan's government, the repercussions of 1908 were deeply political in a twofold sense; on the one hand, many of the sultan's ruling prerogatives were effectively circumscribed by the Ottoman parliament, the CUP leadership, and the reinstated constitution of 1876; on the other hand, the aniconic policy of sultanic representation, which had denied the display of figurative images of the sultan under any circumstances since the 1880s,⁸ was abruptly ended in the democratized media environment created by the CUP.

At the same time, CUP leaders Ismail Enver Bey (1881-1922) and Resneli Ahmed Niyazi Bey (1873–1912) were increasingly venerated as *Hürriyet Kahramanları* (“heroes of liberty”) in the decade that followed the revolution. They soon became some of the most recognizable political faces of the period and came to be contrasted with the “villainous” persona of the sultan they overthrew. Moreover, by infringing on the privileged position of the dynasty (*Osmanlı Hanedanı* or “The House of Osman”) to represent the empire through their achievements, honored as they were in numerous newspaper appearances and through the creation of popular memorabilia,⁹ Enver and Niyazi's heroic personae constituted a radical break with past traditions of Ottoman rulership.

⁷ See Robert Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water or the Art of Slander from Louis XIV to Napoleon* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), idem, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-revolutionary France* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), and Orlando Figes and Boris Kolonitskii, “The Desacralization of the Monarch: Rumors and the Downfall of the Romanovs,” in *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1999), 9-29. For the Ottoman case, see Palmira Johnson Brummett, “The Comic Sovereign,” in her *Image & Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908-1911* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), 113-147.

⁸ See Selim Deringil, “Long live the Sultan!: Symbolism and Power in the Hamidian Regime,” in *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 16-43.

⁹ In this connection see Bahattin Öztuncay ed., *İkinci Meşrutiyet'in İlanının 100üncü Yılı. 100th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Constitution* (İstanbul: Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, 2008) and idem, *Propaganda and War: The Allied Front during the First World War* (İstanbul: Vehbi Koç Foundation Publications, 2014).

How did the revolution's temporary democratization of the Ottoman media contribute to the cultural deconstruction of the political edifice of the Hamidian regime? What role did the CUP's redefinition of rulership play in the transition from Hamidian to CUP rule and in the ongoing reformulation of Ottoman sovereignty? How were the actions of heroic figures understood as forces of change that informed contemporary social, cultural, and political realities? By attending to these questions, I seek to contribute to a number of historiographic conversations concerning: a) the emergence of popular fame and celebrity in imperial contexts;¹⁰ b) the character of monarchical ruler cults since the outbreak of the French Revolution (1789-present);¹¹ and c) the emergence of "modern personality cults" that enjoyed the backing of dynastic empire-states, secular nation-states, and of mass cultures in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹²

However, in contrast with existing works on the cultural dimensions of the 1908 Revolution by Palmira Brummett,¹³ Bedross Der Matossian,¹⁴ Michelle Campos,¹⁵ Mustafa Özen,¹⁶ and Edhem Eldem,¹⁷ I focus my attention on discourses of heroism and popular heroes, as well as on representations of heroic personae in the years immediately

¹⁰ For a sampling of the literature, see Edward Berenson ed., *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame, and Power in Nineteenth-century Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

¹¹ On this subject see David Cannadine, "Introduction: Divine Rites of Kings," in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, David Cannadine and Simon Price ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1-19, Maria Grever, "Staging Modern Monarchs: Royalty at the World Exhibitions of 1851 and 1867," in *Mystifying the Monarch: Studies on Discourse, Power, and History*, Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere ed. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 161-179, Jaap Van Osta, "The Emperor's New Clothes: The Reappearance of the Performing Monarchy in Europe, 1870-1914," in *Mystifying the Monarch: Studies on Discourse, Power, and History*, Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere ed. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 181-192, Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy from Peter the Great to the Abdication of Nicholas II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), and Jeroen Duindam, *Dynasties: A Global History of Power, 1300-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

¹² For a discussion of the characteristics of "modern personality cults," see Jan Plamper, "Paths to the Stalin Cult," in *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 1-25.

¹³ Palmira Johnson Brummett, *Image & Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908-1911* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000)

¹⁴ Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

¹⁵ Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

¹⁶ Mustafa Özen, "Visual Representation and Propaganda: Early Films and Postcards in the Ottoman Empire, 1895-1914," *Early Popular Visual Culture* 6 (2008): 145-57.

¹⁷ See Edhem Eldem, "Enver, before he Became Enver," in *İkinci Meşrutiyet'in İlanının 100üncü Yılı. 100th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Constitution*, Bahattin Öztuncay ed. (Istanbul, Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, 2008), 90-101.

before, during, and after the revolutionary moment. Thus, by shifting scholarly attention to the place of heroism in the late Ottoman Empire, I hope to shed light on the myriad of ways that—in the words of Gottfried Hagen—“Ottoman culture constructed the globe and the universe, space, self, and others.”¹⁸ If heroic figures played a role in shaping the worldviews of persons living within or in proximity to the domains of the Ottoman emperor, then it is the task of the historian to unearth the ways in which their actions were understood as forces of causal and historical change in Ottoman contexts. In this sense, I am less concerned with analyzing the workings of power-relations than I am with uncovering the contours of an Ottoman “world” as understood by Ottomans themselves;¹⁹ a world that was profoundly shaped and informed by imperial realities (culturally, politically, socially) yet is not entirely reducible to “the empire” itself. Indeed, by tethering our lines of inquiry to the confines of an “empire,” in the geographic and political sense that we tend to profess it,²⁰ we tend to lose sight of the analytical utility of terms like “Ottoman polity” or “Ottoman world,” both of which, I argue, are useful frameworks for Ottoman history due to their wider conceptual scope.

Drawing predominantly on Ottoman postcards; illustrated newspapers, journals and periodicals; historical literature; memorabilia and souvenirs; and on the Ottoman dynasty’s artistic patronage, I argue that the symbolic politics of public persona played a pivotal role in certain registers of the cultural transition from Hamidian to CUP rule. This process was manifested through the anthropomorphic representation of heroism and villainy, concepts that were informed by and tethered to imaginings of “saviourhood”—i.e., whether certain figures were seen as contributing to or working against the

¹⁸ The University of Michigan, “Gottfried Hagen,” accessed April 10, 2016, <https://www.ii.umich.edu/ii/people/all/g/ghagen.html>.

¹⁹ The term “Ottoman world” is gaining popularity as a descriptive phrase that entails a more expansive conceptual geography than “Ottoman Empire,” a term that presumes an imperial structure as its central organizing principle. Indeed, while the larger field of empire studies has attracted the energies of a generation of Ottomanists over the past twenty-five years, scholarly interest in an Ottoman “world” beyond the territories that were directly administered by “the empire” promises to deliver new insights into the larger (“extra-imperial”) universe in which Ottomans found themselves. For an edited volume oriented around the idea of an “Ottoman World,” see Christine Woodhead ed., *The Ottoman World* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2011).

²⁰ As Einar Wigen has shown, Ottoman conceptions of empire were complex, plural, and often directly tied to the person of the sultan and the House of Osman. At the same time, they both changed over time and varied depending on which of the empire’s myriad of language was employed; see Einar Wigen, “Ottoman Concepts of Empire,” *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 8 (2013): 44-66.

maintenance of the health and fate of the empire in the face of foreign imperialism and separatist nationalism. Moreover, I draw on the category of heroism to demonstrate that the veneration of the ruling members of the House of Osman, both past and present, continued to influence modes of identification with the Ottoman Empire in the wake of 1908. Indeed, the symbolic universe inhabited by the new military heroes of the revolution remained colored by the legacies of the Ottoman sultans as creators and shapers of the (late) Ottoman world.

Altogether, I examine the role of extraordinary and exemplary individuals in the unfolding of historical causality from the perspectives provided by late Ottoman artists, writers, journalists, and their patrons. While the political and institutional changes wrought by the revolutionary reinstatement of the Ottoman constitution of 1876, the limitation of sultanic prerogative after 1908, and the further development of parliamentary process in the 1910s would all lend more civic power to individual Ottoman subjects in the period under study, the late Ottoman world continued to be inhabited by virtual “supermen” whose herculean efforts in shaping the exigencies of the empire, past and present, were an integral part of the culture of the era.

Locating Ottoman Heroism

Due to constraints imposed by time, the availability of sources, and the impossibility of covering all of the empire’s linguistic registers that were operative in this period,²¹ I largely limit the scope of my analysis to the urban-metropolitan setting of Istanbul and to news media culture and material culture in the linguistic realm of Ottoman Turkish. Thus, the “public sphere” that I will explicate is that of Istanbul-based Ottoman Turkish works as well as their accompanying readership and viewership.²²

²¹ For discussion of the ways that discourse in a particular language complicates the study of empire, see Einar Wigen, “Ottoman Concepts of Empire” and idem, “Two-level Language Games: International Relations as Inter-lingual Relations,” *European Journal of International Relations* 21 (2015): 427-450.

²² Given the plurality of languages used in the empire, it is unlikely that one can speak of only one “Ottoman public sphere.” On this subject see Nadir Özbek, “Defining the Public Sphere during the Late Ottoman Empire: War, Mass Mobilization and the Young Turk Regime (1908–18),” *Middle Eastern Studies* 5 (2007): 795-809 and Cengiz Kirlı, “The Struggle over Space: Coffeehouses of Ottoman Istanbul, 1780-1845” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Binghamton University, 2000). Be this as it may, we should not assume that the readership of the Ottoman Turkish press was restricted to Muslims or to first-language Ottoman Turkish speakers. As Johann Strauss has shown, Ottoman Greeks and other Ottoman non-Muslims made substantial contributions to Ottoman Turkish letters starting in the eighteenth century; see Johann Strauss,

Hence, while my project cannot aspire to be comprehensive, as Kurdish, Berber, Ladino, Arabic, Armenian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Albanian, and Greek language sources are beyond its analytical scope, I nevertheless attempt to showcase the ways that public persona can function as a productive unit of analysis for late Ottoman history by showing how personifications of heroism and villainy made up a crucial part of the symbolic world of the Ottoman revolutionary moment.

As noted above, my primary analytical category is that of “heroism” (*kahramanlık*), a concept that has yet to receive significant attention in Ottomanist historiography.²³ Yet while this specific term was applied to figures of elevated importance in the Ottoman Turkish press as well as elsewhere,²⁴ it is not the only means through which I locate heroism in Ottoman sources. To the contrary, aside from instances wherein heroic figures are explicitly identified using primary categories wielded by the Ottomans themselves, like *kahraman* (“hero”) or *kahramanlar* (“heroes”), I argue that the category of heroism can also be indirectly applied to figures who merit inclusion in this category by virtue of their deeds and achievements in spite of their not being explicitly and literally referred to as “heroes” by primary sources.²⁵

In this connection, I draw on Edward Berenson’s conception of “imperial heroes” as “exemplars of empire” that occupied the attention of ordinary people in a fashion

“Linguistic Diversity and Everyday Life in the Ottoman Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans (late 19th–early 20th Century),” *The History of the Family* 16 (2011): 126-141, idem, “The Rise of Non-Muslim Historiography in the Eighteenth Century,” *Oriente Moderno* 18, (1999): 217-232, and idem, “The Millets and the Ottoman Language: The Contribution of Ottoman Greeks to Ottoman Letters (19th-20th centuries),” *Die Welt des Islams* 35 (1995): 189-249. Moreover, the illustrated press was often made available to non-literate people via public readings in coffeehouses and other spaces of sociability. While no study of this phenomenon exists specifically for late Ottoman Istanbul, see Benjamin C. Fortna, “Reading Between Public and Private in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 30 (2010): 563-573.

²³ For Ottomanist scholarship that has made use of this category, see Gottfried Hagen, “Chaos, Order, Power, Salvation: Heroic Hagiography’s Response to the Ottoman Fifteenth Century,” *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 1 (2014): 91-109 and idem, “Heroes and Saints in Anatolian Turkish Literature,” *Oriente Moderno* 89 (2009): 349-361. However, aside from the work of Gottfried Hagen, I have not come across a study that self-consciously engages with heroism as both an analytical category and an Ottoman category.

²⁴ For instance, a number of Ottoman military officials were given the honorific title *kahraman* (“hero”) as a reward for extraordinary services rendered. These figures were sometimes the subjects of biographical works; see for example Osman Senai, *Plevne Kahramanı Gazi Osman Paşa* (Istanbul: Feridiye Matbaası, 1317/1899).

²⁵ For an example of this latter approach to heroism in Ottomanist historiography, see Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington, Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 2013).

reminiscent of modern celebrity.²⁶ However, for Berenson, heroes of empire stood out from persons who were simply “famous for being famous.”²⁷ While he notes that the news media cultures of the late nineteenth century provided the “great echo chamber” of mass attention that facilitated the amplification of persona in imperial contexts,²⁸ it was the tendency of imperial heroes to “open new possibilities, to make people believe in the realization of crucial things they have always thought impossible” that distinguished them from other kinds of famous persons.²⁹ “By serving as pioneers” and “by showing through their actions that something thought prohibitively dangerous can in fact be done without grievous harm,”³⁰ these heroes embodied the hyperbolic qualities of imperial polities personified.

I thus approach the heroes of the Ottoman revolutionary moment as expressions of Ottoman imperial culture; i.e., as manifestations of the ways that Ottomans conceived of the past, present, and future of the “Sublime State/Dynasty” (*Devlet-i Aliyye*)—or what historians call “the Ottoman Empire”—and its plurality of peoples in a period of pronounced social, economic, political, and cultural turmoil.³¹ However, if Berenson’s heroes of empire were triumphant, masculine, and solitary explorers of “darkest Africa,” the new heroes of the late Ottoman Empire gained their heroic status from their exertion, sacrifice, and martyrdom in the interest of preserving the empire, as well as its rediscovered “liberty” (*hürriyet*), in the face of its many internal and external challenges during the last Ottoman decades. At the same time of course, the examples of historical

²⁶ Edward Berenson, *Heroes of Empire: Five Charismatic Men and the Conquest of Africa* (Berkeley, CA, USA: University of California Press, 2010), 3. For other works that address similar subjects, see also David Miller, *‘Heroes’ of American Empire: John C. Frémont, Kit Carson, and the Culture of Imperialism, 1842–1898* (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of California San Diego, 2007) and Richard Frohock, *Heroes of Empire: The British Imperial Protagonist in America, 1596–1764* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004).

²⁷ Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, 140.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ While the linguistic and geographic limitations of this study will clearly circumscribe the scope of my analysis, my use of the term “Ottoman” is meant to entail all subjects of the *Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniyye* (“Sublime State/Dynasty of the Ottomans”) regardless of language, ethnicity, religion, or geography. Nevertheless, there is an ongoing debate about the analytical scope and utility of this term as well as the historically contingent meanings it may have had over time; see Maurits H. Van Den Boogert, “Resurrecting Homo Ottomanicus: The Constants and Variables of Ottoman Identity,” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 44 (2014): 9–20 and Meropi Anastassiadou and Bernard Heyberger eds., *Figures Anonymes, Figures D’élite: Pour Une Anatomie De L’homme Ottomanicus* (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 1999).

dynastic heroes like Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1444-46, 1451-81) or Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808-39) also illuminated the path towards these goals by virtue of their heroic conquests and their efforts at social and administrative-bureaucratic reform.

Furthermore, I analyze heroism not strictly as an ideal category (and thus, as a topic of intellectual history) but as a social-historical and cultural-historical dimension of the revolutionary era as well as an element of public persona. To be sure, public persona has also received a dearth of attention in Ottomanist scholarship,³² and in historical scholarship more generally, despite its demonstrable importance to the conceptual history of Eurasia since the dawn of the Ottoman polity. For instance, in line with Sanjay Subrahmanyam's call to "delink the notion of modernity from a particular European trajectory...and to argue that it represents a more-or-less global shift, with many different sources and roots, and-inevitably-many different forms and meanings depending on which society we look at it from,"³³ one could make the case that the cults of the Mongol emperor Chinggis Khan (born Temüjin, r. 1206-1227) and the conqueror Emir Timur (r. 1370-1405) can be counted alongside imperialism and global economic integration as some of the most influential phenomena of the last millennium.³⁴ Indeed, as recent work on the subject has suggested,³⁵ the personae of these figures, or in the parlance of today,

³² For a notable exception to this rule, see Ümit Kurt and Doğan Gürpınar, "The Young Turk Historical Imagination in the Pursuit of Mythical Turkishness and its Lost Grandeur (1911–1914)," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (2016): 1-15.

³³ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes Towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies* 31, (1997): 737.

³⁴ The world-historical cult of Alexander of Macedonia (r. 336-323) provides another instructive example; see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Turning the Stones Over: Sixteenth-Century Millenarianism from the Tagus to the Ganges," *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 40 (2003): 143-145, Caroline Sawyer, "Revising Alexander: Structure and Evolution: Ahmedi's Ottoman Iskendername (c. 1400)," *Edebiyat* 13 (2003): 225-43, and John Renard, "Alexander," in *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*, vol. 1, ed. Jane Dammen (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 62.

³⁵ Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2012), Ron Sela, *The Legendary Biographies of Tamerlane: Islam and Heroic Apocrypha in Central Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), Lisa Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire: Memory and Dynastic Politics in Early Modern South and Central Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories," Iver B. Neumann and Einar Wigen, "The Legacy of Eurasian Nomadic Empire: Remnants of the Mongol Imperial Tradition, in *Legacies of Empire*, Sandra Halperin and Ronen Palan, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 99-127, Pamela Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), and William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009). See also Ali Yaycıoğlu, "The Shadow of Chinggis Khan on Istanbul: The Ottoman Empire in the Early-Modern Asian Context, 1300-1600," Interdisciplinary Lecture Series, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 25 April 2013.

their “myths,” were seen as tenable models for statecraft, comportment, and cultural production in imperial contexts as diverse as the Mughal, Qing, Safavid, Ottoman, Üzbek, and Timurid polities. At the same time, especially in the case of Timur, they also stood as the basis for the formation of alterities in many of the Christian-majority societies of north-western Eurasia.³⁶ In my view, this widespread drive to emulate and expand on the achievements of these heroic conquerors, whose personae have so prominently colored the experiences of people across the Eurasian land mass since the thirteenth century, is at least somewhat reminiscent of the cult of the “modern,” both in its primary and analytical formulation. This multifarious phenomenon, which has been described by historical subjects since (at least) the early modern period, has since been enshrined as an analytical category in the humanities and social sciences. Often defined analytically as the project of emulating the scientific, moral, political, cultural, and social achievements of “European” or “Western” society in the previous three centuries;³⁷ as the exponential growth of systematic means of measuring, quantifying, and ordering reality and phenomena;³⁸ as the experience of perpetual unsettlement brought on by the ever-shifting nature of a universe wherein ““all that is solid melts into air””;³⁹ or in yet other ways, this concept has been the subject of an awe-inspiring amount of scholarship in the last century. On the other hand however, despite their profound influence across historical geographies, the Timurid and Chinggisid personae (and others like them) are all too infrequently explored as world-historical phenomena with the potential to generate productive categories of analysis (i.e public persona).

In any case, I argue that public persona, conceived here as a social-historical and cultural-historical category of analysis distinguished from the psychological term

³⁶ See Sela, *The Legendary Biographies of Tamerlane*, 2, 10-13 and Adam Knobler, “Timur the (Terrible/Tartar) Trope: a Case of Repositioning in Popular Literature and History,” *Medieval Encounters* 7 (2001): 101-112.

³⁷ For a discussion of this interpretation, see Subrahmanyam, “Connected Histories” and Isa Blumi, “Introduction: Relocating the Great Transformation in the Balkans and Arabia,” in *Foundations of Modernity: Human Agency and the Imperial State* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 1-14. For a more specific study of modernization theory in North American Middle East Studies, see Zachary Lockman, *Field Notes: The Making of Middle East Studies in the United States* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

³⁸ See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1977).

³⁹ Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Verso, 1983), 15.

“personality,”⁴⁰ is a viable entry point into the study of imperial politics. In contrast with the terms with which we often choose to describe life in the Ottoman Empire, the peoples who lived in the Ottoman domains tended to view their empire as a space that was profoundly colored by the influence of their dynastic House and by the persona of their sultan. This complicates the largely economic, class, and power-based analytical perspectives of the subject-sovereign relationship that our retrospective gaze generally permits. For example, where our categories help us to see “social control,”⁴¹ “legitimation deficit,”⁴² or the workings of “charisma”⁴³ exercised by the House of Osman, those of Ottomans helped them to see the dynasty’s dispensation of “justice” (‘*adl* and ‘*adalet*)⁴⁴ and their management of “world order” (*Nizam-ı Alem*).⁴⁵

Approaching Public Persona

My investigation of Ottoman sources has led me to argue that the emergence of a more popular and public discourse of dynastic heroism in the late Ottoman Empire cannot be viewed purely as the product of “state projects”—i.e. the result of concerted actions on behalf of persons and institutions affiliated with Ottoman officialdom who sought to create an Ottoman imperial “propaganda.” Yet since the publication of Selim Deringil’s *The Well-Protected Domains*,⁴⁶ an influential study of Ottoman politics of legitimacy that builds on work on other dynastic empires by Carol Gluck,⁴⁷ David Cannadine,⁴⁸ and Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger,⁴⁹ historians of the late Ottoman

⁴⁰ While I take “personality” to mean the personal psychological and emotional characteristics of an individual, “persona” refers to an individual’s public or external “second-self” as experienced by others.

⁴¹ Betül Başaran, *Selim III, Social Control and Policing in Istanbul at the End of the Eighteenth Century: Between Crisis and Order* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

⁴² Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 9-10.

⁴³ See Edward Berenson, “Charisma and the Making of Imperial Heroes in Britain and France, 1880-1914,” in *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame, and Power in Nineteenth-century Europe*, Edward Berenson ed. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 21-40.

⁴⁴ See Gottfried Hagen, “Legitimacy and World Order,” in *Legitimizing to Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, Hakan Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 66-67.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 56-62.

⁴⁶ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998).

⁴⁷ Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

⁴⁸ David Cannadine “Splendor out of Court: Royal Spectacle and Pageantry in Modern Britain, c. 1820-1977,” in *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics Since the Middle Ages*, Sean Wilentz ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 206-243.

⁴⁹ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Empire have come to accept that the regime of Abdülhamid II was substantially concerned with “managing” its image in foreign and domestic contexts.⁵⁰ Moreover, Deringil’s work is now used as a methodological starting point for further research into the House of Osman’s preoccupation with preserving and managing imperial legitimacy and political power.⁵¹ Although these functionalist and constructivist tendencies in the literature tend to draw on particular, anthropological ways of reading imperial legitimacy as a phenomenon that is purposefully “constructed,” I resist this line of inquiry due to its implicit (and often ungrounded) assumptions about the degree of cynicism involved in imperial governance as well as its emphasis on analytical categories and frameworks divorced from their source material.⁵²

Given the immense cultural and temporal distance between Ottomans and all living persons, the extent to which many Ottoman frameworks of meaning were tied to the institution of the dynasty are sure to appear foreign and strange to us as twenty-first-century historians.⁵³ As Jeroen Duindam notes, “[t]he extreme elevation of one person

Press, 1983).

⁵⁰ The earlier work of Cornell Fleischer also deserves mention here; see Cornell H. Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleymân,” in *Soliman le magnifique et son temps*, Gilles Veinstein ed. (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), 159-77.

⁵¹ See for example Betül Başaran, *Selim III, Social Control and Policing in Istanbul at the End of the Eighteenth Century: Between Crisis and Order* (Leiden and New York: Brill, 2014) and Marc Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁵² Therefore, in light of the difficulty in locating institutional motivations in the Ottoman newsprint and literary sources, as well as the lack of nuanced insight into the history of political cynicism in Ottoman contexts, I dispense with the term “propaganda” insofar as this term can be understood as an attempt to convince and persuade, and not insofar as it entails informed and purposeful deception and disinformation. As Paul Sedra notes, rigid analytical frameworks that presume the all-encompassing influence of power-relations risk reifying those same structures and contributing to their ethereal influence. In his words, “historians applying Foucauldian frameworks must avoid becoming seduced by just the discipline and order whose genealogy they seek to expose. They cannot allow themselves to assume that the blueprints for networks of power were consistently acted upon in uniform fashion; Paul Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity: Evangelicals, Reformers and Education in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 13. Thus, while the theory and practice of social history demands that all forms of hierarchy be treated with a degree of *a priori* skepticism and doubt, the prevalence of Ottoman dynastic persona as a social and cultural phenomenon cannot be so easily written off as part of the machinations of the Ottoman emperor, his court, or his administration. This is not to say that courtly patronage did not significantly influence the grounds on which the House of Osman was represented. Nevertheless, as Emine Fetvacı has shown, the courtly production of manuscripts and book cultures in the early modern period was a complex process that involved a multiplicity of actors with diverse interests that transcended the bounded confines of the dynasty’s “self-image”; see Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013).

⁵³ At the same time, contemporary monarchies are still able to capture the attention, admiration, and loyalty of their subjects even in contexts wherein the monarchical institution itself has comparatively little

over others does not conform to modern sensibilities” and “is often portrayed in contrast to modernity [...] as the undesirable situation from which we emancipated ourselves.”⁵⁴ Nevertheless, shedding further light on the Ottoman world requires that we question and interrogate anachronistic categories of analysis, lest they impede our ability to accept the fact that “almost all peoples across the globe until very recently accepted dynastic rule as a god-given and desirable form of power.”⁵⁵ While “speaking their language,” conceptually speaking, does not come easy to us, it is important to take Ottoman categories seriously as they profess them to us, even if they contain elements of (what is often called) the “fantastic” or the “Unbelieved.”⁵⁶ Thus, a nuanced understanding of the ways that the Ottoman dynasty shaped the Ottoman world demands an abandonment of contemporary views of social hierarchy and politics, at least insofar as these assumptions confound our ability to appreciate Ottoman perspectives on the naturalness and desirability of the dynasty’s dispensation of justice and order.⁵⁷

However, the dominant moral economies of academic history tend to enforce a set of functionalist approaches to the study of monarchs and monarchies, meaning that they tend to be treated as things that are not what they appear to be (rulers sanctioned by and uniquely in touch with the laws of the universe) and must be “historicized” or “interpreted” as yet other things (manifestations of oppression and unjust social

effective political power; in this connection see Jonathan Freedland, “A Great Family Business. The Crown – a Netflix Television Series Created by Peter Morgan,” *The New York Review of Books* LXIV.5 (March 23, 2017): 16-19. As Freedman notes, the ongoing popularity of *The Crown*, a TV-show about the lives of The House of Windsor, is fueled to some extent by the exemplary actions of figures like Winston Churchill (1874-1965) (“the man who in 1940 stood alone against Hitler and fascism”) and by the weight of recent events in the “the era of Brexit, populism, and anti-establishment upheaval”; *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Duindam, *Dynasties*, 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ For alternative methodological approaches to phenomena not permitted historicity and narrative space in scholarship, see Carla Hesse, “The New Empiricism,” *Cultural and Social History* 1 (2004): 201–207, Luke Clossey, Kyle Jackson, Brandon Marriott, Andrew Redden, and Karin Vélez, “The Unbelieved and Historians, Part I: A Challenge,” *History Compass* 14 (2016): 594-602, *ibidem*, “The Unbelieved and Historians, Part II: Proposals and Solutions,” *History Compass* 15 (2017): 1-9, Luke Clossey, “The Geographies and Methodologies of Religion in the Journal of Early Modern History,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 20 (2016): 1-14

⁵⁷ The sultan’s dispensation of justice has been aptly described by Ali Yaycıoğlu, who notes that “God entrusted his subjects (*vedi’at’u-Allah*) to the sultan, who in turn entrusted his servants—the viziers, governors, and other officeholders—with their rule. The sultan was meant to punish his servants if they acted unjustly and unlawfully. However, if the sultan acted unjustly, there was no formal institution to punish him. God would punish an unjust ruler in the afterlife”; Ali Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 22.

hierarchy). This has the consequence of obscuring the degree to which public persona as such played a role in Ottoman social history, and has arguably prevented the widespread emergence of public persona as an analytical category for the study of dynastic empires and the societies they constitute and create. If we think of dynastic persona as being all about “power” and “image,” as it tends to be conceived analytically,⁵⁸ we miss out on the Ottoman world as it was seen by Ottomans, who saw, in many cases quite clearly, that their emperor was not an analytical archetype, but rather the Master of the Auspicious Conjunction (*Sahib Kiran*); The Caliph of Islam (*Khilāfa*); The Shadow of God on Earth (*Zillu Allah-i filarz*); Khan of Khans (*Khan-i Khanan*); and Shah of Shahs (*Shahanshah*). On the one hand, to accept these premises on anything resembling their own terms is to defy some of the equalizing precepts of social history, which level the human playing-field through the analytical interplay of power-relations. These, in turn, are used to bring out the mundane and ordinary aspects of monarchs and monarchies, “revealing” them to be straw-man constructs akin to the central conceit of the Wizard of Oz. Yet to quote Timothy Brook, “[o]ur inability to see dragons as dragons is our peculiarity, not a peculiarity of those who could.”⁵⁹

In this connection, I concede that there is obviously some benefit in not taking these phenomena purely at face value in the interest of giving voice to the experiences and perspectives of persons who were far from the apex of social and political hierarchies. Nevertheless, I resist the totalizing and universalizing logic at play in much of the recent historiography on monarchs and monarchical cultures,⁶⁰ and of mainstream

⁵⁸ For an influential study that takes up this approach, see Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998). Indeed, Deringil’s use of anthropological categories like “legitimation deficit” and “fine tuning” arguably inaugurated the use of this functionalist approach to Ottoman monarchy; idem, 9-10

⁵⁹ Timothy Brook, “Dragon Spotting,” in *History of Imperial China, Volume 5: Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties* (Cambridge, MA, USA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 21.

⁶⁰ While the existing literature on these subjects ably addresses the relationship between imperial monarchies and the maintenance and legitimation of political power, they generally do not address monarchy from the perspectives of imperial subjects except when these perspectives constitute a form of critique or participation in the formation of imperial “propaganda”; see Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy from Peter the Great to the Abdication of Nicholas II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013) David, Cannadine, “Introduction: Divine Rites of Kings,” idem, “Splendor out of Court: Royal Spectacle and Pageantry in Modern Britain, c. 1820-1977,” in *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics Since the Middle Ages*, Sean Wilentz ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 206-243, and Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998)

social and cultural history more generally,⁶¹ in that I find the *de facto* prohibition of “reading with the grain” to be an unconvincing and shortsighted approach to historical research.⁶² By consistently privileging forms of analysis that treat monarchical persona as a symptom or epiphenomena that denotes other (mutually-inclusive) issues relating to class, gender, governance, religion, or most often, to power-relations, the universalization of these perspectives tends to obscure the degree to which the social and cultural realities of dynastic imperial societies hinged on the persona of the monarch and the ruling House. In short, by framing dynastic persona, in terms that make it seem “unnatural,” “artificial,” or “constructed,”⁶³ historians risk permitting presentist perspectives that insist on the telos of the inevitable displacement of monarchical rule by secular, republican democracy to minimize its utility for engaging with Ottoman history in all of its inconvenient contours.

For example, in the conceptual realm of Ottoman Turkish, “the Ottomans” did not recognize a single term commensurable with the (anglicized) analytical unit commonly referred to as “the Ottoman Empire” in English language scholarship, an entity that has been repeatedly classified in analytical matrices in relation to other “empires.”⁶⁴ Instead, they saw the landscape in which they lived as a space that was intimately related to the House of Osman, referring to it variously, and with no apparent consistently or rigid regularity, as the *Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmâniyye* (“the Exalted State/Dynasty”), the *Memalik-i Mahrusa-i Osman* (“The Well-Protected Domains of the Ottomans”), or yet other terms.⁶⁵ Hence, in keeping with conceptions of “culture” that treat it as a site of

⁶¹ To be sure, many widely practiced theoretical and methodological traditions of historical inquiry (poststructuralism, postcolonialism, the subaltern school, to some extent the Annales school) privilege “reading against the grain,” “reading for silences,” or other ways of reading for the dynamics of power in contexts where its presence is not explicit.

⁶² For perspectives that argue for the analytical utility of “reading with the grain” in line with the precepts of the so-called “new empiricism,” see Carla Hesse, “The New Empiricism,” *Cultural and Social History* 1(2004): 201-207 and Luke Clossey, “Asia-Centered Approaches to the History of the Early Modern World: A Methodological Romp,” in *Comparative Early Modernities: 1100-1800*, David Porter ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 73-98.

⁶³ See Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 9-10

⁶⁴ For a discussion of the implications of this plurality of names, see Wigen, “Ottoman Concepts of Empire,” 37. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that Ottoman Turkish was only one of the three main languages spoken by the imperial elite (the others being Arabic and Persian) and only one of the tens of languages spoken in the Ottoman realms. In this connection, the plurality of other possible conceptual histories of “the empire” must not be neglected.

⁶⁵ However, as Wigen notes, “[t]he meaning of these concepts shifted over time and there [were] a number of overlapping concepts” in use that referred to the “state-people-territory tripod”; *ibid.* At the same time,

both contested and of shared meaning, it is useful for historians to think of the Ottoman sultans as something akin to imperial personifications, as “empire made flesh,” and thus as essential components of the symbolic world within which (what we call) “the empire” was conceived of, lived, and experienced. Indeed, whether they represented God's punishment for the sins of humanity or the actualization of His Divine Plan,⁶⁶ The House Of Osman was woven into the very fabric of the Ottoman world, and it was largely the sultan and his dynastic House that gave meaning and contour to the political entity that historians call the “Ottoman Empire” for many (yet perhaps not all) of his subjects.⁶⁷

Thus, in the interest of producing a social and cultural history of the House of Osman over the *longue durée*, I hope to draw attention to the benefits of querying the symbolic role of the regnant Ottoman sultan, and of the historical memory of the Ottoman dynasty in general,⁶⁸ in the state-sanctioned projects of imperial patriotism that characterized the late Ottoman period in all of its varied manifestations.⁶⁹ Furthermore, although a number of studies have examined the role of sultanic allegiance in the late Ottoman period and its intersection with imperial and national identities,⁷⁰ the extent to which, and the implications of the fact that dynastic symbols of Ottoman imperial culture continued to appear amidst the cacophony of voices which characterized the revolutionary moment of 1908 remains underexplored. I have therefore dedicated my second chapter to an investigation of Ottoman dynastic heroism in the Hamidian and

this confluence of state and dynasty was also present in Habsburg contexts; see Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Harvard: Harvard University Press: 2016).

⁶⁶ For a brief comment on the Ottoman Christian view of the dynasty as divine punishment, see Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: A Short History* (New York and Toronto: Modern Library, 2007), xxxii.

⁶⁷ For examples of the separation of the person of the monarch from the political state entity, see Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire*, 218-219 and Marinou Sariyannis, *Ottoman Political Thought up to the Tanzimat: A Concise History* (Rethymno, Greece: Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas, Institute for Mediterranean Studies, 2015), 125-126 and 130-131.

⁶⁸ In this connection, I differ with Jan Plamper in extending my unit of analysis beyond individuals to “collections of persons”; see Plamper, *The Stalin Cult*, xv.

⁶⁹ Namely the official “Ottomanism” of the Tanzimat (or “reordering”) period (c. 1839-76), the “Muslim Ottomanism” of the Hamidian Era, and the “Ottoman Muslim Nationalism” of the Second Constitutional Period. At the same time, this line of inquiry must also include the plurality of other dynastic modes of imperial affiliation which, as recent studies have shown, could have very little to do with Islam or with Muslim identity; see Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 82. See also idem, “Contest and Conflict: Jewish Ottomanism in a Constitutional Regime,” in idem, 103-131.

⁷⁰ See Darin Stephanov, “Minorities, Majorities, and the Monarch: Nationalizing Effects of the Late Ottoman Royal Public Ceremonies, 1808-1908” (Ph.D. Dissertation, the University of Memphis, 2012).

Second Constitutional Periods.

Moreover, in keeping with the lack of scholarly insight into the subject, I also hope to contribute to what I call a “complex history” of public persona in the late Ottoman Empire by highlighting the degree to which late Ottoman public spheres were populated by a plurality of notable personalities aside from (yet certainly not excluding) that of the incumbent monarch. Given the degree to which “constitutionalist” heroes like Namık Kemal and Midhat Paşa as well as “revolutionary” heroes like Enver Bey and Niyazi Bey enjoyed a considerable degree of veneration in Ottoman news media and material culture after 1908, I suggest that drawing attention to their respective public personae will help to produce a broader picture of the functioning of late Ottoman public spheres more generally. Thus, by following the lead of Thomas M. Barrett,⁷¹ Edward Berenson,⁷² and Mary Louise Roberts,⁷³ all of whom have examined fame and heroism from a social historical perspective, Ottomanist historians can begin to examine the late Ottoman public spheres in terms of notable personalities alongside notable ideas such as constitutionalism, Ottomanism,⁷⁴ scientism, or separatist nationalism. I thus dedicate my third and fourth chapters to this larger project. In sum, to study the nature of public persona in the late Ottoman Empire demands an examination of the interplay between the personae of the House of Osman and those of their more publicly visible subjects.

Power and Public Persona

However, my examination of these issues through the lens of Ottoman heroism differs significantly from previous work. For instance, in contrast to the Weberian and Functionalist traditions of inquiry on which Edward Berenson bases his analysis of imperial heroes in the French and British Empires,⁷⁵ I am less concerned with “what

⁷¹ Thomas M. Barrett, “The Remaking of the Lion of Dagestan: Shamil in Captivity,” *Russian Review* 53 (1994): 353-366.

⁷² Berenson, “Charisma and the Making of Imperial Heroes in Britain and France, 1880-1914.”

⁷³ Mary Louise Roberts, “Rethinking Female Celebrity: The Eccentric Star of Nineteenth-Century France,” in *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame, and Power in Nineteenth-century Europe*, Edward Berenson ed. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 104-118.

⁷⁴ As Palmira Brummett notes, the idea of Ottomanism was oriented around “the preservation of the empire and an attempt to create unity around the symbols provided by the Ottoman dynasty”; Brummett, *Image & Imperialism*, 2.

⁷⁵ See Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, 15-21.

heroism does” than I am with “what heroism was” from the perspectives made available to me by Ottoman sources.⁷⁶ In this respect, the weight of my analytical focus is premised on unearthing Ottoman voices and ways of being in the world instead of explaining them. Thus while I certainly do not ignore the calculations of power, or of critical interpretations of the actions of the powerful, I argue that overemphasizing the historical importance of power-relations belies the impression that power is the most important force that shapes change over time, a conclusion that is tenable only when all other calculations are underprivileged as factors at play.

“Power,” in its theoretical conception, may well be everyone at all times; operative in ways that are complicated, influential, and worthy of study. Nevertheless, the ways in which historians negotiate this reality and render their negotiations into historical writing need not be uniform in their execution. In this connection, the use of “Power,” as an analytical category through which to examine and map the complexities of various forms of hierarchy is not a natural or default approach to the study of history, but rather a decision replete not with consequences. In my view, all analytical approaches have drawbacks as well as benefits. As for power-based approaches, they tend to essentialize complex historical content—from which historians may glean a variety of knowledges and meanings—into modular theoretical grids, thus transforming this content (and all of its incongruities) into analytical language tied directly to the understandings of modern historians. While this approach effectively sheds light on the workings of “Power,” it can also distance us from the thoughts, actions, and experiences of past persons. More importantly, it risks reproducing our own categories of understanding in our analysis and implicitly positioning them as somehow more natural, useful, or valid than those of historical people.

At the same time, however, I do not intend to give the impression that I purposefully attempt to be “theoretically native” or that I am only concerned with “facts”

⁷⁶ While my definition of “Ottoman perspectives” is intended to entail all subjects of the sultan irrespective of language, locality, age, gender (women, men, boys), class, ethnicity, religion, or yet other positional indices, it must be stated here that limitations imposed both by time and the availability of sources restrict the purview of my analysis, for the most part, to perspectives professed by literate men writing in Ottoman Turkish. At the same time however, given the universalizing aims of this study, I intend to include any and all pertinent Ottoman perspectives on their imperial House as they made available to me, irrespective of how contradictory they may appear as an aggregate collectivity.

in some antiquarian sense, but rather that my research questions are oriented more in favor of “what” than “how.” Let me explain this distinction by comparing the methodological emphases of two influential historians. The cultural historian Robert Darnton has described his methodology as one which “treats our own civilization in the same way that anthropologists study alien cultures,” thus presuming, as a matter of approach, that the persons who inhabit even “our own” past are fundamentally different from “us” in the present.⁷⁷ On the other hand, the social historian E.P. Thompson based much of his work on the assumption that there are commonalities and commensurabilities between “our” predecessors and “us.” This is evidenced by his declared aim of “saving” historical persons from “the enormous condescension of posterity,”⁷⁸ thus referring to our tendency to pass judgement on the inhabitants of the past without empathizing with their experience.

While it would be counterproductive to reduce these thinkers to a simple binary, I evoke their contrast as a means to frame my choice of analytical focus as a matter of *emphasis* and not as purposeful ignorance of contemporary theoretical and methodological debates. Hence, my decision to deemphasize analytical frameworks that privilege questions of motivation and calculated manipulation inasmuch as they pertain to power-relations is not undertaken in ignorance of these issues but as a means to shift the focus of the conversation. Furthermore, it is an attempt to showcase the difficulty in convincingly delineating the “constructors,” “controllers,” or “manipulators,” of public persona. In this connection, I suggest that public persona is best treated as a phenomenon so decentered and ephemeral in its nature that it should be historicized as a part of the overall “environment” of societies and is thus beyond the control of any one or combination of persons. This analytical sentiment is mirrored, to some extent, in the work of personality cult theorist Jan Plamper who argues that functionalist approaches can only go so far in explaining the cult process, which he likens to the mystical transmutative art of alchemy. Indeed, “key to the alchemical process is the assumption that the end result is

⁷⁷ Robert Darnton, “The Great Cat Massacre,” in *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 3.

⁷⁸ E.P. Thompson, “Preface,” in *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books 1963), 12.

a sum that amounts to more than its parts. In other words, a surplus.”⁷⁹ Hence, the “larger-than-life-presence” enjoyed by cult figures is the result of “precisely this kind of surplus. And yet this surplus is of a different order. Ultimately we end up with surplus of the unknowable. It, too, belongs inextricably to the alchemy of power; it is a surplus that remains beyond books,”⁸⁰ and hence, beyond the purview of all analytical calculations.

A Note on Sources

My use of the phrase “Ottoman heroism” is intended to be as inclusive as possible in light of the linguistic and geographic limitations alluded to above. However, upon consideration of the significant plurality of linguistic and cultural registers through which subjects of the House of Osman “construed the world, invested it with meaning, and infused it with emotion,”⁸¹ these restrictions constrain my ability to attend to the full cacophony of voices whose consultation is required for the term “Ottoman heroism” to bear anything but a conceptually localized meaning. In this respect, although I speak to a vein of analysis largely concerned with an “Ottoman” polity or empire—and not with something called “the Middle East,” “Europe,” “The Balkans,” or “The Islamic World, to name but a few of the lenses through which one could productively historicize the spatial or conceptual geographies of the Ottoman world—I can only attend to a fraction of the phenomena that the term “Ottoman heroism” might entail. In this connection, I do not aspire to monopolize the conversation concerning what such a concept might be, and concern myself instead with heroism (or heroisms) in the Ottoman Empire in a particular historical context, as opposed to some universalized or definitive “Ottoman heroism.” To be sure, this problem is not unique to the study at hand, but is rather one of the central complications inherent to defining or historicizing what is “Ottoman,” or, in other dynastic imperial contexts, what is “Bourbon,” “Habsburg” or “Romanov.”

With few exceptions, the sources consulted in this thesis are predominantly visual materials or textual materials with numerous illustrations. While I examine a number of largely textual sources, like for example, the tradition of Ottoman Turkish historical literature that emerged in the late nineteenth century, my emphasis is on two categories of

⁷⁹ Pamper, *The Stalin Cult*, 226.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Robert Darnton, “The Great Cat Massacre,” 3.

visually oriented sources: a) illustrated newspapers, journals and periodicals such as *Resimli Kitap*, *Şehbal*, and *İctihad*; and b) postcards, memorabilia and souvenirs, and dynastic patronage. I thus build on Edward Berenson's claim that the increased availability of media forms that emphasized visual representations of human persons played a pivotal role in facilitating the dissemination of heroic public persona at the end of the nineteenth century.⁸² As Berenson notes:

“...the growing numbers of illustrations and eventually photographs...transformed the newspaper from a solid wall of black ink to the more eye-pleasing publications we know today. Given the low resolution of early newsprint photos, individuals made much better subjects than groups, landscapes, or city scenes. For these reasons, the very structure of the mass press leant itself to the production, amplification, and dissemination of celebrity and charisma.”⁸³

In this connection, my focus on visuality reflects my interest in examining the intersections between the development of media culture, historically oriented cultures of empire (like for example, the Ottoman memory of the conquest of Constantinople in 1453), and the growing popularity of Ottoman imperial heroes in the early twentieth century.

Finally, a brief note on the scope and character of my program of research is worth mention here. The vast bulk of research was undertaken at the libraries of the University of Chicago and the University of Michigan in the summer of 2016, which allowed me to examine Ottoman Turkish newspapers, journals and periodicals including *Servet-i Fünun*, *İctihad*, and *Resimli Kitap* through their extensive microfiche collections. I spent ten days (8-18 August 2016) at Chicago's Regenstein Library and another six days at Michigan's Hatcher Graduate Library (19-24 August 2016). Ottoman postcards and memorabilia from the revolutionary era were made available to me by consulting illustrated editions like Bahattin Öztuncay ed., *İkinci Meşrutiyet'in İlanının 100üncü Yılı. 100th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Constitution* (İstanbul: Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, 2008), while much of the artistic patronage of the Ottoman dynasty (portraits, silsilname) was accessed through online databases like Hathitrust or via art-historical

⁸² Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, 19.

⁸³ Ibid.

collections like Ayşe Orbay and Filiz Çağman eds., *The Sultan's Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman* (İstanbul: İşbank, 2000).

Layout

This thesis is arranged thematically, yet is nevertheless governed by a loose chronology. Each chapter represents an attempt to speak to certain groups of imperial heroes and villains and their temporal and cultural relationship to the revolutionary moment. Chapter two examines Ottoman dynastic heroism and the emergence of a canon of heroic sultans whose examples were seen as speaking to the realities of contemporary Ottoman society both before and after the revolution. Chapter three addresses the role of heroism and villainy in the cultural deconstruction of the Hamidian regime immediately after 1908, at which point the democratization of the Ottoman media and the loosening of censorship enabled Ottoman subjects to access, wield, venerate, and critique the image of their sultan to an unprecedented extent. Chapter four turns to the personae of Enver Bey and Niyazi Bey and analyzes their unprecedented status as heroic media heroes who gained positions of merit not by virtue of the dynasty's permission and acclaim, but through their actions in overthrowing the regime of a sitting Ottoman sultan. Finally, I conclude by returning to the major findings and methodological issues elaborated in each chapter and hint at directions for further research by highlighting the importance of public persona (and heroic persona in particular) to understandings of the late Ottoman world.

Conclusion

In sum, this thesis queries the social, cultural, and political locations of individual personae in the late Ottoman Empire, thus addressing personae as historical forces that were ascribed specific traits by Ottomans themselves. In other words, if there existed an Ottoman world in which the experience of all things Ottoman can be located in conceptual space beyond the analytical confines of “the empire,” I hope to begin a historiographic conversation about the characteristics of this world—from the forces that created it to the elements that shaped its everyday functioning. Therefore, by focusing on public persona, I seek to uncover the personalities who made up the brightest constellations in the larger firmament of an *Osmanlı* universe of meaning.

Chapter 2. “In Memory of the White Horse of Fatih”: Heroism, Imperial Culture, and Dynastic Persona in the Late Ottoman World, 1900-1918

It is perhaps no coincidence that the first Ottoman museum, created in the Basilica of Hagia Irene in the mid nineteenth-century, featured the sword of Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1444-46, 1451-81) as its “focal point.”¹ Thus in emulation of the storied conqueror (*fatih*) of Constantinople, visitors to the museum’s exhibits were permitted to brandish his weapon,² “The Sword of God unsheathed in the Jihad,”³ which bore an Arabic inscription describing the merits of its owner: in conquering the Byzantine metropolis in 1453, Mehmed II had established the Ottoman dynasty as the heir of imperial Rome and fulfilled the predictions of the Prophet Muhammad.⁴ As he was the conqueror of the Byzantine city of Constantinople and a great empire-building sultan of Ottoman history,⁵ his sword stood as a physical testament to the glory of the empire’s achievements. In this way, the exhibit provided Ottoman subjects the chance to directly experience the grandeur of their dynasty and invited them to contemplate its role in creating their shared imperial world.⁶

This chapter analyses dynastic heroism (*kahramanlık*) as an expression of Ottoman imperial culture in the period from 1900 to 1918 with particular emphasis on the years immediately preceding and immediately following the revolution of 1908. In this

¹ Wendy Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2003), 50.

² *Ibid.*

³ Jay A. Levenson, *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 197.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵ For a discussion of Mehmed II’s role as empire-builder, see Kaya Şahin, “Constantinople and the End Time: The Ottoman Conquest as a Portent of the Last Hour,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010): 319 as well as Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix Press: 1973).

⁶ Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 51-52. At the same time, the extent to which the exhibit and its message also may have appealed to non-Muslim Ottomans is unclear, especially given Mehmed II’s association with the destruction of Christian Rome.

way, my analysis highlights a consistent interest the House of Osman amongst the late Ottoman public which spans the Hamidian and Second Constitutional Periods. Helped and not hindered by the end of Sultan Abdülhamid II's autocratic regime, Ottoman dynastic heroism survived the end of the dynasty's political efficacy and remained a cultural mainstay in the post-revolutionary world. While previous studies have peripherally examined notions of Ottoman dynastic heroism in the context of the emergence of the Republic of Turkey after 1922,⁷ no study has historicized this phenomenon as part of the cultural history of Ottoman monarchy. Therefore, in concert with this directive, this chapter examines the perception of the Ottoman sultans as historical "shapers" of the world in which the empire's subjects lived, thus addressing issues of "world order" in Ottoman contexts.⁸ Insofar as Ottoman sultans were seen as influential "movers and shakers" in Ottoman history by journalists, artists, writers, and (perhaps also by) their readerships and viewerships, how did the House of Osman shape the late Ottoman world as it appeared to contemporary Ottomans?

Drawing on works of Ottoman Turkish historical literature, the Istanbul-based Ottoman Turkish illustrated press, as well as on the dynasty's institutionalized tradition of courtly artistic patronage, I argue that a select group of Ottoman sultans were venerated in these cultural contexts as heroic empire-builders and empire-reformers whose legacies had shaped and continued to inform the realities of the late Ottoman Empire, and whose heroic examples provided attractive models for the future of the empire and its peoples. Selected from amongst the members of the House of Osman, this canon,⁹ which tended to include Osman I (r. 1299-1324), Mehmed II (r. 1444-46, 1451-81), Selim I (r. 1512-20), Süleyman I (r. 1520-66), Osman II (r. 1618-22), Murad IV (r. 1623-40), Ahmed III (r. 1703-30), Selim III (r. 1789-1807), and Mahmud II (r. 1808-39)

⁷ Gavin Brockett, "When Ottomans Become Turks: Commemorating the Conquest of Constantinople and Its Contribution to World History," *American Historical Review* 119 (2014): 399-433 and Doğan Gürpınar, "The Encounter with the Ottoman Heritage: Imperial Grandeur, Medieval Decay, and Double Discourses," in *Ottoman/Turkish Visions of the Nation, 1860-1950* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 21-67.

⁸ Gottfried Hagen has previously addressed the relationship between the Ottoman concept of "world order" (*Nizam-ı Alem*) and dynastic legitimacy as it was manifested in early modern Ottoman Turkish political literature; see Gottfried Hagen, "Legitimacy and World Order," in *Legitimizing to Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, Hakan Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 55-85.

⁹ In using the term "canon" I do not intend to imply that this group was uniformly accepted as a coherent group (heroic or otherwise), that it was uncontested, or that it was rigidly defined in any context.

entered Ottoman literary consciousness in the Hamidian period (c. 1876-1908).¹⁰ However, quite paradoxically, their heroic personae did not cease to play an important role in Ottoman historical discourse in the wake of the Committee of Union and Progress' ascension to political power after 1908. To the contrary, it was at this point that an explosion of novel newsmedia culture (new publications, expanded print runs) and temporarily relaxed censorship policies provided new space for their veneration as "Ottoman" (*Osmanlı*) and not simply as "Muslim" (*Müslüman*) or "Turkish" (*Türk*) heroes.¹¹

In this connection, I demonstrate that in spite of Sultan Abdülhamid II's (r. 1876-1909) relegation to the role of "constitutional monarch" in 1908, his later dethronement in 1909, and the ascension of Sultan Mehmed V Reşad (r. 1909-18) as a ruler with ostensibly few institutionalized governmental responsibilities,¹² the House of Osman continued to hold weight as a symbolic site of imperial allegiance in the last Ottoman decade. Hence, in an era when imaginings of the empire's future were often colored by the threats of separatist and ethnonationalist subversion, foreign imperial intervention, and growing divisions between the empire's multiethnic and multiconfessional subjects, specific Ottoman sultans, cast as imperial heroes, continued to be used as reference points for reckoning with the empire's past and illuminating right action in its present.

After situating myself in the literature and discussing my methodology, I briefly address some of the influential historical writers of the Hamidian period, like Namık Kemal (1840-1888), Ahmet Refik Altınay (1881-1937), and Ahmed Rasim (1864-1932) who contributed to this heroic canon by emphasizing the exceptional nature of a select group of "conquering" and "reforming" Ottoman sultans instead of purely extolling the House of Osman more generally. Next, I demonstrate the complex and intertwined nature

¹⁰ This is not a comprehensive list of the sultans singled out as exemplary figures, but rather a selection of the most commonly referenced in the sources consulted. As I note below, other sultans such as Bayezid I (r. 1389-1402), Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512), Mustafa II (r. 1695-1703), Mustafa III (r. 1757-74), and Abdülmecid I (r. 1839-61) were also praised by late Ottoman historians for their achievements in conquest, statebuilding, and reform. For a more detailed explication of this canon and its emergence, see below.

¹¹ Thus far, the scholarship on Ottoman dynastic heroism has largely construed it as a precocious expression of the "Turkishness" discussed in late Ottoman intellectual circles; see Ümit Kurt and Doğan Gürpınar, "The Young Turk Historical Imagination in the Pursuit of Mythical Turkishness and its Lost Grandeur (1911–1914)," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (2016): 1-15.

¹² Mehmed V's cultural presence as reigning sultan and "constitutional monarch" is discussed in considerable detail in my fourth chapter.

of Ottoman dynastic heroism by historicizing the career and work of Italian artist Fausto Zonaro (1854-1929) who produced a number of historical paintings for Abdülhamid II as Ottoman Court Painter in the early 1900s; many of which, including a series of paintings of Mehmed II, emphasized the glorious nature of the Ottoman past as a product of the achievements of an Ottoman sultan.¹³ These paintings, which construed Abdülhamid II's legendary ancestor as the conqueror of Constantinople and the "creator" of an Ottoman Empire proper,¹⁴ would later appear in a number of Ottoman newspapers and history books in the Second Constitutional Period, thus exemplifying the ways that courtly traditions of dynastic representation could enter into wider circles of Ottoman society. Finally, I turn to these print media sources themselves and examine how they incited their Ottoman readership to visualize the empire's history as being predominantly shaped by the heroic efforts of the House of Osman.

Historiography

The Ottoman dynasty, or the House of Osman (*Osmanlı Hanedanı*) was a venerable, complex, and protean imperial institution possessed of its own cultures, rituals, and modes of etiquette which influenced the lives of its subjects in multifaceted ways. However, in contrast with other long-lived dynastic houses like those of the Romanovs and Habsburgs,¹⁵ the Ottoman dynasty has yet to be the subject of a

¹³ Also noteworthy in this connection is the work of the Ottoman artist Hasan Rıza (1857-1913) and the Polish artist Stanisław Chlebowski (1835–1884). Hasan Rıza painted a number of sultans and famous battle scenes throughout his career, including a portrait of Mehmed II adorned with swords and other weaponry that appeared in Istanbul art exhibitions in the 1910s; Wendy M.K Shaw, *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 112. Chlebowski worked closely with Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1861-76) throughout the 1860s to produce heroic battle scenes featuring the achievements of Murad II (r. 1421-44, 1446-51), Mehmed II, Süleyman I, and Mehmed III (r. 1595-1603); see Mary Roberts, "The Battlefield of Ottoman History," in *Istanbul Exchanges: Ottomans, Orientalists, and Nineteenth-century Visual Culture* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 37-74.

¹⁴ This conception of Mehmed II as "Renaissance prince" was particularly emphasized by Ahmed Refik; Doğan Gürpınar, "The Encounter with the Ottoman Heritage: Imperial Grandeur, Medieval Decay, and Double Discourses," in *Ottoman/Turkish Visions of the Nation, 1860-1950* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) 53.

¹⁵ For the House of Romanov, see Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy from Peter the Great to the Abdication of Nicholas II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013). For the House of Habsburg, see Adam Wandruszka, *The House of Habsburg: Six Hundred Years of a European Dynasty* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1964) and Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Habsburgs: Embodying Empire* (London and New York: Penguin Group, 1996).

temporally comprehensive study as an imperial house throughout its entire 622-year existence.¹⁶ Thus far, the most expansive book-length studies are those by Leslie Pierce, Rhoads Murphey, Colin Imber, and Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein, all of which focus on the period before 1800.¹⁷

Moreover, while a robust literature focused specifically on the institutional, social, and cultural presence of the dynasty in the late Ottoman period (c. 1789-1922) has begun to emerge,¹⁸ treatments of dynastic heroism are almost non-existent.¹⁹

Nevertheless, several historians have examined this phenomenon with attention to the

¹⁶ For an art-historical volume that focuses on the courtly production of dynastic portraiture, see Ayşe Orbay and Filiz Çağman eds., *The Sultan's Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman* (İstanbul: İşbank, 2000).

¹⁷ Leslie Pierce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) Rhoads Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty: Tradition, Image and Practice in the Ottoman Imperial Household, 1400-1800* (London: Continuum, 2008), Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), and Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein, *Le Sérail ébranlé: essai sur morts, dépositions et avènements des sultans Ottomans (XIV-XIX siècle)* (Paris: Fayard, 2003). For a substantial treatment of the cultural and social presence of the dynasty in Istanbul, see Ebru Boyar, and Kate Fleet, "The Palace and the Populace," in *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 28-71.

¹⁸ See Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), Hakan T. Karateke, *Padşahım Çok Yaşal: Osmanlı Devletinin Son Yüz Yılında Merasimler* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004), idem, "From Divine Ruler to Modern Monarch: The Ideal of the Ottoman Sultan in the Nineteenth Century," in *Comparing Empires: Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen eds. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 287-301, idem, "Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate: A Framework for Historical Analysis," in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, Hakan T. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2005, 13-52), Darin Stephanov, "Minorities, Majorities, and the Monarch: Nationalizing Effects of the Late Ottoman Royal Public Ceremonies, 1808-1908" (PhD Dissertation, The University of Memphis, 2012), idem, "Sultan Abdulmecid's 1846 Tour of Rumelia and the Trope of Love," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 44 (2014): 475-501, idem, "Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) and the First Shift in Modern Ruler Visibility in the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 1 (2014): 129-148, idem, "Ruler Visibility, Modernity and Ethnonationalism in the Late Ottoman Empire," in *Living in the Ottoman Realm: Sultans, Subjects, and Elites*, Kent Schull and Christine Isom-Verhaaren eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 259-271, Wendy M.K Shaw, *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), and Alison P. Terndrup, "Cross-Cultural Spaces in an Anonymously Painted Portrait of the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II" (MA Thesis, University of South Florida, 2015).

¹⁹ For studies of Ottoman heroism in the early modern period (c. 1400-1800), see Gottfried Hagen, "Heroes and Saints in Anatolian Turkish Literature," *Oriente Moderno* 89 (2009): 349-361 and ibid, "Chaos, Order, Power, Salvation: Heroic Hagiography's Response to the Ottoman Fifteenth Century," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 1 (2014): 91-109. For the late Ottoman Empire, see Kurt and Gürpınar, "The Young Turk Historical Imagination in the Pursuit of Mythical Turkishness" and Doğan Gürpınar, "The Encounter with the Ottoman Heritage: Imperial Grandeur, Medieval Decay, and Double Discourses," in *Ottoman/Turkish Visions of the Nation, 1860-1950* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 21-67.

emergence of the Republic of Turkey after 1922 and the popularization of various Turkish nationalisms in the ensuing decades. In his study of commemorative national celebrations in Turkey, Gavin Brockett surveys the genealogy of Mehmed II's ascent to hero status in Turkey from the late nineteenth century, culminating in his celebration as conqueror of Constantinople and founder of Istanbul in the 500th anniversary of the event celebrated in 1953.²⁰ However, while Brockett notes the role of late Ottoman writers in emphasizing Mehmed II's "heroic and enlightened character" and his place in Ottoman history as an ideal conquering sultan,²¹ his analysis is focused on Ottoman Turkish literature and, with few exceptions, does not reckon with the Ottoman media or with courtly culture in any substantial depth.²²

By examining many of the same literary sources, Doğan Gürpınar has framed Ottoman dynastic heroism as an epiphenomenon within the larger umbrella of "Ottoman/Turkish Heroes,"²³ thus conflating the categories "Ottoman" and "Turkish" in a fashion that obscures the historically contingent meaning of these categories as popular modes of affiliation before the 1920s. For Gürpınar "[t]he Ottoman sultans were [...] subsumed under the genre of Turkish Heroes" from the perspective of late Ottoman literati,²⁴ noting that "Mehmed II, Suleiman I, Selim I, and to a lesser extent Bayezid I emerged as outstanding and praiseworthy not only as sultans but also for their superior personal qualities."²⁵ While Gürpınar's treatment of Republican Turkish discourses of Turkish heroism sheds light on popular historical writing in the post-Ottoman world—like for example, the pamphlets dedicated to the *Türk kahramanları* ("Turkish Heroes") or the *Türk Büyükleri* ("Great Turks") in the 1930s and 1940s²⁶—his analysis of the Ottoman roots of this phenomenon fails to account for the complexities of historicizing popular conceptions of Turkishness before the rise of the Kemalist Republican

²⁰ Brockett, "When Ottomans Become Turks, 399-433. On the politics of Ottoman history in the Republic, see also Ahmet Özcan, *Türkiye'de Popüler Tarihçilik (1908-1960)* (Istanbul: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2011).

²¹ Ibid, 407.

²² Ibid, 408. With the exception of several articles published in the Ottoman Turkish newspapers *Servet* and *Malumat*, Brockett's study generally does not account for images and articles found in newspapers, journals, and periodicals in the period under study, but rather focuses on the period after 1922.

²³ See Gürpınar, "The Encounter with the Ottoman Heritage," 37.

²⁴ Ibid, 50.

²⁵ Ibid, 50-51.

²⁶ Ibid, 49.

government.

Indeed, in keeping with a vein of Ottomanist scholarship drawing on arguments made in Kemal Karpat's seminal work *The Politicization of Islam*,²⁷ Gürpınar treats Ottoman dynastic heroism as part of an emerging Turkish nationalist historiography that would anticipate later Republican social and intellectual developments. For example, he claims that this dynastic heroism was oriented around the veneration of these figures as "symbolic but gifted heads of the Turkish nation rather than sultans endowed with semi divine qualities."²⁸ However, Gürpınar does not provide specific, contextualized examples that directly substantiate his claim, nor does he reconcile his arguments with the sizeable literature on the plurality of late Ottoman conceptions of "national" identity which, in sharp contrast to later exclusivist, irredentist, and separatist ethnonationalist modes that gained mass popularity only in the wake of Ottoman collapse, remained generally grounded in Ottoman imperial discourses of belonging and exclusion.²⁹

This perspective, which is skeptical of the location of an ethnic or exclusivist-nationalist Turkishness in Ottoman sources to any significant extent, is aptly exemplified by Palmira Brummett's problematization of late Ottoman notions of identity in her study of cartoon satire in the Ottoman revolutionary press in the period 1908-1911. In contradistinction to the arguments made by Karpat and Gürpınar, Brummett points out the difficulty in separating the "Ottoman" from the "Turk" and notes that her examination of Ottoman cartoons in the revolutionary era indicates that both of these terms were generally intended to mean "Ottoman" insofar as this concept entails imperial subjecthood instead of a specific ethnicity or ethnically-defined nationality.³⁰ Hence, she

²⁷ Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

²⁸ Gürpınar, "The Encounter with the Ottoman Heritage," 51.

²⁹ In this connection see Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), Brummett, *Image & Imperialism*, Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity. The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), Erik J. Zürcher, "Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalist Identity Politics 1908-1939," in *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, ed. Kemal Karpat (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 150-179.

³⁰ Palmira Johnson Brummett, "The Comic Sovereign," in *Image & Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908-1911* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), 323.

argues that “one can scan hundreds of cartoons without finding a figure tagged as a ‘Turk’ except where ‘Turk’ stands as a synonym for Ottoman in general,”³¹ and that “the Istanbul satirists tended to draw Ottomans, but sometimes they called them Turks.”³²

In a more recent co-authored study of Ottoman heroism, Gürpınar and Ümit Kurt “investigate how history and grand historical personas were instrumentalized [in a heroic] narrative of revival and how the politics of the [Turkish] national body was fashioned” in ways commensurable with other national mythologies in Germany, France, and England.³³ For them, much of the historical discourse in the Young Turk journal *Türk Vatan* (“Turkish Homeland”) represents a drive to “emulate their heroic ancestors” from the annals of “Turkic” and “Turkish” History” and replace a sociopolitical identification with “Ottomanness” with that of “Turkishness.”³⁴ While the critiques and qualifications leveled by Brummett and others should caution any generalizations in this regard,³⁵ especially as Kurt and Gürpınar do not speak to the readership or circulation of *Türk Vatan* beyond small intellectual circles, it is clear that debates about the place and role of Mongol, Tatar, Hunnic, Magyar, Selcuk, and various other Turkic-speaking or Inner Asian peoples in shaping contemporary Ottoman realities constituted an important (yet somewhat marginal) part of Ottoman historical discourse from the mid-nineteenth century.³⁶ In any case, Kurt and Gürpınar provide a valuable discussion of the specific place of the House of Osman in journals like *Türk Vatan*, *Türk Yurdu*, and *Tahrir Heyeti*. In their view, the journalist-intellectuals who attempted to reconcile “Ottomanness” with “Turkishness” did so by “Turkifying the dynasty” and “delinking” the origins of the House from that of “the Ottomans” (or alternatively “the Ottoman Turks”) and the Oğuz Turks (*Oğuz Türkler*) more generally.³⁷

However, we should exercise caution before generalizing this view of the dynasty

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Kurt and Gürpınar, “The Young Turk Historical Imagination in the Pursuit of Mythical Turkishness,” 6.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Moreover, Kurt and Gürpınar use terms like “Turkish,” “Turkic,” “Ottoman,” and “Ottoman/Turkish” with little explanation as to how they are wielding these terms analytically, which effectively muddles the distinction between the multifarious categories of their historical subjects and the categories they themselves are using in order to try and understand those categories.

³⁶ Kurt and Gürpınar, “The Young Turk Historical Imagination in the Pursuit of Mythical Turkishness,” 5-6.

³⁷ Ibid, 8.

beyond the elite CUP and Turkist circles discussed by the authors. Indeed, it should not surprise us that the participants in this elite culture attempted to reconcile “Turk” and “Ottoman” in this way, given their views on the history of the Ottoman Turkish-speaking Muslim population of the empire,³⁸ yet there is little evidence to suggest that this separation was undertaken by larger portions of the Ottoman populace or even by larger segments of the elite.³⁹ In this connection, the fact that Turkist discourses of affiliation and identity were present in the late Ottoman context does not mean that historians should neglect the dynastic-imperial (*Osmanlı*) modes at play, which, as I demonstrate below, endured throughout the Second Constitutional Period. Hence, the existence of nationalist elements in Ottoman heroic discourse need not legitimate the conclusion that late Ottoman heroism can be explained predominantly or exclusively through this nationalist lens.⁴⁰

Methodology

In contrast to the aforementioned works, I conceive of dynastic heroism in the late Ottoman Empire as a phenomenon that: a) can be located in (relatively) popular media culture outside of the literary domain; b) remained grounded in a Ottoman imperial context that can hardly be historicized, for the most part, as a symptom of a latent and blossoming Turkish national consciousness; and c) has been largely obscured by historiographic trends in the literature that emphasize the exclusivist (Turkist and Muslim) aspects of imperial affiliation in the wake of the 1908 revolution.⁴¹ In this

³⁸ On Turkism and Turkish nationalism in the late Ottoman Empire see Umut Uzer, *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism: Between Turkish Ethnicity and Islamic Identity* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016) and Ugur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

³⁹ On this subject see François Georgeon, *L'ivresse de la liberté: La révolution de 1908 dans l'Empire ottoman* (Paris: Peeters, 2012).

⁴⁰ While their particular emphasis on the prevalence of ethnonational modes of affiliation neglects to mention the presence of alternative, dynastic-imperial variations, Kurt and Gürpınar's assertion that heroic discourse was meant “to historicize the nation so that the imminent miserable state of the nation could be taken as a (temporary) fall from the glory of the past,” is nevertheless instructive for the study at hand. Although Kurt and Gürpınar focus on the aspects of Ottoman dynastic heroism that hint at an emerging exclusivist Turkism (as evidenced by their recurrent use of the terms “nation” and “national”) other strands of heroic discourse belie an investment in the Ottoman imperial project in terms that mirror this revivalist sentiment; Kurt and Gürpınar, “The Young Turk Historical Imagination in the Pursuit of Mythical Turkishness,” 6.

⁴¹ For works on either side of the debate about the viability of Ottoman imperial patriotism (“Ottomanism”) in the Second Constitutional Period, see Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and*

connection, I argue that examining Ottoman dynastic heroism can help to shed further light on the cultural presence of the House of Osman in Ottoman society, and the role of their personae in imaginings of the empire's past, present, and future. I thus concern myself with the *Osmanlı* (or Ottoman dynastic) dimensions of imperial culture in the late Ottoman Empire and speak to the instances in which imperial identity and subjecthood were associated with members of the House of Osman, past and present, through their heroic examples.⁴²

I further distinguish the present study from the existing literature by virtue of my reading of sources. Contrary to some of the commonly accepted axioms of social history as it has been traditionally distinguished from political history, I analyze dynastic public persona not as a product of the power that “the few” held over “the many,” but rather as an integral dimension of a society writ-large; an aspect of its overall environment (or “structure” in the Braudelian sense)⁴³ that cannot be reduced to questions of competent statecraft and social control,⁴⁴ or informed by a rigid state/society dichotomy.⁴⁵ Hence, by

Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), and Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014)

⁴² However, as stated above, limitations imposed both by time and by the availability of sources subject this study to important restrictions that merit attention here. Firstly, I limit myself to Istanbul-based newspapers, journals, periodicals, and book-length historical accounts, thus effectively circumscribing my intervention to the context of Ottoman Istanbul as an urban metropolis and the foremost capital city of the House of Osman—the *Dar al-Khilafat* (“Abode of the Caliphate”), the *Dar al-Sultanat* (“Abode of the Sultanate”), *Islambol* (“Full of Islam”), *Pāyitaht* (“The Seat of the Throne”), and the *Dar-i Devlet* (“The Abode of the State/Dynasty”). While this particular context invites an examination of dynastic heroism as an element of the experience of the *Istanbullular* (“Istanbulites”) in their regular contact with the dynasty, it also effectively disqualifies my findings from speaking to late Ottoman political and cultural realities in a broader “empire-wide” without further investigation of the different regions and localities that constituted the empire during the period under study. Moreover, I analyze the illustrated Ottoman Turkish language press, a decision that further restricts the readership and viewership to which my study can speak.¹²⁵ Even so, while these limitations cannot be ignored, and must necessarily temper the scope of my conclusions, I suggest that the universality of the discourses of heroism that I examine permit a certain degree of speculation about an overarching *Osmanlı* imperial culture that entailed to modes of affiliation beyond the particular urban and linguistic contexts examined here.

⁴³ See Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Siân Reynolds trans. (London: Collins, 1972-73) and idem, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century, Volume 1: The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*, Siân Reynolds trans. (London: Collins, 1981).

⁴⁴ For an example of a study that views dynastic public persona largely in terms of “social control,” see Betül Başaran, *Selim III, Social Control and Policing in Istanbul at the End of the Eighteenth Century: Between Crisis and Order* (Leiden and New York: Brill, 2014).

⁴⁵ In this regard, my perspective owes more to the “state in society” approach as formulated by Joel Migdal; see Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

treating dynastic persona in ways that would be intelligible to contemporary Ottomans, thus reflecting the widespread perception of the sultans as dispensers of Justice and as historical and contemporary “shapers” of the imperial space in which they lived, dynastic persona emerges as an important dimension of Ottoman social and cultural history that is often obscured by the preoccupation with issues of state power in the secondary literature.

Having outlined the contours of my historiographic intervention and my methodology, I will now turn to developments in late nineteenth-century Ottoman Turkish historical literature in order to provide background for the present study and highlight how the writings of late Ottoman literati contributed to the emergence of a dynastic canon of imperial heroes.

Conquerors, Reformers, and Empire: Historical Writing and Ottoman Dynastic Heroism in the Nineteenth Century

Previous studies have shown that Ottoman writers had begun to locate dynastic heroism as an influential force in Ottoman history by the Hamidian period. As Johann Strauss argues, the second half of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of what he calls a “reading public,” an educated segment of society “which eventually became large enough to sustain a literature.”⁴⁶ In his words, “[t]his reading public was large by comparison with previous periods, although given the limited distribution of literacy, it was of course still very far from the mass reading public of today; but the signs of modernity are visible even in contemporary fiction.”⁴⁷ In line with Strauss’ arguments, it appears that the literary heroism of the late nineteenth century emerged in concert with the social and institutional dynamics that facilitated the growth and spread of literary particular genres and their readerships in the late Ottoman Empire. These included developments in book-making technologies and practices (book printing, sale, and distribution),⁴⁸ the multifaceted social, political, and administrative-bureaucratic reforms

⁴⁶ Strauss, “Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th-20th Centuries)?,” 43.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ On this subject see Johann Strauss, “‘Kütüp ve Resail-i Mevkute’: Printing and Publishing in a Multi-ethnic Society,” in *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 225-253 and İrvin Cemil Schick, “Print Capitalism and Women’s Sexual Agency in the Late Ottoman Empire,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 31 (2011): 196-216.

of the Tanzimat (“re-ordering”) project,⁴⁹ and the introduction of a more expansive public education system throughout the Hamidian era.⁵⁰

As part of this larger literary transformation, a number of Ottoman Turkish works that stressed the heroic nature of certain figures in Ottoman history gained a comparatively substantial readership in the terms described by Strauss. On the one hand, these figures included famous administrative personnel like the Köprülü family of viziers who were renowned for their reformism and military prowess in the second half of the seventeenth century,⁵¹ yet notable practitioners of particular crafts like the travelling writer and bureaucrat Evliyâ Celebi (1611-82), the sea captain and cartographer Piri Reis (1465/70-1553), the scientist-polymath Katib Çelebi (1609-57), and the imperial architect Mimar Sinan (1490-1588)⁵² were also subject to literary lionization. Most notably for the study at hand however, this literature also singled out a number of Ottoman sultans whose actions had greatly shaped the fate and development of the Ottoman world as it appeared to contemporary Ottomans.

Beginning in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, a number of influential writers including Namik Kemal, Ahmed Rasim and Ahmet Refik Altınay began to highlight the achievements of noteworthy Ottoman sultans in works of history. Drawing on the great Ottoman historians and court chroniclers like Aşıkpaşazade (1400-84) and Mustafa Naima (1655-1716),⁵³ yet also borrowing extensively from the work of bureaucrat, scholar, and administrator Ahmed Cevdet Paşa (1822-95),⁵⁴ they stressed the

⁴⁹ For a sample of the literature on the cluster of social, political, and cultural transformation commonly referred to under the umbrella of the “Tanzimat,” see Jens Hanssen, “Practices of Integration—Center-Periphery Relations in the Ottoman Empire,” in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber eds. (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Würzburg in Kommission, 2002), 49-74, and M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 72-108.

⁵⁰ On the transformation of public education in the Hamidian period, see Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908: Islamization, Autocracy, and Discipline* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, Education and the State in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), and Emine Evered, *Empire and Education Under the Ottomans: Politics, Reform and Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012).

⁵¹ Gürpınar, “The Encounter with the Ottoman Heritage,” 34-35.

⁵² See *ibid.*, 42 and 45-50.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 50-56.

⁵⁴ In this connection see Can Erimtan, *Ottomans Looking West? The Origins of the Tulip Age and Its Development in Modern Turkey* (London: Tauris Academic Studies: 2008).

roles of specific members of the House of Osman in shaping their imperial circumstances and modeling behavior worthy of emulation. While these works were at times connected to the initiatives of Ottoman officialdom, they can hardly be equated with highly organized and circumscribed “propaganda” campaigns. For example, the historical writings of Namık Kemal, which praised the achievements of Mehmed II, Selim I, and other noteworthy Muslim rulers like Salah ad-Dın Yusuf ibn Ayyub (r. 1137-93),⁵⁵ hardly fit with the collaborative trend of his later colleagues.⁵⁶ He came to be considered an upstart and a subversive by Ottoman officialdom,⁵⁷ and spent much of his career in exile due to his defiance of the policies of the Hamidian regime.

On the other hand, the career of Ahmed Refik is more ambiguous. As Can Erimtan notes, Refik was a member of the *Tarihi Osmanî Ecümeni* (TOE), a historical society created by Sultan Mehmed V to bring the state sanctioned “Ottomanism” (a form of imperial patriotism)⁵⁸ to Ottoman classrooms and “instil a sense of national pride in Ottoman pupils comparable to the effects that the *Histoire de France: ours élémentaire* had in the French classrooms of the Third Republic.”⁵⁹ He was also a frequent contributor to the TOE’s journal, the *Tarihi Osmanî Ecümeni Mecmuası*,⁶⁰ and taught history at the Ottoman *Harb Okulu* (“War School”).⁶¹ In any case, Refik produced a very large number of publications that spans the late Ottoman and early Turkish Republican periods. Indeed, it was Refik that largely popularized the trope of a *Lâle Devri* (“Tulip Age,” c. 1718-30) in Ottoman history (albeit by expanding on the writings of Ahmed Cevdet Paşa) and solidified the historical memory of Sultan Ahmed III and his vizier and in-law Nevşehirli

⁵⁵ For example, Namık Kemal praised Mehmed II as a ruler who “never diverged from the path of wisdom to advance civilization and state,” and stressed the nobility of Selim I—“the greatest man of the Ottoman Empire”—and his assumption of the mantle of the caliphate from the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mutawakkil III (c. 1508-16, 1517) in 1517; Gürpınar, “The Encounter with the Ottoman past,” 52. Nevertheless, there were persistent, albeit minoritarian, mention of the noteworthy flaws of these sultans; see *ibid.*, 52-53.

⁵⁶ See also Namık Kemal, “Fatih,” in Iskender Pala (trans.), *Namık Kemal’in Tarihi Biyografileri* (Ankara, 1989), 61-114 and *ibid.*, “Yavuz,” in *idem.*, 115-154.

⁵⁷ Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, Third edition (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 68-70.

⁵⁸ The historiography on Ottomanism is far too vast to reproduce here in sufficient detail. For recent works that approach this subject in complex ways, see Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1997), Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era*. Oxford and New York: University Press, 2014)

⁵⁹ Erimtan, *Ottomans Looking West?*, 10.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶¹ Hagen, “The Prophet Muhammad as an Exemplar in War,” 152-153.

Damad İbrahim Paşa (v. 1718-30) as the leaders of a reformist regime.⁶² Similarly, the historian Ahmed Rasim produced a number of large-scale histories of the Ottoman Empire that emphasized the historical importance of Mehmed II, Selim I, and Süleyman I in facilitating Ottoman imperial success in its early centuries.⁶³

Finally, the work of Abdürrahman Şeref (1853-1925) and Mızancı Mehmed Murad Bey (1854-1917) played a pivotal role in the canonization of Osman II as one of the archetypal reformist martyrs of Ottoman history.⁶⁴ Like Ahmet Refik, both were involved in the Ottoman state's administration of education. While Şeref was director of the School of Public Administration, a member of the Ottoman senate during the Second Constitutional Period, official historian of the empire, and the first president of the Ottoman Historical Society,⁶⁵ Mehmed Murad took on various educational positions and held the presidency of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in the clandestine period of the movement before falling out with leader Ahmed Rıza Bey (1859-1930) in the early 1900s.⁶⁶

By way of example, take Sultans Osman II, Mustafa II (r. 1695-1703), Selim III, and Mahmud II who were singled out in nineteenth-century Ottoman historiography as monarchs who fought against the conservative influence of the Janissaries and the ulama and instigated military and institutional remodeling.⁶⁷ They thus helped to create the Ottoman order as it appeared to readers in the Hamidian and Second Constitutional

⁶² For notable works in the new revisionist *Lâle Devri* literature, see Can Erimtan, *Ottomans Looking West? The Origins of the Tulip Age and Its Development in Modern Turkey* (London: Tauris Academic Studies: 2008), *A Tulip Age Legend: Consumer Behavior and Material Culture in the Ottoman Empire (1718-1730)* (Ph.D. Dissertation, State University of New York at Binghamton, 2009). For a sampling of Refik's bibliography, see Ahmed Refik, *Bizans İmparatoriçeleri* (İstanbul: Muhtar Halid Kütüphanesi, 1331), idem, *Lâle Devri, 1130-1143* (İstanbul: Kütüphane-i İslâm ve Askerî, Tüccarzade İbrahim Hilmi, 1331), and idem, *Osmanlı Zaferleri* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 1999).

⁶³ For a sample of Rasim's bibliography, see Ahmed Rasim, *Küçük Tarih-i İslâm* (İstanbul: Der Saadet, 1306), idem, *Resimli ve Haritalı Osmanlı Tarihi*, Four volumes (İstanbul: İkbâl Kütüphanesi, 1910-1912), and idem, *Osmanlı'da Batışın Üç Evresi: III. Selim, II. Mahmut, Abdülmecit* (İstanbul: Evrim Kitabevi, 1989).

⁶⁴ Baki Tezcan, "The 1622 Military Rebellion in Istanbul: A Historiographical Journey," in *Mutiny and Rebellion in the Ottoman Empire*, Jane Hathaway ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison Press, 2002), 36.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 35-36.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 36. On this subject, see also M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) and idem, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁶⁷ On the narrative of "backward" and "reactionary" Janissaries, see Tezcan, "The 1622 Military Rebellion in Istanbul," 37.

Periods who had been educated in the moral economy of the Tanzimat and its Hamidian instantiation,⁶⁸ a world in which the “traditionalist” and “reactionary” Janissaries were a thing of past thanks to Mahmud II’s violent securement of their destruction in the *Vaka-i Hayriye* (“Auspicious Incident”) of 1826.⁶⁹

For instance, Mızıncı Mehmed Murad Bey’s *Ta’rih-i Ebu’ l-Fâruk: Ta’rih-i Osmanide Siyaset ve Medeniyet İ’tibârile Hikmet-i Asliye Taharrisine Teşebbüs*⁷⁰ describes Osman II as “the greatest şeyh of the Ottoman revolution,” as his courageous attempt to defy the influence of the Janissary corps made him a heroic exemplar for later generations of Ottoman reformers.⁷¹ For Mehmed Murad Bey, Osman II was

“...the head of the party of renovators whose other members are Mustafa [II], Selim III, and Mahmud II. Our predecessors could not appreciate his value. Let us save our successors of this defect. Let us no more be unaware of the identity and character of our own existence.”⁷²

In this case, Mehmed Murad’s lionization of Osman II served both as an argument for the historical value of a dynastic figure who shaped the history of the Ottoman Empire as an enlightened reformer as well as a claim for the importance of correctly remembering (and perhaps also emulating) such heroes for the sake and benefit of posterity.⁷³ Indeed, there is a sense of urgency in his words. As the value of the reformist example embodied by Osman II remained unheeded in the centuries after his death, the Ottoman Empire suffered military defeat. However, contemporary Ottomans have the opportunity to save their successors from similar troubles if the memory of Osman II is heeded and “the

⁶⁸ On the influence of late nineteenth-century Ottoman historiography on the historical memory of the so-called “middle-period” (c. 1580-1789), see Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.), 226-227.

⁶⁹ Gürpınar, “The Encounter with the Ottoman Heritage,” 32. For a discussion of the different generations of the Tanzimat-era and their ideational contexts, see M. Şükrü Hanioglu, “The Tanzimat Era” and “The Twilight of the Tanzimat and the Hamidian Regime, in *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 72-108 and 109-149.

⁷⁰ Mızıncı Mehmed Murad Bey, *Ta’rih-i Ebu’ l-Fâruk: Ta’rih-i Osmanide Siyaset ve Medeniyet İ’tibârile Hikmet-i Asliye Taharrisine Teşebbüs*, Seven volumes (Istanbul, 1325-32).

⁷¹ Mızıncı Mehmed Murad Bey as quoted in Tezcan, “The 1622 Military Rebellion in Istanbul 37.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ For a brief survey of secondary works that entertain the idea of an Ottoman or “eastern” Enlightenment, see Ali Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 34.

identity and character” of the Ottoman present can be gleaned from knowledge of the past.⁷⁴ Mehmed Murad thus viewed Osman II’s heroic actions as part of a long chain of reformist endeavor that also encompassed the reign of Mustafa II, who was overthrown by a Janissary-esnaf coalition in 1703,⁷⁵ and that of Selim III, who would institute the *Nizam-ı Cedid* (“New Order”) reforms at the turn of the nineteenth century (only to be overthrown and in 1807 and executed in 1808).⁷⁶

Although this list of writers is by no means exhaustive, their careers aptly demonstrate a pattern: namely the permeability between a) the imperatives of actors and institutions involved in the Ottoman state, b) the intellectual and artistic careers of individuals, c) the centuries-old tradition of courtly patronage (instantiated in this case by the use of histories and chronicles as sources for history writing), and d) an interest in the achievements and overall influence of the Ottoman sultans.⁷⁷ Hence, in lieu of space to discuss the works of the aforementioned writers in detail, it is important to note the influence of their writings and their pertinence to the study a hand. Thus, based on a reading of the cultural legacies of these figures, I identify two dominant modes of heroic sultanhood within the emerging literary mode of dynastic heroism,⁷⁸ namely “reformist” and “conquering” heroism, both of which spoke to late Ottoman imaginings of the empire’s potential futures by way of its past. In my view, these distinct strains of dynastic heroism based on (a) imperial reform (as exemplified by figures like Osman II, Ahmed

⁷⁴ Mızıncı Mehmed Murad Bey as quoted in Baki Tezcan, “The 1622 Military Rebellion in Istanbul,” 37.

⁷⁵ See Rifaat Ali Abou-El-Haj, “The Narcissism of Mustafa II (1695-1703): A Psychohistorical Study,” *Studia Islamica* 40 (1974): 115-131, idem, *The 1703 Rebellion and the Structure of Ottoman Politics* (Leiden: Nederlands historisch-archaeologisch instituut te Istanbul, 1984), and Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*.

⁷⁶ For a revisionist study of this period and these events, see Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

⁷⁷ As I note above, Doğan Gürpınar views the work of these authors as participating in an early “Turkification” of Ottoman history and of the House of Osman. Conversely, Gavin Brockett has argued that “the tendency for these currents to employ the terms ‘Ottoman’ and ‘Turk’ interchangeably—and hence the failure to articulate a distinct terminology—indicated a desire to remain rooted in the legacy of empire itself”; Brockett, “When Ottoman Become Turks,” 406.

⁷⁸ This is not to say that yet other modes of heroism might be gleaned from an analysis of this literature, but rather that these are the two groups that stand out to me. For example, Namık Kemal emphasized Sultan Bayezid I’s exemplary tendency to listen to the pleas of his subjects, thus implying that sultanic patience and empathy may also have been part of this phenomenon; Gürpınar, “The Encounter with the Ottoman past,” 51. Moreover, as Julia Phillips Cohen notes, Sultan Bayezid II was venerated by Ottoman Jews as a model of Ottoman imperial toleration for permitting Sephardim to live in the empire after their expulsion from Iberia; see Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans*, 3, 49, 52, and 56.

III, and Mahmud II) and (b) conquest or martial vigor (as exemplified by Mehmed II, Selim I, Süleyman I, and Murad IV) are discernable in the books, artwork, and newsmedia culture of the Hamidian and Second Constitutional Periods. Although I intend to delve further into the lasting influence of these writers in a future study, here I suggest that while these heroic discourses emerged in the late nineteenth century, they remained a vital part of Ottoman imperial identity and of Ottoman print culture well after the CUP came to dominate elite politics.⁷⁹

Having discussed the broad contours of Ottoman dynastic heroism as it intersected with the emergence of Ottoman Turkish literature in the nineteenth century, I now turn to the realm of courtly patronage and examine the ways that the dynasty's institutionalized traditions of historical memory that emphasized the skills, accomplishments, and individualized aesthetic representations of particular sultans were made available to slightly larger segments of Istanbul's populace in the early 1900s.

Mighty Forefathers and Venetian Painters: Dynastic Heroism in the Courtly Patronage of Sultan Abdülhamid II

The emergence of a canon of dynastic heroes by the turn of the twentieth century was assuredly a process in which the dynasty took part, albeit indirectly, through the continuation of its institutions and practices of patronage and their limited circulation beyond the relatively closed social confines of the sultan's court and the circles of high-ranking bureaucrats and military men associated with it. While an in-depth examination of this imperial tradition or of its dissemination is beyond the scope of this study, I nevertheless attend to the process through which the dynastic heroism of the Ottoman courtly tradition of patronage reached the pages of newspapers, periodicals, journals, and

⁷⁹ Nevertheless, I do not intend to insinuate that the categories of heroism I have presented here are mutually exclusive or otherwise closed to further complication and nuance. For example, although Mehmed II was often associated with the conquest of Byzantine Constantinople in 1453, he was also praised for his toleration of Ottoman Christians and his refined sensibilities. For the writer and feminist Halide Edib Adivar (1888-1964), Mehmed II was memorable for having "confirmed Christian rights and recognized the liberty of the Christians as a community apart"; Halide Edib, *House With Wisteria: Memoirs of Turkey Old and New* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publications, 2009), 195, originally published in 1926. Hence, while I assert that these categories are commensurable with the ways in which late nineteenth-century Ottoman sources describe the achievements and actions of these figures, I do not wish to create a rigid analytical framework that does not bend to the complexities of the source materials, no matter how inconvenient their positions may be. To my mind, our categories of analysis should be predominantly and perpetually dictated by our objects of study (and not the other way around) so that they are both malleable and contingent to the historical phenomena we aim to describe and explicate.

history books by discussing the patronage patterns of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Particular emphasis is placed on this sultan's relationship with Fausto Zonaro (1854-1929), the official Ottoman court painter who collaborated with Abdülhamid II in producing a heroic visual memory of Mehmed II as a great Ottoman conqueror and world-shaper.

Given the lack of research into the Ottoman palatial institution in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is difficult if not impossible to fully reconstruct the intellectual upbringing and intellectual life of Abdülhamid II.⁸⁰ Yet if the education he received as a *şehzade* (“prince”) was anything like its early modern iteration, it is reasonable to assume that he had access to, or was at least aware of the extensive libraries and manuscript collections housed in Topkapı Palace. As Emine Fetvacı has demonstrated, the book and manuscript production of the courtly elite was conducive to the creation of a shared Ottoman courtly culture through the circulation of texts amongst the dynasty and its uppermost elite slaves.⁸¹ In this connection, it is possible to speculate about Abdülhamid II's exposure to dynastic heroism through articles of patronage that he likely encountered, viewed, or read.

The most obvious and tenable example is a *silsilename* (“medallioned genealogy”) manuscript housed in the Special Collections Library at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Known as the *Tabaka-yi Mülûk-i Osmaniyan* (“Layers of the Kings of the Ottomans”),⁸² this manuscript is reputed to have been owned by Abdülhamid II, although this aspect of its provenance cannot be conclusively determined.⁸³ Completed during the reign of Abdülmecid I (r. 1839-61), yet containing sections likely produced in the eighteenth century,⁸⁴ it provides a detailed genealogical tree of the entire House of

⁸⁰ Even so, Engin Deniz Akarlı has attempted to undertake a (partially) biographical approach to the life and career of Abdülhamid II; see Engin Deniz Akarlı, “The Tangled Ends of an Empire: Ottoman Encounters with the West and Problems of Westernization—an Overview,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 26 (2006): 355. Also noteworthy is François Georgeon, “Le Sultan Caché: Réclusion du souverain et mise en scène du pouvoir à l'époque de Abdülhamid II (1876-1909),” *Turcica* 23 (1997): 93-124 and idem, *Abdulhamid: Le Sultan Calife* (Paris: Fayard, 2003).

⁸¹ See Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, 25-57.

⁸² *Tabaka-yi Mülûk-u Osmaniyan*, accessed 10 December 2016, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006822180>.

⁸³ Roberta L. Dougherty, “Oriental Manuscripts at the University of Michigan,” 2-7, accessed 10 December 2016, https://www.academia.edu/1534270/Oriental_Manuscripts_at_the_University_of_Michigan, and idem, “Islamic Manuscripts at the University of Michigan: Summary of Collection History,” 1-3, accessed 10 December 2016, http://www.lib.umich.edu/files/libraries/area/near_east/IsIMssSummary.pdf.

⁸⁴ *Tabaka-yi Mülûk-u Osmaniyan*, accessed 10 December 2016,

Osman from its eponymous founder Gazi Osman I (r. 1299-1326) to the ruling sultan, including all of the *şehzadeler* that did not take the throne. While it does not possess any figurative pictorial flourishes through which individual sultans might be distinguished or raised up above others, the manuscript lists the individualized titles associated with each sultan, thus conveying their reputations and accomplishments to the reader.⁸⁵

To be sure, many of the sultans bear honorific titles such as the Arabic title *sultan* (“worldly power”), the Arabic title *gazi* (holy warrior), and the Turkic and Mongol title *Han* (“king”), each denoting their roles and responsibilities as rulers. However, a select few sultans are further distinguished with the more exclusive and noteworthy title of *fatih* (“conqueror”). These include Mehmed II’s title of *Ebu’l-Feth* (“Father of Conquest”), Selim I’s title of *Fatih-i Mısır* (“Conqueror of Egypt”), Süleyman I’s title of *Ebu’l-Feth*, and Mehmed III’s (r. 1596-1603) title of *Fatih-i Eđer* (“Conqueror of Eđer). With the exception of Mehmed III, whose reputation as a conqueror was well-known to early modern chroniclers and illuminators but appears to have faded with time,⁸⁶ the heroic, conquering reputations associated with each of these sultans in the *Tabaka-yi Mülûk-u Osmaniyan* is consistent with the writings of the late Ottoman literati. In any case, it is certainly possible that these aspects of the dynasty’s historical consciousness may have been part of Abdülhamid II’s palatial education, or been imparted to him by the *Tabaka-yi Mülûk-u Osmaniyan* and other documents like it.

However, speculation aside, it is clear that Abdülhamid II was well aware of the magnificent achievements of his lineage. Indeed, he strove to reference and emulate the example of Mehmed II through subtle gestures, like, for example, his decision to model the color of the horses used by his *Ertuğrul* elite cavalry regiment “in memory of the white horse of Fatih [i.e. Mehmed II].”⁸⁷ Yet his admiration of the Conqueror was most manifestly expressed through his artistic patronage. As Alison P. Terndrup and Gülru

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006822180>.

⁸⁵ As I note below, the particular titles ascribed to each sultan by the anonymous author(s) of the *Tabaka-yi Mülûk-u Osmaniyan* are remarkably similar to those ascribed to these figures both in the late Ottoman popular press as well as in modern Turkish historiography.

⁸⁶ See for example Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*, 46-47.

⁸⁷ Fausto Zonaro, *Twenty Years under the Reign of Abdülhamid: The Memoirs and Works of Fausto Zonaro*, Erol Makzume, Cesare Mario Trevigne, and Dylan Clements eds. (Istanbul: Geniş Kitaplık 2011), 118.

Necipoğlu have argued,⁸⁸ the historical trajectory of Ottoman imperial painting cannot be reduced to a linear process of “Westernization” or “Europeanization.” Nevertheless, the reigns of Mustafa III (r. 1757-74), Abdülhamid I (r. 1774-1789) and Selim III (r. 1789-1808) saw the increased adoption of contemporary German, French, and Italian methods of realist portraiture that would last in some form until the end of the Empire. Moreover, as Günsel Renda has argued, sultans Mahmud II (r. 1808-38), Abdülmecid I, and Abdülaziz I (r. 1861-76) all regularly commissioned portraits and other mimetic memorabilia from European and similarly trained Ottoman artists so as to propagate “a new dynastic image” of the Ottoman House in the nineteenth century.⁸⁹ As Hakan Karateke notes, these same sultans also went to considerable lengths to acquaint their subject populations with their painted selves through the display of imperial portraits in Istanbul, the gifting of portrait medallions (*Tasvir-i Hümayun Nişanı*) to a select group of foreign and Ottoman dignitaries, and (in the case of Abdülaziz I), the kissing of sultanic portrait in villages, towns, and cities in the Province of Salonika (*Eyalet-i Selanik*).⁹⁰

Yet in contrast with the practice of his grandfather, father, and uncle, Abdülhamid II largely neglected the practice of patronizing European (*Avrupalı*) and Ottoman artists to produce portraits of the reigning sultan. As Selim Deringil has convincingly shown, Abdülhamid II vehemently refused to be documented in any figurative medium (whether via photograph, film, or painting) from the early 1880s, choosing instead to be represented only through the selective dispensation of his personalized *tuğra* (“imperial cypher”).⁹¹ The specific reasoning behind this practice and the sultan's overall distaste for

⁸⁸ Alison P. Terndrup, “Cross-Cultural Spaces in an Anonymously Painted Portrait of the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II” (MA Thesis, University of South Florida, 2015), Gülru Necipoğlu, “Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II’s Constantinople,” *Muqarnas* 29 (2012): 1-81, and Gül İrepoğlu, “Innovation and Change,” in *The Sultan's Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman*, Ayşe Orbay and Filiz Çağman eds. (İstanbul: İşbank, 2000), 380-434.

⁸⁹ Günsel Renda, “European Artists at the Ottoman Court: Propagating a New Dynastic Image in the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Poetics and Politics of Place: Ottoman Istanbul and British Orientalism*, Zeynep İnanur, Reina Lewis, and Mary Roberts eds. (İstanbul: Pera Müzesi, 2011), 229.

⁹⁰ Karateke, “From Divine Ruler to Modern Monarch,” 295.

⁹¹ See Selim Deringil, “Long live the Sultan!: Symbolism and Power in the Hamidian Regime,” in *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 16-43. Amazed at the sultan’s prohibition of his figurative image in public and private (palatial) contexts, and frustrated by his inability to paint his royal patron, the painter Fausto Zonaro relates an anecdote that speaks to the degree of institutionalized censure placed on the public access to the sultan’s person: “Even in the Friday *selamlıks*,” he recounts, “when the Sultan came out to go to Yıldız Mosque [for Friday Prayer], if there were members of the diplomatic corps in a private stall or a couple of privileged sightseers there, and one of the random ladies, in order to better see the Sultan, brings a small

public appearances is unclear, with the sultan's personal piety, his anxiety about the prospect of dethronement or assassination, his reclusive personality, and his political adeptness (in the interest of preserving sultanic power) all cited as potential explanations.⁹²

In any case, although Abdülhamid II did not stifle this artistic tradition altogether, he generally refrained from sitting for painted portraits, and few formal paintings of him remain extant.⁹³ Instead, he commissioned portraits of specific sultans (particularly Mehmed II, a conquering sultan, and Selim III and Mahmud II, the great reformist sultans) for a museum project to be established at Yıldız Palace.⁹⁴ In this connection, the French artist Hippolyte Berteaux (d. 1928) and the German William Reuter (b. 1859), were both notable contributors.⁹⁵ However, the project was never completed and all that remains of its layout is an anonymous painting dated to the 1880s and a number of photographs.⁹⁶ While the ultimate plans for Abdülhamid II's museum project are unclear,⁹⁷ it appears to have been designed to function as a personally curated visual archive of Ottoman dynastic achievement for the inhabitants of the palace. In this connection, I suggest that Abdülhamid II sought to create a space specifically designed for the display of sultanic portraiture and paraphernalia, thus cultivating the Yıldız Palace

pair of binoculars up onto her nose, because cameras are prohibited in the stalls and the binoculars might hold a hidden objective, an aide-de-camp would sidle up to them, as though sent from God, and with a tactful and polite 'Excuse me, Madame,' he would make the lady lower the hand holding the binoculars until the Sultan had passed"; quoted in Fausto Zonaro, *Twenty Years Under The Reign of Abdülhamid: The Memoirs and Works of Fausto Zonaro*, Erol Makzume, Cesare Mario Trevigne, and Dylan Clements eds. (Istanbul: Geniş Kitaplık 2011), 118.

⁹² On this subject, see Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 9-10, Stephanov, "Minorities. Majorities, and the Monarch," 272-274, Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, Third Edition (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 76-90, and Akarlı, "The Tangled Ends of an Empire," 355.

⁹³ Abdülhamid II did sit for a number of photographic portraits in his early years as a young prince, some of which survive to this day, although their provenance has yet to be convincingly established; see Günsel Renda, "Portraits: The Last Century," in *The Sultan's Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman*, Ayşe Orbay and Filiz Çağman eds. (İstanbul: İşbank, 2000), 530-531. Moreover, there is no evidence that these paintings were disseminated outside of the sultan's household as he was generally opposed to "the display of his likeness in public spaces"; Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 22

⁹⁴ Renda, "European Artists at the Ottoman Court," 227.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ *Yıldız Sarayı Müzesi* (Anonymous, 1880s, watercolor, 42.5 x 237.5 cm, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, İstanbul, 17/543; Renda, "Portraits: The Last Century," 532. For more detail on the museum, see Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 185-188.

⁹⁷ Indeed, I have found no definitive evidence through which to verify whether any sultanic portraits or paraphernalia was actually hung in Yıldız Palace as intimated by the painting; *ibid.*

as a private site for the historical consciousness of the House of Osman.⁹⁸ Therefore, although Abdülhamid II continued the tradition of having the House of Osman represented in realist portraiture, he did not permit himself to be added to this canon, choosing instead to patronize works that focused on the lives and achievements of heroic sultans worthy of admiration, memorialization, and emulation. By focusing his energies on a choice few individual heroes and not overtly on himself or the dynasty in general, Abdülhamid II's patterns of patronage belie an act of historiographic cultivation that distinguishes him from the vast majority of his predecessors.⁹⁹

As I have intimated above, the sultan took a particular interest in commemorating and emulating the example of his conquering ancestor Mehmed II through his patronage of the work of his court painter Fausto Zonaro, which continued until the sultan's dethronement in 1909. Although the relationship between Zonaro and Abdülhamid II cannot be considered the sole reason for the limited democratization of Ottoman court culture and sultanic portraiture after 1908, it provides an instructive case study in this regard.¹⁰⁰ I thus draw on Zonaro's career in Istanbul to showcase how individuals intertwined in networks of Ottoman imperial patronage contributed to the limited popularization of a heroic dynastic canon not simply as docile puppets manipulated by a puppet master (i.e. the sultan), but as "independent participants in a discourse within the central power."¹⁰¹ I therefore seek to avoid the simple binaries of ruler and ruled, powerful and powerless, manipulator and manipulated, by examining how an individual under the direct employ of the sultan acted as mediator between the institutionalized historical consciousness of the dynasty and the more public realm of book and newsmedia culture after the Ottoman revolution. Zonaro was thus neither an utterly independent agent nor the artistic mouthpiece of the sultan. At the same time, I

⁹⁸ On wall hangings in Ottoman palaces before the 1800s, see Philippe Bora Keskiner, "Sultan Ahmed III (r. 1703-1730) as a Calligrapher and Patron of Calligraphy," (PhD dissertation, University of London, 2012).

⁹⁹ The patron-client relationship between Sultan Abdülaziz and the Polish painter Stanisław Chlebowski (1835–1884) is worth mentioning here, as the former commissioned the later to paint notable scenes in Ottoman history that featured particular sultans; see Mary Roberts, "Ottoman Statecraft and the 'Pencil of Nature': Photography, Painting, and Drawing at the Court of Sultan Abdulaziz," *ARS ORIENTALIS* 43 (2013): 11-30.

¹⁰⁰ Indeed, further research into the dissemination of the work of Chlebowski and Hasan Rıza in the wake of 1908 will help to shed light on this matter.

¹⁰¹ Hagen, "Legitimacy and World Order," 57.

complicate the accepted image of Abdülhamid II as a ruler, as well as his “aniconic” approach to sultanic representation, by examining his relationship with Zonaro as evidenced by the late painter’s memoirs.

As the sultan who outdid previous Muslim rulers through his conquest of the Roman capital, Mehmed II was perhaps the most notable single figure in late Ottoman historical consciousness with respect to his perceived influence on the foundation of an Ottoman “empire” that was more than a regional great power. It was one of the central claims of Ottoman historical thought from the late fifteenth century that the conquest of Constantinople brought the realization of the great destiny of the House of Osman.¹⁰² Indeed, Byzantine Constantinople was known to the Ottomans as one of the world’s most important cities well before its conquest in 1453. Inspired by the saying of the Prophet that “Constantinople shall be conquered” by “an Excellent leader” with “an Excellent army,”¹⁰³ they sought to realize a goal long-desired by other Muslim polities. While they were markedly concerned about the implications of this conquest for the coming of the End Times,¹⁰⁴ and took care to debate its apocalyptic consequences before its execution,¹⁰⁵ *Fatih* saw the city falling “in his dreams...and the thought of conquest never left his tongue.”¹⁰⁶

As indicated by an Arabic inscription displayed on the Topkapı Palace, Mehmed II was “the Sultan of the Two Continents and the Two Seas, the Shadow of God in this World and the Next...the Conqueror of Constantinople, the Father of Conquest.”¹⁰⁷ Hence, in addition to the privileges and duties generally ascribed to ruling sultans, Mehmed II was the singular “Father of Conquest,” the principal founder of the Ottoman imperial order through his world-historical conquest of the capital of Eastern Rome.¹⁰⁸ As Gavin Brockett notes, the events of 1453 were celebrated and memorialized by the

¹⁰² See Şahin, “Constantinople and the End Time,” 317-54 and idem, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

¹⁰³ Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, Volume One (Istanbul: İkdam Matbaası, 1314), 32-33.

¹⁰⁴ See Kaya Şahin, “Constantinople and the End Time: The Ottoman Conquest as a Portent of the Last Hour,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010): 317-54.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 326-327.

¹⁰⁶ Tursun Bey (b. 1420s) as quoted in Boyar and Fleet, “The Palace and the Populace,” 36.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Brockett, “When Ottomans Become Turks,” 405.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Ottoman elite throughout the early modern period,¹⁰⁹ and became the central focus of two manuscript works commissioned by Mahmud II in the early 1800s.¹¹⁰ Yet this historical commemoration also became intertwined with arguments in favor of Ottomanism for figures like Namık Kemal, who identified 1453 as “a seminal moment in the Ottoman historical narrative” and stressed Mehmed II “heroic and enlightened character” as well his role in creating a civilized Ottoman society/nation (*millet*).¹¹¹ Thus, both in the realm of Ottoman dynastic patronage as well in that of late Ottoman historical writing, Mehmed II was known as a great conquering hero whose actions had largely created the Ottoman Empire, as it was known to persons living in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, by attaining its magnificent imperial metropolis. It was precisely this heroic conception of Mehmed II that caught the interest of Abdülhamid II as evidenced by his personal patronage of dynastic portraiture.

Previous treatments of Zonaro’s involvement in courtly aesthetic production tend to treat him principally as “an Italian,” and thus as a kind of external influence on Abdülhamid II and on Ottoman painting more generally.¹¹² To be sure, Zonaro was not an Ottoman subject, nor had he spent any time in the sultan’s domains before 1891.¹¹³ However, as Ahmet Ersoy argues, this externality need not disqualify persons like Zonaro from collaborating in “Ottoman imperial projects.”¹¹⁴ For Ersoy, our contemporary conceptions of belonging and exclusion are largely products of our position in nation-state systems that advocate fixed forms of identity.¹¹⁵ With respect to Ottoman architectural developments in the mid nineteenth century, Ersoy notes that

[t]he pioneering intellectual proponents of the local ‘Ottoman revival [in architecture],’ [...]were mostly ‘hyphenated Ottomans,’ Ottomanized-Frenchmen,

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 404-405.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 406.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 407.

¹¹² See for example Wendy M.K Shaw, *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011) and Osman Öndes and Erol Makzume, *Ottoman Court Painter Fausto Zonaro* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003).

¹¹³ For a summation of Zonaro’s early career in Istanbul, see *ibid*, 56.

¹¹⁴ In this connection, see Ersoy’s book chapter on the cosmopolitan nature of late Ottoman architectural projects; Ahmet A. Ersoy, “Cosmopolitan Commitments: Artistic Networks and the Invention of Authenticity,” in *Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary: Reconfiguring the Architectural Past in a Modernizing Empire* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2015) 91-130.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 91.

Ottoman-Levantines, or Ottoman-Armenians, who were relentless border crossers in their everyday lives, constantly mediating between alternative sites of identification and resisting, as historical subjects, the imposition of rigid notions of cultural belonging.¹¹⁶

In any case, it is clear that Zonaro's work as Abdülhamid II's premier artistic client belies a mixture of influences and inspirations that came from Ottoman historical as well as contemporary French and Italian sources.

In the paintings themselves, Mehmed II appears as a magisterial warrior sultan on horseback, typically leading a massive throng of Ottoman forces against those of the Byzantine Empire or entering the gates of Constantinople as the city's victorious conqueror.¹¹⁷ In this way, the historical image of Mehmed II as a heroic imperial forefather and world-shaping conqueror in Ottoman historiography was given a new (painted) form, thus providing ample, *visual* evidence of the glory of the Ottoman past. Zonaro's recollection of the sultan's official order for the first of these paintings in 1903 confirms this reading, as he claims his paintings were the result of historical research that he personally conducted:¹¹⁸

The sultan wished me to produce a painting depicting the siege of Constantinople by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror as well as allegorical paintings, declaring that he would be very pleased to see such works. Thereupon I begged [Commander of the Naval Yard] Hikmet Pasha [1851-1915] for his help in procuring whatever

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Zonaro's series of paintings of Mehmed II are mostly dateable to the first decade of the twentieth century. They include the following (in chronological order): *Maometto II Entra Costantinopoli [Mehmed II Enters Constantinople]* (Fausto Zonaro, 1903, oil on canvas, 100 x 73 cm, Dolmabahçe Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul), Osman Öndes and Erol Makzume, *Ottoman Court Painter Fausto Zonaro* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 255; *Maometto Incoraggia la Flotta [Mehmed II Encourages the Fleet]* (Fausto Zonaro, 1908, oil on canvas, 75.5 x 98 cm, TGNA Department of National Palaces Collection), *ibid.*, 256; *Maometto II fa Trasportare le Imbarcazioni [Mehmed II Transports the Fleet Overland]* (Fausto Zonaro, 1908, 102 x 74 cm, TGNA Department of National Palaces Collection, Istanbul), *ibid.*, 254; *Maometto II Alla Conquista di Costantinopoli [Mehmed II at the Conquest of Constantinople]* (Fausto Zonaro, c. 1891-1910, 73 x 99 cm, TGNA Department of National Palaces Collection, Istanbul), *ibid.*, 257; *Ritratto di Maometto II [Portrait of Mehmed II]* (Fausto Zonaro, c. 1891-1910, oil on canvas, 67 x 47 cm, Antik AŞ Archives, Istanbul), *ibid.*, 282; *Ritratto di Maometto II [Portrait of Mehmed II]* (Fausto Zonaro, c. 1891-1910, oil on canvas, 99 x 75 cm, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul), *ibid.*, 283.

¹¹⁸ It should be noted here that while Öndes and Makzume interpret Zonaro's diary as stating that this order arrived in 1905, the account book kept by Fausto and Elisa Zonaro contradicts this by recording that an advance payment was given for a painting called "Entrance to Constantinople" in May 1903; Öndes and Makzume, *Ottoman Court Painter Fausto Zonaro*, 135. Moreover, the date of 1903 for this painting is confirmed elsewhere by Öndes and Makzume themselves; *ibid.*, 225.

engravings or paintings there might be on this subject. Hikmet Pasha obtained a number of engravings from the Military Museum. Making use of these, I completed the painting of the glorious siege by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, who buried the Byzantine Empire in the pages of history in 1453. Sultan Abdulhamid II liked this painting very much and I was rewarded by a raise of five liras a month added to my salary.¹¹⁹

In this way, Zonaro presents his paintings as the product of primary research with Ottoman sources housed in an imperial military museum created on the orders of the sultan.¹²⁰ This indicates that his work should be considered amongst other examples of Ottoman courtly patronage, which tended to draw on the existing documentary record of the dynasty's achievements in the form of imperial paintings, chronicles, or histories. Indeed, his words recount a careful study of the available sources: "The final studies, on the armour of the period, were extremely useful for my painting. I made my drafts and tore them up, and drew design after design until I found my painting and felt I had something I could trust. I also had to go to the Istanbul Museum Library to look for authentic touches in old prints of the period I had to depict."¹²¹ Moreover, like the courtly clients before him, his account implies sympathy with the conquest of Constantinople ("the glorious siege") and the achievements of the House of Osman despite his "foreign" (Italian) origin and citizenship.¹²² However, while Zonaro's claim that his paintings were based on engraving, paintings, and sketches and fifteenth-century clothing, weapons, and armor should not be discounted, his painting *Maometto II Entra Costantinopoli* bears a striking resemblance to *Entrée du sultan Mehmet II à Constantinople le 29 mai 1453*,¹²³ an 1876 painting by the French Orientalist Benjamin Constant (1845-1902). In this connection, Zonaro's contribution to Mehmed II's heroic painted image may well have

¹¹⁹ Fausto Zonaro as quoted in *ibid*, 66-67.

¹²⁰ Zonaro was likely referring to the Ottoman naval museum established in the Istanbul dockyards in 1897, which was closed to the public until the Second Constitutional Period; Shaw, *Ottoman Painting*, 111. As Shaw has shown elsewhere, this museum housed an impressive array of medieval and early modern armor and weaponry; Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 50.

¹²¹ Zonaro, Makzume, Trevigne, and Clements, *Twenty Years under the Reign of Abdülhamid*, 204.

¹²² *Ibid*.

¹²³ For further details, see Musée des Augustines, "BENJAMIN-CONSTANT (dit): "Entry of Mehmed II into Constantinople on the twenty ninth of May 1453," accessed 12 December 2016, <http://www.augustins.org/en/les-collections/peintures/xixe-debut-xxe/panorama-des-oeuvres/-/oeuvre/35227>.

been much more composite and syncretic than the work of an “Ottomanized-Italian.” If there is any validity to this assertion, especially given the commonly held scholarly association between Orientalist painters and the workings of cultural imperialism, it is worth exploring this further as part of the larger historiographical debate about Ottoman “self-orientalization.”¹²⁴

While Zonaro’s artistic relationship with Abdülhamid II is well known, their collaborative imagining of the heroic and conquering persona of Mehmed II went beyond the realm of the painted image. Indeed, the historical example of the patron-client relationship between Mehmed II and the Venetian painter Gentile Bellini (1421-1507) appears to have served as a kind of fifteenth-century historical model or metaphor for the quite similar, nineteenth-century relationship between Abdülhamid II and Zonaro. Indeed, Zonaro’s diary indicates that Abdülhamid II went as far as commissioning him to produce exact copies of Bellini’s famous 1480 portraits of Mehmed II, one of which appears to have been displayed on the wall of Şehzade Abdümeceid Efendi’s (1868-1944) personal library.¹²⁵ This suggests that that not all of these portraits remained in the sultan’s possession, but that some of them were either acquired by other members of the royal family or gifted to them by Abdülhamid II. While the manner in which Abdülhamid II treated these heroic paintings is unclear (i.e. whether he hung them up in Yıldız or simply stored them in one of the palace treasuries), a photograph from the early twentieth century documents Şehzade Abdümeceid Efendi’s (1868-1944) sitting in a palatial library in front of one of Zonaro’s “Belliniesque” painting of The Conqueror, positioned as a wall-hanging.¹²⁶ This practice, which is very much in line with the French, Habsburg,

¹²⁴ For a preliminary outline of this debate see Shaw, *Ottoman Painting*, 1-10, Ussama Makdisi, “Ottoman Orientalism,” *American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 768-796, and Edhem Eldem, “Ottoman and Turkish Orientalism,” *Architectural Design* 80 (2010): 26-31.

¹²⁵ Mahmud Şevket Paşa, *Mahmut Şevket Paşa'nın Sadaret Günlüğü*, Murat Bardakçı trans. (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 2014) 364.

¹²⁶ In his 1996 article “Russian Roads to Mecca,” Daniel Brower claims that “[l]ike tourists, [Russian subjects from the Fergana Valley] came back [from the pilgrimage to Mecca] with portraits of the Sultan and pictures of the mosque of Aya Sophia in their baggage”; Daniel Brower, “Russian Roads to Mecca: Religious Tolerance and Muslim Pilgrimage in the Russian Empire,” *Slavic Review* 55 (1996): 580. While Brower provides neither a footnote nor a further clarification of his claim, his vague assertion of the possibility of a trans-imperial market for products bearing Ottoman dynastic iconographies in the first decade of the twentieth century solidifies the need for further research into this phenomenon. While, the details of such a market remain tenuous at best, figures like Fausto Zonaro provide tantalizing clues as to the ways that persons intertwined in the realm of court-sponsored artistic production could contribute to this larger “market.” Indeed, aside from his court patronage, he also produced portraits of Ottoman sultans

English, and modern Greek traditions of monarchical commemoration (whereby painting of the monarch were hung in the private quarters of the imperial elite or even displayed in public settings), is—to my knowledge—the only known example of its kind in Ottoman history. While I have been unable to locate any testimony as to the purposes or meaning of this phenomenon, it is tempting to treat it as an act of purposeful commemoration. As Mehmed II’s heroic example was worthy of remembrance and emulation, his painted image deserved to be positioned in a privileged place where it could be readily viewed and contemplated by his descendants.¹²⁷

In any case, the parallel between Abdülhamid II and Mehmed II on the one hand and Zonaro and Bellini on the other was also evoked by Zonaro himself. In a 1908 letter addressed to the sultan, in which he attempted to coax the sultan into allowing himself to be painted, Zonaro directly drew on this historic parallel by making reference to himself as “another Venetian...already at your command” who was “humbly request[ing] from Your Royal Highness the same permission” as that afforded to Bellini by the sultan’s “mighty forefather.”¹²⁸ However, perhaps the most notable case comes from Zonaro’s description of his presentation of one of his paintings of Mehmed II to Abdülhamid II in 1906. Having entrusted the painting to Arif Bey (?), one of the sultan’s aides-de-camps (*yaveran*), Zonaro recounts that he soon emerged from the sultan’s quarters markedly disturbed by Abdülhamid II’s reaction to the portrait: “A short while later, I saw him come out shaking and breathing heavily. ‘Where is Mehmet the Second? What did you do? When the Sultan saw the painting of Mehmet II, he thought he was looking at his

for personal acquaintances, as was the case with a 1909 portrait of Selim III (Fausto Zonaro, July 1909, pastel, 65 x 45.5 cm, R. Portakal Archives) commissioned by fellow artist Celâl Esad Arseven for his friend Salâh Cinroz; Öndes and Makzume, *Ottoman Court Painter Fausto Zonaro*, 38. Although the connotations of this example should not be overemphasized, it nonetheless represents an instance where dynastic memorabilia was produced for private consumption by an Ottoman subject outside of the palatial elite and henceforth gifted to a fellow subject. Moreover, in keeping with the aforementioned discussion of a link between courtly and (more) popular culture, it is interesting to note that this portrait was produced by an artist who was directly involved with the sultan’s aesthetic patronage for almost two decades.

¹²⁷ Nevertheless, Abdümeçid Efendi was himself a prominent artist and a known friend and admirer of Zonaro’s. Hence, this fact may account for his choice of this particular portrait of Mehmed II as opposed to another, or his choice of a portrait of Mehmed II at all; see Shaw, *Ottoman Painting*, 107-108 and Zonaro, Makzume, Trevigne, and Clements, *Twenty Years Under The Reign Of Abdülhamid*, 235. Moreover, he appears to have taken an interest in producing sultanic portraiture himself as evidenced by a 1912 photograph of the artist posing in front of large-scale equestrian portraits of Mahmud II and Abdulaziz I; Shaw, *Ottoman Painting*, 108.

¹²⁸ Zonaro, Makzume, Trevigne, and Clements, *Twenty Years under the Reign of Abdülhamid*, 234.

own portrait. What should I say?’”¹²⁹ To this, Zonaro responded by evoking the sultan’s biological descent from his conquering ancestor as well as the historical example of Bellini and Mehmed II’s patron-client relationship:

‘Be calm, sir. Please tell His Majesty the Sultan that I studied the features of Mehmet II from the original painting in the Lajard Gallery in Venice made by the Venetian artist Gentile Bellini, who came to Istanbul. Bellini was summoned here by Mehmet II himself to paint his portrait and if he has a resemblance to our Sultan, His Majesty Abdülhamid II, it comes as no surprise. Mehmed II is an ancestor of his, isn’t he?’ As I explained ponderously and calmly cleared up the situation, his color returned and he started to smile with an expression of much happiness and relief. When I had finished what I was saying, without waiting for me to add anything he rushed off back to the Sultan to pass on, for all I knew, something not just explanatory but pleasing. An order was given that meant an extra five Turkish lira a month on my salary.¹³⁰

As with most of the events in his memoirs, I cannot verify Zonaro’s testimony against any other known sources, and this anecdote may well have been embellished or fabricated by Zonaro in order to stress his own mimetic skill and artistry. Nevertheless, the fact that Zonaro’s position as Ottoman court painter allowed him unique access to the sultan, his aesthetic tastes, and the dynasty’s imperial records and traditions should not be readily discounted. Thus, irrespective of the factual accuracy of his accounts, they nevertheless indicate that Zonaro saw himself and his patron as somehow connected to the magnificent career of the heroic sultan he painted. As for Abdülhamid II, the series of paintings themselves stand as evidence both of the complex relationship this sultan patron and his most privileged client as well as the perceived link between the contemporary Hamidian world and that of Abdülhamid II’s heroic ancestor. At the same time, as I discuss below, these paintings would eventually gain a whole new “second life” as publically accessible imaginings of the past during the Second Constitutional Period.

The “Imaginary Wings”¹³¹ of “Kahraman Selim”:¹³² Ottoman Dynastic Heroism in the Second Constitutional Period, 1908-1918

¹²⁹ Ibid, 204.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Aġaoġlu Ahmet, “Niçin Çıkıyor?,” *Harb Mecmuası* 1, Istanbul, Teşrinisani, 1331/Aralık 1915,

¹³² Ahmet Refik, “Kahire Yollarında,” *Harb Mecmuası* 4, Istanbul, Kanunısani 1331/Rebiülevvel 1334, 59.

When the CUP permanently ousted Abdülhamid II in 1909, the effective power of the newly enthroned Ottoman sultan, Mehmed V (r. 1909-18), was profoundly circumscribed. This effectively relegated him, even more so than his predecessor, to the important yet politically impotent position of a “constitutional monarch.”¹³³ In this way, the uppermost levels of political power came to be dominated by the CUP leadership and the reinstated Ottoman parliamentary assembly, a fact mirrored by the emergence of a new group of non-dynastic heroes from the ranks of the revolutionary military establishment—namely the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* (“heroes of liberty”) Ismail Enver Bey (1881-1922) and Resneli Niyazi Bey (1873–1912) whose careers are examined in a later chapter. However, in spite of these concrete political changes and their heroic cultural concomitants, the public persona of the ruling sultan (Mehmed V) remained an integral part of Ottoman public life as evidenced by his frequent and well-documented public appearances in Istanbul and his tours of the Ottoman Balkan provinces.¹³⁴

In spite of the scholarly preoccupation with questions of separatist and ethnonational subversion throughout the early 1910s, especially concerning the emergence of a proto-Turkish nationalism or an more exclusivist Ottoman Muslim national consciousness spearheaded by intellectual circles within the CUP, I argue that the perseverance of Ottoman dynastic heroism in Ottoman Turkish newsprint culture testifies to the ongoing viability of dynastic-imperial (*Osmanlı*) modes of affiliation in the sultan’s Well-Protected Domains (*Mamalik al-Mahrusa*). Indeed, as I demonstrate below, the CUP’s rise to power paradoxically facilitated the florescence of Ottoman dynastic heroism by toppling the Hamidian regime and undoing its censorship policies. With the notable exception of periodicals published outside of the Hamidian regime’s orbit of influence, these strictures had profoundly circumscribed the degree to which the dynasty could be included in public treatments of Ottoman history

Freed from the rigid censorship previously imposed on the subject by the

¹³³ Abdülhamid II’s brief tenure as “constitutional monarch” is discussed in the following chapter, while the reign of Mehmed V is discussed in a later chapter.

¹³⁴ On this subject see Eric Jan Zürcher, “Kosovo Revisited: Sultan Reşad’s Macedonian Journey of June 1911,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 35 (1999): 26-39 and Julia Phillips Cohen, “Contest and Conflict: Jewish Ottomanism in a Constitutional Regime,” in *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 103-131.

government, the institutional upheaval instigated by the revolution temporarily permitted journalists far greater leeway in discussing the Ottoman dynasty and its achievements before the hardening of CUP press control after the *Bab-ı Ali* Coup of January 1913.¹³⁵ More importantly, however, this new revolutionary media environment also saw a much more substantial democratization of Ottoman court culture as evidenced by the circulation of the work of Fausto Zonaro. While the artist himself had left Istanbul by 1911 due to the new regime's disinterest in his services,¹³⁶ Zonaro's paintings of Mehmed II's heroic deeds began to appear in Ottoman Turkish language history books, journals, and periodicals. In this way, Zonaro and Abdülhamid II's vision of the achievements of the House of Osman and its role in the Ottoman imperial past could be accessed by a much wider readership and viewership than that of the courtly elite of Yıldız Palace or the patronage of Zonaro public art exhibitions. At the same time of course, the considerable pressures confronting the empire from internal and external sources (Russian British, French, and Italian, imperial expansion; irredentist nationalist movements amongst Armenians, Arabs, and Albanians) many of which posed an existential threat to the empire's territorial integrity, likely also played a role in directing the attention of contemporary Ottomans to the heroic examples of the House of Osman and their legacies of conquest and reform. Finally, the increasing presence of visual content in Ottoman newsmedia culture should also be considered in this regard, as images could more conspicuously highlight specific personae and could be easily "read" by both literate and illiterate persons.¹³⁷ While the present study cannot claim to be the last word on the subject, I suggest that it was this combination of distinct yet related factors that contributed to the continued expression of Ottoman dynastic heroism well into the empire's last decade.

The personae of the ruling members of the House of Osman had a recurrent

¹³⁵ For examples of Hamidian censorship in action, see Ebru Boyar, "The Press and the Palace: The Two-way Relationship between Abdülhamid II and the Press, 1876–1908," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 69 (2006): 420.

¹³⁶ Shaw, *Ottoman Painting*, 56.

¹³⁷ Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, 19. What's more, as Ahmet Ersoy notes, late Ottoman periodicals were formidable repositories of photographic images that were given circulation and viewership by the press irrespective of whether all Ottoman consumers were capable of reading their text; see Ahmet A. Ersoy, "Ottomans and the Kodak Galaxy: Archiving Everyday Life and Historical Space in Ottoman Illustrated Journals," *History of Photography* 40 (2016): 331-338.

presence in the Istanbul-based Ottoman Turkish language print media and book culture of the Second Constitutional Period.¹³⁸ Indeed, while the incumbent sultan was no longer the center of political decision-making, the origins, achievements, and historical genealogy of the dynastic House was given specific commemorative treatment by Ottoman journalist contributors, amongst whom historian Ahmet Refik, the activist and sociologist Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924), and the poet Süleyman Nazif's (1870-1927) are noteworthy examples. Hence, while it may be obvious to us that the penultimate Ottoman sultan was a politically "defanged" "constitutional monarch," this view does not appear to have been shared by contemporary Ottomans, who continue to treat their sultan as well as his ancestors with the veneration they deserved as God's principal ruling sovereigns.

For instance *Salname-i Servet-i Fünûn* recurrently ran an article titled "*Osmanlı Padişahları*" that simply listed each ruling member of the House from Osman I until Abdülhamid II, replete with the dates of their reigns and their individual sultanic titles.¹³⁹ Thus, far from being restricted to a privileged, educated literary elite, knowledge of the Ottoman sultans and their respective dynastic personae was available to anyone who could access the yearly periodical or encounter its content read aloud at a coffee shop. In this way, the readership of *Servet-i Fünûn* could learn that Mehmed II was "the Conqueror," that Bayezid I (r. 1389-1412) was "the Thunderbolt," and that Süleyman I was "the Lawgiver" while also acquainting themselves with the face and personage of the ruling sultan (Mehmed V was afforded a full-page image on the following page).¹⁴⁰ They could thus learn the series of sultanic titles developed by the courtly tradition of history-writing, and inherited by the history writers of the late Ottoman period, without ever opening a history book or attending primary school. Functional literacy in Ottoman Turkish, or access to someone who could read newspapers aloud, was all that was required.

As noted above, articles that relayed the heroic history of the House of Osman were not uncommon in the years before the revolution.¹⁴¹ Noteworthy in this connection

¹³⁸ It be noted here that the majority of newspapers, journals, and periodicals from the period were produced in the Ottoman capital.

¹³⁹ See for example "*Osmanlı Padişahları*," *Salname-i Servet-i Fünûn* [?], Istanbul, [?] 1326 (Hicri) [1910 Gregorian], 32.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 33.

¹⁴¹ At the same time, journals operating outside of the immediate control of the Ottoman central

is an article by Ebüzziya Tevfik (1849-1913), an important journalist and political commentator which celebrates the 600th anniversary of the founding of the Ottoman dynasty by recounting its history (“*Tarih-i İstiklal-i Saltanat*” or “History of the Independence of the Sultanate”)¹⁴² on “22 Septembre 1300” and includes a full-page bust-portrait of His Imperial Majesty Osman I (“*Sultan Osman Han Gazi Hazretleri*”).¹⁴³ However, reportage on this subject in the illustrated press increased dramatically with the exponential quantitative and qualitative growth of the Ottoman media in the wake of the 1908 Revolution. At this point, Ottoman dynastic subjects appeared in more popular outlets,¹⁴⁴ a phenomenon aptly demonstrated by a cover-page article in a 1914 issue of Ziya Gökalp’s *Çocuk Dünyası* (“Children’s World”) detailing the role of Osman I in the founding of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴⁵ Readers are informed about his statebuilding career as well as the location of his “blessed tomb” (“*mübârek türbesi*”) in Istanbul.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, while Osman I died near six centuries before the publication of the article, he is referred to as “our Emperor” (“*Padişahımız*”) in the present tense.¹⁴⁷

The Ottoman Turkish press also documented the retrospective veneration of noteworthy sultans through public ceremonies in the early Second Constitutional Period. Take for instance a 1910 article in *Resimli Kitap* (“Illustrated Book”) that recounts the visit of Sultan Mehmed V to his ancestor Sultan Murad I’s (r. 1362-1389) “place of martyrdom” (*meşhed*) in Priştina, Kosovo Province.¹⁴⁸ Known alternatively by the

government did publish on the House of Osman before 1908. See for example, Abdullah Cevdet, “Osmanlı Hanedanı,” *İctihad*, Cairo, Kanunievvel 1907 (Rumi) [October 1907 Gregorian], 217-219.

¹⁴² Ebüzziya Tevfik, “İstiklal Saltanat Osmaniyе’nin 600üncü Sene Sahihesi, İçinde Bulunduğumuz 1900üncü sene Miladiye’ye Tesadüf Ediyor,” *Mecmua-i Ebüzziya* 90, Istanbul, Eylül [?] 1317 (Rumi) [September 1900 Gregorian], 291.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 289. This bust portrait is from the Young album, a series of portraits of the House of Osman commissioned by Sultan Selim III and based on the work of the Ottoman Christian artist Konstantin Kapıdağlı (active c. 1789-1806); On the work and career of Konstantin Kapıdağlı, see Renda, “Portraits: The Last Century.” As Mary Roberts notes, version of this album as well as a number of *cartes-de-viste* copies were circulated in both London and Istanbul; see Roberts, *Istanbul Exchanges*, 23-35.

¹⁴⁴ For a firsthand account of the transformation of the media in this period, see Ahmet Emin Yalman, “The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by its Press” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1914) and idem, *Turkey in My Time*, 2nd edition (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957).

¹⁴⁵ *Çocuk Dünyası* 41, İstanbul, 19 Kanunievvel 1329 (Rumi) [October 1913], cover page and “Osman Gazi” in ibid, 8-10.

¹⁴⁶ “Osman Gazi,” *Çocuk Dünyası* 41, İstanbul, 19 Kanunievvel 1329 (Rumi) [October 1913], 9

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ “İstanbul’dan Meşhed-i Hüdavendigar’a,” *Resimli Kitap* 26, Istanbul, Teşrinievvel 1326 (Rumi) [October 1910 Gregorian], 511-533.

Persian moniker *Hüdavendigâr* (“Lord”), Murad I was killed and martyred by a Serb assassin after the battle of Kosovo in 1389, and was remembered in Ottoman imperial historiography as a great heroic sultan whose institutional reforms and martial valor merited particular commemoration.¹⁴⁹ By 1910, sultanic trips to proximate imperial provinces were not unprecedented.¹⁵⁰ However, as Erik Jan Zürcher points out, this trip was unique in that its “climax” involved Mehmed V’s visit to the tomb of an heroic ancestor deemed worthy of a conspicuous sultanic visitation.¹⁵¹ In this connection, while the event has been previously examined as part of the Ottoman administration’s attempt to strategically centralize subject loyalties in the person of the sultan, encourage participation in a state-sanctioned Ottomanism, and strengthen the public association between the CUP leadership and the dynasty, it has yet to be examined as a celebration of Ottoman dynastic heroism.¹⁵² Indeed, a tent that once belonged to Sultan Selim I was erected near the tomb for the sultan to use while participating in Friday prayer, during which the local imam urged all those present to heed the example of Murad I in treating Christians and Jews like “‘brothers.’”¹⁵³

The article itself, titled “From Istanbul to the Place of Hüdavendigâr’s Martyrdom,” devotes most of its attention to the movements of Mehmed V and the loyal adulation of his watchful subjects in a series of large photographs.¹⁵⁴ Yet the fact that the sultan’s visit was primarily meant to stage Mehmed V’s public expression of respect toward an empire-building ancestor alongside considerable administrative and public participation from local Ottoman subjects signals the value placed on the public veneration of the House of Osman as well as the newsworthiness of sacred geographies associated with Ottoman monarchy. Thus, the article is notable for showcasing the public

¹⁴⁹ In his account titled *Ma Hanalik* the writer Ibrahim Al-Muwaylihi’s argues that Murad I is the greatest martyr of all Ottoman sultans who died during a military campaign. In his words, Murad I, “God be pleased with him! [...] was killed in battle against the Serbs. Having won a victory, he went to take a look at the dead and was stabbed by a prisoner. He was brought back to Bursa, which in his name is called Kudandakar [*Hüdavendigâr*]”; Ibrahim Al-Muwaylihi, *Spies, Scandals, and Sultans: Istanbul in the Twilight of the Ottoman Empire—The First English Translation of Egyptian Ibrahim Al-Muwaylihi’s Ma Hanalik*, Roger Allen ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 175.

¹⁵⁰ For earlier trips see Stephanov, “Sultan Abdulmecid’s 1846 Tour of Rumelia and the Trope of Love,” *Journal of Turkish Studies* 44 (2014): 475-501.

¹⁵¹ Zürcher, “Kosovo Revisited,” 34.

¹⁵² See Ibid, 26-27 and Phillips Cohen, “Contest and Conflict,” 103-131.

¹⁵³ Zürcher, “Kosovo Revisited,” 34.

¹⁵⁴ See “Istanbul’dan Meşhed-i Hüdavendigâr’a,” 516-523.

commemoration of an exemplary sultan like Murad I, yet also for depicting the ways that Mehmed V himself exemplified and demonstrated proper deference to an “august” imperial hero by visiting his sacred tomb (“*hazret-i Hüdavendigâr meşhed-i Mübareklerini ziyaret etmek üzere zat-i Padişahinin meşhede mevasaletleri*”).¹⁵⁵

In addition to event-based reportage of this kind, the journalism of the post-revolutionary period also touched on the role of the House of Osman in Ottoman political history. Alongside a discussion of the achievements of noteworthy Ottoman administrative figures like the members of the seventeenth-century vizierial Köprülü dynasty,¹⁵⁶ journalist Ali Kemal Bey’s “Ottomans and the Progress of Politics” also highlights the political contributions of “The Sultanate of Islam” (*Saltanat Islamiye*).¹⁵⁷ It mentions conquering sultans like Mehmed II and Süleyman I—whose reign restored the perfection of the state and sultanate of the Ottomans (“*Süleyman Kanuni’nin sultanatı için...devlet ve sultanate kemaliye tekrar*”)—as well as “introducers of reform” (*islahat mukaddemeleri*) like Osman II and Murad IV, both of whom were remembered as reformist sultans for their attempts at centralizing the Ottoman state and at curbing the power of the Janissaries and ulama factions.¹⁵⁸ A portrait of each sultan from the early-nineteenth century Young Album is also included.¹⁵⁹ As the inclusion of images in newsmedia publications was a selective process, given the limitations of available technology, it is instructive that these figures were granted the privilege of appearing in pictorial form. Hence, in line with the arguments presented above, Ali Kemal Bey’s recounting of the development of Ottoman political history is largely centered on the actions and characteristics of individual sultans and their able administrators, thus producing a history in which the House of Osman is readily visible as a causal force.

The heroic image of Mehmed II as the conqueror of Byzantine Constantinople and founder of Ottoman Istanbul was also quite visible in the years after the 1908 revolution. Moreover, the visual repertoire of Mehmed II’s conquering heroism developed by Abdülhamid II and Fausto Zonaro began to enter the purview of the media

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 517.

¹⁵⁶ Ali Kemal Bey, “Osmanlılar da Terakkiyyet Siyaset,” *Resimli Kitap* 1, Istanbul, Eylül 1324 (Rumi) [September 1908 Gregorian], 6.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 4-5.

¹⁵⁹ On the Young Album, see Roberts, *Istanbul Exchanges*, 23-35.

in the wake of the sultan's deposition and the artist's fall from courtly favor. On the one hand, Zonaro's paintings of Fatih began to appear in newspaper and journal articles that featured historical content. For instance, Zonaro's *Maometto II fa Trasportare le Imbaracazioni* (1908) graced the cover of the June 1914 issue of *Afiyet* ("Health") alongside images of Mehmed II's famous fifteenth-century portrait medals that stressed his role as *Rum-i Imparator* ("Emperor of Rome")¹⁶⁰ and as a world-conqueror in the tradition of Alexander of Macedonia (353-323 BC).¹⁶¹ In this way, the memory of the sultan's conquests as well as his conquering persona were given a privileged position on the cover of a popular magazine, thus acting as the "draw" or "selling point" of the magazine for potential customers. By purchasing this issue of *Afiyet*, they were promised further insight into the actions of one of their empire's great conquering heroes, visualized for them in painted form by Abdülhamid II's court artist.

At the same time of course, references to Mehmed II and his heroic career were not always directly tied to the work of Zonaro. Indeed, well before the revolution, a postcard printed in an 1893 issue of *Mecmua-i Ebuzziya* displayed a bust portrait of the sultan ("*Fatih Sultan Mehmed Han*") next to a painting of *Ayasofya Camii*, the former Byzantine imperial cathedral that Mehmed II transformed into one of the principal mosques of the new Ottoman capital.¹⁶² Bearing the French title of "*Souvenir de Constantinople*," the "four colored" postcard associates Mehmed II with the mosque he founded and with the city he conquered, thus reinforcing the longstanding link between Mehmed II, *Ayasofya*, and the city of Istanbul in Ottoman historical thought.¹⁶³ At the same time, the image of Mehmed II triumphantly entering the gate of Constantinople was evoked in a copy of Benjamin Constant's (1845-1902) *Entrée du sultan Mehmet II à Constantinople le 29 mai 1453* by the Ottoman artist Ali Sami Bey (1880-1967) that

¹⁶⁰ On Mehmed II's portrait medals and his engagement with the Roman and Alexandrian imperial legacies, see Necipoğlu, "Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation," 32, Antonia Gatward Cevizli, "Bellini, Bronze and Bombards: Sultan Mehmed II's Requests Reconsidered," *Renaissance Studies* 28 (2014): 753, Eva Stamoulos, "Mehmed II's Portraits: Patronage, Historiography and the Early Modern Context" (Ph.D. Dissertation, McGill University, 2005), 22, and Julian Raby, "Mehmed the Conqueror's Greek Scriptorium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983), 18.

¹⁶¹ "İhtifal Muhteşem Munassabiyetle," *Afiyet* 20, 4 Haziran, İstanbul, 1330 (Rumi) [17 June Gregorian], cover page.

¹⁶² *Mecmua-i Ebuzziya* 73, İstanbul, Receb 1310 (Hicri) [January-February 1893 Gregorian], 1276-1277.

¹⁶³ "Dört renkli"; *Ibid*, 1277.

appeared in the October 1910 issue of *Resimli Kitap*.¹⁶⁴ As the painting is readily identified as a copy of a Constant original, and not of Zonaro's more recent work ("[Benjamin Constance'nin] Tablosundan Ali Sami Bey tarafından kopya ettilmişdir"),¹⁶⁵ this appropriation of Constant's work by an Ottoman artist belies a public interest in the visualization of the sultan's heroic conquest irrespective of the fact that the source material was a French Orientalist painting. Thus while historians have tended to view the work of Orientalist painters as harmful concomitants of cultural imperialism, their visual content could nevertheless be drawn upon affirmatively in the visualization of the Ottoman past.¹⁶⁶

Aside from the Istanbul press, a Zonaro-inspired version of Mehmed II's heroic persona also made its way into Ottoman Turkish historical literature.¹⁶⁷ Celal Esad Arseven's (1875-1971) *Eski İstanbul* ("Old Istanbul), which details the history of Byzantium/Constantinople/Istanbul from its origins as a Greek colony in the sixth century B.C.E. through the periods when it served as the capital of the Roman and Ottoman Empires, includes two entire chapters on Mehmed II and his conquest of Constantinople.¹⁶⁸ Replete with images depicting the ships, weapons, and battle strategies wielded by the Ottoman besiegers, it also features Zonaro's *Maometto II fa Trasportare le Imbaracazioni* as the sole figurative visualization of the sultan's conquest in action.¹⁶⁹ Hence, Arseven not only makes the sultan's heroic conquest an integral part of his treatment of the city's historical geography, but draws on the imagery created by Zonaro and Abdülhamid II to represent Mehmed II's actual execution of the conquest. In this way, Arseven aligns his work with the prevalent view of the sultan as an emperor inextricably associated with acts of conquest and gives Zonaro's painting the privilege of conveying the majesty and glory of this legacy.

¹⁶⁴ *Resimli Kitap* 26, Istanbul, Teşrinievvel 1326 (Rumi) [October 1910 Gregorian], 233.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ For similar arguments about other painters active in the late Ottoman Empire, see Mary Roberts, "The Battlefield of Ottoman History," 37-74.

¹⁶⁷ To be sure, works of history that focused on the House of Osman were published before 1908, although they tended to have few (if any) illustrations. See for example Ahmet Vefik Paşa, *Fezleke-yi Tarih-i Osmani* (Istanbul: Dar üt-tıbaat ül-amire, 1880).

¹⁶⁸ Celal Esad Arseven, "Sultan Mehmed II and his Conquest Preparations" (*Sultan Mehmed Sani ve Fatih hazırlıkları*), in *Eski İstanbul: Abidat ve Mebanisi* (Istanbul: Dar Saadat, 1327), 29-38 and idem, "Istanbul's Conquest (*Istanbul'un Fetih*)," in idem, 38-56.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 47.



Figure 1. Sultan Mehmed V visits Sultan Murad I's "Place of Martyrdom"¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ "İstanbul'dan Meşhed-i Hüdavendigâr'a," 516 and 517.

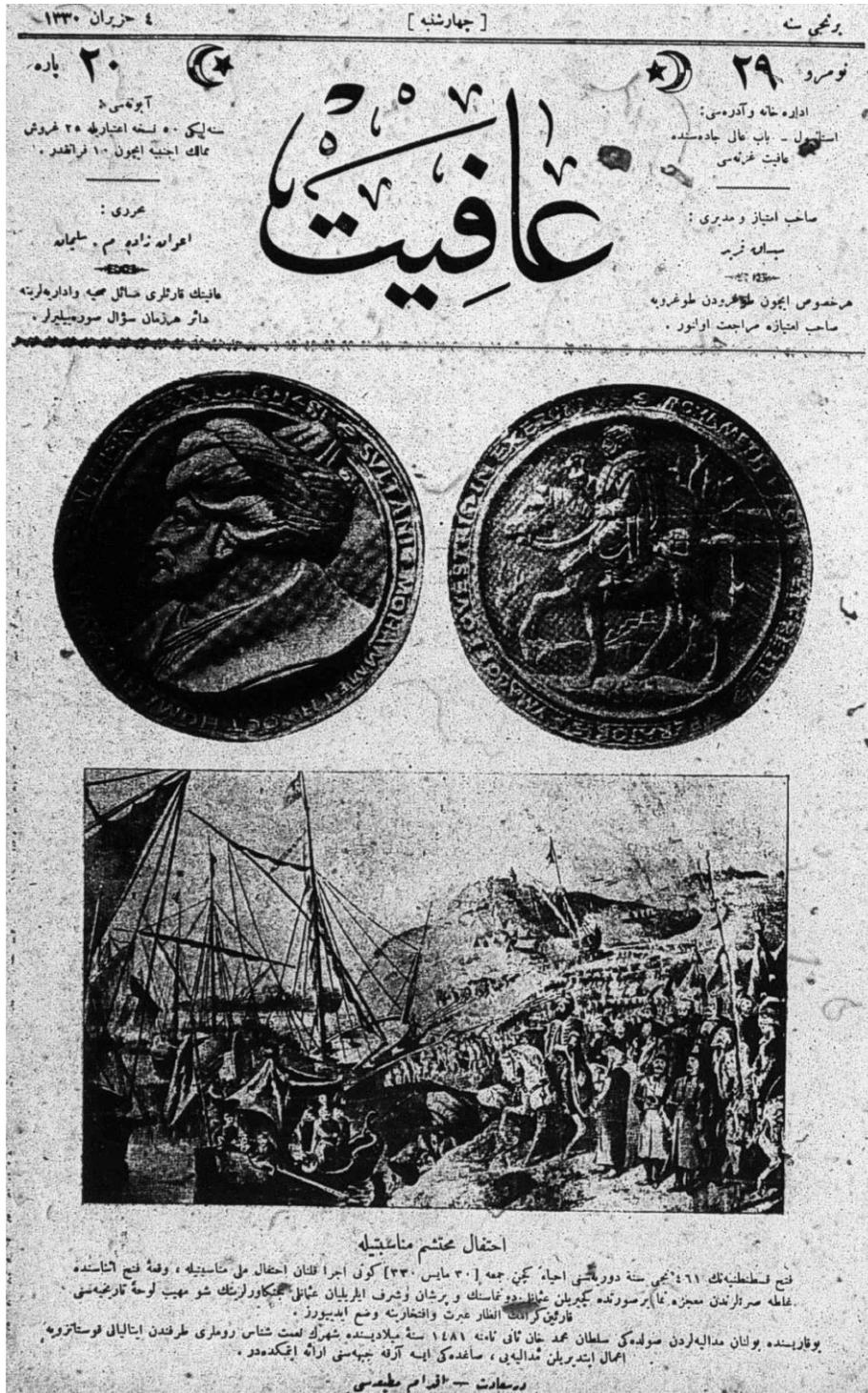


Figure 2. Sultan Mehmed II as Alexandrine Emperor and Conqueror of Constantinople on the cover of *Afiyet*¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ “İhtifal Muhteşem Munassabiyetle,” *Afiyet* 20, 4 Haziran, Istanbul, 1330 (Rumi) [17 June Gregorian], cover page.

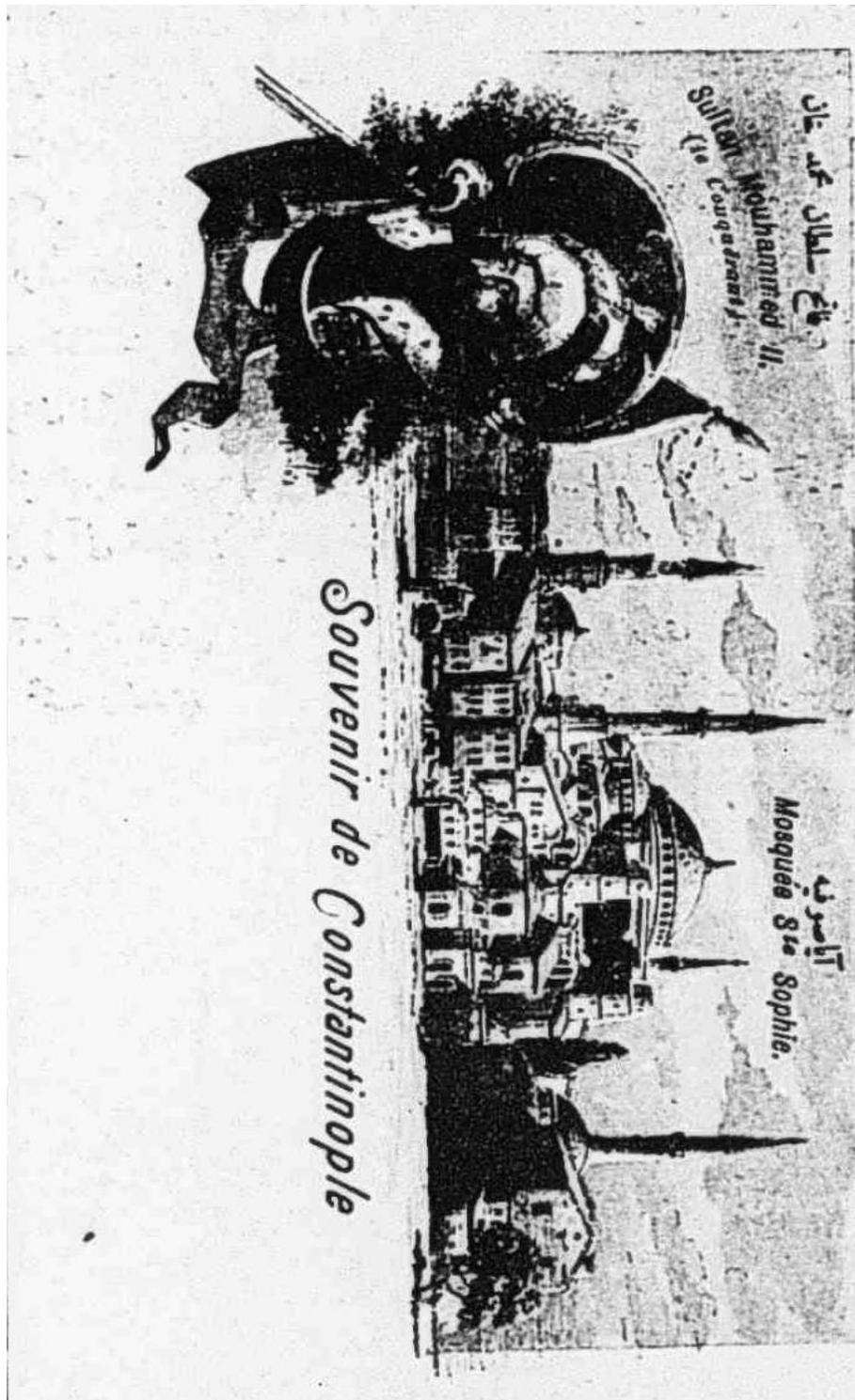


Figure 3. Sultan Mehmed II and Ayasofya Camii on a “*Souvenir de Constantinople*”¹⁷²

¹⁷² *Mecmua-i Ebuzziya* 73, Istanbul, Receb 1310 (Hicri) [January-February 1893 Gregorian], 1276-1277.

Similarly, a 1908 Ottoman Turkish translation of Louis Thuasne's *Gentile Bellini et Sultan Mohammed II*¹⁷³ by Ahmed Refik includes images of Mehmed II's Alexandrine portrait medals and Bellini's famous painting as well as a preface by the translator.¹⁷⁴ Much like the French original, Refik's text commemorates the patron-client relationship between Mehmed II and the master painter Gentile Bellini in the last years of the sultan's reign, thereby highlighting the story of the heroic sultan and his cosmopolitan artistic patronage which so inspired Abdülhamid II, and disseminating to a wider Ottoman readership. In any case, it is clear that Mehmed II's great conquering persona, as well as his reputation as a great patron of the arts, was a worthy subject for both historical scholarship and journalistic writing in the early years of the Second Constitutional Period. Yet well after the *Bab-ı Ali* Coup of January 1913, the heroism of the House of Osman could still be found in Ottoman Turkish newsprint culture, including the journalistic reportage on the Great War (c. 1914-18). While it is beyond the scope of this study to substantially delve into the complex ways that participation in total war affected late Ottoman worldviews,¹⁷⁵ it is worth noting here that the heroic examples of Ottoman sultans made noteworthy appearances in wartime journalism. This is most evident in the reporting of the journal *Harb Mecmuası* ("War Journal"), which frequently ran articles that located historic precedent for the undertaking of the Great War in the actions and achievements of the Ottoman sultans.¹⁷⁶

The most prominent of these wartime heroes is Selim I, whose conquest of the Mamluk sultanate in the early sixteenth century effectively doubled the size of the empire, an achievement which dramatically increased its overall population (giving it a

¹⁷³ Louis Thuasne, *Gentile Bellini et Sultan Mohammed II: Notes sur le Séjour du Peintre Vénitien à Constantinople (1479-1480) D'après les Documents Originaux Partie Inédits* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1888).

¹⁷⁴ Louis Thuasne, *Fatih Sultan Mehmed ve Ressam Bellini (1479-1480)*, Ahmed Refik trans. (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Ahmet İhsan, 1325 [1909 Gregorian]).

¹⁷⁵ For example, Gottfried Hagen has examined the ways that the life of the Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslim community served as models for articulating the ideal qualities of soldiers, military leadership, and the successful undertaking of warfare in the period 1914-18; see Gottfried Hagen, "The Prophet Muhammad as an Exemplar in War: Ottoman Views on the Eve of World War I," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 22 (2000): 145-172.

¹⁷⁶ Mehmet Beşikçi describes *Harb Mecmuası* as "the main propaganda journal of the Ottoman military during the war"; Mehmet Beşikçi, *The Ottoman Mobilization of Manpower in the First World War: Between Voluntarism and Resistance* (Leiden and New York: Brill, 2012), 190. While the journal may have been used by the military to convince its readership of the value and righteousness of the war effort in the interest of garnering support and encouraging volunteers, it is nevertheless noteworthy that many of the figures featured as patriotic examples are members of the House of Osman.

Muslim-majority for the first time) and brought the Holy Cities of Islam (Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem) under Ottoman stewardship. For several contributors to *Harb Mecmuası*, Selim I's legacy of conquest and martial valor paralleled the present conditions of the Great War and provided a viable model for military valor, leadership, and conquest. As demonstrated by the anecdote that opens the previous chapter, its anonymous contributor articulated a markedly heroic image of Selim I in the wartime context and argued that his example would inspire the eventual success of the Ottoman army against that of Great Britain in a 1915 article detailing the reasoning behind the Ottoman war effort.¹⁷⁷ In their view, the sight of Selim I's "imaginary wings" ("*Yavuz Selim'in hayâlî kanatlarını*") had inspired the army and would help them defeat their formidable enemy, thus bringing "the ruby-red birth of the great salvation day of Muslimhood into being."¹⁷⁸ Although this journalist makes reference to the "Turkish and Islamic homeland" (*Türk ve İslam vatani*) in his writings,¹⁷⁹ they nevertheless viewed Selim's example as part of a heroic past informing an (albeit) bleak "Ottoman" present, noting that the era of the Great War would be written by future historians as "a time of dark interregnum" in "Ottoman history" (as opposed to "Turkish history")¹⁸⁰ However, it is noteworthy that their vision of Ottoman victory was expressed in terms of a salvation of "Muslimhood" (*Müslümanlık*).¹⁸¹

Similar views can be found in the influential historian Ahmet Refik's contributions to *Harb Mecmuası*. In a two-part article titled "On Cairo Roads" ("*Kahire Yollarında*") that appeared in the fourth and fifth issues of the journal (January and February 1916), Refik discusses the heroic military exploits of Selim I as a precedent for contemporary Ottoman circumstances.¹⁸² Juxtaposed with photographs of the Ottoman

¹⁷⁷ "Niçin Çıkıyor?," *Harb Mecmuası* 1, İstanbul, Teşrinisani, 1331 (Rumi) [November 1915 Gregorian], 3.

¹⁷⁸ "Başlarının üstünde Yavuz Selim'in hayâlî kanatlarını gören bu ordu yakın bir istikbalde süngüsünü mağur İngiltere'nin can damarına saplayacak ve o zaman akan kanlar Müslümanlığın büyük kurtuluş gününün yâkut doğuşunu vücuda getirecek"; *ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 3-6.

¹⁸⁰ "[B]u zaman Osmanlı tarihinde hikayesi... yazılacak bir devir, karanlık bir fetret zamanıydı gözyaşıyla"; *ibid.*, 3-4.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁸² Ahmet Refik, "Kahire Yollarında," *Harb Mecmuası* 4, İstanbul, Kanunısani 1331 (Rumi)/Rebiülevvel (Hicri) 1334, 58-59 and *idem*, "Kahire Yollarında," *Harb Mecmuası* 5, İstanbul, Şubat 1331 (Rumi)/Rebiulahir 1334 (Hicri), 70-74.

army carrying out military operations against Great Britain in Mesopotamia, Refik recounts the sultan's illustrious career from his 1514 campaign against the Safavid army of Shah Ismail (r. 1501-24) to his eventual conquest of Egypt and Syria. Having defeated his Safavid rival and achieving his "most sacred hopes," "now on Cairo roads, he wanted to establish a path of true victory to the pyramids" (i.e., to Egypt)¹⁸³ by "taking his revenge against the rulers of the Mamluk Sultanate."¹⁸⁴ To be sure, Refik describes Selim's actions in line with the late Ottoman tradition of dynastic heroism as I have described it; he calls Selim's soldiers "heroic" ("*kahraman askerler*")¹⁸⁵ and directly refers to the conquering sultan as a hero ("*Kahraman Selim*").¹⁸⁶ Moreover, given the numerous photographs of Ottoman soldiers marching, undertaking military drills, and fighting British forces that are presented in the article, it is hard not to draw a connection between the heroic career of Selim I and the ongoing campaign of the Ottoman army against the Entente powers.¹⁸⁷

Refik's parallel between the war and the campaigns of Selim I can also be found in an anonymous article from March 1917 concerning the Ottoman-Russian front in the Caucasus.¹⁸⁸ The author makes reference to "the zeal of the old Ottoman army" ("*eski Osmanlı ordusunun himmetini*") and notes the legacy of the conquering sultan as it was manifested in the geography of the area where this part of the Great War was being fought:¹⁸⁹ "Once upon a time, those of Yavuz Selim came also to these areas on these roads, along with the Ferhat Paşas and the Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşas, with their might

¹⁸³ "*Selim-i evvel en mukaddes emellerinden birine nail olmuşdu; şimdi Kahire yollarında, ehramlara doğru bir zafer yolu tesis etmek isteyordu*"; Selim I's most sacred hopes were gained; now on Cairo roads, he wanted to establish a path of true victory to the pyramids"; ibid.

¹⁸⁴ "*Mısır sultanlarından intikam almakd*"; ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ahmet Refik, "Kahire Yollarında," *Harb Mecmuası* 5, İstanbul, Şubat 1331 (Rumi)/Rebiulahir 1334 (Hicri) [January 1916 Gregorian], 72.

¹⁸⁶ Ahmet Refik, "Kahire Yollarında," *Harb Mecmuası* 4, İstanbul, Kanunısani 1331 (Rumi)/Rebiülevvel 1334 (Hicri) [February 1916 Gregorian], 59.

¹⁸⁷ In this connection, see Ahmet Refik, "Kahire Yollarında," *Harb Mecmuası* 5, 72-74. Moreover, A poem by the poet, politician, and educator Fâik Âli Ozansoy (1876-1950) included in this same issue praises Selim I as one amongst a number of "grand heroes" ("*büyük kahramanlar*") like the companion of the Prophet Khalid ibn al-Walid (585-642), the Umayyad commander Târiq ibn Ziyâd (c. 670-720), and Sultan Orhan I (r. 1324-62); Fâik Âli Ozansoy, "Kal'a-ı Sultaniye Karşısında," *Harb Mecmuası* 5, İstanbul, Şubat 1331 (Rumi)/Rebiulahir 1334 (Hicri) [January 1916 Gregorian], 66.

¹⁸⁸ "Kafkas Cephesinde: Bir Zabitin Defter Hatıratından," *Harb Mecmuası* 17, İstanbul, Mart 1333 (Rumi)/Cemaziyelevvel 1335 (Hicri) [March 1917 Gregorian], 258-259.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 258.

and bravery unmatched in history left a boastful reputation. Today in the space from the Black Sea until the limits of Iran, in this snowy war zone was the landing place for our then heroic army's persistent sacrifices.”¹⁹⁰

As tenable as Selim’s example appears to have been for the contributors to *Harb Mecmuası*, other noteworthy sultans were also highlighted in this context. Indeed, the nation/society (*millet*) created by Gazi Osman I is praised and compared with the Umma of the Prophet Muhammad in the poet Süleyman Nazif’s 1915 article on the Ottoman capital (as each had anticipated the conquest given their respective “excellence,”) ¹⁹¹ in which he notes their foresight in recognizing Istanbul as the correct and legitimate imperial city.”¹⁹² However, he appears to associate this *millet* with being “Muslim” and “Türk,” although what these terms meant to him, and the degree to which they might have been interchangeable, is unclear. ¹⁹³ By way of contrast, Ziya Gökalp, the activist and intellectual usually associated with the pan-Turkist heritage of the Republic of Turkey, ¹⁹⁴ similarly praises Mehmed II for wresting the city from the Byzantines but lionizes its delivery to Islamdom as opposed to the Turkish nation. ¹⁹⁵ Indeed Mehmed II’s “eternal gift to Islam was the attainment of the conquest of the city of Constantinople,” thus, “satisfying the grandest desire of the Prophet of Glory.”¹⁹⁶

Finally, Ahmed Refik touches significantly on the heroic characteristics of the

¹⁹⁰ “Bir zamanlar Yavuz Sultan Selimler de bu muntıkaya gelen yollardan geçmişler, Ferhat Paşalar, Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşalar celadetleriyle, hamasetleriyle tarihte ebedî bir nam-ı iftihar bırakmışlardır. Bugün Karadeniz’den İran hududuna kadar imtidat eden bu karlı harp muntıkası o zamanlar kahraman ordumuzun mütevali fedakarlıklarına ma’kes olmuştu”; *ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Süleyman Nazif, “İstanbul Bizim Ebedî Payitahtımız: Vatan Afiyet Gibidir, Kıymeti Ancak Gıtdikden Sonra Bilinir,” *Harb Mecmuası* 4, İstanbul, Kanunısani 1331 (Rumi)/Rebiülevvel 1334 (Hicri) [January 1916 Gregorian], 50-51.

¹⁹² “Hazret-i Muhammed’in ümmetine ve Sultan Osman’ın milletine asırlarca evvel işaret etmiş olduğu bu belde-i tayyibe, bu Kostantiniyye, bu İslambol, bu İstanbul bizim ebedi payitahtımızdır!”; “The excellence of Muhammad’s umma and [Gazi] Osman’s society/nation had signaled for centuries before that this town of purity, this Constantinople, this Islambol, this Istanbul is our eternal Seat of the Throne!”; *ibid.*, 51.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ For a discussion of this legacy and its relationship to Ziya Gökalp, see Umut Uzer, *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism: Between Turkish Ethnicity and Islamic Identity* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016) and Ugur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁹⁵ Ziya Gökalp, “Din, Vatan,” *Harb Mecmuası* 11, İstanbul, Temmuz 1332 (Rumi)/Ramazan 1334 (Hicri) [July 1916 Gregorian], 162-164.

¹⁹⁶ “Sultan Mehmed-i Sâni İslâm’a mev’ud-ı ezeli olan belde-i Kostantiniyye’nin fâtihliğini ihrâz ile Peygamber-i zî-şânının en büyük arzusunu tatmin ediyor...”; “Sultan Mehmed II gave appreciation from before eternity to Islam with the achievement of the town of Constantinople’s conquest, satisfying The Prophet of eternal glory’s greatest...”; *ibid.*, 163.

empire's historical military efforts by noting "our heroic army's glorious commanders," "our self-sacrificing Paşas," and "brave soldiers."¹⁹⁷ However, he also lionizes "serious self-sacrificing, homeland-loving heroic emperors like Genç Osman [Osman II]"¹⁹⁸ whose reformist tendencies were being increasingly noted by Ottoman intellectuals in the early twentieth century.¹⁹⁹ However, Refik was more interested in this sultan's military accomplishments than his governmental reforms and used their example to illustrate the historical merits of Ottoman armies; in his words

"Osman II's undertaking of these [northern] campaigns would be a model for heroism to a radiant degree. During these Holy Wars castles were overrun and they trembled in the face of our soldiers bold attacks. The Turkish [Ottoman] army remained undaunted in the face of obstacles."²⁰⁰

Indeed, Refik views the Ottoman northern campaigns of the seventeenth century in the territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as sites of the Ottoman's "greatest heroisms (*en büyük kahramanlıklarımız*)."²⁰¹ He thus praised Osman II as well as Sultan Mehmed IV (c. 1648-87), in whose reign "further victories were secured" ("*bu havâlîde ihrâz-ı zafer eden*").

Hence, for many of these authors, securing an Ottoman victory meant in the war meant consciously emulating of the heroic examples of the dynasty, for the contemporary circumstances of the Great War both mirrored and demanded reference to past precedent in order to affect the desired future outcome. The other side of this equation can be seen in a section featured near the end of every issue of *Harb Mecmuası* after the first. Initially titled "*Yaşayan Ölüler*" ("The Living Dead"),²⁰² and later changed to "*Mübarek*

¹⁹⁷ "kahraman ordumuzun şanlı kumandanları, fedakâr paşalarımız, cesur askerlerimiz"; Ahmed Refik, "Galyçya'daki Şanlı Osmanlı Askerlerine," *Harb Mecmuası* 13, İstanbul, Teşrinievvel 1332 (Rumi)/Muharrem 1335 (Hicri) [October 1916 Gregorian], 196.

¹⁹⁸ "Bu yollar Genç Osman gibi cidden fedakâr, vatanını sever kahraman padişahlar"; *ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ See Baki Tezcan, "The 1622 Military Rebellion in İstanbul: A Historiographical Journey," in *Mutiny and Rebellion in the Ottoman Empire*, Jane Hathaway ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison Press, 2002), 25-43.

²⁰⁰ "İkinci Sultan Osman 'ın bu taraflarda yaptığı seferler kahramanlığa nümüne olacak derecede parlaktı. Bu gazâlar esnasında kuşatılan kaleler, askerlerimizin pek cesûrâne hücumlar karşısında titrerdi. Türk askeri hiçbir mâniadan yılmazdı"; Ahmed Refik, "Galyçya'daki Şanlı Osmanlı Askerlerine," 196.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 197-198.

²⁰² "*Yaşayan Ölüler*," *Harb Mecmuası* 2, İstanbul, Kanunievvel 1331 (Rumi)/ Safer 1334 (Hicri) [January 1916 Gregorian], 28.

Şehidlerimiz” (“Our Blessed Martyrs”),²⁰³ these pages honored the memory of soldiers who had fallen in battle serving sultan and empire. If historical heroes like Selim I were models to be emulated in the line of duty, reaching across time to provide guidance in the face of total warfare, then the Living Dead/Blessed Martyrs were the “everyday” Ottoman subjects who died in pursuit of their example, who would, in turn, inspire other soldiers to give their bodies to the imperial cause. In this way, they posthumously shared in the renown of the great heroes of the past whilst, to some extent, becoming “everyday heroes” themselves, much in the same way that Enver Bey and Niyazi Bey became *Hürriyet Kahramanları* in celebration of their efforts in bringing about the reinstatement of the Ottoman constitution.²⁰⁴ In life they served their empire by living up to heroic example of great Ottomans of the past, while in death they added their identities to the repertoire of heroic examples.

Conclusion

Altogether, it is clear that *Harb Mecmuası*’s contributors treated the history of the House of Osman as a repertoire for precedent and emulation in their reportage on what turned out to be the last and greatest military engagement of the Ottoman Empire. While the Ottoman sultans were assuredly not the only figures highlighted as praiseworthy heroes of empire in any of the aforementioned contexts, an examination of their treatment as heroes can help us see beyond the teleology of the emerging nation-state system to a set of imperial alternatives to a national future that did not appear untenable to Ottomans in the 1910s. Thus, it is important for historians to be mindful the fact that, for many Ottomans, the House of Osman was not a relic of the past by the Second Constitutional Period, but rather an important part of their imperial present and a tenable aspect of their imperial future.

²⁰³ “Mübarek Şehitlerimiz,” *Harb Mecmuası* 17, Istanbul, Mart 1333 (Rumi)/Cemaziyelevvel 1335 (Hicri)/[March 1917 Gregorian], 270.

²⁰⁴ I discuss this latter phenomenon in much greater detail in a later chapter.



Figure 4. "On Cairo Roads" by Ahmet Refik²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Ahmet Refik, "Kahire Yollarında," *Harb Mecmuası* 5, Istanbul, Şubat 1331 (Rumi)/Rebiulahir 1334 (Hicri)/February 1916 (Gregorian), 70.



Figure 5. “Yaşayan Ölüler” or “Living Dead”²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ “Yaşayan Ölüler,” *Harb Mecmuası* 2, Istanbul, Kanunievvel 1331 (Rumi)/Safer 1334 (Hicri)/January 1916 (Gregorian), 28.



Figure 6. “Mübarek Şehidlerimiz” or “Our Blessed Martyrs”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ “Mübarek Şehidlerimiz,” *Harb Mecmuası* 17, Istanbul, Mart 1333 (Rumi)/Cemaziyelevvel 1335 (Hicri)/March 1917 (Gregorian), 270.

Indeed, for many authors writing in Ottoman Turkish during the Second Constitutional Period, the ways that “heroic emperors” (*kahraman padişahlar*) served the Ottoman Empire were well worth remembering and commemorating in books, newspapers, and journals.²⁰⁸ In spite of the relative distance of the reigning sultan from the channels of administrative functioning after the revolutionary moment, the CUP’s dominance of the Ottoman political sphere, and the intensification of Turkish nationalist sentiment in certain intellectual circles, the heroic examples of the House of Osman continued to be treated as models of comportment, achievement, and right action in print media contexts. In an era of considerable existential crisis characterized by internal interconfessional and interethnic strife as well as aggressive diplomatic pressures leveled by the major imperial powers, the heroic legacies of the Ottoman sultans informed numerous discussions about the nature and shape of the Ottoman world. To be sure, the sultan-in-exile Abdülhamid II was largely spared the praise applied to his ancestors and to his successor. Yet, for some, the memory of Ottoman dynastic heroism provided a dynastic locus for a form of patriotic Ottomanism that continued into the last years of Ottoman rule.

²⁰⁸ Refik, “Galyçya’daki Şanlı Osmanlı Askerlerine,” 196.

Chapter 3. God’s Shadow Revealed: Monarchy, Villainy, and the Deconstruction of the Hamidian Order, 1908-1911

*“Despite there being no telephones in Istanbul, the big news [of the restoration of the constitution] spread at the speed of lightning...the sound of twenty thousand people, in a place that was normally quiet [Yıldız Palace], reverberated around in a stupendous fashion: ‘My Sultan!...Long live my Sultan!...’ I had not heard similar cries for many years, and in the whole of my life, I had never seen such a jubilant crowd. The Sultan had entered the Palace, but the cries continued without abating, so a window of the Palace was opened and Abdülhamid’s pale face appeared there...A tremendous scream of ‘Long Live!’ was followed by a deep silence. His Majesty lifted his arms as though he were praying. The imam of the mosque stepped out from among the crowd and began a prayer every request of which was met with ‘Amen!’ from the people in unison. The enthusiastic voices of the people were truly moving”.*¹

-Fausto Zonaro, *Twenty Years under the Reign of Abdülhamid*

Unlike his Romanov contemporary Tsar Nicholas II (r. 1894-1917), who allowed his face to grace coins, postcards, and other monarchical “souvenirs” in the early twentieth century,² Sultan Abdülhamid II did not permit his persona to become a visible and accessible commodity during the first 32 years of his reign. Instead, this task was left to the regime that overthrew him. As his information-management structures were dismantled, the revolution of 1908 forced the figurative image of the sultan into the realm of public scrutiny by exposing his person to the vagaries of both critical and venerative public discourses.³ In the words of Ahmet Ersoy, “[t]his was the carnivalesque moment

¹ Zonaro, *Twenty Years under the Reign of Abdülhamid*, 228-229.

² On this subject, see Richard Wortman, “Demonstrations of Godliness,” in *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy from Peter the Great to the Abdication of Nicholas II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 147-160, idem, “Publicizing the Imperial Image in 1913,” in *Visual Texts, Ceremonial Texts, Texts of Exploration: Collected Articles on the Representation of Russian Monarchy*, Richard Wortman and Ivan Grave eds. (Brighton, Massachusetts: Academic Studies Press, 2014), 71-98, and Jan Plamper, “Paths to the Stalin Cult,” in *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 5-9.

³ On this subjects see Klara Volarić, “Ottoman Periodicals During Hamidian and Early Young Turk Period [sic] (1876-1909),” in “*Carigradski Glasnik: A Forgotten Istanbul-based Paper in the Service of Ottoman Serbs, 1895-1909*” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Central European University, Budapest, 2014), 1-24, accessed 21 February 2017, https://www.academia.edu/6976436/Ottoman_Press_from_Tanzimat_to_early_Young_Turk_period_1830s

in the history of Ottoman publishing, when journal pages were filled with...caricatures and puns lampooning the state officials, and [eventually] the sultan himself.”⁴ In this way, the aniconic policy of sultanic representation, which had denied the display of figurative images of the sultan under any circumstances since the early years of Abdülhamid II’s reign, was ended abruptly in the revolutionary aftermath. While newspapers and pamphlets published by members of the opposition in exile had portrayed the sultan in this way long before the 1908 Revolution, by 1911 Abdülhamid II had become a figure of laughter and disdain in much of the mainstream Istanbul-based Ottoman Turkish media, thus completing his transformation in this context from Shadow of God on Earth to tyrannical anti-monarch, the revolution’s villainous antagonist.

Palmira Brummett has noted that the post-revolutionary satirical press took advantage of the novel freedom of expression following the end of the Hamidian prohibition of political critique to satirize and parody the person of the sultan.⁵ Yet no existing study has attempted to historicize the cultural repercussions of the forced end of Hamidian aniconism in the larger contexts of the political, social, and cultural history of Ottoman monarchy. How did the resultant proliferation of figurative representations of Abdülhamid II inform the ways that the *Istanbullular* could experience their emperor, and how did this development factor into the politics of public persona in post-revolutionary Istanbul? Drawing on revolutionary memorabilia (posters, postcards) and newsmedia cartoons from the period 1908-11, I argue that the print media discourses which drew on the figurative image of Abdülhamid II (including those that vaunted and praised him as “The First Sultan of the Constitution” as well as those that made satire of his person) played a role in the cultural deconstruction of the political edifice of the Hamidian regime. Moreover, I argue that Abdülhamid II’s brief second tenure as “constitutional monarch” (c. July 1908-April 1909) witnessed a novel development in the relationship between sultan and subject in the Ottoman Empire.⁶ As it occurred alongside the rapid democratization and proliferation of news media culture in the Ottoman Empire,

-1909.

⁴ Ersoy, “Ottomans and the Kodak Galaxy,” 357.

⁵ In this connection see Brummett, “The Comic Sovereign,” 113-148.

⁶ The first tenure being the First Constitutional period (*Birinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi*) in its entirety from 23 November 1876 until 13 February 1878.

it had the effect of rapidly accelerating the commodification of the House of Osman and thus altering the means through which the producers and consumers of these cultures experienced the empire's ruling House.

The CUP's initial rise to power did not come at the immediate expense of Abdülhamid II, who was allowed to remain on the throne so long as he agreed to reinstate the prorogued constitution of 1876 and abide by the legislation passed by of the lower and upper houses of the Ottoman parliamentary assembly (*Meclis-i-i Mebusan and Meclis-i Ayan Umumi*) respectively. Even so, the emergence of iconic modes of sultanic representation in Ottoman newsprint culture contributed to the deconstruction of the symbolic order of the Hamidian regime by contravening the sultan's conviction to avoid all forms of figurative representation. While the specific reasoning behind the sultan's aniconism remains opaque, it is clear that Abdülhamid II took his role as sultan-caliph quite seriously, thus treating all photographic and painted forms of representation inappropriate for the caliph of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad's successor as spiritual leader of the world community of Muslims (*Umma*).⁷

After briefly outlining my intervention in the literature and discussing my methodological approach, I begin the chapter by highlighting the ways that Ottoman subjects in Istanbul participated in this cultural deconstruction by buying or selling "Souvenirs of the Constitution" (posters, postcards, and other revolutionary memorabilia) that celebrated the sultan's status as constitutional monarch in the wake of July 1908. Finally I examine the ways in which Abdülhamid II was represented in the Istanbul-based Ottoman Turkish satirical press during the period 1908-1911. To be sure, the sultan became a regular fixture in illustrated magazines, like *Kalem* ("Pen") and *Davul* ("Drum"), and, for a time, appears to have occupied the position of a recognizable "recurring character." In the visual language of the revolutionary press, he stood for the disgraced and (later) deposed sultan in exile. Yet far from being a sympathetic character, this "Sultan Hamid" (or simply "Hamidi") as he was colloquially called, often stood in as arch-villain of the pre-revolutionary world. He thus constituted the metaphorical

⁷ For an anecdotal testimony to this personal motivation, see Zonaro, *Twenty Years under the Reign of Abdülhamid*, 118.

“dragon” of tyranny and despotism (*istibdad*) slain by the victorious CUP leadership.⁸

To be sure, information concerning the distribution of these products remains largely vague (in the case of newspapers, magazines, periodicals and journals)⁹ or totally absent (in the case of memorabilia), thus complicating any attempts to “zoom in” on individual cases.

Nevertheless, this fact need not prevent us from examining the potential connotations of their content. Even when these cultural products venerated the sultan as a central participant in the instigation of a new era of Ottoman liberty, they also infringed on the symbolic precepts of his regime by breaking with his long established tradition of aniconic sultanic representation, thus dampening the aura of sacrality and mystique that he and his regime had long labored to cultivate. Moreover, although the individual identities of their consumers are beyond our reach, the multi-linguistic nature of many of the posters, postcards, and newsmedia (with French and Ottoman being the most commonly used languages) indicates that the ethnolinguistic makeup of this consumer base was quite diverse. Hence, in lieu of the sources requisite to elucidate *individual* experience, I nonetheless speculate more generally about how Ottomans living in Istanbul might have encountered their sultan as “constitutionalized” monarch and (later) as “sultan in exile,” given the florescence of the satirical press in the last years of Abdülhamid II’s reign.

Historiography

Previous treatments of the revolutionary transitional period between the Hamidian

⁸ On the use of this metaphor in the revolutionary press, see Brummett, *Image & Imperialism*, 79-82.

⁹ As the Ottoman state did not require publishers to supply circulation figures, it is often not possible to obtain precise information regarding the number of issues sold in each case; Klara Volarić, “Ottoman Periodicals During Hamidian and Early Young Turk Period (1876-1909),” in “*Carigradski Glasnik: A Forgotten Istanbul-based Paper in the Service of Ottoman Serbs, 1895-1909*” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Central European University, Budapest, 2014), 1-24, accessed 21 February 2017, https://www.academia.edu/6976436/Ottoman_Press_from_Tanzimat_to_early_Young_Turk_period_1830s-1909, 21. What’s more, this equation is complicated still further by the fact that many Ottomans likely gained access to these materials indirectly or through oral and collective traditions of reading practiced in coffeehouses and reading rooms; Ahmet Ersoy, “Ottomans and the Kodak Galaxy: Archiving Everyday Life and Historical Space in Ottoman Illustrated Journals,” *History of Photography* 40 (2016): 337. As Klara Volarić notes, many consumers of newsmedia chose to share subscriptions of individual issues with others instead of purchasing them themselves; Volarić, “Ottoman Periodicals during Hamidian and Early Young Turk Period,” 22.

and Second Constitutional eras of Ottoman history have tended to address the transformation of Ottoman newsprint culture as a concomitant dimension of revolutionary *mentalités* and the social and cultural changes they wrought. Yet they do not attend to the ways that the loosening of Hamidian censorship policies overturned the symbolic logic of the Hamidian regime by democratizing access to the figurative persona of Abdülhamid II.¹⁰ While works by Palmira Brummett,¹¹ Michelle Campos,¹² Bedross Der Matossian,¹³ Mustafa Özen,¹⁴ and Edhem Eldem have all briefly examined the ways in which the notable personalities of this period (Enver Bey, Niyazi Bey, Abdülhamid II, etc.) were represented in its material cultures,¹⁵ the role of heroism and villainy in the contravention of Hamidian aniconism has yet to receive significant attention.

Of these works, Palmira Brummett's "The Comic Sovereign," is perhaps the most pertinent to the present chapter, as it aptly showcases Abdülhamid II's varied satirical roles in Ottoman "cartoon space" during the early years of the Second Constitutional Period. Far from being universally hated, a multiplicity of perspectives on the sultan's value and character existed throughout the last Ottoman decades, including more praiseworthy views that vaunted him as a constitutional monarch and steward of the empire's new liberty.¹⁶ However, more derogatory and critical views of the sultan gradually gained momentum after the Ottoman counter revolution of April 1909. In this way, a ruling member of the House of Osman became increasingly associated with violence, tyranny, and misrule to an extent that was unprecedented in the mainstream press. Especially after his dethronement on April 27 1909, Abdülhamid II came to be construed as the primary antagonist of the liberated empire. In the words of Brummett,

"The sultan, having endured past the point at which he could provide life to the kingdom, became a symbol of death, preserving his sovereignty only at the expense of his people...Where Osman, the founder of the dynasty, was associated with prosperity and expansion, as symbolized, in the chronicle of Aşıkpaşazade,

¹⁰ On Hamidian censorship, see İpek K. Yosmaoğlu, "Chasing the Printed Word: Press Censorship in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1913," *The Turkish Studies Association Journal* 27 (2003): 15-49.

¹¹ See for example Brummett, "The Comic Sovereign," 113-147.

¹² Campos, "Sacred Liberty," in *Ottoman Brothers*, 21-58.

¹³ Matossian, "The Euphoria of the Revolution," in *Shattered Dreams of Revolution*, 23-48.

¹⁴ Özen, "Visual Representation and Propaganda," 145-57

¹⁵ Edhem Eldem, "Enver, before he Became Enver," 90-101.

¹⁶ Brummett, *Image & Imperialism*, 113-115.

by a tree of life and flowing streams, Abd ül-Hamid was associated with the choking off of the life of the empire. Where Süleiman Kanuni was the ‘Lawgiver,’ Abd ül-Hamid was the violator of the law and of the circle of justice.”¹⁷

Be this as it may, I depart from Brummett’s suggestion that the contributors to Istanbul’s post-revolutionary media closely mirrored the House of Osman’s *de facto* removal from political power. For Brummett, “no one took [Abdülhamid II’s] place as padishah, since the real power of that title was gone,” with the exiled sultan being the closest available symbol for “real sultanic power” (a phenomenon existing only in the past tense) and Sultan Mehmed V (r. 1909-18) being perceived only as a “figurehead.”¹⁸ On the one hand, the Ottoman sultanate was certainly “in the process of being disestablished” as a “hegemonic (or dominant) subsystem” in the wake of the revolution.¹⁹ Yet while much of the satirical cartoons of the period explicitly referenced the antiquated, obsolete, or outright despotic aspects of monarchy, much (yet perhaps not all) of this vitriolic discourse was directed at Abdülhamid II, whose reign ended first in embarrassment and controversy and finally in deposition and exile. Moreover, as I demonstrate in the next chapter, Mehmed V enjoyed a markedly visible public profile in the Ottoman Turkish press that hardly matched his “real” position as “figurehead” from the perspective of modern historians. Thus, although the Istanbul-based Ottoman Turkish press may well have construed Abdülhamid II as a monarch “set aside, along with other symbols of the past, by the inevitable march of modernity,”²⁰ the House of Osman was not altogether abandoned as a tenable political, social, or cultural nexus of imperial affiliation. While the Hamidian order collapsed, the *Osmanlı* order remained intact.

Methodology

I do not view the political transition of 1908 and the accompanying desacralization²¹ of Abdülhamid II’s royal person purely as the result of a calculated

¹⁷ Ibid, 114.

¹⁸ Ibid, 132.

¹⁹ Ibid, 14-15.

²⁰ Ibid, 116.

²¹ In the wake of the French Revolution and its accompanying ideology of monarchical de-sacralization, one of the central problems faced by Europe’s ruling families revolved around whether it was better to

project of “delegitimization” on the part of the CUP.²² To the contrary, while the CUP’s provisional abolishment of the Hamidian regime’s policies of pre- and post-publication censorship certainly facilitated the deconstruction of the Hamidian order,²³ it was largely newspaper editors and their publication staffs who carried out this process. In light of the legal liminality that emerged in the wake of the constitutional proclamation, and seeking to celebrate the revolution themselves and/or capitalize on the interest and euphoria of others, they stopped submitting their papers for review. Therefore, by focusing on the general roles of cartoonists, journalists, and writers as well as the (admittedly anonymous) persons who bought, read and viewed the work they produced, I differ somewhat from the existing literature on late Ottoman imperial legitimacy which, upon the instigation of the work of Selim Deringil, has emphasized the efforts of actors and institutions affiliated with the Ottoman state at managing the latter’s “public image.”

It can be argued that the CUP had every intention of challenging the political legitimacy of the Hamidian regime and, after the counter revolution of 1909, of facilitating the defamation of the deposed sultan in exile.²⁴ Yet their actions during Abdülhamid II’s short tenure as “constitutional monarch” did not match their concerted efforts to affect his defamation while in exile,²⁵ as they appear to have realized the

stress a monarchy’s *similarity* and *closeness* with their imperial subjects or to emphasize their *difference* and *separation* from them. In this connection, a number of studies have taken up the problems of monarchical institutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See Plamper, “Paths to the Stalin Cult,” in *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 1-25, Maria Grever, “Staging Modern Monarchs: Royalty at the World Exhibitions of 1851 and 1867,” in *Mystifying the Monarch Studies on Discourse, Power, and History*, Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere ed. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 161-179, Martin Kohlrausch, “The Working of Royal Celebrity: Wilhelm II as Media Emperor,” in *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame, and Power in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Edward Berenson and Eva Giloi eds. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 52-66, Richard Wortman, “Moscow and Petersburg: The Problem of Political Center in Tsarist Russia, 1881-1914,” in *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics Since the Middle Ages*, Sean Wilentz ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 244-274, and *ibid*, “Publicizing the Imperial Image in 1913,” in *Visual Texts, Ceremonial Texts, Texts of Exploration: Collected Articles on the Representation of Russian Monarchy*, Richard Wortman and Ivan Grave eds. (Brighton, Massachusetts: Academic Studies Press, 2014), 71-98.

²² For intimations in this regard, see Volarić, “Ottoman Periodicals during Hamidian and Early Young Turk Period (1876-1909).”

²³ On this “double censorship” see Yosmaoğlu, “Chasing the Printed Word,” 25.

²⁴ Many of the existing arguments of this kind have been summarized and examined by Klara Volarić; see Volarić, “Ottoman Periodicals During Hamidian and Early Young Turk Period (1876-1909),” 18.

²⁵ In this connection, see M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) and *idem*, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

strategic utility of maintaining his rule as a politically “toothless” sultan that still enjoyed substantial support from his subjects.²⁶ Indeed, it appears that aside from the CUP’s dismantling the Hamidian regime’s censorship and surveillance bureaucracies, the actual subversion of the symbolic logic of Abdülhamid II’s rule was undertaken largely by the contributors to Ottoman newsmedia and by the anonymous street salesmen of revolutionary memorabilia.

As noted above, I draw on the examples of French and Russian Imperial historiography to explore the cultural aspects of revolutionary regime change in the Ottoman Empire. Much like France in 1789 and Russia in 1917,²⁷ the transfer of power from the Hamidian Regime to the CUP was also manifested culturally.²⁸ As the maintenance of the sultan’s aniconism was an important part of the regime’s public policy, and a crucial limitation to the ways that Ottomans could experience their reigning sultan-caliph, its widespread contravention by Ottoman subjects aptly exemplifies the intersection between politics and public persona. Indeed, as the sultan’s effective power waned throughout his tenure as constitutional monarch and his eventual dethronement and exile, his persona came to be explicitly associated with anti-revolutionary reaction and absolutist tyranny in many print media contexts.

Hence, while the “political pornography” at play in the Ottoman context was not

²⁶ For a source that anecdotally records the populism of Abdülhamid II in the wake of the revolution, see Zonaro, *Twenty Years under the Reign of Abdülhamid*, 228.

²⁷ See Robert Darnton, *The Devil in the Holy Water or the Art of Slander from Louis XIV to Napoleon* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), idem, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-revolutionary France* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), Lynne Hunt, “The Many Bodies of Marie Antoinette: Political Pornography and the Problem of the Feminine in the French Revolution,” in *Eroticism and the Body Politic*, Lynne Hunt ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 108-131, and Orlando Figes and Boris Kolonitskii, “The Desacralization of the Monarch: Rumors and the Downfall of the Romanovs,” in *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1999), 9-29.

²⁸ While there is not space to discuss theme here in substantial detail, a virtual genre of “Anti-Hamidian” literature emerged in the early revolutionary era. Aptly exemplified by the biting critique of Osman Nuri Bey’s *‘Abdülhâmîd-i Sâni ve Devr-i Saltanatı: Hayat-ı Hususiye ve Siyasiyesi* (Abdülhamid II and the Period of his Sultanate: Private and Public Life”), these works often told the story of the Hamidian period as an era of trials and tribulation for the Ottoman Empire that was finally ended by the successful execution of the 1908 revolution; see for example Osman Nuri, *‘Abdülhâmîd Sâni ve Devr-i Saltanatı: Hayat-ı Hususiyesi ve Siyasiyesi* (İstanbul: Kütüphane-i İslâm ve Askerî, Tüccarzade İbrahim Hilmi, 1327 [1911 Gregorian]). In this way, they juxtaposed the tyranny and villainy of Abdülhamid II with the liberty and heroism of the CUP, and often included heroic representations of the Ottoman general and statesmen Mahmut Şevket Paşa (1856-1913) as the leader of the Action Army (*Hareket Ordusu*) that put down the 1909 counter revolution and dispelled the last vestiges of Hamidian autocracy.

explicitly “sexual” in content, as was the case in the Bourbon and Romanov Empires, it nevertheless contributed to the cultural deconstruction of the Hamidian regime and the overall cultural flux of the revolutionary moment. In the first place, the flurry of visual representations of the sultan, satirical or otherwise, were “political” in that their very existence as public assessable images of the Ottoman Emperor defied a cultural policy the Hamidian Regime rigidly enforced while in power, and “pornographic” in the sense that they were produced for visual perusal and consumption. The more overtly scandalous, satirical, and critical images violated this principle still further, thus transforming the *padişah*, the traditional dispenser of heroic status and the heir to a heroic dynastic legacy, into the ur-villain of the revolutionary era.

In this regard, I treat cultural transformation as a concomitant dimension of revolutionary political change that tends to involve a degree of interplay between heroic and villainous personae. In the 1790s, the people of France rallied against the perceived decadence of the House of Bourbon and found a worthy adversary in the figure of Queen Marie Antoinette (r. 1774-91), in all of her corruption and gluttony, while figures like Maximilien François Marie Isidore de Robespierre (1758-94) and Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (r. 1804-14, 1815) eventually emerged as heroes. Just over a century later, the participants in the dual revolutions of 1917 found villainy in the royal person of Tsar Nicholas II and in the House of Romanov more generally, and eventually vaunted Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov “Lenin” (1870-1924) and Leon Trotsky (1879-1940) as leaders and savior figures. Similarly, the dramatis personae of 1908 matched Enver Bey, Niazi Bey, and other heroes of Ottoman Liberty against the villainy of Abdülhamid II and the forces of backwardness and decline.

**“The First Sultan of the Constitution”:
Revolutionary Souvenirs, Street-level Culture, and the Sultan’s Body**

Given the relative scarcity of sources of verifiable provenance, it is problematic to generalize widely about the impact of the end of Hamidian censorship based purely on a “reading” of the extant material culture. As Edhem Eldem has argued, studies that base their arguments on material culture that do not consider questions of provenance risk

overreading and over-analyzing sources.²⁹ In this connection, attempts to justify the application of systematic analytical models on the material traces of the past often fall short of convincingly exposing the actually existing “order of things” because of the partial nature of our evidence at any given point. Thus, if one accepts the likely yet not certain conclusion that we are always working with a poverty of data, and that pursuing “complete” knowledge of an event, process, or experience, is not an attainable or productive analytical endeavor, it is important to note that seeking generalizable conclusions from a bounded group of sources always risks overanalysis. However, with this in mind, I suggest that the admittedly incomplete and anecdotal evidence at hand can enable us to put forward useful, albeit limited, postulations regarding the breakdown of Hamidian aniconism as it was experienced on the ground. Hence, despite Joan Scott’s important and insightful trepidations regarding “experience” as a generalization,³⁰ I nonetheless find it useful “to document the existence of [things]...in all their variety and multiplicity, to write about and thus to render historical what has hitherto been hidden from history;”³¹ to effect an “enlargement of the picture, a correction to oversights resulting from inaccurate or incomplete vision...and illuminate the lives of historical persons.”³²

Of the available anecdotes, Fausto Zonaro’s recollection of seeing figurative images of Abdülhamid II sold to passersby on Galata Bridge in the months immediately following the revolution is perhaps the most tantalizing:

One day I was returning home, muttering to myself, having been into Istanbul to talk with an official from the Finance Ministry about my own situation [after the revolution]... I was on the [Galata] Bridge. A tradesman carrying a bundle of posters was shouting at the top of his voice: ‘Abdülhamid, first Sultan of the Constitution!’ He was selling pictures of the Sultan with the words ‘Abdülhamid, first Sultan of the Constitution’ written underneath in Turkish and French. I also bought one of those strange pictures.³³

²⁹ Edhem Eldem, Nir Shafir, and Emily Neumeier, “Following Ottoman Photographs,” Ottoman History Podcast, August 11th, 2015, accessed March 15 2017, <http://www.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2015/08/ottoman-empire-photography-edhem-eldem.html>.

³⁰ Joan W. Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1991): 773-797.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 775.

³² *Ibid.*, 776.

³³ Zonaro, *Twenty Years under the Reign of Abdülhamid*, 234. It is striking that Zonaro does not mention the presence of Armenian or Greek, as extant photographs of the poster contain all four languages; see “A

While his account was written retrospectively, and is certainly deserving of skepticism in this connection,³⁴ it is noteworthy on several counts. In the first place, it describes a blatant and outright violation of the dictates on the regime's long-held restrictions on the public display of figurative images of the sultan-caliph, even if they were ostensibly intended to market the sultan in a positive manner. In this way, it provides an instructive if limited example of how pedestrian *Istanbulular* might have encountered and participated in this cultural transition through their experience and patronage of street-level revolutionary memorabilia inscribed with Ottoman dynastic persona.

Second, the posters themselves celebrated Abdülhamid II's contribution to the reinstatement of the constitution of 1876 in four different languages: Ottoman, the official language of the state and the language most literate Muslims in Istanbul read; Greek, and Armenian, the languages of the two largest non-Muslim communities; and French, arguably the most widespread language among expatriates.³⁵ This multiplicity of languages implies that the poster sellers intended to attract a fairly diverse consumer base (which at least entailed the principal linguistic groups of the capital) through the veneration of the Ottoman Emperor, thus aptly exemplifying the kind of monarch-oriented Ottoman imperial patriotism described by Darin Stephanov and Julia Phillips Cohen.³⁶ On the one hand, the posters stressed the role of a Muslim emperor in the

poster of Abdulhamid II in four languages" (Erol Makzume Collection, Istanbul) in Zonaro, *Twenty Years Under The Reign Of Abdülhamid*, 234, as well as "[P]osters of Sultan Abdulhamid II being sold on the Galata bridge" (Elisa Zonaro, 1908, photograph, Zonaro Family Collection) in Osman, Öndes and Erol Makzume eds., *Ottoman Court Painter Fausto Zonaro* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 79.

³⁴ There are sections of Zonaro's memoirs that suggest he may have embellished certain aspects of his life-story and achievements. For instance, he claims that he eventually managed to coax Abdülhamid II into allowing himself to be painted and recounts the three occasions on which the sultan posed for him in particular detail; Öndes and Makzume, *Ottoman Court Painter Fausto Zonaro*, 82. However, while he claims to have painted the sultan from life, all three of the extant portraits bear a striking resemblance to a photograph taken by Zonaro's wife Elisa Zonaro in the early 1900s, thus opening up the possibility that they were based on this photograph and not produced as Zonaro described; see *ibid.*, 83. In any case, evidence of these portraits now exists only through photographs taken by Elisa Zonaro. Although precise information about them is lacking, one of the three paintings was ostensibly destroyed while in the possession of the Palace during the purge of Hamidian documents after 1909, another was apparently sold to a Count Vincenzo Marsaglia in San Remo on 9 March 1912, and the last "is known to have been displayed in the artist's home in San Remo for a long time"; *ibid.*, 83.

³⁵ According to Zonaro, they were sold at 20 piasters each; *ibid.*, 81.

³⁶ See Julia Phillips Cohen, "Contest and Conflict: Jewish Ottomanism in a Constitutional Regime," in *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era*. Oxford and New York: University Press, 2014), 103-131, Darin Stephanov, "Sultan Abdulmecid's 1846 Tour of Rumelia and the

rediscovery of the “sacred liberty” embodied by the Ottoman constitution as well as the “religious, quasi-messianic images, language, and expectations” that accompanied its reemergence.³⁷ Yet by advertising the posters not solely to an Ottoman-speaking Muslim elite,³⁸ but to a sizeable portion of Istanbul’s ethno-linguistic demographics (as demonstrated by the inclusion of four distinct written forms of communication in addition to the oral cries of the salesperson), the posters creators invited a wide range of the sultan’s subjects to celebrate his actions.³⁹

Finally, it provides an instructive case in the commodification of Ottoman monarchy,⁴⁰ a process that appears to have occurred only to a limited extent beforehand, but would change dramatically in the wake of 1908. With some notable exceptions,⁴¹ material cultures documenting the character and achievements of the House of Osman were largely restricted to the courtly elite throughout the early modern period.⁴² Yet

Trope of Love,” *Journal of Turkish Studies* 44 (2014): 475-501, and idem “Ruler Visibility, Modernity and Ethnonationalism in the Late Ottoman Empire,” in *Living in the Ottoman Realm: Sultans, Subjects, and Elites*, Kent Schull and Christine Isom-Verhaaren eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 259-271.

³⁷ Campos, “Sacred Liberty,” 50.

³⁸ In this connection, the category “Ottoman” is sometimes equated with Ottoman Turkish-speaking Muslims in the secondary literature; see for instance Engin Deniz Akarlı, “The Tangled Ends of an Empire: Ottoman Encounters with the West and Problems of Westernization—an Overview,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 26 (2006): 364. However, recent work by Michelle Campos and Bedross Der Matossian has shown that much of the revolutionary imagery and symbolism professed in the early years of the Second Constitutional Period was markedly inclusive in its intended audience; see Campos, “Sacred Liberty,” 21-58 and Matossian, “The Euphoria of the Revolution,” 23-48.

³⁹ Given that Zonaro understood the language of the salesperson, it is reasonable to assume that he spoke either French or (more likely) Ottoman Turkish.

⁴⁰ For work on the commodification of monarchy in other imperial contexts, see Alison Rowley, “Monarchy and the Mundane: Picture Postcards and Images of the Romanovs, 1890-1917,” *Revolutionary Russia* 22 (2009): 125-52, Eva Giloi, “Copyrighting the Kaiser: Publicity, Piracy, and the Right to Wilhelm II’s Image,” *Central European History* 45 (2012): 407-51, and Maria Grever, “Staging Modern Monarchs: Royalty at the World Exhibitions of 1851 and 1867,” in *Mystifying the Monarch Studies on Discourse, Power, and History*, Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere eds. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 161-179.

⁴¹ It is important to note that the street-level production and sale of sultanic portraits was already practiced in early modern Istanbul to a more limited extent. This is evidenced by the “Rålamb Book of Costumes” (*Rålambska dräktboken*), a seventeenth-century manuscript bought by Claes Rålamb (1622–98) in 1657–58 that includes a portrait of the child-sultan Mehmed IV (r. 1648-87); see “Rålamb Book of Costumes,” World Digital Library, accessed 26 February 2017, <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/17190/>. Furthermore, in the late sixteenth century an artist’s workshop in Baghdad produced relatively cheap *Silsilenâme* (“medallion genealogies”) of the House of Osman that appear to have been intended for sale to persons beyond the courtly elite; see Serpil Bağcı, “From Adam to Mehmed III: Silsilenâme,” in Ayşe Orbay, *The Sultan’s Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman*, Ayşe Orbay and Filiz Çağman eds. (İstanbul: İşbank, 2000), 188-201.

⁴² On the Ottoman courtly tradition of dynastic representation see Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington, Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 2013), Ayşe Orbay and Filiz Çağman

beginning in the 1830s, the Ottoman court took the initiative to make mimetic portraits of the reigning sultan much more publicly accessible. In the last decade of his reign, Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808-39) displayed large-scale portraits in public places,⁴³ sent them to European rulers and provincial magnates as part of inter-imperial and intra-imperial diplomatic gift economies,⁴⁴ and bestowed miniature portraits of himself (*tasvir-i hümayun*) to select Ottoman and foreign officials as symbols of loyalty.⁴⁵ Moreover, these practices were continued to a considerable extent by Mahmud II's two immediate predecessors: Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839-61) sent three large-scale portraits as diplomatic gifts for to the hereditary prince-governor of Ottoman Egypt, Khedive Abbas I (r. 1848-54) in 1850, which were henceforth "paraded through the city," displayed in public for three days, and eventually hung "in the three most important public offices";⁴⁶ while Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1839-61) had his portrait hung in government offices in Istanbul including the Sublime Porte (*Bab-i Ali*).⁴⁷ At the same time, persons aside from the sultan and his Istanbul government also participated in this process. As Hakan Karateke notes, an imperial governor-general (*vali*) of Salonica Province (*Selanik Eyalet*) in the early 1860s took it upon himself to travel throughout the province, inciting local notables to kiss the sultan's portrait, and submitted a list of those who complied to

eds., *The Sultan's Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman* (İstanbul: İşbank, 2000), and Suraiya Faroqhi, "The Ottoman Sultan: Victorious and Pious," in *A Cultural History of the Ottomans: The Imperial Elite and its Artefacts* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 60-80. At the same time, I do not intend to suggest that The House of Osman was not interested in acquainting their subjects with the characteristics and personalities of reigning sultans. For the example of Istanbul, see Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, "The Palace and the Populace," in *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 28-71.

⁴³ Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations* (İstanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2004), 128-129.

⁴⁴ This term is used in reference to the practices of gift exchange employed by the ruling elites of both modern and early modern states as a means to establish and maintain diplomatic ties. On this subject, see Darin Stephanov, "Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) and the First Shift in Modern Ruler Visibility in the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 1 (2014): 129-148.

⁴⁵ It is unclear at which point the gifting of this decoration became institutionalized. As Edhem Eldem suggests, the early instances of its bestowment (c. 1831-32) may have been isolated incidents that preceded a more regularized practice of bestowment in the latter half of the decade; Eldem, *Pride and Privilege*, 129. Nevertheless, it appears that Mahmud II had already taken a particular interest in the contemporary European practice of distributing miniature dynastic portraiture by 1829; Stephanov, "Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) and the First Shift in Modern Ruler Visibility," 137. On European miniature portraits, see Marcia Pointon, "'Surrounded with Brilliants': Miniature Portraits in Eighteenth-century England," *The Art Bulletin* 83 (2001): 48-71.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Karateke, "From Divine Ruler to Modern Monarch," 295.

Istanbul.⁴⁸ While each of these cases suggests a limited commodification of Ottoman monarchy, these products were both few in number and limited in circulation in comparison with newsmedia culture.

However, Abdülhamid II drastically reversed this practice by explicitly forbidding all objects bearing figurative portraits of his person from production and display,⁴⁹ and applying rigid strictures on the use of his imperial cypher (*tuğrâ*) and all other official imperial symbols.⁵⁰ Yet the end of the effective political power of the Hamidian Regime brought a permanent end to the House of Osman's control of their limited commodification and ushered the dynasty into what Ahmet Ersoy has called the "Kodak Galaxy." Drawing on the work of Marshall McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*,⁵¹ Ersoy describes "a changing world touched by cameras and the enhanced movement of images," a process which "shaped the everyday experience, and more particularly the historical imagination of late Ottoman audiences."⁵² Made tangible by the regime's censorship and surveillance bureaucracies, the sultan's practice of aniconism had sheltered the figurative image of Abdülhamid II from representation in Ottoman print culture during its initial florescence in the 1890s,⁵³ yet the revolution temporarily leveled the playing field of representation and freed up the image of the emperor for his subjects' perusal and use. As Ersoy notes, it was only at this point that "[t]he full disruptive power of the new media regime would...be unleashed," "bringing with it all the ensuing risks and delights."⁵⁴

As evidenced by Zonaro's memoirs, the behavior of the sultan had shifted to accommodating the changing political tide by the second day of the revolution. At this point,

...inexhaustible groups of school and office workers with their flags headed for Yıldız and ceaselessly passed by, showing their respect for the great-hearted

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 22.

⁵⁰ For a comprehensive outline of this practice, see *ibid.*, 22-37

⁵¹ Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).

⁵² Ersoy, "Ottomans and the Kodak Galaxy," 333.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 356.

Efendi who bestowed liberty on his people, to the greatest of Caliphs, the first Sultan of the Constitution: In every tone and with great delight, they sang, ‘Long live Liberty, may it live long!...’ On the 26th, 27th, and 28th of July, I went with my eldest son to wander this great city in which demonstrations were gradually increasing. Not just certain groups now, but whole districts: the whole of Istanbul, the whole of Scuteri, Galata, and Tatavla were standing up and going to see their Sultan in the public squares.”⁵⁵

Forced into the open by the dictates of circumstance, Abdülhamid II exposed himself to his people, who had assembled *en masse* to celebrate the constitution and commend his perceived role in its reinstatement. Although it was ostensibly an isolated incident, this gathering at Yıldız Palace was a telling precursor for things to come. Wrested from his place of security, Abdülhamid II made his person available to the eyes of his subjects. Yet as a continuing result of this same event, he and would soon be “captured” by the pencils, brushes, gears, and cameras of illustrators, printers, photographers eager to include their sultan in their print cultures. This divested him of his position as an abstract monarch, beyond figurative representation.

While Zonaro’s anecdotes allow for a degree of informed speculation as to the nature of the cultural deconstruction of the Hamidian regime, we should nevertheless exercise caution in expanding on its example. In the absence of a documented array of such experiences, it is impossible to know how many posters were sold, how many salespersons were involved in their sale,⁵⁶ who purchased these posters, what people did with them, and what people thought about them.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, other articles of post-revolutionary material culture preserved in private collections and art-historical works support the notion that material evidence of the breakdown of Hamidian aniconism was manifested beyond the realm of Zonaro’s limited experience.

Many “Souvenirs of the Constitution” from the last years of the Hamidian era

⁵⁵ Zonaro, *Twenty Years under the Reign of Abdülhamid*, 229.

⁵⁶ A photo credited to Elisa Zonaro depicts a young boy selling these posters. Given that Zonaro’s memoirs mention “a tradesman,” we might reasonably assume that at least two persons were engaged in this activity: a boy (pictured) and a man (the “tradesman”). However, this distinction may well be artificial.

⁵⁷ In his memoirs, Zonaro mentions a letter he sent to the sultan that recounts his experience with the poster seller and warns Abdülhamid II of “seeing badly-made pictures [...] being displayed throughout the metropolis”; Zonaro, *Twenty Years Under The Reign Of Abdülhamid*, 234. While Zonaro’s account of the poster incident cannot presently be corroborated by any other written source, this letter, if found, would lend support to its historicity when coupled with the extant photographs of the poster and poster seller currently housed in the Erol Makzume Collection; see *ibid.*

celebrate the return of the constitution by commemorating the achievements of the figures who had contributed to its reinstatement. While it is difficult to ascertain their patterns of dissemination and ownership, an analysis of these memorabilia suggests a culture of revolutionary commemoration in which public persona played an important role. In this connection, the writer and activist Namık Kemal (1840-88) “The Greatest of Writers,”⁵⁸ as well as the Tanzimat-era statesmen Mustafa Reşid Paşa (1800-58) “The Celebrated Grand Vizier,”⁵⁹ and Midhat Paşa (1822-83) “The Grand Initiator of the Constitution”⁶⁰ were represented in a series of lithograph portrait posters that praised their various contributions to the constitutional achievement in Ottoman, Greek, Armenian, and French. However, Abdülhamid II also appears on a poster alongside these constitutional heroes as “The United Ottomans’ Imperial Majesty Emperor Abdülhamid Efendi” (“*Yekvücut Osmanlıların Şevketlû Padişahı Abdülhamid Efendi*”).⁶¹ Although contemporary photographs suggest that the sultan usually rode in a horse drawn carriage during public occasions, here he is depicted on horseback with his imperial entourage riding past the *Yıldız Hamidiye Camii* as part of a typical *selamlık* ritual for Friday prayer. Barring any evidence regarding their distribution, it is reasonable to assume that they were sold either on the street by salesmen as in Zonaro’s anecdote or in local shops.

Similarly, Abdülhamid II’s forced visual lionization as First Sultan of the Constitution also extended into the realm of postcards.⁶² Although the images displayed on Ottoman postcards were typically not signed or dated, the fact that they position Abdülhamid II in a positive role indicate that they were likely printed before the sultan’s dethronement in the wake of the counterrevolutionary movement of April 1909.⁶³ On one

⁵⁸ “*Edib-i Azam Merhûm Namık Kemal Bey*”; Bahattin Öztuncay ed., *İkinci Meşrutiyet’in İlanının 100üncü Yılı. 100th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Constitution* (İstanbul: Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, 2008), 147.

⁵⁹ “*Le Celebre Grand Vizier*”; *ibid*, 145.

⁶⁰ “*Le grand Initiateur de la Constitution Ottomane*”; *ibid*, 146.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 144.

⁶² On the historical trajectory of postcards in the empire, see Mustafa Özen, “Visual Representation and Propaganda: Early Films and Postcards in the Ottoman Empire, 1895–1914,” *Early Popular Visual Culture* 6 (2008): 145-57. While Özen claims that postcards bearing the figurative image of Abdülhamid II were available in Istanbul before the revolution, he provides no examples in this regard.

⁶³ Also notable in this regard is the Levantine composer Augusto Selvelli’s (1866–1943) “*Hommage Respectueux à S.M.I le Sultan Abdul hamid Khan II, March de la Constitution Ottomane*”; “A Respectable Homage to His Imperial Majesty Sultan Abdülhamid Han II, March of the Ottoman Constitution composed in honor both of the sultan and the constitution”; see Öztuncay, *İkinci Meşrutiyet’in İlanının 100üncü Yılı*, 166.

such card, a bust portrait of the sultan appears beneath his *tuğra*, the Ottoman coat of arms, and the phrase “Long Live my Emperor, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” (“Padişahım çok yaşa!—Hürriyet, Müsâvât, Uhuvvet”) in Ottoman as well as the words “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité” in French.⁶⁴ In another, he appears in a horse-drawn carriage accompanied by a throng of fez-covered heads ostensibly on his way to mosque for the *selamlık* alongside the words ““S[a].M.[ajesté]. I[mpériale] le Sultan se rendant au Sélamlık après la Proclamation de la Constitution 1908” (“His Imperial Majesty the Sultan on his way to the *Selamlık* after the Proclamation of the 1908 Constitution”).⁶⁵

While all of these examples violate the precepts of Hamidian aniconism, perhaps the most striking example is a card on which the sultan’s portrait is adorned by a green wreath and flanked by Enver Bey and Niyazi Bey above the French words “Vive S.M.I Abdoul Hamid Khan II, Vive le [sic] Constitution! 11/24 Juillet 1908” (“Long Live Sultan Abdülhamid Han II, Long Live the Constitution of July 11/24 1908!”).⁶⁶ In this instance, not only is the sultan’s figurative image featured as part of the symbolic repertoire of revolutionary euphoria, but he is positioned in between Enver Bey and Niyazi Bey, the *Hürriyet Kahramanları*, and thus deprived of his privileged position as the sole anthropomorphic embodiment of the empire. To be sure, such images praised Abdülhamid II as perhaps the most important architect of the new Ottoman Liberty, yet they did so while introducing an entirely new set of heroic personae that would come to share his sacral space in celebration of July 24th 1908. This symbolically uplifted them to a position in close proximity with Abdülhamid II and showcased their status as imperial heroes while simultaneously forcing the sultan out of his self-imposed aniconic seclusion and into the mundane realm of the postcard and the poster alongside the revolutionaries who overthrew his regime. If the coming of the revolution was the culmination of the struggles and achievements of the past individuals (i.e. the efforts of heroic figures like Midhat Paşa, Mustafa Reşid Paşa, and Namık Kemal) in the logic of the “Souvenirs de

⁶⁴ Ibid, 153. For similar examples, see Yusuf Çağlar ed., *Kanun-i Esasi'den Askeri Müdahaleye II. Meşrutiyet*, (Istanbul: Zaman Kitapları, 2008), 6, Öztuncay, *İkinci Meşrutiyet'in İlanının 100üncü Yılı*, 153, and Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations* (İstanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2004), 363 and 369.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 161. In this regard see also Özen, “Visual Representation and Propaganda,” 148.

⁶⁶ Öztuncay, *İkinci Meşrutiyet'in İlanının 100üncü Yılı*, 160.

Constitution,”⁶⁷ such images paint the post-revolutionary future as an era devoid of unbridled Hamidian autocracy. In this way, they anticipate the further political subordination of the dynasty to the CUP leadership during the reign of Mehmed V.

At the same time, the “hijacked” persona of Abdülhamid II also appeared amongst the “Souvenirs” in aniconic forms. Much in the same vein as the postcards and posters that celebrated the sultan’s 25 year on the throne in 1901,⁶⁸ these souvenirs did not include his figurative image. Instead, they tended to include his *tuğrâ* alongside the phrase “*Padişahım çok yaşa!*” (“Long live my Emperor”!) coupled with the conceptual mantras of the revolution “*Hürriyet, Adalet, Müsâvât, Uhuvvet*” (“Liberty, Justice, Equality Fraternity”).⁶⁹ In this way, dynastic patriotism was intertwined with revolutionary values in advocacy of the new constitutional future, in spite of the fact that the revolution itself was a *de facto* abrogation of the Hamidian order and the autocratic politics of the Ottoman Emperor.

Altogether it is clear that the “Souvenirs of the Constitution” made significant use of Abdülhamid II’s persona during his reign as constitutional monarch and incorporated his figurative image into in their celebration of a liberated Ottoman future. While the ways in which these commemorative cultures reached and affected contemporary Ottomans remain largely opaque to us, it is nevertheless useful to take stock of the role they played in the cultural deconstruction of the pre-revolutionary order. Indeed, the sultan’s aniconism, which had been rigidly enforced in Istanbul before 1908,⁷⁰ was flagrantly disregarded in the interest of promoting a revolutionary Ottoman future in which the sultan would take part. However, once Abdülhamid II was permanently overthrown, and his tenure as “First Sultan of the Constitution” was ended, his public persona shifted in many contexts from hero to villain. This is aptly exemplified by the Ottoman Turkish satirical press, which had begun to parody the sultan since the early days of the Second Constitutional Period.

His Imperial Majesty, Grand Villain of the Revolution:

⁶⁷ For more examples of revolutionary memorabilia (tablecloths, postcards, etc.) which commemorated the contributions of these figures, see *ibid*, 162-163, 184-185, and 191.

⁶⁸ For an example see Çağlar, *Kanun-i Esasi'den Askeri Müdahaleye II. Meşrutiyet*, 23.

⁶⁹ See *ibid*, 30 and 32-33.

⁷⁰ See in particular, Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 22.

Abdülhamid II as “Recurring Character” in the Ottoman Turkish Satirical Press

By the summer of 1909 Abdülhamid II had left Istanbul by train for Salonica, the city where he would spend the first leg of his exile in house arrest at the Villa Alatini, a mansion belonging to a local industrialist. Yet the cultural deconstruction of his regime continued throughout the early reign of Mehmed V through the continued contravention of Hamidian aniconism, albeit in a more uniformly critical and satirical vein. Indeed, beginning immediately after the revolution, and escalating after his dethronement, Abdülhamid II began to take on the role of an anti-revolutionary villain in the Istanbul-based Ottoman Turkish press, as the force against which the CUP’s revolutionary heroism was defined and from whom the Ottoman Constitution was liberated. This was especially the case in the illustrated satirical press, in which the sultan as was cast as a pathetic, reactionary, and (at times) bloodthirsty despot deserving of laughter, derision, and moral indignation from Ottoman readers and viewers. While his presence in the satirical press appears to have petered out somewhat by 1911, his villainous persona arguably took the form of a “recurring character”: one who was readily recognizable not as “our sultan” (*padı̄şahımız*), but as the deposed and disgraced “sultan in exile” whose actions as Ottoman emperor had disqualified him from the sympathy and reverence conventionally due to members of his imperial House.

Hence, Abdülhamid II’s post-deposition notoriety in Ottoman print media contexts is noteworthy both as an important cultural aspect of Ottoman regime change and as a novel development in the social and cultural history of the Ottoman monarchy. Although a number of sultans were deposed throughout the Ottoman centuries, Abdülhamid II was the only sultan to be overthrown in the “emerging age of mass media,” which, according to Ahmet Ersoy, began in the empire in the 1890s.⁷¹ In this way, “Sultan Hamid” became an anthropomorphic representation of the empire’s backwardness, and a symbol of its unfortunate era of corrupt patrimonial governance. For many contributors to the newly emergent satirical press, “Sultan Hamid” had ruled over a barbaric pre-revolutionary world characterized by the gross misgovernance of the monarch and the predations of his traitorous web of spies and cronies.⁷² Throughout this

⁷¹ Ersoy, “Ottomans and the Kodak Galaxy,” 331.

⁷² For a cartoon that aptly illustrates this sentiment, see *Geveze* 41, İstanbul, 26 Mart 1325 [?] (Rumi),

“age of despotism,”⁷³ the sultan and his regime cared little for the welfare of their people and did not attempt to alleviate their suffering. They care only for the maintenance of their own power.⁷⁴

Mehmed V’s ascendance to the Ottoman throne on April 27th 1909 was celebrated by newspapers and journals from across the empire and beyond: from *Resimli Kitap*, *Şehbal*, and *Kalem* in Istanbul to the Tbilisi-based Azeri language weekly *Molla Nasreddin*.⁷⁵ However, while the empire celebrated its new “second” sultan of the constitution, the persona of his predecessor became ever more associated with all things anti-constitutional, anti-revolutionary, and backward in the satirical press. Therefore, the political legitimacy of the Ottoman dynasty was to survive the revolution with the notable exception of Abdülhamid II, the despotic emperor. Although the satirical critique of Abdülhamid II began almost immediately after the revolution,⁷⁶ it is clear that the sultan’s deposition opened the door for a much more virulent deconstruction of the Hamidian Regime, as the celebratory aspects of his “constitutional” reign were abruptly shelved. This effectively left the critical registers of discourse to predominate in many contexts with the perceived role of the sultan in the events of the 1909 counter revolution adding further fuel to the fire. On the one hand, coverage of the sultan was not always overtly derogatory or derisive even after his exile. For example, his portrait graced the cover of the June 1910 issue of *Bahçe* (“Garden”) Magazine alongside Villa Allatini, his residence in Salonica until 1911.⁷⁷ Moreover, the appearance of a similar portrait on the

cover page.

⁷³ Brummett, *Image and Imperialism*, 123.

⁷⁴ On this theme, see the cartoon that graced the cover page of *Geveze* 34, in which Abdülhamid II and Hüseyin Hilmi Pasha (1855-1922) discuss the reasons behind the misery and suffering of the people of Anatolia, who are represented in the form of a starving man: “[Hilmi Paşa:] *Yok! Sana bak söyleyelim...Böyle idare olamaz. Senin yapacağın bu midir?*—[Abdülhamid II:] *Ben herkes açlıktan olmesine doğrusı razı değilim, benim zamanımda böyle şu...O! La! Maz...*” (“No! Let’s say ‘Look here!’ Things should not be handled like this. Was this your doing? Quite frankly, I am not pleased that everyone is dying of hunger. In my time, such things...Could! Not! Be!”); (“*Comment Hilmi [sic], est-ce [sic] de cette façon que tu gouvernes en laissant mon peuple mourir de faim! sous mon régime je ne tolérai pas cela!*” (“How Hilmi, is it in this way you govern my people by letting them die of hunger? Under my regime I would not tolerate this!); *Geveze* 34, İstanbul, 2 (or 3) Mart 1325 (Rumi) [15 (or 16) March 1909 Gregorian], cover page.

⁷⁵ See for instance, *Resimli Kitap* 8, İstanbul, Mart 1325 (Rumi), cover page, *Şehbal* 5, İstanbul, 10 Mayıs 1330 (Rumi), cover page and *Molla Nasreddin* 17, Tbilisi, 1909 [23 May 1909 Gregorian], cover page.

⁷⁶ Brummett, *Image & Imperialism*, 121.

⁷⁷ *Bahçe* 41, İstanbul, 2 Haziran 1330 (Rumi) [15 June 1914 Gregorian], cover page.

cover of the May 1909 issue of *Resimli Kitap* serves more to highlight the relationship between the new and previous sultan (with Mehmed V replacing his cousin Abdülhamid II) than to decry his personal faults.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, these instances were far outweighed by a repertoire of satirical representations of “Sultan Hamid” that sought to elicit laughter and derision at the sultan’s expense. Take for instance his appearance in a March 1909 issue of *Alem* (“World”) as a sullen and somber figure smoking *nargile* (“hookah”) in a salon chair.⁷⁹ Described in the caption as “at home thinking over the recent events,”⁸⁰ he is a pitiful emperor, left behind by the progress of history, whose docility and inaction stands in sharp contrast with the bravery and action of the new heroes of liberty. Similarly, *Cingöz* (“Shewd” or “Clever”) ran a cartoon in August 1908 that featured a seated Abdülhamid II alongside Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar (r. 1907-1908) attempting to entice Tsar Nicholas II into joining “on the bench” (i.e. the political sidelines) of constitutional monarchy.⁸¹ Despite their invitation however, Nicholas II refuses (“Am I a fool like you? I must take the air”), only to be reminded of the tenuousness of monarchical absolutism in their day (“Correct, but sometimes the wind turns rough”).⁸² Finally, a 1910 issue of *Bahçe* depicts Abdülhamid II reluctantly dancing to music played by a tall, elegant “Lady Liberty” figure.⁸³ “You have sang, and I am glad” she says in French and in Ottoman, “now dance!”⁸⁴ In all cases, the sultan is construed as a humiliated and ineffective monarch who has lost control of his empire in the face of its changing political and intellectual landscape, forced to take a passive role in its historical trajectory as other parties take the reins of politics at his expense.

⁷⁸ *Şehbal* 5, Istanbul, 10 Mayıs 1325 (Rumi) [23 May 1909 Gregorian], cover page.

⁷⁹ *Alem* 4, Istanbul, 19 Şubat 1324 (Rumi) [4 April 1909 Gregorian], 6.

⁸⁰ “*Chez lui songeant aux derniers évènements*”/“*Teneffüs salonunda vuku'at ahirenin tafakları/tekikleri*”; *ibid.*

⁸¹ “*Selanik'te neşr olunan “bahçenin ظيیر سي علاوه” gazetesinden alınmış.—Yahu, sende bizim gibi otursana...—Ben sizin gibi budala mıyım? Hava almak lazım.—Doğru ama, bazen rüzgar sert eser (“Taken from the Salonica newspaper... [?]*—Look here, sit like us—Am I a fool like you? I must take the air.—Correct, but sometimes the wind turns rough”); *Cingöz* 1, Istanbul, 12 Şaban 1327 (Hicri)/ 26 Ağustos 1324 (Rumi) [8 September 1908], cover page.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Bahçe* 41, 240.

⁸⁴ (“*Vous chantiez. J'en suis fort aisé: Eh bien! Dansez maintenant!*” (“*You sang. I am glad: Well! Now dance!*”); “*İşiniz çünkü tagannimiş efendim o zaman: durmayıp şimdide raks eyleyiniz bari heman!*” (“*It's your job because my lord was sang back the: now don't stop and dance for once right now!*”); *ibid.*

Forcibly mediated into the realm of publicly accessible illustrated media, he was manifested in a plurality of profane guises: as a weeping man begging to hold onto the last vestiges of his fortune and privilege;⁸⁵ an unwary fisherman who used “espionage” as well as worms (“*asticot*”) for bait, only to catch “a terrible fish” (a Lady Liberty figure holding the head of a gorgon);⁸⁶ a man-headed “Turkey” (peacock) with its feathers “plucked” from it;⁸⁷ a foolhardy monarch laughing at the misfortune of his equally foolish royal peers;⁸⁸ a bloodthirsty tyrant whose behaviour evokes the protagonist of Xavier de Montépin’s (1823-1902) *Moulin Rouge*;⁸⁹ or simply as a hyperbolically large facial protuberance (“Istanbul’s...victorious [and] largest nose”) in reference to the sultan’s notoriously prominent proboscis.⁹⁰ Yet Abdülhamid II’s career as anti-revolutionary avatar was perhaps most visible in the illustrated satirical magazine *Kalem*, which featured his figurative image with considerable frequency in the period under study. Generally featured on the cover of the magazine, the sultan took many forms which highlighted his persona as arch-nemesis of Ottoman political integrity. Due either to his devious and tyrannical nature or his personal weakness as a ruler, *Kalem*’s Sultan Hamid was unsuitable for the position to which he was born.

The range of themes and settings within which *Kalem* presented Abdülhamid II as royal villain were by no means uniform. On the one hand, he might appear as a dark, mysterious, and brooding monarch whose hold on Ottoman politics was becoming ever more tenuous.⁹¹ In this connection, *Kalem*’s contributors construed “Sultan Hamid” as an

⁸⁵ “*Pıtır pıtır ağlayarak: Bari bunları bana bırakınız*” (“Crying softly: Leave at least these to me”); *Davul* 22, İstanbul, 29 Nisan 1325 (Rumi) [12 May 1909], cover page.

⁸⁶ “*Ciel sauve-nous, cette sorte de poisson de terrible*”; “Heaven save us from this terrible fish”; *Kalem* 6, İstanbul, 8 October 1908 (Gregorian), cover page.

⁸⁷ “*Un coq d’Inde qui a sa queue déplumée*” (“A Turkey who has been plucked”); “*New York’ta Enver Bey’den: Tüyü de dökülmü baba hindi*” (“From Enver Bey in New York: The Turkey has been molting”); *Davul* 21, İstanbul, 10 Nisan 1325 (Rumi) [23 April 1909], 6.

⁸⁸ “*Şah İran: Can-e man in çi halist? (yahu bu ne hal)—Hünkar: Gülme komşu ki gelir başına*” (“Shah of Iran: What’s going on?—Sovereign: Neighbor, don’t laugh at another’s misfortune, it may happen to you one day”); *ibid*, cover page. See also *Davul* 28 wherein Abdülhamid II appears shaking hands with Tsar Nicholas II with the caption “two diplomats (İki diplomat)”; *Davul* 28 İstanbul, 16 Mart 1325 [?] (Rumi) [29 April 1909], cover page.

⁸⁹ “*Kırmızı değirmen cinayetleri’ romanı قارم [?] veya kahramanlarından*” (“Red Mill Murders’ or one of its characters”); *Davul* 21, İstanbul, 15 Nisan 1325 (Rumi) [28 April 1909], 4.

⁹⁰ “*İstanbul’un...galip ettiği en büyük burun*”; *Davul* 24, 14 Mayıs 1325 (Rumi), cover page. For another cartoon that features Abdülhamid II nose, see *Geveze* 23, İstanbul, 21 Kanunısani 1324 (Rumi) [3 February 1909], cover.

⁹¹ See for instance *Kalem* 29, İstanbul, 18 May 1909 (Gregorian), 8.

incompetent ruler oblivious to the conditions of his empire, as is the case with a cartoon published shortly after his deposition that depicted Abdülhamid II viewing an approaching crowd of dissidents with a backwards looking glass;⁹² as the sultan's vision is obscured by his faulty use of the (otherwise useful) equipment available to him, his actions created the "optical illusion" that political change was much further away from him than expected.⁹³

On the other hand, especially after his April 27th deposition, Abdülhamid II's persona was frequently evoked to represent a hyperbolically villainous anti-monarch. In this view, he was tyranny embodied and despotism incarnate; the real "sick man of Europe," bringing misery and ruin to his subjects through his political ineptitudes and his corrupt administration of justice.⁹⁴ Indeed, anathematic personal and political characters like despotism (*istibdad*) were often directly and explicitly associated with the sultan and his legacy.⁹⁵ As an emperor who failed to live up to the expectations of his subjects, he was thus deserving of the same fate as a criminal who has transgressed the boundaries of imperial law. Take for example a cartoon from the early days of the sultan's exile in which a bloody-handed Abdülhamid II stands before a gallows pole, scimitar at his side, embellished with the words "despotism personified" ("*İstibdad müşahhas*").⁹⁶ Hence, if the new revolutionary heroes of the Second Constitutional Period were commonly associated with liberty (*hürriyet*), Abdülhamid II was cast as its personified antithesis. Having dispensed with all semblance of dutiful governance at the end of a thirty-three year long reign of tyranny and corruption, "Sultan Hamid" cared little for the lives of his people and freely sacrificed their lives as needed. This view can be seen in another cartoon published just days after Abdülhamid II was overthrown, wherein the sultan and

⁹² "Illusion d'optique. De 1877 à 1909. Ah! Je m'étais trompé; 27 Avril 1909" ("The optical Illusion from 1877 to 1909. Ah! I was wrong; 27 April 1909"); "1293-1325 Durbin-i cilve. Ah! Yanlış bakıyorum" ("A far-sighted look at the manifestation of fate. 1293-1325. Ah! I am seeing wrong"); *Kalem* 37, Istanbul, 13 Mayıs 1325 (Rumi) [26 May 1909] 8.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ On the sultan as "sick man," see *Kalem* 29, Istanbul, 18 May 1909 (Gregorian), 8.

⁹⁵ For another example, see the cartoon in Brummett, *Image & Imperialism*, 102.

⁹⁶ "C'est à ne pas en croire ses oreilles, il a déshonoré tous les autocrates"; ("This is not to be believed, he has dishonored all autocrats"); *Kalem* 34, Istanbul, 16 Nisan 1325 (Rumi), 8. A similar example can be found in an issue of *Davul* from the previous day. In this case the sultan appears flanked by human skulls, drenched in blood, and identified as the "Sabık [former] hünkar ve hunkar," a play on the similarity between a word for sovereign ("hünkar") and the markedly negative phrase "the bloody" (*hunkar*); *Davul* 21, Istanbul, 15 Nisan 1325 (Rumi)[28 April 1909],4.

his secretary discuss the demands of the mob that has gathered outside of Yıldız Palace.⁹⁷ “Let’s give them whatever want,” says the sultan, all the while wondering whether they might be appeased by “the heads of one or two Grand Viziers” or by the head of his secretary himself.⁹⁸ While the sultan contemplates the desires of his subjects and contemplates the wanton killing of his officials, his secretary remarks on the sultan’s slowness in realizing that it is *his own* head that the rioting crowd has asked for.⁹⁹ A painting of a decapitated head served on a platter can be seen hanging on the wall in the background behind the sultan, thus adding to the overall comedy of the image.

In the moral universe of *Kalem*’s contributors, Abdülhamid II was not a partner in the revolution’s constitutional achievement in the months after July 1908. In contrast to the tenor of the venerative and celebratory “*Souvenirs de Constitution*” discussed above, he was the revolution’s antagonist: a reactionary despot whose desired freedom of action was becoming increasingly limited by the Ottoman parliament. By his deposition in 1909, the sultan’s disappearing political and personal autonomy had become a running joke. For example, it was visualized in a January 1909 cartoon that presented him as a bird chained to its perch on the battlements of a castle.¹⁰⁰ As he watches an airplane soar overhead, the caption summarizes his psychological state with the word “jealousy” (“*kıskançılık*”).¹⁰¹ This metaphor can also be seen in an image from the following month, in which Abdülhamid II is shackled to the side of a cliff assaulted by hungry vultures while a group of onlookers celebrate in a distant city (ostensibly Istanbul).¹⁰² In an ironic evocation of the sultan’s exile, the caption informs us that “Abdülhamid is doing extremely well. He is very pleased with Salonica and doesn’t want to be in a position to

⁹⁷—*Va voir, que demande-t-il? Est-ce les têtes quelques Grands Vézirs, est ce la tienne; je'accept d'avance, on fera droit â leur demande. —...—Serais-tu muet, par exemple, tu ne dis rien. Demanderaient-ils ma...—Le secrétaire.—Il y a mis du temps, mais il a compris* (“—Go and see, what they want? The heads of Grand Viziers, yours; I accept in advance, we will grant their request—...—Would you be silent, for example, if not mine...—The Secretary: It took some time, but he understood”); “—*Bak, ne istiyorlarsa verelim! Afv umumi, bir iki sadrazam başı mı, senin basın mı? —...—Söylesen dilin mi tutuldu mu? Yoksa benim... (Kendi Kendine) هاشونى [?] bile eden*” (“Look, whatever they want we will give! Universal pardon? The heads of one or two Grand Viziers? Your head?—...— Speak? Are you tongue tied? Or [they want] mine...—... (To himself) Finally he has understood”); *Kalem* 34, Istanbul, April 29 1909 (Gregorian), cover page.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Kalem* 65, Istanbul, 26 Teşrinisani 1325 (Rumi) [9 December 1909], cover page.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Kalem* 76, Istanbul, 18 Şubat 1325 (Rumi)[28 February 1910], 4.

leave”¹⁰³—despite his lack of choice of in the matter.

As Palmira Brummett notes, Abdülhamid II’s persona “in exile” underwent a general yet not universal transition from “the formidable despot” to the “stooped and defeated” monarch that elicited humor based on the unfortunate personal situation that his “despotism” had garnered for him.¹⁰⁴ The *mise en scène* of the Hamidian drama was therefore somewhat paradoxical: on the one hand, Abdülhamid II had been a ruling member of the House of Osman and was thus deserving of all of the powers and privileges as the Prophet’s successor (“*halife*”) and God’s earthly shadow. Nevertheless, in the logic of the satirical press, he had overstepped the limitations of this position through tyranny and corruption and was finally put in check by the revolution of July 1908 and, later, by the Ottoman Action Army (*Hareket Ordusu*) in April 1909.¹⁰⁵

In some cases, *Kalem*’s “sultan in exile” directly fits Brummett’s description, as several cartoons depict him as a miserable and lonely outcast who is down on his luck. In one case from June 1911, Abdülhamid II is shown conversing with one of his harem eunuch’s about the possibility of receiving “universal amnesty” during a public celebration,¹⁰⁶ perhaps in response to Sultan Mehmed V granting of amnesty to rebels in Ottoman Albania.¹⁰⁷ Depicted bent-double and seated on a divan, the ex-sultan has been humbled by his humiliating state and is desperately seeking pardon at any opportunity. Another example finds him weeping into a handkerchief and “remembering Nisan 14th” (April 27th in the Gregorian calendar), the day of his dethronement.¹⁰⁸ Another cartoon

¹⁰³ “*Nouveaux Prométhée: Les Fourneaux-Abdul Hamid se porte très bien et ne veut par quitiér Salonique*” (“The New Prometheus: The Furnace-Abdul Hamid behaves well and does not want to leave Salonica”); “*Gazeteler: Abdülhamid’in hal ve sahtı son derecede iyidir. Selanikten pek memnundur ve oradan ayırabilmek istemiyor*” (“Newspapers: He is very pleased with being in Salonica and does not want to be in a position to leave”); *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Brummett, *Image & Imperialism*, 121.

¹⁰⁵ The commander of the Action Army, Mahmud Şevket Paşa (1856-1913), also had a considerable media presence in the wake of the counter revolution. While his public persona was much more positive than that of Abdülhamid II, he nevertheless appeared in cartoon-form in the satirical press; see for example *Kalem* 57, Istanbul, 1 Teşrinievvel 1325 (Rumi) [14 October 1909], cover page.

¹⁰⁶ “*À la villa de l’armée-Ali, est ce que l’amnistie est-elle comprise dans le programme des fetes?—Inchallah!!!!....*” (“At the army villa—Ali, is the amnesty included in the program of festivities?—Inchallah!!!!”); “*Ali, şenlikler arasında afv-i umumi de daha mı?—İnşallah!!..* (Ali, will there also be universal amnesty as part of the festivities?”); *Kalem* 29, Istanbul, 15 June 1911 (Gregorian), cover page.

¹⁰⁷ George W. Gawrych, *The Crescent and the Eagle: Ottoman Rule, Islam and the Albanians, 1874-1913* (London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 2006), 186.

¹⁰⁸ “*14 Nisan hatırlatı—hüngür, hüngür ağlarım. Ciğerimi dağalarım...*” (“Remembering April 14th—Im sobbing bitterly. I’m hurting deeply.”); *Kalem* 122, Istanbul, 1327 (Rumi) [20 April 1911 Gregorian], cover

published only days after his deposition finds “Sultan Hamid” in a position of vexed repose, lamenting his unfortunate circumstances and wishing that Abu l-Huda al-Sayyadi (d. 1909), one of his former administrators was around to aid him in his exile.¹⁰⁹ Thus, while *Kalem*’s contributors always represented Abdülhamid II in some form of caricature, they sometimes represented him “if not as sympathetic, at least as familiar.”¹¹⁰ The sultan was, after all, a member of the Ottoman House, and his post-dethronement longing for better days likely spoke to a wider nostalgia for “the lost era of Ottoman glory.”¹¹¹

However the “sultan in exile” was not without the potential to create further problems in the Ottoman world. He was, after all, a despot who exemplified all that the revolution opposed, and *Kalem*’s contributors continued to depict him as a menace, albeit an imprisoned one, whose commemoration demanded emphasis on his tyrannical nature. Even after his dethronement, he remained a figure that haunted representations of Ottoman politics and Ottoman sovereignty.¹¹² For example, one cartoon depicts Abdülhamid II in a cage (replete with elongated nose, chin, and other exaggerated facial features) surrounded by revelers holding banners bearing the phrases “Liberty,” “Progress,” and “Vive le Sultan” as well as the name of his imperial successor (“Mehmed V”).¹¹³ Hence, while the sultan has been removed and marginalized politically by the empire, his aggressive and bestial appearance signal his status as a dangerous figure antithetical to the values of the new constitutional era. Nevertheless, the presence of the French words “Sans Souci” (“without worry/carefree”) implies that the empire’s future remains safe as long as he is incarcerated and under the control of the new regime. He has been relieved of all “worries,” “cares” and responsibilities as Ottoman emperor.

Yet the cartoon memory of Hamidian villainy also involved a recollection of the

page.

¹⁰⁹ “—O Ebul-Huda où es-tu? Si tu étais encore là, tu aurais pu conjurer ce malheur” (“—O Ebu l-Huda where are you? If you were still there, you could have warded off this misfortune”); “Ah Abdul Huda nerdesin? Eğer sen olsaydına bunlar başıma gelmezdi” (“Ah Abul Huda where are you? If you were still here this misfortune would not have happened to me”); *Kalem* 34, Istanbul, 16 Nisan 1325 (Rumi) [29 April 1909], cover page.

¹¹⁰ Brummett, *Image & Imperialism*, 128.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² For a cartoon that speaks to this latter concept, see *Kalem* 29, Istanbul, 28 Mayıs 1325 (Rumi) [10 June 1909 Gregorian], cover page.

¹¹³ *Kalem* 130, Istanbul, 16 Haziran 1327 (Rumi) [29 June 1909 Gregorian], 9.

crimes of the Hamidian regime and the political misfortunes it had caused. One cartoon from May 1909 conveys the danger that Sultan Hamid's past misdeeds continued to pose by depicting him offering large swathes of the empire's territories to Kaiser Wilhelm II (r. 1888-1918) on a pastry platter.¹¹⁴ "Master, would you like to eat this beautiful cake?" ("...*bu güzel pastasını tenavül buyururlar mı?*") he asks, while the Kaiser devours yet another Ottoman province that is visible on his plate.¹¹⁵ This theme can also be seen in a slightly earlier image that shows the British King Edward VII (r. 1901-10) embracing a "Russian bear" meant to represent the Romanov Empire.¹¹⁶ Labelled "One of the consequences of the reign of Abdülhamid," it blames the Hamidian regime for the 1907 alliance between Great Britain and Imperial Russia (which caused considerable anxiety amongst Ottoman diplomatic circles), thus driving them literally "into each other's arms."¹¹⁷ At the same time, the sultan's exile did not cleanse him of the ability to do harm in the post-revolutionary present. For instance, one cartoon shows him in a schoolhouse holding forth in "a classroom of despotism" ("*Bir derslane-i istibdad*") to other contemporary monarchs, thus imparting his "expertise" in tyrannical misgovernment to other imperial powers even during his gilded banishment.¹¹⁸ In this sense, the cartoonist construes the deposed sultan as a figure who had caused many of the empire's historical problems, yet still remained a risk for contemporary Ottomans even while virtually incarcerated in Salonica. On the other hand, still other cartoons coupled parody with revisionism by assigning an ironically positive historical role to Hamidian despotism. In this connection, one cartoon from the fall of 1909 has Abdülhamid II pompously taking credit for the emergence of an Ottoman "Republic."¹¹⁹ As his malfeasant administrative decisions had instigated political change and upheaval, he should be credited with the improved state of things.

¹¹⁴ "Sire! Voulez-vous manger ce gâteau?—Merci, je n'ai pas encore digéré l'autre." ("Sire! Do you want to eat this cake?—Thank you, I have not yet digested the other."); *Kalem* 35, Istanbul, 6 May 1909 (Gregorian), cover page.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ *Kalem* 34, Istanbul, 26 Nişan 1325 (Rumi) [9 May 1909 Gregorian], 4.

¹¹⁷ "*Une des conséquences du régime d'Abdul-Hamid*"; "*Devri Hamidi neticeden*"; ibid.

¹¹⁸ *Kalem* 39, Istanbul, 28 Mayıs 1325 (Rumi) [10 June 1909], 6.

¹¹⁹ "*Je serai toujours le Grand méconnu. Pourquoi ne pas vouloir comprendre qu'en facilitant la réaction je préparais l'Republic*" ("Abdul Hamid: I will always be the Great unrecognized. Why would you not want to understand that by facilitating the reaction I was preparing the Republic"); *Kalem* 49, Istanbul, 6 Ağustos 1325 (Rumi) [19 August 1909], 9.



Figure 7. "Les Traîtres"¹²⁰

¹²⁰ "Les Traîtres," Geveze 41, İstanbul, 26 Mart 1325 [?] (Rumi), cover page.



Figure 8. Abdülhamid II the exile in Salonica¹²¹

¹²¹ *Kalem* 76, Istanbul, 18 Şubat 1325 (Rumi) [28 February 1910], 4.



Figure 9. “Remembering Nisan 14th”¹²²

¹²² *Kalem* 29, Istanbul, 28 Mayıs 1325 (Rumi) [10 June 1909], cover page.

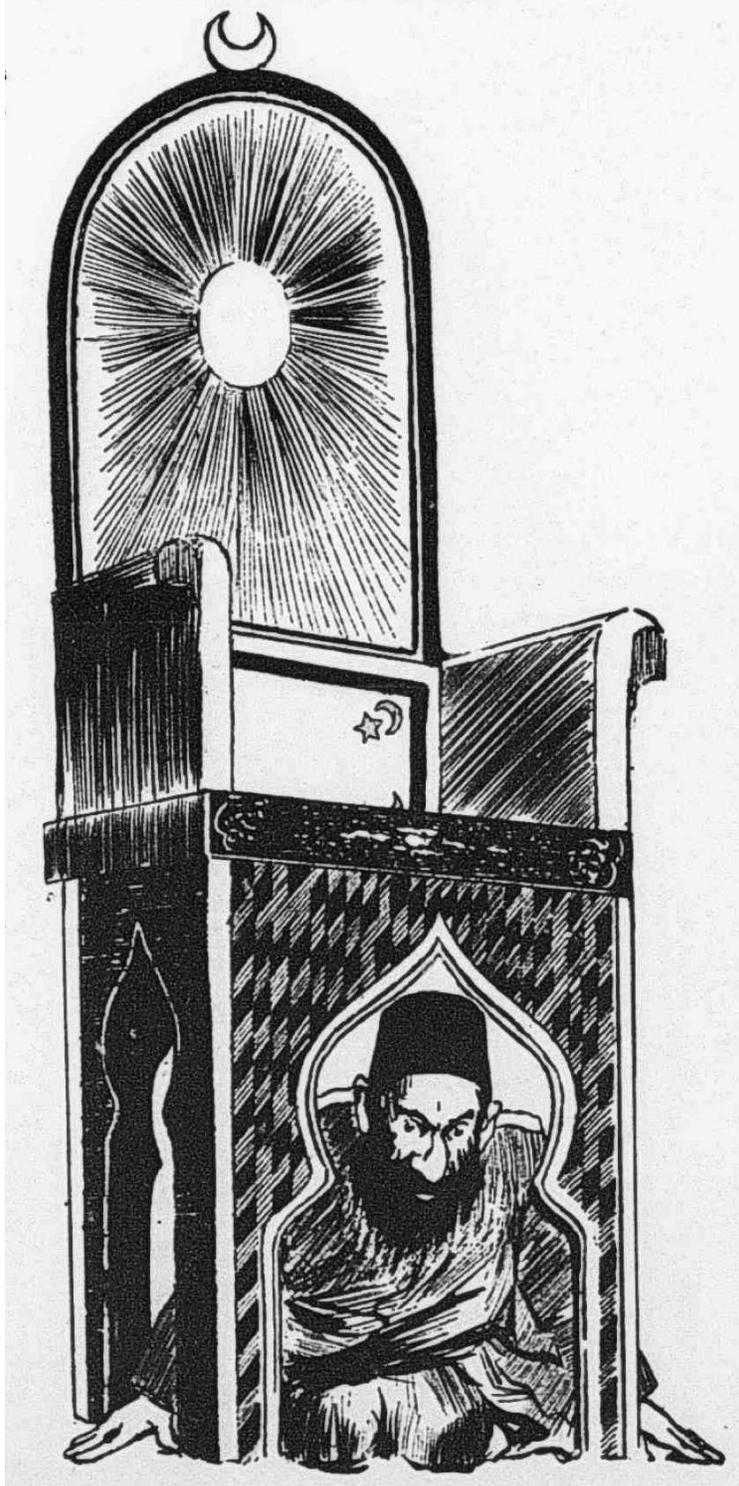


Figure 10. Abdülhamid II and Ottoman sovereignty¹²³

¹²³ *Kalem* 29, Istanbul, 28 Mayıs 1325 (Rumi), cover page.

While *Kalem*'s Abdülhamid II was multivalent, quicksilver, and protean, the sultan's villainous persona took the form of a recurring character within the pages of the magazine. Yet well beyond the confines of *Kalem*, "Sultan Hamid" was a recognizable persona that carried a particular and relatively stable set of connotations. Indeed, satirical renderings of his person were frequently featured on the front covers of magazine, thus indicating that "Sultan Hamid" was both a familiar face to Ottoman consumers and a selling point for magazine publishers even in his markedly caricatured forms. Although he makes fewer and fewer appearances in the cartoon realm from 1910 onwards, Abdülhamid II was nonetheless an important player on the post-revolutionary satirical stage, a role that contravened his personal will and flew in the face of the cultural prerogatives of his regime.

**Conclusion:
The Curtain Removed, the Caliph Commodified**

Throughout the period under study, the Hamidian chapter of Ottoman history was in the process of being written, rewritten, and illustrated in many different ways by many different minds, the majority of whom did not identify themselves or explain their motivations in detail. In this revolutionary satirical milieu, the place of the House of Osman in the liberated constitutional order seemed tenuous and uncertain for some.¹ Yet while the persona of Abdülhamid II was made to either serve as a villainous despot, malfeasant buffoon, or nostalgic exile, in many of the aforementioned print media contexts, his transformation from sultan-caliph to comical antagonist did not signal the end of the House of Osman as a tenable nexus of the Ottoman imperial system. Hence, the Ottoman revolution of 1908-09 differs markedly from the Bourbon and Romanov cases in that it did not signal the end of the dynasty as symbol of the imperial state. As evidenced by the public veneration of Mehmed V throughout his decade-long reign, the revolution did not usher in the end of the dynasty's place as the symbolic center of the empire. Indeed, despite their loss of control over their own public representation, the emergence of CUP hero cults that infringed on their monopoly over the dispensation of imperial prestige, and the ongoing limitation of the effective power of the *padişah* by the

¹ On the discourse of monarchical obsolescence in the revolutionary press, see Brummett, *Image & Imperialism*, 116-120.

parliamentary assembly, the House of Osman remained an indispensable element of their imperial world for many Ottomans.

Nevertheless, the revolution marked a significant limitation in the powers of the monarch as well as his commodification through print media culture. As I have intimated thus far, the effects of this commodification were multifaceted. On the one hand, Abdülhamid II's role as anti-constitutional villain in the satirical press ushered in a the unprecedented situation whereby the figurative image of an Ottoman sultan could be disseminated (and hence venerated and caricatured) using the efficient production mechanisms of a fledgling mass press. As the following chapter will show, this dramatic increase in the Ottoman Turkish media's use of figurative images of notable Ottoman persons would continue to influence the ways in which the *Istanbullular* experienced the major personae of the post-revolutionary era.

On the other hand, the subordination of the policy of Hamidian aniconism was itself a markedly political process, albeit one that was spurred on without centralized direction and control. In other words, despite the CUP's efforts to attack the Abdülhamid II's political legitimacy while in exile, their longheld collective disdain of the sultan-caliph, and their ambitions to political power at the sultan's expense, the cultural deconstruction of the Hamidian order was not an organized CUP initiative. As it was manifested on the ground and on the pages of newspapers, posters, and postcards, it was, for the most part, a phenomena driven by the producers and consumers of articles of material. The vast majority of these actors remain anonymous, yet the vestiges of their humble contributions to an overarching process are not beyond our reach

Chapter 4. Grand Heroes of the Twenty-fourth of July: Enver Bey, Niyazi Bey, and Ottoman Revolutionary Heroism (1908-1911)

In the fall of 1908 the Ottoman Albanian Gjylihan Hoxha and her husband Halil Hoxha, parents of the future Stalinist dictator Enver Hoxha (r. 1944-1945), decided to name their son “Enver” (أنور) in honor of Ismail Enver Bey (1881-1922), one of the heroic military leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress who had recently intimidated the regime of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909) into reinstating the Ottoman constitution of 1876.¹ The parents of future Egyptian president Muhammad “Anwar” (أنور) el-Sadat (r. 1970-81) made a similar decision in 1918.² Yet “Enver” was not simply a popular name for Ottoman boys in the wake of the revolutionary moment of 1908; it was a name that conjured the image of a hero of empire, a brave and victorious savior-figure whose face and persona came to be associated with the hopeful future of the Ottoman Empire.

Even so, his fame and repute was known far beyond the Well-Protected Domains of the Ottoman sultan.³ In the German Empire for example, Enver Bey the revolutionary leader gained a kind of heroic celebrity unparalleled by any other contemporary Ottoman figure. According to historian of twentieth-century Germany Stefan Ihrig, “it was Enver Pasha and he alone who became the symbol of the renewed Ottoman Empire” in Germany, and he soon gained the status of “a recognizable media figure.”⁴ Known also as “the Turkish Moltke” in reference to the revered German Field Marshal Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke (1800-91),⁵ Enver’s name graced a German brand of

¹ Frederick Anscombe, *State, Faith, and Nation in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Lands* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 250.

² Şuhnaz Yılmaz, “An Ottoman Warrior Abroad: Enver Paşa as an Expatriate,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 35 (1999): 65, n11.

³ For an influential biographical account of Enver’s life and career, see Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Makedonya’dan Ortaasya’ya Enver Paşa*, 3 volumes (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1971).

⁴ Stefan Ihrig, *Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination* (London: Belknap Press, 2014), 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*

cigarettes, a number of Berlin’s double-decker buses, a Potsdam bridge (“Enver-Pascha-Brücke”), and gained such a degree of ubiquity amongst German soldiers during the Great War (1914-18) that the Ottoman Empire itself was often referred to simply as “Enverland.”⁶ Given his relatively humble beginnings, how did a mid-level Ottoman military man acquire such a highly prominent persona in an empire where the House of Osman had long held a monopoly on the dispensation of social prestige?

It is widely accepted that much of the political decision making in the Ottoman central government was largely dominated by the high CUP leadership—albeit not without contestation from internal political factions—throughout the Second Constitutional Period.⁷ Although the notion that a “triumvirate” of paşas ruled over last Ottoman decade as a virtual dictatorship has been challenged in recent scholarship,⁸ Enver Bey, Mehmed Tala’at Bey (1874-1921), and Cemal Bey (1872-1922) maintained considerable *de-facto* control over domestic politics in the years after the *Bab-ı Ali* Coup of January 1913. However, during the initial years of revolutionary euphoria that followed 1908, it was typically only Enver and Ahmed “Resneli” Niyazi Bey (1873-1912) who were consistently vaunted with the novel phrase *Hürriyet Kahramanları* (“Heroes of Liberty”) and venerated as the revolution incarnate in the Ottoman Turkish press.⁹ As the saviors of the ailing empire and the decisive military strongmen who would champion strength, truth, and action where the Hamidian regime had wrought only indecision, decadence, and tyranny, theirs were some of the most recognizable political faces of the period.

Throughout the height of their fame in the era c. 1908-11, their heroism was predominantly associated with the political concept of “liberty” (*hürriyet*). An invaluable

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 93-103. As Zürcher notes, the political thwart of the CUP was in fact quite limited in the Ottoman provinces in the early years of the period, and they tended to rule by-proxy in these regions through local notables; idem, 95. At the same time, the CUP were also forced to compete with the resurgent political influence of the bureaucrats of the *Bab-ı Ali* (“Sublime Porte”) as well as that of Yıldız Palace and other political factions in parliament—like, for instance, the powerful liberal opposition party (*Osmanlı Ahrar Fırkası* or “Party of Ottoman Liberals”) led by Şehzade Sabahaddin Efendi; idem.

⁸ Indeed, Zürcher refers to the idea of a ruling “triumvirate” as a “simplification” and argues that “[t]he CUP was led by an inner circle of some 50 men, who belonged to a number of factions”; idem, 110.

⁹ While Ahmed Cemal Paşa (1872-1922) and Mehmed Talaat Paşa (1874-1921) were to become much more well-known in later years, they do appear to have received the same degree of attention as revolutionary heroes in the period under study as evidenced by the sources consulted.

treasure rescued from the clutches of Hamidian despotism (*istibdad*), Ottoman constitutional liberty had been crushed in its infancy in 1878 when Abdülhamid II had prorogued the Ottoman parliament after little more than a year. As Michelle Campos notes, Liberty was the principal object of veneration in the post-revolutionary press when it came to the achievements of July 1908:

“[r]ather than speaking of a ‘revolution,’ most often the press and public referred to ‘liberty’ (*al-hurriya*), such as the ‘arrival’ of *hurriya* or the periods ‘before’ or ‘after’ *hurriya*, and this term more than anything else served as a metonym for the 1908 revolution, encapsulating the aims of the revolutionaries, the dreams of its supporters, and even the fears of its opponents. ‘Liberty’ was not simply a question of political rights, but rather represented a broad flexible package of competing political, philosophical, social, cultural, and even metaphysical worldviews.”¹⁰

In this connection, the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* were at once the agents of revolution that had ushered in this new age of liberty, yet also the physical embodiment of liberty itself. They were celebrity soldiers who would lead the empire toward its destiny—a state of perfect liberty—and away from the despotism and decay of the Hamidian era.

Although the post-revolutionary hero cults of Enver and Niyazi have received peripheral attention in the literature,¹¹ no study has substantially examined their roles as heroic figures in the representational realm of revolutionary print culture, and the ways in which their heroic reputations contributed to the new post-revolutionary landscape of public persona has yet to be explored. Drawing on their coverage in Istanbul-based Ottoman Turkish illustrated newspapers and periodicals like *Resimli Kitap*, *Şehbal*, and *İctihad*, as well as the extant archive of commemorative memorabilia that singled them out as exemplary figures, I argue that the public cult of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* was one of the most prominent symbolic dimensions of the Ottoman revolutionary moment, for it was manifested in ways that framed Enver and Niyazi as some of the most

¹⁰ Campos, “Sacred Liberty,” 34-35.

¹¹ Enver’s larger-than-life public persona has been previously discussed by Edhem Eldem; see Edhem Eldem, “Enver, Before He Became Enver,” in *İkinci Meşrutiyet’in İlanının 100üncü Yılı. 100th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Constitution*, Bahattin Öztuncay ed. (Istanbul, Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, 2008), 90-101. For other works that touch on the *Hürriyet Kahramanları*, see Campos, “Sacred Liberty” in *Ottoman Brothers*, 38-42, Brummett, “The Voice and Image of the Public, and its Targets,” in *Image & Imperialism*, and 60-62.

prominent shapers of the new liberated Ottoman Empire. At the same time, by infringing on the privileged position of the House of Osman to represent the empire, honored as they were with countless newspaper appearances and with their own lifelike figurines and other memorabilia,¹² these figures constituted a radical break with past traditions of Ottoman rulership with respect to its expression in public space. Unlike older imperial heroes—like Gazi Osman Paşa (1832-1900), who had distinguished himself in the sultan’s service during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78—Enver and Niyazi made their names in revolutionary defiance of sultanic power. Although their actions were publicly construed as attempts to save the empire and the dynasty, their fame coincided with the ascent to power of a new military-political class which overtook the effective power of the Ottoman emperor, who had previously managed and subordinated the popular influence of imperial heroes through public ceremonial.¹³

However, as I have stressed above, I have little evidence to suggest that these heroic personae were the result of a “propaganda” campaign or some other kind of state-project bent on glorifying the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* at the expense of, or through association with the Ottoman dynasty or any of the other recurring personalities of the revolutionary moment. Indeed, unlike the other notable personality cults of the early twentieth century,¹⁴ Enver and Niyazi do not appear to have been the “architects” or “engineers” of their own cult. On the one hand, the Ottoman Empire lacked the centralized administrative structures and rigidly circumscribed public spheres wielded by later nation-states; on the other hand, there is little evidence to suggest that Enver and Niyazi actively and systematically propagated their cult with public opinion in mind, although isolated incidents (some explored below) suggest that they at least were aware of, and to some extent approved of their public veneration. Hence, while issues hinging on the politics of legitimacy and the sociology of power will certainly not be absent from

¹² Bahattin Öztuncay ed., *İkinci Meşrutiyet’in İlanının 100üncü Yılı*, 215.

¹³ For example, the Ottoman feminist, activist, and writer Halide Edib notes that Abdülhamid II took care to ensure that Gazi Osman Paşa’s fame did not impede or detract from his own authority and persona. See Halide Edib, *House With Wisteria: Memoirs of Turkey Old and New* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publications, 2009), 82 and 100.

¹⁴ See for example Ian Kershaw, *The ‘Hitler Myth’: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), and Daniel Leese, *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in China’s Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), and Jan Plamper, *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

my analysis, I orient my study towards querying the ways that these heroic figures were conceived in the revolutionary moment based on their representation in print media and memorabilia cultures produced by Istanbul-based publishers and artisans. In this connection, I hope to shed light on the place of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları*, and the novel brand of revolutionary military heroism that they exemplified, in the larger historical trajectory of late Ottoman public persona. It is thus the numerous “Envers” and “Niyazis” as avatars of liberty and revolution—and not as really-existing persons—that I am concerned with here. As larger-than-life heroes whose cults came to infringe on the sacral position of the Ottoman sultan in certain cultural contexts, their example offers insight into workings of popular heroism (and fame more generally) in the Second Constitutional Period (c. 1909-18).

After a brief discussion of the state of the secondary literature and the nature of my methodological approach, I touch on the place of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* in the larger context of late Ottoman heroism. Next, I turn to the role that the Heroes of Liberty were thought to occupy in the *long durée* of Ottoman history as evidenced by the Istanbul-based *Osmanlıca* press: namely their heroic triumph over Hamidian villainy and their consequent position as “saviors” of the future of the empire. Therefore, emphasis is placed on the characteristics and achievements that made them worthy of praise and emulation from the perspective of those that produced and sold their likenesses. Moreover, I also address a broad sampling of souvenirs and memorabilia that glorified the exploits of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* (yet also allowed Ottoman subjects to “take them home”) in hopes of shedding light on larger historiographic conversations concerning the commodification of individual persona in the twentieth century.¹⁵ Based on an analysis of revolutionary-era posters, postcards, and other domestic consumer products made available through art-historical collections,¹⁶ I aim to query the role of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* in shaping the Ottoman world of Ottoman-Turkish speaking

¹⁵ For works that address similar issues, see Daniel L. Unowsky, *Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848-1916* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2005), Ibragimov, *Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination*, Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, and Maureen Perrie, *The Cult of Ivan the Terrible in Stalin's Russia* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), Stephen Gundle, Christopher Duggan, and Giuliana Pieri eds. *The Cult of the Duce: Mussolini and the Italians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), and Plamper, *The Stalin Cult*.

¹⁶ Öztuncay ed., *İkinci Meşrutiyet'in İlanının 100üncü Yılı*, and idem, *Propaganda and War: The Allied Front during the First World War* (İstanbul: Vehbi Koç Foundation Publications, 2014).

Istanbullular as it was conveyed by the often anonymous salesmen and artisans who designed and sold their commemorative products.

By way of conclusion, and building on the foundation of the previous chapter, I address the ways in which the public veneration of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* infringed on the privileged position of Sultan Mehmed V (r. 1909-18) to represent the Ottoman Empire through the inclusion of their figurative images (as well as those of other imperial heroes) alongside that of the sultan in various forms of memorabilia and in the illustrated press. However, while the sultan's relegation to the position of a "constitutional monarch" meant his removal from much of the day-to-day operations of governance, he nevertheless enjoyed a paradoxical visibility and media fame in illustrated publications such as *Resimli Kitap* and *Servet-i Fünûn* that was unprecedented in Ottoman monarchical history. Thus, as I have intimated above, and in spite of the rise of the rise and public prominence of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları*, I conclude that the politics of public persona in the Second Constitutional Period did not signal not a complete break from the pre-revolutionary one inasmuch as the ruling member of the House of Osman continued to hold weight as an imperial nexus of identification and affiliation for Ottoman subjects.

Historiography

A handful of studies have addressed the fame of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* as an aspect of Ottoman revolutionary culture. As Bedross Der Matossian notes, the public glorification of individual heroes worked to unite disparate groups in the collective celebration of the 1908 revolution. In his view, figures like Enver and Niyazi "crossed not only religious and ethnic boundaries but also the geographic boundaries of the empire to become popular icons personifying the victory of the Revolution and demise of the ancien régime."¹⁷ This view is echoed by Palmira Brummett, who reads the media-circulated posed studio portraits of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* as the confident avatars of a "heroic revolution that would bring freedom, order, success, and prosperity to Ottoman society."¹⁸ Similarly, Michelle Campos describes Enver and Niyazi as "the

¹⁷ Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution*, 32.

¹⁸ Brummett, *Image & Imperialism*, 60.

representatives and guardians of liberty,”¹⁹ “the sources of book dedications, poems, postcards, and commemorative kerchiefs, ceramics, and cigarette papers and cases, not to mention numerous laudatory reports in the press.”²⁰ In this sense, they became “ubiquitous symbols” of a newly liberated Ottoman utopia.²¹ Still other studies peripherally highlight their role as “larger-than-life” revolutionary leaders whose actions provided moral guidance to the post-revolutionary world that replaced the Hamidian regime. Edhem Eldem’s “Enver, Before He Became Enver” and Şuhnaz Yilmaz’s “An Ottoman Warrior Abroad: Enver Paşa as an Expatriate” are thus far the only English-language studies that examine the relationship between Enver’s political career and the emergence of his heroic persona,²² yet the life of Niyazi has received virtually no attention in this regard. Finally, Mustafa Özen’s study of revolutionary-era visual culture treats Enver and Niyazi as “the symbols of a patriotic-nationalistic hero-construction that appealed to military and heroic concepts.”²³ Yet while these works make significant reference to the cult of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* as important figures in Ottoman revolutionary culture, few studies make reference to more than a few individual images or anecdotes in their explication of Enver and Niyazi’s fame, and none takes up their hero cult as a central analytical focus. Thus, in spite of their perceived importance to the unfolding of the revolution as well as its aftermath, a primary source-based study of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* that endeavors an extensive examination of their representation in Ottoman print media culture has yet to emerge.

Methodology

In examining the hero cult of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* I do not intend to insinuate that Enver and Niyazi were pervasive cult figures whose personae uniformly captivated the hearts and minds of *Istanbullular*. Moreover, given the relative scarcity of extant visual sources and a lack of a systematic means to quantify or qualify their dissemination and reception, it would be hazardous to generalizing widely about the

¹⁹ Michelle Campos, *Sacred Liberty*, 40.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 38-39.

²¹ *Ibid*, 38.

²² Eldem, “Enver, Before He Became Enver,” 90-101 and Yilmaz, “An Ottoman Warrior Abroad,” 40-69.

²³ Mustafa Özen, “Visual Representation and Propaganda: Early Films and Postcards in the Ottoman Empire, 1895–1914,” *Early Popular Visual Culture* 6 (2008): 153-154.

scope of their popularity. To be sure, reportage on the careers and achievements of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* was quite widespread, and was received by an international audience in addition to its recurrent presence in the *Osmanlıca* press (as well as other Ottoman presses). As evidenced by a 1915 article in *The Washington Post*, the fame and infamy of the *Kahramanları* was recognized across cultural and geographic space.²⁴ In this case, Enver Bey is identified as “a marvelous swordsman, a fluent linguist, a man of ascetic simplicity of life, possessed of a remarkable combination of the qualities of idealism and practicality, of the mystic and the man of action.”²⁵ Hence, word of Enver’s “forceful personality” extended far beyond the domains of the Ottoman sultan, and thus beyond the purview of CUP press control.²⁶

At the same time, however, questions as to whether most *Istanbulular* knew Enver and Niyazi at all (by name or by face), or whether they thought of them specifically (or even predominantly) as heroes, remain markedly unclear even in the more limited context of Ottoman Istanbul. Therefore, while the fame of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* appears to have demonstrably transcended contemporary national and imperial boundaries, precisely gauging the degree of their fame at the level of the individual *Istanbulu* would require an extensive quantitative analysis. Even so, this approach would still fall short of explicating the minds of individual persons, whose thoughts are in many cases not readily accessible for our perusal. It is thus extremely difficult to guess at the variety of social positions held by those interested or invested in the cult, with the exception of informed (and albeit limited) speculations about the social positions of the average consumers of print media culture—i.e. literate men with disposable income. However, as I note above, this line of argument does not account for the people who consumed print culture secondhand, or for those who were made aware of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* either through the oral testimony of others or through personal experience. According to Michelle Campos, “[b]low-by-blow accounts of the

²⁴ “Enver Pasha, Gunman of the East Known also as Beau Brummell of Asia; Real Hero in Turkish Drama,” *The Washington Post*, Washington D.C., 30 August 1915, 5.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.* As Niyazi Bey had died four years earlier in 1911, it is not surprising to find disproportionate emphasis on Enver Bey in this particular article. For an earlier instance that mention both heroes, see “Photograph Brigands; Curious Obtain Photographs of Turkish Outlaws; Old Order Changes Rapidly,” *The Washington Post*, Washington D.C., 3 September 1908, 14.

revolution and its heroes were published in newspapers and on broadsheets” yet were also “were spread by word of mouth in city cafés and village squares.”²⁷ In other words, while the anecdotal sources constantly remind us of the popularity of these heroes, it is markedly difficult to analytically evaluate the scope of this popularity.

As I note above, the cult of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* differed markedly from the later personality cults of state leaders. Unlike the cults of Führer Adolf Hitler (r. 1933-45),²⁸ Joseph Stalin (r. c. 1927-52),²⁹ Chairman Mao Zedong (r. 1949-76),³⁰ or Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (r.1923-1938),³¹ Enver and Niyazi’s veneration was not facilitated by a tightly organized state project whereby state actors and institutions propagated the leader’s cult through the purposeful management and dissemination of information via an efficient public-relations bureaucracy.³² Indeed, their hero cult was bolstered for the most part by the participants in the Ottoman media and by its consumers.³³ In this connection, the work of Edward Berenson provides an instructive example. As Berenson notes, the heroic achievements of several of the gentlemen-explorers of colonial Britain and France were recorded by the authors themselves in bestselling memoirs, yet they owed their widespread recognition and renown to reportage in a cheap and affordable penny press.³⁴ Much like the Ottoman case, wherein the

²⁷ Michelle Campos, *Sacred Liberty*, 40.

²⁸ See Ian Kershaw, *The ‘Hitler Myth’: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

²⁹ See Jan Plamper, *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

³⁰ See Daniel Leese, *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in China's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

³¹ See Esra Özyürek, *Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), idem ed., *The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey* (Syracuse, N.Y.; Syracuse University Press, 2007), and Yael Navaro-Yashin, “The Cult of Atatürk: The Apparition of a Secularist Leader in Uncanny Forms,” in *Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Oxford New Jersey: Princeton University Press (2002): 188-203.

³² This term is borrowed from Jan Plamper’s work on the cult of Joseph Stalin; see Jan Plamper, *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), xvi. For Plamper, a personality cult is “the symbolic elevation of one person much above others,” although (in his view) the array of cult-objects must always be limited to “living or deceased real human beings” from the realm of politics, “not allegorical beings...collectives of persons” or figures from the spheres of religion, literature, film, music, or sports; *ibid*, xv

³³ On fame and celebrity in late imperial contexts, see Edward Berenson ed., *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame, and Power in Nineteenth-century Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

³⁴ Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, 20. This Arabic edition was published as Resneli Niyazi Bey, *Khawāṭir Niyāzī*, Velī ed-Dīn Yegen trans. (Cairo: Matba‘at ‘Alī Sukkar Aḥmad, 1909) and images of Enver (“Hero of Liberty Commander Enver Bey”; “بك أنور البكاشي الحرييت بطل”; and Niyazi (“Resneli Niyazi”; “نيزاي”;

firsthand testimonies of colonial heroes were the subject of particular demand (Niyazi Bey's autobiographical account of the revolution appeared in Ottoman, Greek, Armenian, Bulgarian, French, and English, and was later translated into Arabic after "one Beirut newspaper editor complained about the oversight"),³⁵ the populism of these British and French colonial heroes was facilitated and henceforth amplified by the complex web of individual motivations and institutional prerogatives embodied by the mass press. While not free of prejudice, and even a degree of state-censorship in the Second Constitutional Period, in both cases "the media trumpeted their trials and tribulations and framed their work as wondrous, meaningful, and great."³⁶ In this connection, the world-historical context in which the cult of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* came into being can help to shed light on the emergence of these popular "supermen." As Jan Plamper notes, the age of consumerism, mass culture, and participatory politics and its accompanying democratizing tendencies wrought a paradoxical situation wherever it spread: indeed, "elevation above the anonymous masses became one of the most rare and most coveted items. The more everyone seemed alike, the greater the value of being different."³⁷

In any case, as I have not found evidence to support the notion that a centralized group or set of institutions were the *de facto* "managers" of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* phenomenon, I examine it principally as a social-historical and cultural-historical phenomenon and not solely as a development in Ottoman political history. Furthermore, while addressing the "popularity" of these imperial heroes cannot be bolstered by a quantitative as well as a qualitative analysis at this juncture, I nevertheless attempt to shed light on the historical exigencies of a post-revolutionary Istanbul in which venerative memorabilia and news coverage was available to *Istanbullular*. In this way, I argue that the example of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* "gave empire a strong emotive resonance and invested a broad public in its success."³⁸ However, unlike the heroism of their counterparts in Britain and France, this investment in "the empire" was not necessarily indicative of widespread faith in an overseas colonial project, but rather a

(الرسنهلي) appear on pages 13 and 14 respectively.

³⁵ Campus, "Sacred Liberty," 40.

³⁶ Berenson, *Heroes of Empire*, 20.

³⁷ Plamper, *The Stalin Cult*, 10.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 21.

vote of confidence for the continuation of a version of the multi-ethnic multi-religious Ottoman imperium in the face of the challenges presented by internal and external forces (i.e., separatist nationalism, state bankruptcy, and Great power imperialism).

Self-made Men:

Kahramanlık and Hürriyet Kahramanlığı in the Late Ottoman Empire

In spite of the public visibility of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* in the wake of the revolution, the title of “hero” (“*kahraman*”) had been attached to the names of Ottomans as honorific titles long before 1908. In the late Hamidian period, military figures like Gazi Osman Paşa (1832-1900)³⁹ and Fuad Paşa (1835-1931) were awarded this title in recognition of their service to the sultan against the forces of the Romanov Tsar during the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78. In this connection, each was named in reference to the particular battle in which they distinguished themselves through their heroism: Osman Paşa acquired the title of *Plevne Kahramanı* (“Hero of Plevna”) for his efforts at the Battle of Plevna in 1877, while Fuad Paşa became *Elena Kahramanı* in recognition of his role in the Battle of Elena that same year.⁴⁰ However, while Abdülhamid II’s dispensation of these titles tended to accompany a promotion in military rank, the sultan also appears to have taken a particular interest in maintaining a degree of control over the careers and public popularity of these figures. For instance, Fuad Paşa was eventually accused of plotting against Abdülhamid II in 1902 and was placed under house arrest until the outbreak of the revolution, while Osman Paşa was kept close to the sultan himself where his celebrity could cause no harm to his government. As Halide Edib notes, this sultan was markedly concerned about the social thwart of certain popular individuals and took steps to ensure they could not pose a political threat to him:

Abdul Hamid feared the popularity of two men, [*Plevne Kahramanı*] Osman Pasha and [the comedian] Abdulrazzak. He kept Osman Pasha away from the public by attaching him to his royal person, and he followed the same tactics with Abdi. The famous comedian was taken into the royal Music Amusement Department and was forbidden to play in public. A despot is not a real despot if he is not jealous of every popular talent not exclusively used for his royal

³⁹ On the life of Gazi Osman Paşa see Osman Senai, *Plevne Kahramanı Gazi Osman Paşa* (Istanbul: Feridiye Matbaası, 1317 [1899 Gregorian]).

⁴⁰ Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution*,

pleasure, and permitted to the public only through him.⁴¹

According to Halide, such “public favorite[s]” were allotted a privileged place in the sultan’s retinue during public celebrations,⁴² thus producing a sort of sociopolitical “gilded cage.” For example, during the weekly *Selamlık* procession from Yıldız Palace to its accompanying mosque, Osman Paşa “the old hero of Plevne and of many popular songs too, his hands folded in his lap...was thus exhibited in an almost humiliating position, in an enforced attitude of respect and subservience to the sultan whom everyone feared and many hated.”⁴³

It should be noted here that Halide’s recollections of this period were recorded much later (in 1926), at which point the Kemalist government had already established the Republic of Turkey and had begun to spend their intellectual energies Turkifying, defaming, and disowning their Ottoman past. Indeed, the Hamidian regime (and Abdülhamid II in particular) had come to be widely construed as a corrupt and tyrannical force in the Ottoman press since the early days of the Second Constitutional Period, a trend that would continue with vigorous Kemalist encouragement throughout the first decades of the Republic. While Halide’s vehement condemnation of the sultan’s actions must be taken with a grain of salt, Fausto Zonaro’s memory of being honored with a promotion at Abdülhamid II’s court largely confirms her recollection of the special, albeit almost “domesticated” place that the likes of Osman Paşa enjoyed in Ottoman imperial ceremonial. While waiting his turn in line to receive the prestigious Ottoman rank of *Saniye* (“Second”), Zonaro noticed that even a high-status figure like the incumbent Şeyhülislam would be made to kiss an object held by Osman Paşa in the process of their recognition by the sultan:⁴⁴

His majesty invites everyone to pray standing up and then he sits on his brilliant gilded throne and the hand kissing commences. Sat on the left of His majesty the Sultan, with a shawl in his hand, was the hero of Pleven [...] We move forward in a line. First are the religious men in their gold-braided purple and green robes. At the front is the Sheikh ul-Islam, who greets His majesty, kisses the shawl in the

⁴¹ Edib, 100.

⁴² Edib, 82.

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Zonaro, *Twenty Years under the Reign of Abdülhamid*, 163.

hand of the hero of Plevna, and returns.⁴⁵

Thus, at least in the context of the late Hamidian period, the social prestige enjoyed by those honored with the title of *kahraman* tended to be tied to the persona and prestige of the sultan as the reigning Ottoman emperor. Although this was assuredly an honorable, and perhaps even a desirable social position, their raised status was nevertheless directly tied to his person and to his imperial House, and was therefore contingent on his judgement and good graces.

Having briefly addressed the social category of the *kahraman*, I will now turn to the Second Constitutional Period and to the novel category of *Hürriyet Kahramanı*. While the aforementioned military heroes certainly enjoyed a degree of popular recognition outside the purview of Ottoman officialdom, and it is difficult to sort out which context of social elevation preceded the other, their heroic status was also directly tied to the ceremonial and administrative prerogatives of the sultan and could thus be officially “revoked” by his will. By contrast, persons venerated as “Heroes of Liberty” were typically designated as such wholly by popular sentiment as it was shaped and reported by the Ottoman media, thus functioning in a space largely independent of sultan prerogative. This was especially the case in the early days of the revolution when the new regime of censorship and normative discourse had not yet solidified.⁴⁶ Hence particularly in the period under study, “Heroes of Liberty” were heroes in spite of the sultan, and not by virtue of his favor. Indeed, in several cases, these figures were instrumental in

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ While it is beyond the purview of this study to examine the ways that that oppositional activists and journalists (including the CUP in-exile) depicted heroic figures of Ottoman constitutional history (like Namık Kemal and Midhat Paşa) throughout the Hamidian period, it is important to note that there are continuities between these portrayals and those that would appear in the Second Constitutional Period. For example, M. Şükrü Hanioglu notes that “[i]n their periodicals, the Young Turks [i.e. the overall dissident intellectual group from which the CUP emerged] praised Mahmud II's reforms, the Tanzimat movement, Mustafa Reşid Pasha, the Young Ottomans [the movement with which Namık Kemal was associated], and Midhat Pasha”; Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 17. Thus, while the explicit and uncensored public veneration of Namık Kemal and Midhat Paşa would only emerge in the wake of the 1908 revolution, as most Young Turk periodicals were produced by expatriate groups elsewhere in Europe or domestically in markedly clandestine fashion, there was significant precedent for their lionization in the history of Young Turk cultural production. In this connection see also Ali Haydar Midhat Bey, *The Life of Midhat Pasha: A Record of His Services, Political Reforms, Banishment, and Judicial Murder: Derived from Private Documents and Reminiscences by His Son Ali Haydar Midhat Bey* (London: John Murray, 1903) as well as Orçun Can Okan, “Politics of Remembering Midhat Pasha: Post-Ottoman Contexts of a Contested Memory in Turkey and the Arab East” (Unpublished Master’s Essay, Columbia University, 2015).

overturning and henceforth directly limiting sultanic power, and were far from being its subordinate beneficiaries.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that Enver Bey and Niazi Bey were by no means the only revolutionary heroes venerated through the use of this term—or very similar terms—in the Second Constitutional Period. To the contrary, well-known figures like *Hareket Ordusu* commander Mahmud Şevket Paşa (1856-1913) were also recurrently featured in the revolutionary press. Commonly referred to as “*Du [sic] Grand Libérateur*,”⁴⁷ his stoic visage graced the covers of a number of newspapers, journals, and posters in the early post-revolutionary years in honor of his leading role in defeating the forces of the counterrevolution in April 1909.⁴⁸ Yet, as Der Matossian has shown, still other, less well-known heroes also featured prominently in this revolutionary culture and were celebrated across social boundaries of faith and geography: Madteos Izmirlian (1845-1910), the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople (p. 1894-96), was celebrated as a “hero of freedom” for his guarded banishment in Jerusalem under the Hamidian Regime;⁴⁹ Elena Kahramanı Fuad Paşa (1835-1931), the Circassian military commander exiled for plotting against the sultan in 1902 was greeted by a crowd of some fifty-thousand people upon his liberation in 1908;⁵⁰ finally, Şehzade Sabahaddin Efendi’s public stance in favor of administrative decentralization made him a virtual celebrity amongst non-Muslim Ottomans (especially Ottoman Armenians, Greeks, and Jews) upon his return to Istanbul from exile in September 1908.⁵¹ In any case, it appears that the phrase “Heroes of Liberty,” both in Ottoman (“*Hürriyet Kahramanları*”) and in French (“*Héros de la Liberté*”), was at times applied to individual participants in the defeat of the 1909 counter revolution as well as the *Hareket Ordusu* as a group.⁵² While this fact further complicates our understanding of this honorific, it also offers a possible explanation as to why this term was used with greater regularity from this point onward

⁴⁷ *Şehbal* 8, İstanbul, 15 Temmuz 1325 (Rumi) [28 July 1909 Gregorian], cover page. See also *Resimli Kitap* 19, İstanbul, Nisan 1326 (Rumi) [April-May 1910], cover page.

⁴⁸ Yusuf Çağlar ed., *Kanun-i Esasi'den Askeri Müdahaleye II. Meşrutiyet*, (İstanbul: Zaman Kitapları, 2008), 154-155.

⁴⁹ Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution*, 32-32.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 35.

⁵¹ *Ibid* 36-37.

⁵² See Özen, “Visual Representation and Propaganda,” 153 and Campos, *Sacred Liberty*, 39.

in the Ottoman Turkish press, and implies that the rarified liberty from which these heroes derived their distinction was fought for both in July and in April 1909.

However, Enver and Niyazi were by far the most recognizable and famous of Ottoman revolutionary heroes.⁵³ Their actions became the stuff of theatrical plays, marches were composed in their honor, and their names were chosen for babies and newly christened ships.⁵⁴ While Niyazi's death in 1911 likely curtailed his public visibility and veneration relation to his partner-in-fame, the characteristics and behavior of Enver Bey became particularly popular throughout the Second Constitutional Period, especially after his involvement in the 1911 war between the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Italy in Trablusgarb Province (*Trablusgarb Vilayeti*), and the 1913 reconquest of Edirne during the second Balkan War.⁵⁵ His style of facial hair, the "Enver moustache" ("*Enver bıyığı*"),⁵⁶ as well as his characteristic "pose" ("*Enveri Pozları*")—a position one assumed by standing with one hand on one's waist and the other pointing forward into the revolutionary future⁵⁷—became a fashionable means of emulating the revolutionary hero for men and boys. Nevertheless, both Enver and Niyazi shared an equal part in embodying the revolution's singular *Hürriyet Kahramanları* in the period under study, looming far above other figures with respect to their veneration in post-revolutionary Ottoman material culture. Far from being purely "Muslim" or "Turkish" heroes, their names were exalted in public celebrations attended by Ottomans of various backgrounds. As Der Matossian notes, this was certainly the case in a 1908 ceremony held in an Armenian cemetery that honored Armenian martyrs of the revolution;⁵⁸ while these martyrs were non-Muslims, this did not disqualify their mourners from praising both of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* at their funeral.

Yet it should be noted here that the public visibility of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* was not necessarily correlated with their *de facto* influence in contemporary Ottoman politics. Aside from the fact that the CUP of 1908-11 had yet to solidify its effective

⁵³ Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution*, 32.

⁵⁴ Özen, "Visual Representation and Propaganda," 154.

⁵⁵ Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "An Ottoman Warrior Abroad: Enver Paşa as an Expatriate," 43 and 46.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵⁷ Yusuf Çaglar ed., *Kanun-i Esasi'den Askeri Müdahaleye II. Meşrutiyet*, (Istanbul: Zaman Kitapları, 2008), 124.

⁵⁸ Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution*, 27.

political power as it would in 1912 (via largely rigged general elections) and 1913 (with the *Bab-ı Ali* Coup), neither Enver nor Niyazi were top-level decision makers within the CUP leadership in the early revolutionary period. To the contrary, figures like Mehmed Tal'at Bey (1874-1921), Ahmed Rıza Bey (1859-1930), as well as a substantial cadre of officials from the pre-revolutionary era were much more directly involved in the running of the state in the period under study despite their lesser visibility in revolutionary material culture.⁵⁹ Hence, the cult of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* was not a leader cult proper in its initial stages, as its cult objects were neither official or *de facto* heads of state during the period they were both alive. In this regard, their popularity should not be viewed purely as a cultural expression of their influence in Ottoman political circles: As figures who were involved in tearing down the old regime as well as erecting a new, revolutionary political order, they stood in a class of their own in Istanbul's public sphere.

Combating Tyranny, Restoring Liberty: Enver and Niyazi as Heroes of Empire

*"The following Friday [after the reinstatement of the constitution] it seemed like the people at Yıldız had gone mad. Photographers worked the whole day on taking negatives of the events of the day, but the photographs which had been taken had been seized before the next Friday arrived. The Turks [sic] in Istanbul were celebrating a holiday, so they were not working, and, around midday, the road to the Sublime Porte was filled with people smoking cigarettes, readings newspapers, and deciphering the barbed caricatures of fugitive ministers and accursed prefects. The pictures of dogs representing high-level personalities with signs around each of their necks: on these signs just ten days earlier had been written respectful names that shied away from insults...[now] everywhere in the capital was bestrewn with printed pictures of the revolutionary heroes, Niyazi Bey and Enver Bey, as well as the dreadful caricatures of former ministers."*⁶⁰

-Fausto Zonaro, *Twenty Years under the Reign Of Abdülhamid*

As Zonaro's anecdote demonstrates, street-level material cultures bearing the

⁵⁹ Indeed, the politician and historian Yusuf Hikmet Bayur (1891-1980) claimed that Tala'at Bey "made" Enver Bey into a revolutionary hero for political reasons ; Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 36.

⁶⁰ Zonaro, *Twenty Years Under The Reign Of Abdülhamid*, 230

personae of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* began to appear immediately after the revolution alongside satirical cultures that derided the villainous officials of the Hamidian Regime if not yet the sultan himself.⁶¹ Even if printed pictures of Enver and Niyazi were not quite “everywhere in the capital,”⁶² his words describe an almost carnivalesque environment in which Ottoman officials have become the subject of animal caricature, and the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* have emerged as notable personae that one could encounter in the streets of Istanbul. While it is difficult to gauge the dissemination and reception of these cultural artifacts, a qualitative analysis of the extent sources can nevertheless shed light on the modes of heroic representation that were available to contemporary *Istanbulular*.

As Edhem Eldem notes, the fame and empire-wide repute of his great-step-uncle Ismail Enver Bey was largely a consequence of the events of July 1908. This instigated his social transformation from “Enver Bey” the mid-level soldier to “Enver Paşa” the charismatic leader who would marry into the House of Osman.⁶³ The revolution was thus the singularity from which the *Hürriyet Kahramanları*’s cult sprang and flourished, only to be bolstered by the events of 31 Mart 1325/13 April 1909. However, Niyazi’s premature death meant that he would enjoy a shorter public life than Enver, and a number of sources retrospectively stress the dramatic shift in Enver’s character as he emerged as larger-than-life figure in Ottoman society and politics. For example, Halide Edib describes the young Enver Bey as “a man of incredible purity of life and spirit. No force of feminine charm, no amount of temptation and pleasure, could draw him away from his hard-working and priest-like abstinence.”⁶⁴ However, she argues that the “beloved Enver Bey of 1908 and of [the Ottoman-Italian War in] Tripoli” eventually became a “hated military dictator,” thus evoking Süleyman Nazif’s (1870-1927) aphorism that ““God damn him, Enver Pasha killed Enver Bey.””⁶⁵ Although Halide’s recollection reflects knowledge of the empire’s experience in the Great War under CUP leadership, these statements nevertheless highlight the fame and eventual infamy of the longer-lived Hero

⁶¹ In this connection, Jens Hanssen, “‘Malhamé–Malfamé’: Levantine Elites and Transimperial Networks on the Eve of the Young Turk Revolution,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43 (2011): 25-48.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Eldem, “Enver Before He Became Enver,” 92-93.

⁶⁴ Edib, 404-405. By her own admission, Edib is paraphrasing the words of her husband Abdülhak Adnan Adıvar (1882-1955).

⁶⁵ Eldem, “Enver Before He Became Enver,” 92. See also Edib, *House with Wisteria*, 404-405.

of Liberty.⁶⁶

The fame of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* can be observed in a variety of forms from the early days of the revolution, yet was perhaps most spectacularly manifested in the realm of newsmedia culture. Frequently depicted on the covers of newspapers and periodicals, they represented the fated coming of *hürriyet* as well as the possibilities of individual ambition in the post-revolutionary world: freed from Hamidian tyranny and its corrupt, nepotistic, and patrimonial network of spies and informants, Enver and Niyazi destroyed the political system responsible for Ottoman decline and achieved remarkable social mobility while simultaneously opening up this possibility for other “ordinary” subjects.

The personae of Enver and Niyazi were integrated into the narrative arc of late Ottoman history immediately after the revolution, and their posed photographs were printed and reprinted in articles describing their shared realization of Ottoman political destiny. For instance, an article in *Resimli Kitap* titled “*Hak, Hürriyet, Hakimiyeti*” (“Rights, Liberty, and Sovereignty”) written on the anniversary of the 31 March Incident (*Otuz bir Mart Vakası*) positions them as the culmination of the historical trajectory of Ottoman constitutionalism.⁶⁷ Appearing at the end of the article, which also features full-page images of Mustafa Reşid Paşa, Sultan Mehmed V, and Mahmud Şevket Paşa, they are described as having played an essential role in saving the nation from the low point of its decline (“*milleti hadid-i infirazdan kurtaran*”)⁶⁸ and securing its “rights and sovereignty” (“*millet’in hak ve hakimiyeti*”).⁶⁹ In this way, they stand at the end of the author’s narrative of Ottoman history and are thus positioned as the culmination of the empire’s long and troubled history of constitutional reform. Even so, their praiseworthy characteristics are not completely identical to each other as they appear in their respective photo captions, thus indicating that their individual heroisms was seen as somewhat

⁶⁶ The notion that “Enver Paşa” became a dictator of sorts who gained a degree of contemporary notoriety is aptly expressed by Şuhnaz Yılmaz. In her words, Enver’s fame would continue to increase in the years immediately following the revolution, yet “the honeymoon with the Young Turks would not last long, for history would witness the emergence of the very ‘hero of freedom’ as a leading autocrat during the rule of the Triumvirate”; Yılmaz, “An Ottoman Warrior Abroad,” 43.

⁶⁷ Ahmed Mecid, “*Hak, Hürriyet, Hakimiyet*,” *Resimli Kitap* 22, Istanbul, 10 Temmuz 1326 (Rumi) [23 July 1910 Gregorian], 807-817

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 815.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 817.

unique. While both are praised as “*mücahidler*” (“warriors of the faith”) and “perpetually honorable” (“*ebed şeref*”),⁷⁰ Enver is specifically credited with being the sword “bravery and patriotism” (“*seyf-i celadet ve hamiyetile*”)⁷¹ and Niyazi with the activity of actually “saving” or “liberating” (“*kurtaran*”) the empire.⁷²

In most cases Enver and Niyazi portraits typically appear together in sequence on subsequent pages of a publication in alternating order. However, each hero sometimes appeared without his counterpart. For example, two years before Niyazi’s death in 1911, *Musavver Muhit* featured a posed image of Enver Bey that was clearly based on the same series previously published in *Resimli Kitap*.⁷³ In this instance, his identification as an officer who is “forever heroic” (“*daima kahraman*”) and “forever self-sacrificing” in the name of liberty (“*daima fedakyar-i hürriyet olan*”) highlights his heroic status as well as his connection to Ottoman Liberty.⁷⁴ To be sure, individual representations of this kind lasted well into the period and continued after Niyazi’s death and Enver’s increasing social prominence. A much more politically established Enver can be found on the cover of a 1914 issue of *Zeka* (“Wit”) replete with the title “Hazretleri” (“His Excellency”) and adorned with medals likely designating his military achievements in the Tripoli and Balkan campaigns.⁷⁵ Similarly, and in spite of his death, the “late” (“*merhum*”) Niyazi Bey graced a 1914 cover of *Şehbal* without his still living and increasingly famous partner.⁷⁶ Finally, although the present study is centered on the city of Istanbul, it is important to note that images of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* appeared in newsprint cultures from across the empire’s east-west expanse. In Cairo, *İctihad* (“Interpretation”) published bust-portrait style photographs of the heroes in July 1908 at the end of a series of noteworthy figures associated with Ottoman constitutionalism including Midhat Paşa,

⁷⁰ Ibid, 815 and 817.

⁷¹ Ibid, 815.

⁷² Ibid, 817.

⁷³ “*Daima kahraman, daima fedakyar-i hürriyet olan Erkan-i Harb Binbaşısı Enver Bey,*” *Musavver Muhit* 24-2, Istanbul, 18 Nisan 1325 (Rumi) [28 April 1909], 47. In this connection, a relatively small number of posed photographs of Enver and Niyazi tended to appear in the Ottoman press. For example, the aforementioned image of Niyazi Bey from *Resimli Kitap* closely resembles one that appears in his *Khawātir Niyāzī*; see *Resimli Kitap* 22, Istanbul, 10 Temmuz 1326 (Rumi) [23 July 1910 Gregorian], 815 and Niyazi Bey, *Khawātir Niyāzī*, 14.

⁷⁴ *Musavver Muhit* 24-2, Istanbul, 18 Nisan 1325 (Rumi) [28 April 1909], 47.

⁷⁵ *Zeka* 29, Istanbul, 17 Nisan 1330 (Rumi) [30 April 1914], cover page.

⁷⁶ *Şehbal* 95, Istanbul, 10 Nisan 1330 (Rumi) [23 April 1914], cover page.

Grand Vizier Hüseyin Avni Paşa (1820-76), the activist Ali Suavi (1838-78), Namık Kemal, and the nationalist intellectual Şemseddin Sami (1850-1904).⁷⁷ Moreover, just beyond the eastern borders of the empire, the satirical Azeri language journal *Molla Nasreddin* featured Enver Bey on its cover multiple times during its tenure in the Romanov city of Tbilisi.⁷⁸

At the same time, cultural manifestations of the cult of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* transcended the confines of news media culture and frequently took the form of postcards, posters and other “Souvenirs of the Constitution” that took the form of commemorative consumer products. For instance, the Ömer Koç Collection contains a set of ceramic figurine models of the heroes ostensibly designed for elite consumption, thus giving interested Ottomans the chance to display Enver and Niyazi in their own homes.⁷⁹ Another cardboard item that Bahattin Öztuncay has labelled “[a]n optical game for children” allowed users to shift between viewing bust portraits of each “*Hürriyet Kahramanı*” by pulling down a paper insert.⁸⁰ Niyazi’s visage appeared on a cigarette case bearing the revolution’s core mantra “*Hürriyet, Adalet, Müsâvât, Uhuvvet*,”⁸¹ and both heroes can be found on commemorative “*Hürriyet Kahramanı*” cigarette papers from the Üğür Yeğin Collection that reference “11 Temmuz” (July 24th) as well as its accompanying values in French, Greek, and Ottoman (“*Hürriyet, Adalet, Müsâvât*”).⁸² One such product includes the phrase “*unies pour la patrie*” (“United for Our Homeland”) below bust portraits of Enver and Niyazi and above an arrangement of Ottoman flags bearing the word “*Hürriyet*.”⁸³ Furthermore, the intimate connection between the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* and the celebration of the Ottoman revolutionary past and future can also be seen in souvenir handkerchiefs each inscribed with the revolutionary phrases “*Kahraman Askerler*” (“Heroic Soldiers”), “*Yaşasın İttihad ve Terakkî*” (“Long Live and Progress and Progress”) and “*Yaşasın Vatan*” (“Long Live the

⁷⁷ *İctihad* 8, Cairo, Haziran 1908 (Rumi) [July 1908 Gregorian], 293-312.

⁷⁸ See for example *Molla Nasreddin* 7, Tbilisi, 6 February 1914 (Gregorian), cover page.

⁷⁹ “Enver Bey and Niyazi Bey ceramic figures commemorating the constitution,” Ömer Koç Collection; Öztuncay ed., *İkinci Meşrutiyet’in İlanının 100üncü Yılı*, 215.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 214.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 208.

⁸² *Ibid*, 200-201.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 201.

Fatherland”).⁸⁴

Finally, Enver and Niyazi featured prominently in the souvenir postcards and posters of the period. In one poster, they appear—swords drawn—engaged in a gallant charge on horseback below a flag-carrying Ottoman “Lady Liberty,” trampling underfoot an emaciated (yet nonetheless threatening) turbaned figure, who appears to represent the tyranny of the Hamidian Regime and the pre-revolutionary world.⁸⁵ On the other hand, they were sometimes featured separately, especially in the case of Enver.⁸⁶ However, as many of these postcards cannot be precisely dated, and their provenance remains largely unknown, it is difficult to ascertain whether these independent representations were in fact part of a series of similar postcards (in which Niyazi may well have appeared) or whether they were produced after Niyazi’s death.⁸⁷ Hence, the prevalence of singular Enver postcards may be due more to the incompleteness of the available sample of postcards than to Enver’s disproportionate popularity.

Having surveyed the kinds of materials on which the Enver and Niyazi’s heroic personae were inscribed, it is important to take stock of how Enver and Niyazi fit into the longer history trajectory of Ottoman constitutional history as evidenced by post-revolutionary material culture. If the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* were the destined liberators of the empire—heroes who had arisen at the end of a frustrated journey towards constitutional monarchy and the empire’s political salvation—Namık Kemal and Midhat Paşa were their most prominent forefathers. While their heroic personae merit study on their own terms, these proto-revolutionary heroes regularly appeared alongside Enver, Niyazi, and (sometimes Mahmud Şevket Paşa) as the political and intellectual precursors of the Second Constitutional era. Appearing on postcards, posters, and the cover pages of newspapers and journals, these figures stood in as the historical architecture of Ottoman Liberty, past and present. In this way, the heroic forefathers of the revolution reached across time into the revolutionary moment itself through their association with Enver and Niyazi and vice versa: The Heroes themselves were connected to Liberty through their

⁸⁴ Ibid, 187. Niyazi’s also includes the phrase “*Kahraman Niyazi Bey, 11 Temmuz 1324*”; *ibid*, 186.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 158.

⁸⁶ See for example *ibid*, 22 and 79.

⁸⁷ As long-dead figures like Namık Kemal make frequent appearances in all kinds of *souvenirs de la constitution*, this latter option may be irrelevant here, especially as Niyazi himself appeared in newsprint contexts years after his death in 1911.

association with and realization of their predecessor's goals.

Take for example an image that appeared on the cover of *Papağan* ("Parrot") in which Enver, Niyazi, and Mahmud Şevket ride on horseback through an archway decorated with Mehmed V's portrait and the phrases "Vive la Turquie Vive la Constitution," "Vive le Sultan Mohamed Han V," and "Adalet, Müsâvât, Uhuvvet."⁸⁸ Ottomans of different backgrounds applaud the heroes' progress through the arch and present them with wreaths and flowers, while Namık Kemal and Midhat Paşa appear as disembodied bust-figures watching on from the clouds. Although the words "Ottoman Constitution" (*Osmanlı Meşrutiyeti*) appear near the bottom of the image, thus indicating that the achievement of the venerated heroes is the constitution's restoration, the presence of Mahmud Şevket Paşa points to the importance of the 31 March Incident and the heroism of the *Hareket Ordusu*.⁸⁹ In another image from the same period (April 1909), Enver Bey is pictured walking along the Bosphorous accompanied by angels heralding the return of Ottoman Liberty.⁹⁰ Two angels play trumpets and spread flowers in Enver's path, while two others fly beside him holding a bust portrait of Midhat Paşa (the great martyr of constitutional liberty) and a third hands him a key. In this way, the image signals Enver's place as a revolutionary hero furthering the constitutional mission of Midhat Paşa.⁹¹ Although Midhat is long dead, murdered in exile by the Hamidian regime, his persona extends into the revolutionary present through the achievements of the likes of Enver Bey.⁹²

This juxtaposition of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* with the constitutional figures of the pre-revolutionary period can also be seen in other kinds of revolutionary artifacts. For instance, a number of handkerchiefs display this repertoire of heroes in different combinations, generally including Enver and Niyazi alongside Midhat Paşa and Namık

⁸⁸ *Papağan* 39, Istanbul, 10 Temmuz 1325 (Rumi) [23 July 1909 Gregorian], cover page; Hidayet Dağdeviren collection, Box 26, Hoover Institution Archives. For another instance in which Mahmud Şevket Paşa appears with Enver and Niyazi (described as "Mücahid-i hürriyet" or "Liberty Fighters"), see *Musavver Eşref* 19, Istanbul, 23 Temmuz 1325 (Rumi) [7 August 1909 Gregorian], cover page.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ F.G. Aflalo, *Regilding the Crescent* (London: Martin Secker, 1911), 4.

⁹¹ This image is described as "A Popular Cartoon, April 1909 (Enver Bey and the Dawn of Liberty)" by F.G. Aflalo; *ibid.*, 4. It has been identified elsewhere as "a postcard"; Campos, "Sacred Liberty," 40.

⁹² For a postcard series that positions the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* with other constitutionalist figures, see Öztuncay ed., *İkinci Meşrutiyet'in İlanının 100üncü Yılı*, 154-155.

Kemal,⁹³ although they sometimes included Ahmed Rıza Bey,⁹⁴ Mahmud Şevket Paşa,⁹⁵ or other lesser-known statesmen like Kamil Paşa (1833-1913, the first grand vizier after the reinstatement of the constitution in July 1908) and Gabriel Noradungyan Efendi (1852-1936).⁹⁶ A particularly poignant example datable to 1326 (Rumi) [1910-11] places an image of Midhat Paşa in the center of an ornate pattern of Ottoman banners and other insignia across which the core mantra of the revolution (“*Hürriyet, Adalet, Müsavat*”) appears.⁹⁷ Moreover, the entire edifice—and by extension, the integrity of the revolutionary project—is supported by Enver and Niyazi who stand proudly on either side of Midhat, holding up the poles that support his banner. While the “true” or “correct” meaning of the image may forever elude us, the inclusion of the words “*Yaşasın Askerlik*” (“Long Live Military Service”) implies a veneration of the institution from which Enver and Niyazi emerged in order to save the empire by upholding Midhat’s constitutional legacy.⁹⁸ If Midhat died trying to combat Hamidian despotism and reverse Ottoman imperial decay, his legacy is carried on in the revolutionary present by the heroes who successfully combatted Abdülhamid II’s governmental malfeasance, which, by his dethronement in April 1909, had eroded the sultan’s persona as “first sultan of the constitution” in the realm of its press coverage and its “Souvenirs.” In still other cases, the Heroes were depicted alongside the new sultan himself.⁹⁹ As this phenomenon is somewhat unique in Ottoman history, the relationship between the cult of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* and the public representation of Mehmed V is worth exploring in detail. Much like the venerative postcards produced during Abdülhamid II’s short “constitutional” reign, the growing renown of the heroes intersected with the novel visibility of the thirty-fifth Ottoman sultan in the realm of post-revolutionary press and souvenir cultures. As the faces of Enver and Niyazi began to gain ubiquity as widely recognizable figures, they came to enjoy an unprecedented degree of public association with Mehmed V that only added to their elevated status.

⁹³ See *ibid*, 184.

⁹⁴ See *ibid*, and 191.

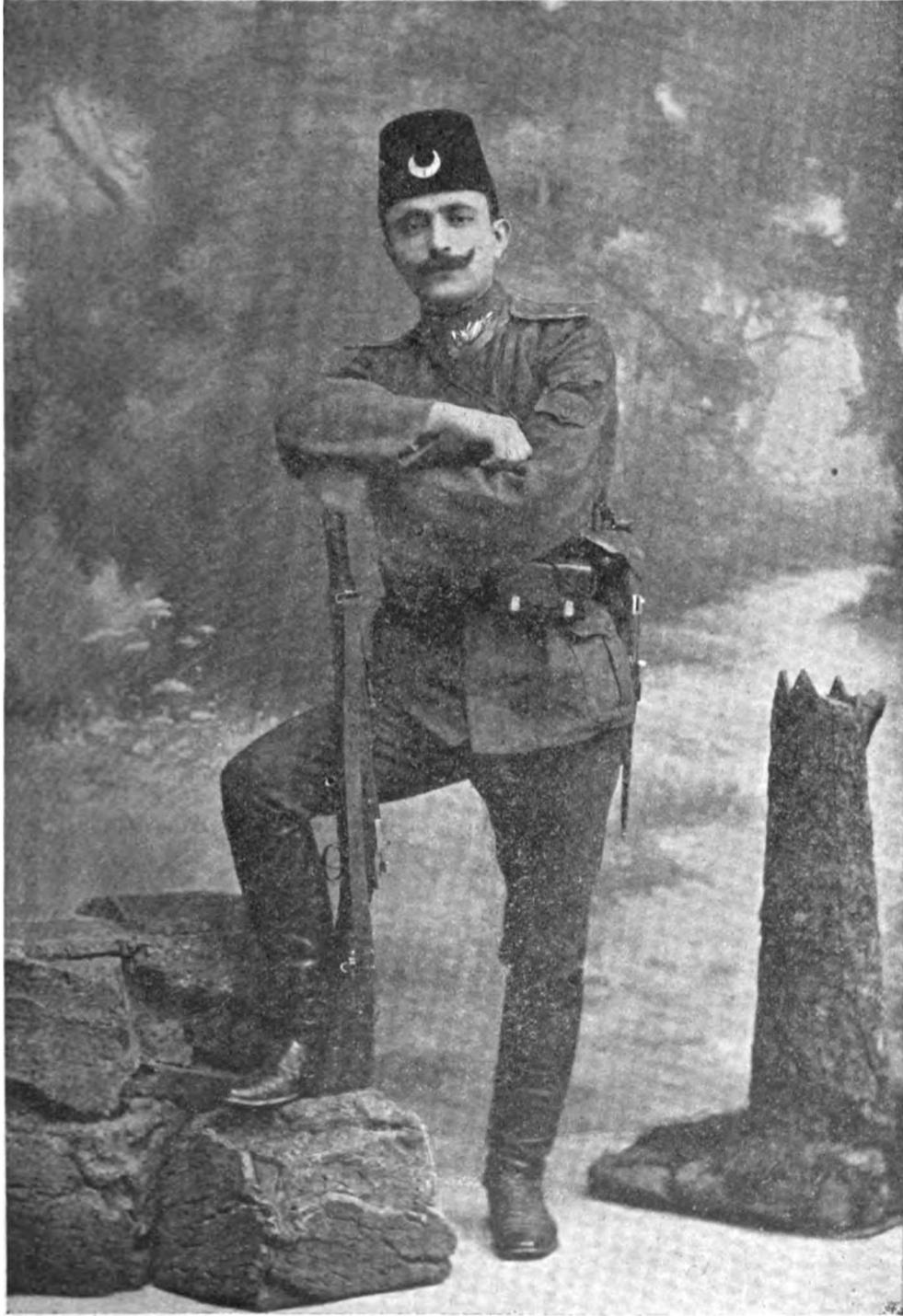
⁹⁵ See *ibid*, 150.

⁹⁶ See *ibid*, 185

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 192.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*.

⁹⁹ See *ibid*, 150.



قهرمان حریت بیگباشی انور بك
Le Héros de la liberté : Le Commandent Enver Bey

Figure 11. Enver Bey, Hero of Liberty¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ “*Kahraman-ı Hürriyet Binbaşısı Enver Bey*”; “Hero of Liberty Commander Enver Bey”; *Resimli Kitap* 10, Temmuz 1325 (Rumi) [July 1909 Gregorian], 985.



قهرمان حریت قول اغاسی نیازی بك
Le Héros de la liberté: Le Lieutenant Major Niyazi Bey

Figure 12. Niyazi Bey, Hero of Liberty¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ “Kahraman-ı Hürriyet Kolağası Niyazi Bey”; “Hero of Liberty Captian Niyazi Bey”; *ibid*, 984



١٠ تموزك بيوك و فدائار قهرمانی
سیف جلاوت و حمیتیه ملتک حق و حاکمیتنی یوکسنتن مجاهد ابد شرف
انور بک

Le grand héros du 10 Juillet, ENVER BEY, qui retira la Turquie de l'hypogée d'affres et de désespoir.

Figure 13. Enver Bey, grand and devoted hero of the 10th of Temmuz¹⁰²

¹⁰² “10 Temmuz’un büyük ve fedakar kahramanı; seyfi celadet ve hamiyetiyle milletin hak ve hakimiyetini yükselten mücahid-i ebedşeref Enver Bey; “The grand and devoted hero of the 10th of Temmuz; the holy and forever honorable warrior Enver Bey who raises the nation’s right and sovereignty with the sword of bravery and patriotism”; “Le grand héros du 10 Juillet, Enver Bey, qui retira Turquie de l’hypogée d’affres et de désespoir”; “The great hero of July 10, Enver Bey, who withdrew Turkey from the apogee of agony and despair”; Resimli *Kitap* 22, Istanbul, 10 Temmuz 1326 (Rumi) [23 July 1910 Gregorian], 817.



۱۰ تموزك بيوك و فدالار قهرمانى
ملتى حضيض انقراضدن قورتاران مجاهد ابد شرف
نيازى بك

Le grand héros du 10 Juillet, NIAZI BEY, qui sauva la patrie du labyrinthe de terreur et de décadence.

Figure 14. Niyazi Bey, grand and devoted hero of the 10th of Temmuz¹⁰³

¹⁰³ “10 Temmuz’un büyük ve fedakar kahramanı; milleti hadid-i inkırazdan kurtaran mücahid-i ebedşeref Niyazi Bey; “The grand and devoted hero of the 10th of Temmuz; the holy warrior and perpetually honorable Niyazi Bey who saved the nation from the lowest point of decline”; “Le grand héros du 10 Juillet, Niazı Bey, qui sauva la patrie du labyrinthe de terreur et de décadence”; “The great hero of July 10, Niazı Bey, who saved the homeland from the labyrinth of terror and decadence”; ibid, 815.

Conclusion:

The *Hürriyet Kahramanları* and the “Second Sultan of the Constitution”

Upon Enver Bey’s betrothal to the Ottoman princess Naciye Sultan (1896-1957) in 1909, he became intimately connected the House of Osman as a *damad* or “son in law.”¹⁰⁴ Although their marriage would not actually take place until 1914,¹⁰⁵ Enver’s public persona transcended the confines of the revolutionary hero and came to share in the aura and prestige of the dynasty soon after this union was made public. This association was perhaps most visibly demonstrated when he travelled to Trablusgarb in 1911 to gather support for the Ottoman war against the Kingdom of Italy, and was taken aback by the fact that his popularity amongst the Arabic-speaking peoples of the region came not from his ties to the revolution, but rather from his status as *damad*. In his own words, “[t]he spirits of the Arabs are higher each day. The unexpected arrival of a relative of the caliph [Enver himself] has made a large impression on them, and as far as the troops go, I can see and feel that my presence has meant something to them.”¹⁰⁶ This discrepancy thus speaks to the different ways that Enver’s persona was experienced in different locales: In Istanbul, his ties to the battle for constitutional liberty take precedence, while in North Africa his conjugal proximity to the House of Osman and the incumbent sultan-caliph formed the basis of his repute: ““Only this connection helps me,” wrote Enver, “[t]he Arabs don’t know the hero of freedom Enver but they show respect to the son-in-law of the Caliph.””¹⁰⁷

This connection between revolutionary hero and the House of Osman was also reflected in much of the material culture of the period. Once the Hamidian policy of aniconism was abrogated in the wake of the revolution, photographs and other figurative images of the reigning sultan became much more available for publication and consumption. As a result, images of the sultan could appear on a variety of media bound only by the limitations of technology and by the situational evaluation of CUP censors.

¹⁰⁴ Yilmaz, “An Ottoman Warrior Abroad,” 46.

¹⁰⁵ Charles D. Haley, “The Desperate Ottoman: Enver Paşa and the German Empire – I,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 30 (1994): 5

¹⁰⁶ Enver Bey as quoted in *ibid*, 4.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 5. At the same time, the extent to which views of Enver and Niyazi’s role in Ottoman history differed in relation to the religion, language, or gender of specific individuals or groups has yet to be seen.

Yet as I have discussed in the previous chapter, this change in policy was also accompanied by a change in representational culture manifested largely in the realm of postcards and posters: the Exalted Person of the sultan could now appear alongside other notable persons, amongst whom the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* stand out quite prominently as “self-made men” only recently accepted into the Ottoman political establishment.

In one postcard series launched in commemoration of Mehmed V’s ascension to the throne on 27th April 1909, Mehmed V is at times pictured in the company of Enver and Niyazi:¹⁰⁸ in one case, he is surrounded by bust portraits of Midhat Paşa, Ahmed Rıza Bey Mahmud Şevket Paşa, Şehzade Yusuf İzzeddin Efendi (1857-1916), the heir apparent to the Ottoman throne, and the military cruiser *Hamidiye* (associated with the victory of the Hareket Ordusu against the 1909 counterrevolution) as well as each of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları*;¹⁰⁹ in another instance, he is accompanied both by his sons (“...*les princes impereaux*”) and “*Les vaillants Héros le Libèrte Enver & Niyazi Bey* [sic];”¹¹⁰ another postcard finds the sultan (“Empereur des Ottomans”) represented in a bust portrait flanked on either side by three-quarter profile portraits of Enver and Niyazi;¹¹¹ while yet another example places the sultan above the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* atop the Ottoman coat of arms with all three persons represented in bust portrait form.¹¹² In all cases, the heroic personae of Enver and Niyazi are incorporated into the celebration of the new Ottoman emperor’s enthronement in the wake of the victory of the *Hareket Ordusu* against anti-constitutionalist forces. Enver and Niyazi are thus permitted considerable space in a souvenir culture that commemorates the official end of the reign of Abdülhamid II and the final battle for the fate of Ottoman constitutionalism and the liberated future of the empire. While the sultan’s person—represented figuratively or by proxy through his *tuğra*—were the most commonly used symbols toward which imperial patriotism was directed in Ottoman material culture, the post-revolutionary milieu saw Mehmed V sharing this space with the soldiers who had overthrown his predecessor.

¹⁰⁸ This series is currently housed in the Uğur Göktaş Collection; Öztuncay ed., *İkinci Meşrutiyet’in İlanının 100üncü Yılı*, 162-163.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 163.

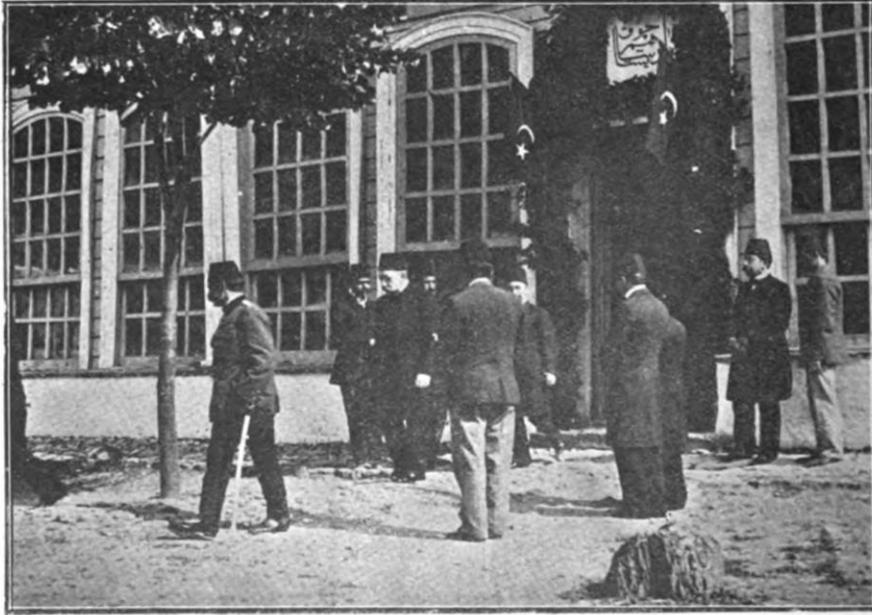
¹¹⁰ Ibid. 162.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 75.

¹¹² Çağlar ed., *Kanun-i Esasi'den Askeri Müdahaleye II. Meşrutiyet*, 118.



ذات حضرت پادشاهینک هرکه به سیاحت مایونلری
Le noyage impérial à Héréké



پادشاه نوجاه حضرتلری هرکه بی تشریفارنده قاش فارقه سندن عودتلری

Figure 15. The Movements of Mehmed V in *Resimli Kitap*¹¹³

¹¹³ *Resimli Kitap* 9, Istanbul, Haziran 1325 (Rumi), 943.



پادشاه جدید محترم سلطان محمد خان خامس حضرتتوری

Figure 16. “His Imperial Majesty the Honorable Sultan Mehmed Han V”¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ “*Padişah-ı Cedid Muhterem Sultan Mehmed Han Hams Hazretleri*”; “His Imperial Majesty the honorable Sultan Mehmed Han V”; *Resimli Kitap* 8, Istanbul, Mart 1325 (Rumi), cover page.

From an analytical perspective, Enver and Niyazi were not the sole actors in either the 1908 or the events of April 1909, and were thus not solely responsible for the end of Hamidian autocracy. Even so, they rapidly became the human incarnations of Ottoman constitutional Liberty in much of the *Osmanlıca* media, and stood as the principal exemplars of a new social group that had directly interfered in and made a place for themselves in Ottoman politics at the expense of dynastic power. Nevertheless, this hardly spelt the end of the public importance of Ottoman monarchy as evidenced by Mehmed V's recurrent presence in the illustrated media. Indeed, the life and activities of Mehmed V were markedly newsworthy, and reportage on His Imperial Majesty's movements through his empire was consistently featured in full-length illustrated articles. *Resimli Kitap* depicted him meeting with Serbian King Peter I (r. 1903-18)¹¹⁵ or holding forth at a banquet at Beylerbeği Palace;¹¹⁶ visiting Sultan Murad I's *meşhed* in Priština,¹¹⁷ and being greeted by his subjects as he toured the nearby provinces of his empire.¹¹⁸ He appeared on the cover of *Harb Mecmuası* and *Molla Nasreddin*,¹¹⁹ and received full or near full-page spreads in other publications like *Rubab* and *Musavver Muhit*.¹²⁰ His accession to the throne was announced and commemorated on the cover pages of multiple periodicals¹²¹ and his portrait was recurrently printed by *Servet-i Fünûn* following a list of his ruling ancestors.¹²² Therefore, if Mehmed V was not—for intents and purposes—the *de facto* ruler of the Ottoman Empire, but rather something closer to a monarchical “figurehead,” he was nevertheless an integral part of the Ottoman world as it appeared in the Istanbul-based Ottoman Turkish press. This runs contrary to the prevalent view of Mehmed V as both a (relatively) politically ineffective monarch and a culturally

¹¹⁵ *Resimli Kitap* 19, Istanbul, Nisan 1326 (Rumi) [April 1910 Gregorian], 536-545.

¹¹⁶ *Resimli Kitap* 23, Istanbul, Ağustos 1326 (Rumi) [August 1910 Gregorian], 918.

¹¹⁷ “İstanbul’dan Meşhed-i Hüdavendigâr’a,” *Resimli Kitap* 26, Istanbul, Teşrinievvel 1326 (Rumi), 511-533.

¹¹⁸ *Resimli Kitap* 9, Istanbul, Haziran 1325 (Rumi) [June 1909 Gregorian], 943.

¹¹⁹ See *Harb Mecmuası* 1, Istanbul, Teşrinisani 1331 (Rumi) [November 1915 Gregorian], cover page and *Molla Nasreddin* 17, Tbilisi, [?] 1325 (Rumi) [1909 Gregorian], cover page.

¹²⁰ See *Rubab* 41, 25 Teşrinievvel 1325 (Rumi), 3 and *Musavver Muhit* 2-24, Istanbul, 18 Nisan 1325 (Rumi) [31 1909 Gregorian], 41.

¹²¹ See for instance, *Resimli Kitap* 8, Istanbul, Mart 1325 (Rumi) [March 1909 Gregorian], cover page, *Şehbal* 5, Istanbul, 10 Mayıs 1330 (Rumi) [23 May 1914], cover page and *Molla Nasreddin* 17, Tbilisi, [?] 1909, cover page.

¹²² “Osmanlı Padişahları,” *Salname-i Servet-i Fünûn* [?]. Istanbul. [?] 1326 (Rumi) [1910 Gregorian], 33.

unimportant one.¹²³ Thus, far from being subsumed by the emergence of the CUP leadership as a politically effective elite, and the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* as a popular political cult, the cultural significance of the House of Osman remains visible in newsmedia culture as evidenced by Mehmed V's public persona.

¹²³ Simply put, the Ottoman emperor tends to receive far less attention before 1908 (especially in the Hamidian period) than afterward with respect to late Ottoman history, thus giving the impression that his institution and its cultural is less deserving of study. In the case of the Hamidian era, the sultan is referenced quite often in the secondary literature. However, this lack of attention does not necessarily imply that the sultanate ceased to play an important role in the Ottoman world in the years after the CUP's ascension to power or even beyond the collapse of the empire. For a notable exception see Tilman Lüdke, *Jihad Made in Germany: Ottoman and German Propaganda and Intelligence Operations in the First World War* (London: Global, 2005).

Chapter 5. Conclusion: The *Osmanlı* Empire?

In a 1994 interview with the French magazine *L'Express*, Welfare Party member and mayor of Beyoğlu Nusret Bayraktar (b. 1951) scoffed at his interviewer's unorthodox suggestion that portraits of Mehmed II be hung in Istanbul office buildings in conspicuous defiance of the secularist foundations of the Republic of Turkey.¹ “We are not bothered by such obsession with form” he replied, subtly critiquing the widespread commemoration of the Kemalist legacy through the hanging of Atatürk portraits; “[i]f there are people who have served our society in the past, we remember them, but we are not into such formalisms.”² While I do not intend to imply that Turkey holds some sort of privileged position amongst Ottoman successor states with respect to its inheritance of Ottoman cultural politics, it is interesting to note that Bayraktar's approach to the memory of noteworthy historical figures is largely opposed to the views of the Ottoman voices I have examined here, for whom the history of the House of Osman and some of their more famous subjects appears to have been intertwined with their very sense of place in historical time. Much like the relative emphases on the importance of epic battles and on continuity with classical antiquity in Serbian and Greek national consciousness respectively,³ late Ottoman historical narratives paid significant attention to the heroism of individual persons and their role in shaping the contours of the Ottoman world. In this concluding chapter, I summarize my findings in this regard, delve further into the methodological issues raised throughout the thesis, and highlight directions for further inquiry into late Ottoman public persona.

With respect to my second chapter, the problem of historicizing Ottoman dynastic heroism as an “Ottoman” phenomenon remains a tantalizing one: can we truly and consistently separate “Ottomanness” from “Turkishness” when it comes to the heroism of

¹ Yael Navaro-Yasin, “The Historical Construction of Local Culture: Gender and Identity in the Politics of Secularism Versus Islam,” in *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*, Çağlar Keyder ed. (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 71.

² Beyoğlu Nusret Bayraktar as quoted in *ibid.*

³ Maria Todorova, “National Heroes as Secular saints: The Case of Vasil Levski,” IWM Working Paper No. 1 (2002): 1.

the House of Osman at the turn of the twentieth century? As I have noted above, the phrases “Ottoman” and “Turk” appear intertwined in complex ways not easily explicated by analytical methods. Yet to my mind, given that the labelling of dynastic heroism as either an “Ottoman” or a “Turkish” phenomenon involves applying categories created by historians, it is largely our choice of analytical emphasis that shapes our understanding of this phenomenon as being one thing or another, often with little room for liminality, layerdeness, or multiplicity. Indeed, when one attempts to understand the past, there are undoubtedly many “stories” to tell (perhaps even infinitely many), and the decisions and emphases of scholars largely define which “story” (that of an enduring Ottomanism or an emerging Turkism) is privileged in the end, in addition to the weight of evidence.

For some historians, the late Ottoman veneration of heroic members of their imperial House is another chapter in the story of Turkish nationalism and of Turkist intellectual history more generally. On the other hand however, I have attempted to construe it as part of the larger story of the “Ottoman Empire” (the *Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmâniyye* or “Sublime State/Dynasty of the Ottomans”), a polity oriented toward and organized around a dynastic imperial House, as well as the affiliations of its subjects toward its emperors. To be sure, this problem may be to some extent a matter of perspective, semantics, and analytical definition, especially in lieu of access to the minds of the Ottoman voices consulted above. Nevertheless, it is hard to discount the Ottoman imperial and Ottoman dynastic (*Osmanlı*) dimensions of this phenomenon, while one arguably requires a degree of teleological logic to legitimize its treatment as something predominantly “Turkish” in any sense akin to the popular Turkish nationalism of the Republic of Turkey. Suffice it to say that, based on the evidence consulted, the Istanbul-based Ottoman Turkish print cultures reveal a mode of heroism that is distinctly imperial, yet mixed (at times) with hints with particularist or confessional sentiment much like the contemporary Habsburg and Romanov cases.⁴ Even so, there are virtually no indications that this kind of Ottoman heroism should be historicized as yet another indication of the inevitable emergence of the Turkish Republic.

⁴ See Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Harvard: Harvard University Press: 2016) and Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy from Peter the Great to the Abdication of Nicholas II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

In the absence of a wealth of sources replete with clearly worded answers to all of our research questions, it may not be possible to accurately know and understand the intricacies of late Ottoman views of their dynasty in their totality. Nevertheless, I have endeavored to outline the contours of various negotiations of the heroic character and historical influence of the House of Osman as they appeared in press, book, and courtly cultures of the late Hamidian and Second Constitutional Periods. Moreover, in explicating specific aspects of the imperial culture of the Ottoman Empire, this study has sought to unearth the ways that Ottomans thought of their dynasty as a historical and causal force in the universe.

At the same time, villainy played as much of a role as heroism in late Ottoman newsprint and souvenir culture. As my third chapter has attempted to show, the politics of public persona played an important role in the cultural aspects of revolutionary celebration, commemoration, and satire the late Ottoman Empire, and had a profound cultural influence on Abdülhamid II's era of constitutional monarchy. While it is well known that the post-revolutionary climate produced an array of figurative and non-figurative visualizations of Ottoman sovereignty more generally alongside a substantial repertoire of imagery directed specifically toward the character of "Sultan Hamid,"⁵ I have endeavored to explore how the emergence of figurative representations (both venerative and derisive) of Abdülhamid II contributed their own political-cultural effect to the revolutionary moment.

Revolutions are undertaken by soldiers and dissidents, rendered effective by the use or threat of force. Yet the cultural dimensions of revolutionary regime change, amongst which manifestations of human persona are perhaps the most visible, need not be actualized by revolutionary forces themselves, but rather by the people who buy and sell "mundane" articles of print culture. It is not so much that they damaged the political legitimacy of the sultan or of the House of Osman in general, but that they contravened a public policy of aniconism surrounding the sultan-caliph, a wall of mystique maintained

⁵ See for example *Davul* 1, 14 Teşrinievvel 1324 (Rumi) [27 October 1908], 6, in which laborers work on a large-scale crown (a symbol of emperorship) held up by scaffolding while a drummer (*davulcu*) shouts orders at them that evoke the fragility and tenuousness of the Ottoman monarchy: "*Davulcu: Usta temeliler çorun. Bir sakatlık çıkaracaksın!*"; ("Drummer: Borrow from the upper foundations. You will remove a defective part!"); *ibid.*

by the Hamidian regime since before the birth pangs of an Ottoman Turkish mass press in the 1890s. Hence, until the CUP's threat of violence prompted the collapse of the Hamidian censorship and surveillance bureaucracies, Ottoman print media culture had evolved in public space without the figurative body of the emperor, thus making its dramatic and rapid liberalization after July 1908 a watershed moment in the social and cultural history of monarchy in the Ottoman Empire.

Yet even after his era of gilded exile had begun, Abdülhamid II did not become a universally hated object of ridicule. Given the considerable presence of venerative manifestations of his persona during his second tenure as constitutional monarch, and the continuation of nostalgia evocations of his persona throughout the last Ottoman decade, there is no evidence to suggest that all vestiges of support for the sultan vanished from the minds of Ottomans after April 27th 1909. Indeed, the Ottomans continued to live in a dynastic empire well after their revolution had ran its course, yet their world had changed dramatically even outside of the realm of politics. Freed from the strictures of imperial policy and facilitated by the representational technologies of a mass press capable of efficiently representing the human form, the figurative image of the Ottoman emperor was made available to his subjects for the first time as a readily accessible consumer commodity; a tangible "thing" one could own, take home, and use at will. Thus, the Ottoman sultan remained God's Shadow, albeit one that was no longer shrouded in darkness himself.

Turning to the reign of Abdülhamid II's successor, my fourth chapter addressed the persons who would come to share in the Ottoman sultan's public visibility in the Second Constitutional Period. If the fame of the Heroes of Liberty meant they were permitted a place alongside the sultan in certain representational contexts, and were thus included in the cultural celebration of the victories of Ottoman constitutionalism, their fame did not translate into an all-encompassing cult that superseded the central public role of the Ottoman emperor. At least in the period under study (c. 1908-11), and perhaps even later, the increasing cultural presence of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları*'s coexisted with an emperor whose diminished political efficacy was not directly reflected in his considerable public visibility. Thus, while it is beyond the purview of this study to substantially delve into the ways in which Mehmed V's persona was manifested

throughout the Second Constitutional Period, it is important to note that the *Hürriyet Kahramanları*'s rise to cultural prominence did not reproduce the effects of the political rise of the CUP: The 1908 revolution and the dethronement of Abdülhamid II marked the end of any form of sultanic autocracy in the Ottoman Empire, yet this concrete political shift coincided with the rise of Enver and Niyazi's hero cult in concert with (and not at the expense of) the career of perhaps the most publicly available of Ottoman sultans, whose figurative image was a part of Ersoy's "Kodak Galaxy." Hence, especially in the case of Enver Bey, or rather "Enver Paşa" the imperial son-in-law and military commander, the Heroes of Liberty were clearly connected to and infringed on the privileged place of the emperor in the realm of *Osmanlıca* newsmedia and souvenir cultures. In this connection, the "second sultan of the constitution" kept his singular place as exalted *padişah* in the post-revolutionary world, yet he nevertheless shared representational space with a variety of other notable personalities not limited to, yet perhaps most spectacularly, the "grand and devoted hero[es] of the 24th July."⁶ If the *padişah* was God's Earthly Shadow and The Prophet's Successor, the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* were stewards of Ottoman Liberty, in touch with its dark past and striving for its brighter future. Both were needed to save the empire.

Conclusion:

Late Ottoman Heroism in an "Imperial" Context?

In the wake of my analysis, a crucial question remains: To what extent can the present study shed light on an Ottoman "polity" and not simply reproduce the particular views of a single linguistically-bounded elite community living in the Ottoman capital? To be sure, the location of this study in the city of Istanbul and its preoccupation with Ottoman Turkish texts limits its analytical scope inasmuch as it cannot speak to the character of Ottoman heroism in other geographic and linguistic contexts beyond the realm of informed speculation. Moreover, questions regarding the dissemination, reception, and overall effect of the ideas discussed above are beyond the scope my available data, and I leave their examination to future research.⁷ At the same time

⁶ "10 Temmuz'un büyük ve fedakar kahraman[lar]ı"; *Resimli Kitap* 22, Istanbul, 10 Temmuz 1326 (Rumi) [23 July 1910 Gregorian], 815 and 817.

⁷ For further details on the price of particular periodicals as well as their frequency of publication, see Brummet, *Image & Imperialism*, 333-339.

however, it is important to note that for the most part the heroic discourse examined here speak to large-scale imperial realities and not to those of a narrow in-group defined by ethnic, religious, or regional ties. Although the Ottoman sultans were Muslim rulers who lived in Istanbul and predominantly spoke Ottoman Turkish (amongst many other languages), they were rooted in a wider Islamicate tradition of governance. This meant that the purview of their authority was the entirety of their Well-Protected Domains and their subjects were the inhabitants of this territory irrespective of their particular confession. In other words, the social, cultural, and political geography articulated by these voices was a universalist and imperial one centered on the bodies of a ruling family that left room for a multiplicity of participants in spite of its explicit hierarchies (i.e., the “second-class” status of non-Muslims) which ebbed and flowed in severity as time wore on, and was likely experienced differently across the empire’s cultural and geographic space. Similarly, although the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* were Muslim soldiers, their heroism and popularity was hardly limited to the purview of Muslim Ottomans, but was rather, by all indications, an Istanbul-wide phenomenon.

Hence, while the perspectives examined here cannot speak for the whole of the empire, it is important to note that their subject matter, the achievements of the House of Osman and the *Hürriyet Kahramanları*, represented universally applicable political and cultural institutions with whom all Ottoman subjects were involved and affiliated: namely the Sublime Dynasty of the Ottomans (*Hanedan-ı Aliyye Osmani*) itself, as well the reinstatement of Ottoman constitutional Liberty. To be sure, the views leveled by the aforementioned Istanbul-based voices may be quite similar to sentiments felt and expressed elsewhere in the empire. Yet dissimilarity in this connection need not be an unwelcome result, for the plurality of ways in which Ottoman subjects reconciled themselves with their shared imperial circumstances is an important and valuable topic of study, irrespective of whether further investigation will paint the results of the present study as isolated and atypical. Given the limitations of time and space, the present study has endeavored to achieve little more than an introductory step in the study of public persona in the late Ottoman Empire and to provide a framework for further analysis of this dimension of the Ottoman world.

Yet barring the fact that this location of the “imperial” in the “local” is an

admittedly provisional solution, this thesis has shown that much of late Ottoman material culture was imbued with a sense of heroism, based on the activity of “saviourhood” and one’s individual exertion and sacrifice in the name of sultan and empire. In an era of considerable social and political turmoil, the *Istanbullular* of the late Hamidian and Second Constitutional Periods could turn to their long imperial history for recourse to exemplary heroisms on which to base their contemporary actions: they could recall “the glorious siege by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, who buried the Byzantine Empire in the pages of history in 1453”;⁸ imagine the “winged” figure of Selim I leading them to victory in Mesopotamia against the Entente;⁹ look to the example of Süleyman I, “the great conquering and organizing Sultan”¹⁰ who restored the empire’s perfection (“*kemaliye*”) in the wake of his father’s conquests;¹¹ or draw on the lessons of the Ottoman “reform movement” that had been spearheaded by “enlightened Sultans...and their ministers” since the eighteenth century.¹² On the other hand, by the dawn of the Second Constitutional Period, the Ottomans also lived in a liberated, post-revolutionary present. Secured by the defeat of Hamidian autocracy, the Ottoman world was headed toward an even brighter future thanks to the efforts of the *Hürriyet Kahramanları*, the chosen sons of the empire and its *padişah*. Transformed by circumstance and by a fledgling mass press into larger-than-life revolutionary heroes, the former Enver Bey and Niyazi Bey towered above the heads of other “regular” Ottomans in the course of their duty as the new dispensers and preservers of constitutional liberty.

In conclusion, this examination of the cultural life of late Ottoman Istanbul has yielded an important insight into the *mentalités* of the era: Namely that the Ottoman world of the early twentieth century was inhabited by a number of extraordinary and, in some cases, almost superhuman persons. By virtue of their powers and achievements, they deviated drastically from the default mold of mortal personhood. In addition to the ruling sultan himself, whose decisions, laws, and mystical thaumaturgical powers played a pivotal role in the empire’s everyday functioning, ancestral members of the House had

⁸ Fausto Zonaro as quoted in Öndes and Makzume, *Ottoman Court Painter Fausto Zonaro*, 66-67.

⁹ “Niçin Çıkıyor?,” *Harb Mecmuası* 1, Teşrinisani, 1331 (Rumi) [November 1915 Gregorian], 3-6.

¹⁰ Yalman, “The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by its Press,” 13.

¹¹ Ali Kemal Bey, “Osmanlılar da Terakîyyet Siyaset,” *Resimli Kitap* 1, İstanbul. Eylül 1324 (Rumi) [September 1908 Gregorian], 4-5.

¹² *Ibid.*

achieved things hitherto thought impossible by virtue of their formidable personal characteristics. From Mehmed II's conquest of Constantinople to Selim I's accruiion of the holy cities of Islam, and from Osman II's courageous stand against the Janissaries to Mahmud II's destruction of the corps in 1826, these achievements shaped the revolutionary world that emerged from the 1908 revolution; an event which was, in turn, instigated by the human vessels of the empire's liberated constitutionalist destiny (i.e., the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* and their compatriots). Thus in the logic of the sources consulted here, these heroes had a disproportionate influence on the making and unfolding of history. In both in the pre- and post-revolutionary eras, "extraordinary sultans" and their trusted "men of great ability and organizing capacity" were amongst the prime movers of the Ottoman past,¹³ while the *Hürriyet Kahramanları* were the unexpected saviors of the empire, emerging from obscurity to combat Hamidian villainy and realize the dreams of martyred heroes Namık Kemal and Midhat Paşa. Hence, the sun rose and set on an Ottoman Empire they had built, saved, and continued to make in their image, while the memory of their exploits provided (at least) some Ottomans with a guiding light, a moral compass, and a map of the Ottoman world in its becoming.

¹³ Halide Edib, *House With Wisteria: Memoirs of Turkey Old and New* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publications, 2009), 191.

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