3   Was Salonica a Levantine city?

Philip Mansel

The Levant means 'where the sun rises': the eastern Mediterranean. Levant is a geographical word, free from associations with race or religion. It is defined not by frontiers but by the sea. Levantine cities such as Smyrna, Alexandria, and Beirut shared the following characteristics: geography; diplomacy; language; hybridity; commerce; modernity; and finally, vulnerability. In the nineteenth century Salonica was one of those cities.

Diplomacy

The modern Levant was a product of diplomacy, not conquest. It flourished after 1535 partly as a result of one of the most successful alliances in history, between the Ottoman Empire and France, between the Caliph of the Muslims and the Most Christian King. It was based on international strategy, on their shared hostility to Spain and the House of Austria.

With the alliance came the capitulations: agreements between the Ottoman and foreign governments, which allowed foreigners to live and trade in the Ottoman Empire, for the most part under their own legal systems. (This is still a toxic issue today: most American soldiers were withdrawn from Iraq in 2011 not to please Iraqi or American opinion, but because the US government refuses to allow American soldiers to be subject to foreign, in this case Iraqi, law). As a result of the French-Ottoman alliance, French consuls—later joined by those of the Netherlands, England, and other countries—were appointed to most Levantine ports.[1]

These were the 'years of the consuls', to paraphrase the title of Ivo Andric's 1945 novel about nineteenth-century Bosnia, *The Days of the Consuls*. Janissaries guarded them from insult or attack. To show equality of status, they often refused to remove their hats in the presence of the local governor. The ports of the Levant became, at times, diarchies between foreign consuls and local officials. Many locals preferred the consuls' law courts, since they were often more convenient and less corrupt than their own. Consuls could be peace-makers. In 1694 and 1770, respectively, consuls in Smyrna persuaded the commanders of the Venetian and Russian navies not to attack the city, in order to prevent reprisals by Muslims against local Christians (Kontente 2005, 343; Anon. 1772, 107, 113).

Soon the French-Ottoman alliance acquired commercial and cultural momentum. Consuls acted both as servants of their own government and as local power-brokers and transmitters of technology and information. In a *danse macabre* of mutual manipulation that has lasted to this day, outside interference was at least matched by local desire for more of it. Consuls were equivalents of modern international organisations such as the World Bank, the IMF, or NATO: unpopular but effective. In nineteenth-century Alexandria, consuls protected criminals of their own nationality from Egyptian courts, but also helped introduce quarantine and fight cholera. Consuls also brought foreign post offices to the ports of the Levant.

The British consul-general played a vital role in the riots in Alexandria, which precipitated the British invasion in 1882. He was subsequently the senior British official in Egypt, which he helped to rule (Mansel 2010, 102–103). Consuls played a similar role in Beirut after the French invasion of 1860, helping to run the internationally guaranteed regime in Mount Lebanon, as they did in Crete after 1898. As the power of the Ottoman Empire declined, consuls could facilitate the transfer of Ottoman sovereignty and territory to foreign empires or local nation states.

Salonica after 1850 also had its 'years of the consuls'. They formed the aristocracy of the town, one of them recalled. A square was called Place des Consuls (Wratislaw 1924, 212). As in Smyrna, Alexandria, and Beirut, they were power-brokers. May 1876 was a time of rising tension in the city, owing to a Christian family's opposition to the desire of their daughter Itchko to convert to Islam to marry a Muslim called Hairullah. Her family appealed to the main non-Muslim source of authority—the consuls. The French consul-general and the German vice-consul, a local millionaire called Mr. Abbot, entered a mosque during Friday prayers, without protection. In front of the vali himself they were murdered.

In reprisal the great powers sent warships to train their guns on the city. On 16 May around fifty Muslims, many of whom had nothing to do with the murder, were hanged on the quay beside the White Tower, watched by officials, consuls, a vast crowd, and British sailors in full uniform. As had already happened during a similar public punishment after a brawl between a Frenchman and an Egyptian in Alexandria in 1863, Ottoman authorities were forced to advertise to the local population their humiliation by foreign powers (Sciacky 2000, 37–38; Risal 1913, 251–253; Vakalopoulos 1963, 116). The scene was watched by the French sailor Julien Viaud, who published his drawings of it in *Le monde illustré* (17 June 1876) and later, writing under the name Pierre Loti, described it in the opening pages of the novel which made him famous, *Aziyadé* (1879).

Consuls in Salonica were again crucial in 1912. In the first Balkan war, the Ottoman armies had been defeated by those of Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro. To protect Salonica and its inhabitants, and ensure a peaceful transition from Ottoman to Greek rule, the municipal council and the foreign consuls seized the initiative: with the Ottoman governor, they decided that, while the Ottoman army would withdraw, the Ottoman police and gendarmes would remain in the city. On 7 November the consuls went to Greek army headquarters to negotiate the army's entry into the city. Negotiations were in French. To avoid what he called 'unnecessary bloodshed', Hasan Tahsin Pasha, the Ottoman commander,

agreed with the consuls not to defend Salonica; moreover, he knew the Greek army was stronger than his own (Leune 1914, 338–339, 344).

On 8 November Salonica was encircled by Greek and Bulgarian forces. Hasan Tahsin Pasha decided to surrender to the Greeks—in part to stop Bulgarians entering Solun, as they called the city some considered rightfully Bulgarian. The surrender took place 'in a relaxed and friendly manner'. On 9 November Greek forces reached the outskirts of Salonica. Ottoman forces handed over their rifles. 26,000 Ottoman soldiers marched into captivity (Erickson 2003, 223–225; Leune 1914, 363). On 10 November, led by Crown Prince Constantine, Greek troops entered the city. Greeks sang their national anthem, and trampled on the fezzes they had previously worn. Blue and white Greek flags covered the city. At a thanksgiving service the archbishop cried 'Hosannah to the glorious descendants of the fighters of Marathon and Salamis, to the valiant liberators of our beloved fatherland! … the golden rays of liberty must illuminate all the corners of the unredeemed nation'—in other words Constantinople, Smyrna, and beyond (Veinstein 1992, 250–253). Greek newspapers were printed in blue and white and ended articles with the cry 'To the city! To Constantinople!' (Leune 1914, 311, 316–317).

The foreign consuls had helped ensure a transfer of sovereignty in Salonica, from Turkey to Greece, far less lethal than that which would occur ten years later from Greece to Turkey in Smyrna, without their intervention.

Language

International languages for inter-community communication were another characteristic of the Levant. Before the triumph of English, the Levant used two international languages. First was *lingua franca*, the simplified Italian described by French travellers as

> généralement entendue par toutes les cotes du Levant, qui a cours par tout le Levant entre les gens de Marine de la Méditerranée et les Marchands qui vont négocier au Levant et qui se fait entendre de toutes les nations.
>
> (Dakhlia 2008, 81, 9, 100, 497)

A commercial rather than a literary language, *lingua franca* was rarely written down. It was spoken by slaves and sailors; by the Beys of Tunis and Tripoli; and by Byron, who learnt what he called 'Levant Italian' in Athens in 1810. The *Gentleman's Magazine* wrote in 1837 of an Englishman in the Levant: 'he has talked *lingua franca* till he has half forgotten English' (Mansel 2010, 14). *Lingua franca* was proof of the accessibility of the Levant to the outside world. It was not a cultural ghetto.

From 1840, thanks to the spread of schools and of steam and rail travel, French, then the world language from Buenos Aires to Saint Petersburg, became the second language of the Levant. The language of science, culture and diplomacy, it was spoken by pashas, viziers, and sultans; by Mustafa Kemal and by the poet from Smyrna, George Seferis; and as an official language of the municipalities of

Alexandria and Beirut. Young Turk revolutionaries learnt French in Paris, which they called a 'star brighter than my dreams'. 5,000 French words—such as *complot*, *metres*, *dansös*—entered the Turkish language, another form of integration with the outside world (Mansel 2010, 45–47).

Salonica shared these polyglot habits. Most inhabitants spoke some words of Spanish, known in the city as Ladino or *Judezmo*, the language of Salonica Jews, owing to their numerical and commercial predominance in the city Veinstein 1992, 28–32; Risal 1913, 347). The Ottoman Sultan Abdulmecid spoke French to Salonica's Jewish and Levantine notables on his visit in 1859. Although many were nostalgic for the subtlety of Ladino, French became so popular in Salonica that all modern schools of whatever religion, even some German schools, taught it. A French-language newspaper called the *Journal de Salonique*, ('*publication bi-hebdomadaire, Politique, Commerciale et Littéraire'*) was founded in 1895; soon it had a circulation of about 1,000 (Veinstein 1992, 71, 211, 217; Molho 2005, 135).

Vidal Nahoum, father of the philosopher Edgar Morin, was born in Salonica in 1894. Through education in a French (*Alliance Israélite Universelle*) school, he became culturally French, even before becoming physically and legally so, after emigration to France in 1917. Like many other Frenchmen from Salonica, such as the Carasso and Modiano families, although he retained nostalgia for the Ottoman Empire and his native city, he did not feel '*dépaysé*' in France. His son wrote:

> la France c'est pour lui la Poésie faite Nation … Le prestige du francais est lié à celui de la patrie de la liberté, au mythe de Paris … l'essor des idées laiques a favorisé la gallomanie laquelle amplifie en retour l'essor des idées laiques.

> (Morin 1989, 28, 66, 88, 90, 356–357)

Hybridity

Hybridity and multiple identities were other characteristics of the Levant. The Lebanese-American historian William Haddad has written, 'the nation state is the prison of the mind'. The Levant was a jailbreak. The Ottoman Empire enforced few of the national restrictions and regulations of European governments. There were no ghettos. Travellers were attracted by the variety of races and costumes in these cities and the juxtaposition of mosques, churches, and synagogues, inconceivable in European cities before 1970 Mansel 2010, 2, 4).

In Levantine cities no single group dominated demographically. In Smyrna and Beirut populations were roughly half Christian and half Muslim; in Alexandria approximately three-quarters Muslim and one-quarter Christian and Jewish (Mansel 2010, 55, 91, 96, 107). In Salonica in 1850 the population had been about 70,000; by 1906 it had risen to 110,438, of whom 47,017 were Jewish, 33,756 Greek, and 29,665 Muslim (of whom half may have been *dönme* of Jewish origin) (Veinstein 1992, 107).

Outside the home some men developed multiple identities: in the seventeenth century Sabbatai Zevi, the 'false Messiah' of Smyrna, founded his own religion, with Christian and Muslim as well as Jewish elements, and made many converts in Salonica. His followers are still an important element in Izmir and Istanbul. There are three distinct groups: those who believe in Zevi and his eventual return to earth as the Messiah; those who remain officially Jewish, but secretly believe in Zevi; and the *Dönme*, those who converted to Islam but retained certain Jewish practices (Sciacky 2000, 90; Baer 2010, passim).

Mustafa Kemal, a Muslim born in Salonica in 1881, son of an official probably with Macedonian blood, after going to a traditional Koranic school, switched against his mother's advice to the Fevziye school, much frequented by *dönme*. Then he enrolled in a military school in order to join the army. Many attribute his zeal for reforms in part to his Salonica background, on the edge of the Ottoman Empire, exposed to other cultures. At military college in Constantinople, he was at first known as Selanikli Mustafa (Stavroulakis 1984, 3). I have been assured by elderly gentlemen in Istanbul that he knew, although he rarely used, Ladino.

In public, at places of work, or relaxation, from the *Cercle de Salonique* founded for wealthy businessmen in 1873 to the cafés, taverns, and '*musicos*' of the port, (and in the *Federacyon* labour union founded after 1908) the male population worked and played side by side. The official journal of the province of Salonica was in four languages: Ottoman, Greek, Bulgarian, and Judeo-Spanish. Some chose not only employees, but also wet-nurses and spouses, from other religions. Christians and Muslims visited each other's houses and made pilgrimages to the tombs of each other's holy men. Christians continued to pray in a section of the church of Saint Demetrios, although it had been turned into a mosque (Veinstein 1992, 105, 116; Levy 2000, 100n).

Daily coexistence did not, however, exclude eruptions of nationalism—as terrorist attacks in Macedonia, and the Balkan wars, would show. Hybridity affected public lives more than personal loyalties. Religious authorities generally restricted marriages to people within their own community and encouraged people to live near their place of worship. Postcards in Salonica used dress to emphasise national differences: they showed Greek peasant women bedecked in gold coins; Macedonians with thick leggings, white tunics, and embroidered aprons; Albanians in massive sheep-skin cloaks; Turks in suits and a fez. The inscription always mentioned the race of the person portrayed (Petropoulos 1980, 7, 22, 66–68). Jobs in the city were traditionally distributed by ethnicity. Grocers and waiters were Greek, yoghurt-sellers Albanian, clothes-sellers Jewish, tram conductors Turkish, shoeshine-boys gypsies (Veinstein 1992, 28–32; Risal 1913, 347). A French visitor called Ricciotto Canudo admired Salonica as 'a true crossroads of races … you think you find there the power of life itself, growling, boiling, a human whirlpool in the centre of an ocean of European, African and Asiatic activity' (Canudo 1992, 182).

Trade

Levantine cities were not romantic. They were trading cities, integrated into the economic systems of Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Many became boom cities, which experienced rapid rises in population. Principal hub of a vast network of inland trade routes, Smyrna became the city where Asia came shopping for Europe, and Europe for Asia. From 5,000 in 1600, the population rose to around 100,000 in 1700 (Goffman 1990, 139).

Alexandria became a capitalist El Dorado, attracting a gold rush of Europeans and Syrians in the nineteenth century. In the cotton boom of the 1860s capital could double every two years. The population rose from 5,000 in 1800 to 100,000 in 1850 and 232,000 in 1882. It became the port linking the economies of Egypt and Europe, with the largest stock exchange outside Europe and North America (Mansel 2010, 56, 108).

Beirut in 1826 had been described as a republic of merchants, living according to its own law. Its rise was due not only to local merchants but also, like that of Smyrna and Alexandria, to the arrival of foreign merchants and consuls. By 1841 according to the American traveller A. A. Paton, it was 'a Levantine *scala*, a bastard, a mongrel'. Its population rose from 6,000 in 1800 to around 130,000 in 1900 (Mansel 2010, 151).

Salonica was also a trading city. Jews formed around half the population of the '*Madre de Israel*', as they called Salonica. Until 1923 most shops in the city closed on the Sabbath and on Jewish holidays (Veinstein 1992, 28–32; Risal 1913, 347).

Salonica also became a boom town after 1860. Entrepreneurs from the Allatini, de Botton, and Modiano families—often with links with the western Mediterranean port of Livorno—helped bring Salonica, in a few years, out of the Middle Ages into the nineteenth century. Brick, soap, and beer factories were opened. Dr. Moise Allatini, Salonica's great moderniser (whose family founded the famous Allatini flour mill), started the first French-language school in 1858. He offered help and medical care to all, whatever their religion. The city walls were demolished in 1866 and new boulevards created; French- or Austrian-style villas, such as the Villa Kapandji, appeared by the shores of the Aegean (Veinstein 1992, 34–35, 171–174; Desmet-Grégoire and Georgeon 1997, 83, 85).

One of the main commercial streets, as in Smyrna and Alexandria, was called Rue des Franques (Risal 1913, 143). The quay was constructed in the 1870s, at the same time as Smyrna's; streets were slowly paved, drains finally installed (Veinstein 1992, 107). Railway links to Vienna in 1888 and Istanbul in 1896 began to open up the hinterland. In 1888 the Banque de Salonique was founded with French and Austrian capital. European fashions began to replace traditional dress (Veinstein 1992, 187, 189; Levy 2000, 26–28).

Another characteristic of Levantine cities was their sense of separation from the hinterland. In an age when sea transport was more important than it is today, and usually quicker and safer than rail or road, regular boat services made it easier to travel from port to port than into the hinterland. Their role as ports facilitated

Levantine cities' emergence as commercial and cultural centres. The corniche, where the boats docked, was the principal meeting place.

To many visitors Alexandria seemed part of Europe, Beirut the Paris of the Middle East, and Smyrna a different country from Constantinople, as Halid Ziya, author of *Kirk Yil*, remembered. Many of Salonica's inhabitants rarely left the city. The mountains of Macedonia were ravaged by *comitacis*, *cetniks*, and *cetes*—brigands who used nationalism (Greek, Albanian, Macedonian, Bulgarian, or Turkish) as an excuse for pillage and murder: trains were held up, villages burnt, 'traitors' shot (Bérard 1897, 151, 153, 162; Owen 1919, 19).

Modernity

Levantine cities also brought education and modernity. 'Smyrna illuminates like a beacon all the other provinces of the Ottoman Empire', wrote the Austrian consul-general Charles de Scherzer. It had the Ottoman Empire's first botanical collections, newspaper, American school, railway, electricity, cinema, and football club: Bournabat Football and Rugby Club, established by English merchants in 1894, fourteen years before the foundation of the legendary Galatasaray team in 1908 (Mansel 2010, 164–166). Alexandria had Egypt's first theatres (Arabic and Italian), feminist newspaper, and brewery, and in Cavafy the first publicly published homosexual poet since the ancient world (Mansel 2010, 144).

Smyrna, Beirut, and Alexandria attracted dynamic foreign schools, run by the *Mission Israélite Universelle*, Jesuits, the *Order of Notre Dame de Sion*, the *Frères des écoles chrétiennes*, or other organisations. Like the American University and Université Saint-Joseph in Beirut, they gave pupils the intellectual weapons, including language skills, with which to resist the cultural imperialism they represented. They were attended by Muslims and Jews as well as Christians (Mansel 2010, 135–136).

Salonica also spread education and modernity. As postcards at the 2012 exhibition at the Villa Kapandji showed, the city contained German, French, Italian, Jewish, Greek, and Serbian schools. Modern Turkey was born not in Anatolia or Istanbul, but in Salonica, birthplace of Mustafa Kemal (and of the great Communist poet Nazim Hikmet). Turks took advantage in Salonica of a measure of freedom unparalleled anywhere else in the empire, due to a combination of geography and demography. The liberal character of the least Muslim large city in the Empire (Muslims comprised at most 30% of the population), combined with the proximity of the largest army corps in the Ottoman empire, based eighty miles away in Monastir (now Bitola), made Salonica a more effective incubator and accelerator of political change than Constantinople or Smyrna. Some of the best schools in Istanbul today are continuations of schools founded in Salonica, that left, with staff, pupils, and charitable foundation, in 1912. The famous Istanbul newspaper *Cumhuriyet* is the successor of the Salonica newspaper *Rumeli*.[2] The publishers of the Salonica newspaper *Yeni Asır* ('New Century'), moved it to Izmir, where it is published to this day (Kontente 2005, 600).

More than other Levantine cities, Salonica became a city of revolutions. The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO) was founded in 1893 in Salonica. Believing in 'Macedonia for the Macedonians' (though some wanted it to be part of greater Bulgaria, since the two nationalisms were at that time closely linked), it soon developed its own shadow law-courts, armed forces, and taxes, like a state within a state (Veinstein 1992, 132, 135; Sciacky 2000, 72). Fanatically anti-Greek, it terrorised villages, most of which would have preferred to remain neutral. On 29 April 1903 in Salonica the office of the Ottoman Bank and the surrounding cafés, as well as a French boat in the harbour, were blown up by Bulgarians, led by a teacher called Delchev, who hoped to shake Macedonia out of its lethargy and force European intervention. In reprisal Bulgarians—recognisable by their dress—were killed in the street, until the governor Fehmi Pasha came to restore order in person, despite a bomb thrown at his carriage (Sciacky 2000, 81).

Another organisation of revolutionaries opposed to the Sultan, called the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), was established in Salonica in 1904. Its nucleus was provided by two young officers, Enver and Cemal, and Talaat Bey, a telegraph employee. Like the IMRO, the CUP created a state within the state. The army was infiltrated. Like many others from Macedonia, members of the CUP had the ultra-nationalism of the frontier. Enver had a Christian Turk or Gagauz background, while Talaat was a Pomak, a Bulgarian Muslim. Cemal came from the island of Mytilene in the Aegean. Other early members of the CUP included Niyazi, of Albanian origin; Cavid, head of the Salonica school of arts and crafts, a *dönme*; and Dr Nazim, born in Salonica, who had studied in Paris. All were united in hatred of what Enver's uncle Halil called 'the imbecile rule of the palace'—which, moreover, failed to pay the troops on time (Kansu 2007, 89).

The presence of foreign consuls in Salonica assisted revolutions. The CUP communicated with political exiles in Paris, and smuggled in subversive men and books, using Greek consuls and foreign post offices as well as their own networks (Hacisalihoglu 2004, 168–169; Sciacky 2000, 120; Panayotopoulos 1980, 87–95). In Salonica they planned revolution in the cafés near the White Tower or at the Café Cristal (Desmet-Grégoire and Georgeon 1997, 88, 89). Salonica was a political and national time bomb.

On 3 July 1908, fearing an investigation by the Sultan's police, the CUP officers began a military coup in Monastir. As more soldiers joined, or refused to suppress the coup, the movement turned into a constitutional revolution. On 24 July the Sultan capitulated and announced that elections to the Ottoman parliament would be held in the autumn. In front of the Salonica konak, the Inspector-General of the Macedonian provinces Huseyin Hilmi Pasha read out the Sultan's decree. Three times he called for cheers for the Sultan; each time he was greeted by silence (Veinstein 1992, 236). On the main square, Enver Bey, the handsome young leader of the revolution, proclaimed: 'we are no longer Turks, Greeks or Bulgarians but brothers. Long live the fatherland!—the nation!—liberty!' Speeches, ovations, flag-waving processions—one led by a virgin dressed in white, to symbolise the purity of the Ottoman constitution—succeeded each other.

In the following days, the city appeared to be united. Bristling with cartridges, pistols, and daggers, brigands laid down their arms (or rather those too old to be useful) and proclaimed their love of Liberty, Fraternity, and Justice, from the balconies of the Olympos Palace Hotel and the *Cercle de Salonique*. Their photographs were taken in Salonica studios, and sold as postcards of 'brigand bands' or 'bandit chiefs', titled 'Hassan Cavus', 'Livanos', or 'Paulos with his companion' (Sandalci 2000, 853–870). As in Constantinople, imams, priests, and rabbis embraced each other (Koker 2008, passim; Morin 1989, 59). The number of murders in Macedonia fell from 1,768 in 1907 to 291 in 1909 (Cumali 2007, 274).

The whole city seemed to be wearing cockades or 'liberty ribbons' in the white and red colours of the Young Turk revolution: white to show that Turkey must be pure, and red to show willingness to shed blood to make it so. Until 1912, the revolutionary ruling party, the Committee of Union and Progress, held its congresses and published its newspaper *Yeni felsefe* (new philosophy) in Salonica. Everything was discussed: the organisation of labour; women's rights (Figure 3.1); the settlement of Bosnian Muslims in Macedonia; and the reform of the Turkish language. In 1911, a group of Young Turk writers called *Genc Kalemlar*—young

Figure 3.1 Photograph of women at the summer theatre beside the White Tower, 1908. From the French periodical *L'Illustration*, 15 August 1908. Original caption: '*A Salonique. - Réunion de femmes turques et européennes écoutant une oratrice musulmane conférencier sur les droits de la femme, au théâtre d'été de la Tour Blanche. Deux clichés de Turquie qui n'eussent pas été possibles avant la révolution*'. (Macedonian Struggle Museum 61178, Giannis Megas Collection; used by permission of the Macedonian Struggle Foundation)

pens—was formed there, including the Turkish nationalist Tekinalp (born Moise Cohen) (Figure 3.2).

The Young Turk revolution had international impact. Salonica was hailed as the holy city of the revolution, '*le berceau de la liberté ottomane*'. Olympos square was renamed Place de la Liberté; there were plans to rename Salonica itself 'the *kaaba* of Liberty'. Few Muslims considered that it might soon be lost to the empire (Veinstein 1992, 114, 238). The ancient family of Evrenoszade, which had helped conquer the Balkans for the Ottomans in the early fifteenth century, decided to restore its ancestors' tombs, in what is now Giannitsa, forty kilometres west of Salonica, in 1908, as if they would be there for another 500 years (Lowry 2008, 1–192).

On 13 April 1909 there was an attempt at counter-revolution in Constantinople by troops faithful to the Sultan and horrified by the Committee's alleged irreligion. In Constantinople many supported the Sultan. Salonica, however, remained true to the revolution. 30,000 demonstrators in Liberty Square promised to protect the constitution (Figure 3.3). The 'operation Army' under Shevket Pasha, Enver, and Mustafa Kemal, with volunteers from Albanian, Greek, and Bulgarian brig- and bands, advanced by train to Constantinople. To win popular support they had to promise to protect the Sultan. Instead, on 23 April troops surrounded Yildiz Palace and deposed him. He was sent by train to exile in Salonica, where he lived under house arrest in the Villa Allatini. He was replaced by a younger, more lib- eral brother, who reigned as Mehmed V (Kansu 2000, 90, 118). When he visited Salonica in 1911, Mehmed V did not call on the brother he had deposed.

Figure 3.2 Postcard, mounted officers of the Ottoman garrison of Thessaloniki parading by the White Tower, 1908. (Macedonian Struggle Museum 57530, Papaioannou Collection; used by permission of the Macedonian Struggle Foundation)

Fêtes de la Constitution Manifestation populaire

Figure 3.3 Postcard, Thessaloniki post office employees marching in support of the constitution, 1908. Original caption: '*Fêtes de la Constitution: Manifestation Populaire*'. On reverse, '*editeur: Albert J. Barzilai*' and note in French dated 1 January 1916. (Macedonian Struggle Museum 56668, Papaioannou Collection; used by permission of the Macedonian Struggle Foundation)

Vulnerability

Salonica also shared the vulnerability of other Levantine cities. A riot or a change of regime could change it overnight. After the entry of the Greek army in November 1912, Salonica was the first major city to be de-levantinised, before Smyrna or Alexandria. The Rotunda of Galerius, which had first been transformed from a Roman temple into a church, then after 1430 into a mosque, in 1912, like many other mosques, became a church again (Kiel 1990, 145). Shop and street

signs henceforth had to be in Greek. People talking French in the streets were sometimes assaulted for doing so—already in Constantinople since 1908 Greek diplomats had been trying to persuade local Greeks to leave French schools, stop speaking French, and hellenise their shop signs (Oztuncay 2008, 26–27).

The assassination of King George I in Salonica on 13 March 1913 led to 'reprisals' against Muslims and Jews, often by Greek policemen and soldiers. Many died. After the Bulgarian school was attacked and fighting broke out between Greek and Bulgarian soldiers on 1 June 1913, Bulgarians fled the city. Although Jews kept some privileges such as exemption from military service, and the right to keep accounts in Spanish, many regarded the Greek 'liberation' as more oppressive than Ottoman rule. Many left for France (Morin 1989, 90, 115, 120; Sciacky 2000, 157; Molho 2005, 46).

Identity was not immutable. Some Salonicans preferred to abandon their city, emigrate, and become American or French. An unknown number, whether Jewish, Muslim, *Dönme*, Slav, or Albanian, changed religion and language and became officially Greek and Orthodox (as, for self-protection, Czechs in Vienna became Austrian, Slavs in Trieste Italian, and the people of Strasbourg switched identity four times between France and Germany in 1871–1945).

Thousands of embittered Muslims had already fled terrorism in the country-side—descendants of Christian converts to Islam, as well as Turks. After 1912 Muslims left Salonica as well, including Mustafa Kemal's mother. They moved to Constantinople or Izmir. Perhaps as many as 150,000 Muslim refugees arrived in the Aydin vilayet alone in 1912–1914 (MacCarthy 1995, 141–142, 145, 156, 159, 261). Beginning with Mustafa Kemal himself, Balkan refugees, living proof of Turkey's European roots, would provide much of the driving force behind its modernisation (cf. Tesal 1997).

British and Austrian proposals for Salonica and the surrounding area to become an autonomous, neutral city or province, like Tangier or Mount Lebanon, protected by international guarantees and an internationally officered gendarme-rie (as Macedonia had possessed since 1903) were supported mainly by Jews. Joseph Nehamia, author of *Salonique, la ville convoitée* (1913), believed Salonica should be a new Venice, 'the threshold of central Europe', the great port between Germany and Suez. Few others, however, put their city before their nation (Risal 1913, 365; Molho 2005, 175–177, 190, 365).

Once the commercial dynamo of Turkey in Europe, after 1912 Salonica sank to being the second city of Greece, cut off from its former hinterland by the new frontiers of Albania, Serbia, and Bulgaria. The creation of nation states weakened the city's Levantine character, its trade, its hybridity, its multilingualism, and the power of the consuls.

Benefiting from its geographical distance from the capital, however, Salonica again played a role as revolutionary capital in 1916–1917. This revolution was led by Venizelos against King Constantine in Athens; as in 1908–1909 it had been led by the CUP against Abdulhamid in Constantinople. As a result, the city experienced a last international incarnation, as headquarters of the allied *Armée d'Orient*. Its streets filled with troops from Annam, India, Senegal, Serbia, and

Russia, as well as France and Britain (Mansel 2010, 201–203; cf. Scheikevitch 1922, passim). Levantine ports, being accessible to foreign navies, were easy to occupy, as Beirut (in 1860) and Alexandria (in 1882) had already discovered.

In conclusion Salonica in its Levantine heyday between 1850 and 1918 shows the political as well as the cultural and commercial independence of cities. Geography, demography, trade, and diplomacy can empower them to play an independent role, often against the orders of the state and its capital. Through the flight or transfer of its Muslims, and above all the destruction of its Jews by the German state in the Second World War, the history of Salonica also shows that, as one Salonican who emigrated to America, Leon Sciacky, wrote, 'civilisation was but a thin crust, a layer so tenuous that one dared not trust it' (Sciacky 2000, 16).

Notes

1 For a survey, see Mansel 2010, 6–15, 19.
2 I am grateful for this point to Professor Zafer Toprak.

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