

FREEMASONRY IN THE OTTOMAN LANDS: A TRANSNATIONAL
HISTORY

A Ph.D. Dissertation

by
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To My Family



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HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

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Early encounters with Freemasonry in the Ottoman lands took place in the eighteenth century. Its significance as a sociocultural institution developed after the Crimean War, when Ottoman subjects belonging to different ethnic and religious backgrounds joined an increasing number of lodges formed in Istanbul and Izmir, as well as the Balkans, Egypt and Palestine. Following the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, Ottoman Freemasonry formed its own sovereign administrative body and was highly engaged in the political climate of the period during which the Committee of Union and Progress became a major political actor. A significant characteristic of Ottoman Freemasonry after the middle of the nineteenth century was its inclusivity towards different elements in the empire. It was seen by its adherents as a vehicle towards the ideal of a fraternal existence within the remaining territories of the

empire, epitomized in the Young Ottoman movement and later that of the Young Turks. This work endeavors to place Ottoman Freemasonry in the broader sociopolitical picture of the Ottoman Empire from the late 18th century until the collapse of the empire following the First World War. The history of Ottoman Freemasonry during this period is significant historically because of its association with individuals from Ottoman society's diverse ethnic and denominational components, many with prominent standing in the cultural and political history of the empire, and also, because of its relation with the various significant sociopolitical processes which took place during this period.

Keywords: Freemasonry, Lodge, Young Ottomans, Murād V, Salonica, Committee of Union and Progress

ÖZET

OSMANLI TOPRAKLARINDA MASONLUK: BİR ULUSAŞIRI TARİH İNCELEMESİ

Tiryaki, Rüştü Murat

Doktora, Tarih Bölümü

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Osmanlı topraklarında masonluk ile erken karşılaşmalar on sekizinci yüzyılda gerçekleşti. Masonluğun, bir sosyokültürel kurum olarak gelişimi ise Kırım Savaşı sonrası oldu ve bu tarihten itibaren çeşitli etnik ve dini temelden gelen Osmanlı tebaası, İstanbul ve İzmir ile Balkanlar, Mısır ve Filistin’de sayıca artan localara katılımlar gösterdi. 1908 yılındaki Jön Türk Devrimi sonrası Osmanlı masonluğu kendi bağımsız yönetim otoritesini oluşturdu ve İttihād ve Terakki Cemiyeti’nin bir siyasi aktör olarak ön plana çıktığı bu dönemin siyasi iklimi içinde yer aldı. Osmanlı masonluğunun on dokuzuncu yüzyılın ortasından itibaren gelişen önemli bir özelliği imparatorluğun çeşitli unsurlarına yönelik kapsayıcılığı idi. Bu unsurlara mensup masonlar, Osmanlı masonluğunu, Yeni Osmanlılar hareketi ve sonrasında Jön Türkler tarafından temsil edildiği şekliyle imparatorluğun kalan topraklarında bir arada yaşayabilme amacına yönelik bir araç olarak benimsediler. Bu çalışma, on

sekizinci yüzyılın sonundan, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Birinci Dünya Savaşı sonunda yıkılışına kadar olan sürede Osmanlı masonluğunu, imparatorluğun geniş sosyopolitik manzarası içinde konumlandırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Osmanlı masonluğunun bahsi geçen dönem içinde tarihi olarak önemi, pek çoğu imparatorluğun kültürel ve siyasi tarihi içinde önemli yere sahip olan ve Osmanlı toplumunun çeşitli etnik ve dini kökenlerinden gelen fertlerinin masonluk içindeki varlığına ek olarak, bu dönemde gelişen çeşitli sosyopolitik süreçler ile Osmanlı masonluğunun ilişkisinden kaynaklanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Masonluk, Loca, Yeni Osmanlılar, V. Murād, Selanik, İttihād ve Terakki Cemiyeti

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Painting by Jacques-Louis David61

INTRODUCTION

Freemasonry in the form it is practiced today is the result of an evolution comprising centuries old traditions and origins. However, certain aspects of its current organizational structure and ritual practices took shape in the British Isles at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was not long before British Freemasons introduced this new form of Freemasonry to continental Europe and from there it found its way to the overseas dominions of the leading European empires. Freemasonry's evolution within distinct geographical and cultural environments created what we may now retrospectively call Freemasonries with more or less the same essential principles but often distinct practices and philosophical approaches.

As Freemasonry spread from Christian Europe into imperial dominions and other sovereign states on the periphery of the continent with predominantly non-Christian populations, this encounter proved to be a major challenge for the fraternity due to its many aspects connected with Christian tradition and faith. However, the universal approach towards belief in a supreme being was one with obvious appeal to primarily the monotheistic religions.¹

A tolerant view of religion and an idea of universal fraternity resonated quite favorably with the members of various religions and ethnicities within imperial lands

¹ See Section 1.1.

possessing multi-national elements like that of the Ottoman Empire. While various social groups, as explored in this work, became prominent in Freemasonry's gaining a foothold in the empire as well as its further development, given the complexity of the demographic make-up of the empire, enlistment to the Freemasonic institution was not a uniform process among different groups within Ottoman society. For both Muslims and Christians, hesitation was prevalent due to the antagonism towards Freemasonry among religious and civil authorities, and the society at large.

One phenomenon that came to exist concurrently with the spread and development of Freemasonry in Europe and elsewhere was the antagonism towards its practices and teachings. This animosity was often propelled by the official statements of the Catholic Church in the form of papal bulls. The opposition of the Catholic Church in certain European states extended its influence to the Ottoman lands through not only the local Catholic institution itself but also the predominant religious institution of the majority of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire, the Fener (Phanar) Rum Patriarchate.² During most of the period in which Freemasonry came into contact with Ottoman subjects in or outside of the Ottoman Empire, anti-Masonic sentiment was transmitted into the society also through the Islamic scholars who perceived Freemasonry as a threat to Islamic faith. This was in most likelihood due to a negative perception of its secretive practices and organization. In the current historiography of Ottoman Freemasonry, two commonly proposed dates for a hostile action taken by the imperial administration against the formation and existence of Freemasonic social connections within the empire are 1748, and 1826. The first of these is attributed to Sultan Maḥmūd I (r.1730–54) and is believed to be an influence of the papal bull of 1738, *In Eminenti Apostolatus*

² See Section 1.2.

Specula, which triggered the reaction of the 'ulamā' (i.e., the members of the learned class who acted as a religious aristocracy in the administration of the Ottoman Empire). The abolishment of the Janissary corps in 1826 created a similar hostile attitude towards mystical fraternal associations, particularly the Bektashis, which in most likelihood affected Freemasonry as well, notwithstanding its presumably limited existence in the Ottoman territories at the time.³

Many publications against Freemasonry, which targeted its philosophical and ritual content as well as its organizational aspects, went into circulation in European countries and the translations of a few found their way to the Ottoman Empire, albeit with significant delay, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.⁴ On the other hand, it is hard to assess how much impact they may have had in impeding the growth of Freemasonry in Europe and elsewhere. In the case of the Ottomans, it is all the more so, because of the scarcity of such publications put in circulation in the empire and their limited access to only the literate and educated minority of the population.

It may be argued that many of those who revealed their opposition to Freemasonry through their writings sought the type of speculative sources to serve their purposes, instead of relying on the actual philosophical treatises and discussions relating to the internal structure of the fraternity penned by Freemasons themselves. Although Freemasonry is often believed to have been rather secretive of its ritual system and operation, the level and nature of this secrecy is open to debate. There has always been a good deal of written output accessible to those outside the

³ Celil Layiktez, *Türkiye'de Masonluk Tarihi, Vol.1* (Istanbul: Yenilik Basımevi, 1999), 6,13.

⁴ A book compiled with the aim of reviling Freemasonry was published in Istanbul in 1877 or 1878 with the title of *Esrâr-ı Farmason*. It was mainly a translation from a French original which the translator claimed to have been published in 1822. See Suha Umur, "Osmanlılarda Masonluğa Ait İlk Kayıtlar (3)," *Şakul Gibi* 2, no.18 (November 1989): 16–18. Léo Taxil's book *Les Mystères de la franc-maçonnerie dévoilés* published in France in 1886 was also translated into Ottoman language in the subsequent years.

fraternity. However, as Albert G. Mackey states in the “Masonic Publications” article of his *Encyclopedia*, such treatises from the Freemasons themselves have been rather of little interest to those who have developed their own myths and ideas regarding Freemasonry:

The objections to treatises and disquisitions on Masonic subjects, that there is danger, through them, of giving too much light to the world without, has not the slightest support from experience. In England, in France and in Germany, scarcely any restriction has been observed by Masonic writers, except as to what is emphatically esoteric; and yet we do not believe that the profane world is wiser in those countries than in our own in respect to the secrets of Freemasonry. In the face of these publications, the world without has remained as ignorant of the aporrheta of our art, as if no work had ever been written on the subject; while the world within – the craft themselves – have been enlightened and instructed, and their views of Masonry, (not as a social or charitable society, but as a philosophy, a science, a religion) have been elevated and enlarged.

The truth is, that men who are not Masons never read authentic Masonic works. They have no interest in the topics discussed, and could not understand them, from a want of the preparatory education which the Lodge⁵ alone can supply. Therefore, were a writer even to trench a little on what may be considered as being really the arcana of Masonry, there is no danger of his thus making an improper revelation to improper persons.⁶

Fortunately in recent years, research into Freemasonic history has gained momentum through a great deal of neutral insight in the light of available documents interpreted by historians in the “profane world” in Mackey’s terms (i.e., those outside of Freemasonry) as well as by Freemasons themselves, as presented in the historiographical section below.

This particular study of Freemasonry will focus on the organizational and sociopolitical aspects of its development within the context of Ottoman territories and Ottoman subjects in order to demonstrate its relevance within the broader sociopolitical environment and circumstances of the empire. Although some

⁵ See Glossary in Appendix A.

⁶ Albert G. Mackey, M.D., *An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and its Kindred Sciences: Comprising the Whole Range of Arts, Sciences and Literature as Connected with the Institution* (Philadelphia: Moss & Company, 1874), 617.

Freemasonic activity existed in the Ottoman lands from the very early stages of the development of European Freemasonries, during most of its existence it was dependent on the foreign Freemasonic bodies in the way it was administered and organized. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, all lodges formed within the Ottoman Empire were opened and worked under the auspices of various European Freemasonries. It was not until 1909 that an Ottoman Grand Orient⁷ was formed and aspired to unite under its roof all the lodges working within the empire. This thesis will describe the significance of Freemasonry in the Ottoman context through its involvement and association in the course of the last two hundred years of the empire with certain social elements, notably the diplomatic circles, the commercial networks, and political entities like the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). The aim is to reveal certain critical themes and phases of Ottoman Freemasonic history and to inspect how, through its inherent transnational characteristic of operating through lodges taking authority from their metropolitan organizations, Freemasonry adapted itself to the sociopolitical environment of the empire as manifested through different types of relations, be they commercial, diplomatic, social or political in their nature. It will demonstrate moreover that the development of Freemasonry within the Ottoman context was closely linked to a transnational context, notably the commercial, cultural and political ties to Britain, France, and other nations, which made Freemasonry appeal to Ottoman subjects in various ways, namely in their commercial interests, cultural and intellectual pursuits as well as political aspirations. Consequently, it will demonstrate that despite Ottoman Freemasonry's own geographic and demographic dynamics, it experienced challenges similar to its counterparts in Europe and elsewhere, notably the cultural

⁷ See the definition of "Obedience" in Glossary in Appendix A.

and religious differences among the members, the extent of inclusivity, the social and political interests at the institutional and individual level, to name but a few.

A major component of the resulting work has therefore been a historic examination of the affiliation with Freemasonry of a wide spectrum of individuals including merchants, army officers, intellectuals and prominent officials of states and governments as well as members of aristocracy and royalty on the upper end of the spectrum. This Freemasonic affiliation was closely associated with the various social networks to which these individuals belonged and certain motives⁸ in their adherence to Freemasonry can be identified. The diverse motivations and aspirations, mainly social, intellectual and commercial, led these individuals to an adherence to Freemasonry which often times also created common ground in the pursuit of sociopolitical aims, as in the case of the CUP or the highly politically oriented lodges of Egypt in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth. Therefore, the history of Ottoman Freemasonry from the late 18th to the early 20th century is significant historically because of its association with individuals from Ottoman society's diverse ethnic and denominational components, many with prominent standing in the cultural and political history of the empire, as well as its relation with the various significant sociopolitical processes which took place during this period.

This thesis is organized into a number of thematic sections which are then grouped into several chapters that relate to the development of Ottoman Freemasonry. While a much broader picture with additional themes could be

⁸ Koloğlu postulates a number of motives for Ottoman subjects' joining of Freemasonry: 1. the cause of consolidating freedoms and human rights, 2. mere political aims, 3. building a social network and being involved in philanthropic deeds, 4. personal gain. This type of a classification is arguably superficial, as the motive for joining the Freemasonic order was most likely a weighted sum of these rather simplified criteria in addition to others that can be suggested. Even in a hypothetical case where the motivation for personal gain or political advancement could be predominant, an interest in the intellectual and spiritual aspects of Freemasonry would not be absent. See Orhan Koloğlu, *Abdülhamit ve Masonlar* (Istanbul: Pozitif, 2004), 239–42.

possible, given the existing archival material and sources yet to be explored, the thesis focuses on the following subjects:

1. How Freemasonry expanded in the Ottoman territories through its relation with particularly the commercial and diplomatic networks often acting as a vehicle to enhance the ties within these communities as well as with their counterparts outside the empire.
2. How Freemasonry related to sociopolitical endeavors within the Ottoman Empire, where it was at certain times involved both as a liberal medium for the sharing of ideas as well as a relatively secret environment for political platforms to form and expand.
3. How Freemasonry overlapped with the social networks of both the Ottoman subjects living in Europe (to represent the state, to attend educational institutions, etc.) and the European expatriates living in Ottoman territories (as members of diplomatic missions, men of commerce or political refugees, etc.).

While these constitute the main threads that come to the fore in different periods of Ottoman Freemasonry, other significant themes like Ottoman Freemasonry's relation to Sufism and the Young Ottoman movement, occasional political debates among Freemasons, connections with foreign Freemasonries, and the question of inclusivity are also featured to help enhance the picture of Ottoman Freemasonry. In the light of these main threads and thematic probes into Ottoman Freemasonry, the thesis offers answers to a number of historical questions: Who were the agents in the introduction of Freemasonry into the Ottoman lands and in the later periods of its progress? How was Freemasonry organized in the Ottoman Empire? How inclusive were the lodges towards various elements of Ottoman society? To what extent did Freemasonry become a sociopolitical vehicle for various

groups especially in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Additional questions are implicit in the various thematic sections where related interpretations are presented.

While Freemasonic activity in cities like Izmir, Istanbul and Salonica dominate most of the historical narrative, Egypt is also given a special consideration in this study due to its particular political position within the Ottoman Empire from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the end of the First World War during which it came under the rule of the Muḥammad ‘Alī dynasty. During this period, it reached varying degrees of autonomy and following the British occupation of 1882 it was practically outside of Ottoman political domination. The relations of the Ottoman and Egyptian royal houses and state élite with Freemasonry especially during the period of the latter’s administration as a Khedivate under nominal Ottoman sovereignty after 1867 was put into consideration as a significant component of the evolution of Freemasonry within the Ottoman territories. This aspect of Freemasonry, namely the involvement of royalty and state élite as a supporting or oppositional component, is closely associated with the position and extent of involvement of the Freemasonic organizations within the social and political entanglements of state and society.

Sources and Historiography

Many works of research on Freemasonry deal with its esoteric, ritual or philosophical content. However, evaluating these aspects insofar as they pertain to Ottoman Freemasonry is not within the scope of this work. The personal views regarding these subjects which are often put forward in various forms of treatises

with either a pro- or anti-Masonic approach are not taken into consideration for their own sake. The type of anti-Masonic literature mentioned earlier is thus not pertinent to the subject of this work as it mostly focuses on religion and expounds on what was perceived as Freemasonry's pre-dominantly anti-clerical position from the standpoint of both Christian and Islamic ideologues.

Although many lodges have been formed and in many cases discontinued during the long history of Ottoman Freemasonry, giving a comprehensive account of the formation and development of these lodges within the Ottoman Empire is beyond the scope of this thesis.⁹ The portrayal of certain lodges as required in the context of the threads and discussions pursued in the narrative is done with reference to either extant lodge records or secondary sources revealing them.

Although the organization of Ottoman Freemasonry gained its sovereign character after the formation of the Ottoman Grand Orient in 1909, for the purposes of convenience and integrity throughout this work, whenever the term Ottoman Freemasonry is used, it refers to all the Freemasonic activity that existed within the Ottoman territories before or after the formation of its Grand Orient. Hence, Ottoman Freemasonry will refer to the activities of lodges belonging to various European Freemasonries prior to the existence of the Ottoman Grand Orient as well as to those after its inception whether under its roof or not.

In a study which aspires to make connections between various Freemasonic organizations and their transnational endeavors, the historic sources for consultation are rather diverse. However, access to the historic records of Freemasonic organizations is mostly restricted in many places due to their institutional confidentiality and also due to the loss and destruction of archives during periods of

⁹ A list of the Ottoman lodges cited in this work is given in Appendix D with relevant information regarding their places, Freemasonic authorities involved, and dates of formation and discontinuation.

sociopolitical upheaval, as well as periods of institutional hiatus. In the case of Ottoman Freemasonry, most of the accessible documents belonging to the period prior to the formation of a sovereign Grand Orient come from foreign Freemasonic institutions which operated their lodges in the Ottoman lands until that time and even afterwards. Certain documents like lodge registers of members and extant records of lodge meetings, as well as correspondence between lodges and their metropolitan administrations provide some insight into the organizational and sociocultural aspects of Freemasonic activity. These can in most cases be accessed through the institutional archives and in some cases through libraries or internet archives. In addition, quite a number of early publications on Freemasonry and journals published especially during the nineteenth century have been made available on the internet. The online copies of newspapers and journals¹⁰ prove very useful for making thematic searches related to the pursued information. These primary sources provide some of the essential content to any research into Ottoman Freemasonry. In this particular work, direct access to the archival materials was unfortunately eclipsed by the Covid pandemic that spanned almost the whole period of research, so they were either sought in digital form if available or secondary sources presenting them were used.

Only a few books dealing with the chronological evolution of Ottoman Freemasonry have been published so far. One of the earliest works was by Kemalettin Apak, part of which was allocated to a general insight into the development of Freemasonry in the Ottoman lands prior to the establishment of the Turkish Republic.¹¹ For the history prior to 1909, the author's narrative is mainly based on traditionally accepted accounts, albeit with lack of documentary evidence.

¹⁰ See the list of Published Primary Sources in the Bibliography section.

¹¹ Kemalettin Apak, *Ana Çizgileriyle Türkiye'deki Masonluk Tarihi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Mason Derneği, 1958), 17–143.

The accounts after 1909 are corroborated with the extant lodge registers and records, then available to the author from the Grand Lodge archives. In subsequent years, further documents from the archives of European Freemasonic establishments have been accessed by later researchers and more light has been shed on the history of Ottoman Freemasonry. An important contribution came from Celil Layikteş whose three volume work is one of the most comprehensive works shedding light to many historic aspects of Freemasonry during the Ottoman and Turkish Republic eras.¹² For his research on the Ottoman era, though he relies heavily on research done by historians like Paul Dumont, the author has collected a significant amount of documents and records from the British and French Freemasonic archives. On the other hand, the focus of the compiled material is mainly on Istanbul, Izmir and Salonica with very little reference to Freemasonry in the rest of the Ottoman lands.

A major output regarding Freemasonic activity in the later part of Ottoman history was written by Orhan Koloğlu whose particular focus was on the sociopolitical engagements of the lodges during the rule of Sultan ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd II and Freemasonry’s relations with the CUP in the subsequent period, as well as on how Freemasonry dealt with the challenge of reconciliation with Islam. While ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd II has long been associated with an oppressive regime targeting to eliminate his potential political opponents including many associations and institutions through most of his reign with fear of possible plots against him, Koloğlu in *Abdülhamit ve Masonlar* provides evidence regarding a somewhat unexpected policy of the Sultan towards the Freemasonic lodges. The author reveals that although ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd was obviously aware of the potential of the lodges in aiding the opposition, he still sent donations to them for social endeavors. According to

¹² Layikteş, *Türkiye’de Masonluk*, 3–143.

Koloğlu, this was apparently an attempt to direct the lodges towards social engagements instead of getting involved in oppositional politics. In his sequel on Ottoman Freemasonry, *İttihatçılar ve Masonlar*, the author this time focuses on the association of Freemasonry with the CUP from the latter's inception as a secret society in Salonica to its political engagements in the aftermath of the Young Turk revolution and until the First World War.¹³ Finally, in his *İslam Aleminde Masonluk* Koloğlu gives a general overview of the Freemasonic activity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Islamic states, with introductory summaries regarding Egypt, Iran, Algeria and the Middle East, putting into perspective what he calls "colonial Freemasonry."¹⁴ His journalistic approach is evident in his posing questions about how this western institution of brotherhood could be reconciled with Islam and the political realities of the periods of interest.

A significant contribution to Freemasonic history of the Ottoman lands within the context of the activities of French Freemasonry especially in the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth came from Paul Dumont who published a number of articles portraying the crucial influence of the French Freemasonic culture on the Ottoman Freemasons through progressive and at times revolutionary ideas.¹⁵ Dumont relies on archival material from the Grand Orient de France regarding the development of Freemasonic lodges in Istanbul, Salonica and elsewhere established under its auspices. His research reveals the registers of these lodges making it possible for the author to interpret the social and economic relations of the members giving a sociological dimension to his research. Dumont aims to interpret their

¹³ Orhan Koloğlu, *İttihatçılar ve Masonlar* (Istanbul: Pozitif, 2012).

¹⁴ Orhan Koloğlu, *İslam Aleminde Masonluk* (Istanbul: Kırmızı Kedi, 2012).

¹⁵ Several of these articles published by Paul Dumont in the 1980s and 90s were brought together in a volume entitled *La Franc-maçonnerie d'obédience Française dans l'Empire Ottoman: Ottomanisme, mouvements nationaux et "idées françaises" à l'âge de l'expansion coloniale de l'Europe* (Istanbul: Les Éditions Isis, 2013).

sociopolitical engagements in the context of the then prevailing international relations and colonial interests. Relying in similar fashion to Dumont on the archival material from the Grand Orient de France, subsequent research by Eric Anduze shed further light to a much debated period during which the Ottoman Grand Orient was formed.¹⁶ Anduze reveals the involvement of the French and Italian Freemasonries during this process through the correspondence between several Istanbul Freemasons and the Grand Orient de France, where the elaboration of their expectations and disillusionments also gives hints of the political alignments at the international level in the period leading to WW1.

The earlier research of Dumont on French Freemasonic archives was complemented by Angelo Iacovella's research on archival material from the Grande Oriente d'Italia to throw light on the affairs and composition of Italian lodges in Salonica and Istanbul.¹⁷ Iacovella reveals the close relations between the Italian lodges in Salonica and the initial organization of the Union and Progress movement there. He argues that the connections with the Italian lodges were based on the Young Turks' interest in the Risorgimento and their taking the Carbonari as an example for their own network of a clandestine organization to fight against the despotism of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II. Iacovella also exposes the difficult position of the Italian Freemasonry with its close links to the CUP during a time when Italy attacked the Libyan territories of the Ottomans, thus bringing the question of how the Freemasonic fraternity could fare through politically challenging conditions.

While examining in his work the connections between Islamic mysticism, occidental philosophical ideas and Freemasonry in the Islamic sphere, the primary focus of Thierry Zarcone falls on the Bektashi order and its ritualistic and

¹⁶ Eric Anduze, *La Franc-maçonnerie de la Turquie Ottomane 1908-1924* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005).

¹⁷ Angelo Iacovella, *Gönye ve Hilal: İttihad-Terakki ve Masonluk*, trans. Tülin Altınova (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1998).

organizational affinity with Freemasonry.¹⁸ Rıdā Tewfîk (Rıza Tevfik), a member of this order and a leading figure in early twentieth century Ottoman Freemasonry, is the main character in Zarcone's research of the convergence of Sufism and Freemasonry in the final phase of the Ottoman Empire with extensions into the Islamic realm out of the Ottoman Empire as well.

Very little research on the Freemasonic involvement of Ottoman subjects outside the Ottoman territories has appeared as a published work. Onnik Jamgocyan's research provides valuable insight into many young members of the Ottoman Armenian community who were educated in Europe after 1830s, particularly in France.¹⁹ These individuals brought back European enlightenment ideals to their community while maintaining their own cultural values. Jamgocyan imparts detailed information regarding some leading personalities among them who were either initiated into Freemasonry or were very closely related with Freemasonic circles. They were very influential in establishing educational institutions and most significantly redefining the power and authority of the Patriarchate by penning the so-called Armenian constitution of 1863, establishing the jurisdiction of both the Patriarch and the newly formed Assembly of the Armenian People (*Millet-i Ermeniyân*). The author emphasizes that many prominent members of the Armenian community were drawn into the ranks of Freemasonry not to establish social ties but rather in pursuit of the high cultural and intellectual values of fraternity, love, liberty, education and charity.

While a considerable number of works have dealt with the Freemasonry of Istanbul, Izmir and the Balkans, much less has been published about Freemasonic

¹⁸ Thierry Zarcone, *Mystiques, philosophes, et francs-maçons en Islam: Rıza Tevfik, penseur Ottoman (1868–1949), du soufisme à la confrérie* (Istanbul: Institut français d'études anatoliennes d'Istanbul, 1993).

¹⁹ Onnik Jamgocyan, *Les Francs-maçons Arméniens - La 'Constitution' de l'Arménie Ottomane, Constantinople-1863* (Paris: Les Editions du Bosphore, 2017).

activity in the Levant during the Ottoman period. Dorothe Sommer's work provides insight into this area through her research based on data primarily collected by virtue of her contact with the descendants of the former members of lodges from Tripoli in Northern Lebanon.²⁰ Following her interpretation of the organization of Freemasonry in Egypt and the Levant, Sommer argues that the influence of colonial interests is not valid for the region concerned and that the Freemasons have rather chosen to be involved in the fraternity for the sake of consolidating their social and intellectual identities during a time when the future of the Ottoman Empire was rather bleak. In this regard, the author challenges the arguments of historians like Dumont and Anduze who have given priority to the pursuit of political interests in the establishment of lodges under foreign Freemasonries rather than the social and intellectual pursuits.

Interest in the significant role of Freemasonry within Egyptian and Middle Eastern history was rekindled subsequent to the abolishment of Freemasonic activity under Gamal Abdel Nasser's rule after 1956. In an early attempt to encourage further research on the topic, Jacob Landau interpreted a number of documents from various sources in order to put together a preliminary account of Freemasonry's involvement in Egyptian politics in the second half of the nineteenth century. He formed the backbone of his narrative around the political endeavors of 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Pasha²¹ and his relations with different elements of Egyptian politics at the time.²²

Some works within the historiographical output on Ottoman Freemasonry mentioned above have followed a chronological pattern by dividing its history into specific periods while compiling a variety of accounts within each of them, albeit

²⁰ Dorothe Sommer, *Freemasonry in the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Fraternity and its Influence in Syria and the Levant* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015).

²¹ See Appendix B.

²² Jacob M. Landau, "Prolegomena to a Study of Secret Societies in Modern Egypt," *Middle Eastern Studies* 1, no.2 (January 1965): 147–59.

with little thematic relevance between the accounts. A few of the works have focused on the membership and affairs of certain lodges with the aim of portraying through them a larger picture of Ottoman Freemasonry within a particular period and geography, while the remaining ones have offered content regarding certain events and individuals with the aim of presenting insight to a limited part of the nearly two hundred years of Freemasonic history within the Ottoman lands.

An extensive work covering the multiple aspects and significance of Freemasonry during its entire history in the last two hundred years of the Ottoman Empire does not exist in the Freemasonic literature yet. This work aims to contribute to the existing literature through a portrayal of the social, political and cultural impact of Ottoman Freemasonic activity during this long period, by dividing the broad historical picture of Ottoman Freemasonry into thematic sections with relevant content from different geographies and periods. While an exhaustive treatment of these themes is not intended, the breadth of the material presented here will provide answers and new interpretations to a multitude of questions and topics of discussion on Ottoman Freemasonry from its early origins in the eighteenth century to its state of existence in the last phase of the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century.

CHAPTER I

EARLY ENCOUNTERS WITH FREEMASONRY IN THE OTTOMAN LANDS

1.1. Freemasonries within Freemasonry: An Overview

Freemasonry is a fraternal organization which claims deep operational and intellectual roots, going back to the esoteric societies of temple builders of ancient civilizations in Egypt and the Middle East²³ as well as the later medieval European guilds of masonry²⁴. “Operative Freemasonry”²⁵ refers to the performing of the original trade of masonry as a profession. Its exact origins and ways of organization are open to debate. Over time, this solely operative nature of the masons’ guilds progressed into so-called “speculative Freemasonry”²⁶. This term often denotes the form of Freemasonry which dates back to the seventeenth century when certain people from outside the trade of operative masonry started to be accepted into

²³ David Brewster, *The History of Free Masonry Drawn from Authentic Sources of Information; with an Account of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, from its Institution in 1736, to the Present Time* (Edinburgh: Alex. Lawrie and Co., 1804), 12–18.

²⁴ Jasper Ridley, *A Brief History of the Freemasons: The True Story of the World’s Most Powerful Secret Society* (London: Constable & Robinson, 1999), 3–8.

²⁵ See Glossary in Appendix A.

²⁶ See Glossary in Appendix A.

masonic lodges. The subsequent transformation from operative to “accepted” or “speculative” membership brought about the evolution into modern lodges where the operative element is only represented through the symbols and rituals associated with the ancient customs and legends of the original trade.²⁷ The organizational principles of this modern Freemasonry were laid out in the early eighteenth century. In this newly attained form, it spread rather quickly in the British Isles and onto the European continent.²⁸ The philosophical framework was developed in parallel with the enlightenment ideas of the eighteenth century²⁹ and later in the following century liberal ideas were added.

Freemasonry identifies itself as a moral system that transcends religious and political divisions. Its philosophical content bases itself on allegorical interpretations many of which allude to Judeo-Christian scripture and literature. Freemasonic ritual in a similar vein incorporates many images and elements of ancient religion and philosophy in the form of a continuous accumulation of symbolism from the Holy Land, Egypt and the Levant to Europe and further into the Americas.

Speculative Freemasonry was able to establish itself in most of Europe and North America during the eighteenth century. As new Freemasonic organizations developed, the form of Freemasonry practiced by each of them also diversified in intellectual content and ritual construct. In that regard, one could not speak of a monolithic Freemasonry anymore but rather distinct Freemasonries. However, despite these transformations and diversifications in practice, the essence of

²⁷ For a more detailed explanation of operative and speculative Freemasonry see the related entries in *The Royal Masonic Cyclopedia of History, Rites, Symbolism and Biography*, ed. Kenneth R.H. Mackenzie (London: Bro. John Hogg, 1877), 530, 686.

²⁸ J. J. L. Ratton, “Origin and Progress of Freemasonry,” *The Irish Monthly* 41, no.478 (April 1913): 175–82.

²⁹ For a detailed research on the development of Freemasonry in relation to the Enlightenment, see Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), and also James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 252–72.

Freemasonic principles were kept as common assets and shared by these distinct institutional embodiments of Freemasonry.

Despite all the diversified structures and practices of today's Freemasonries, Freemasonic jurisprudence preserves its most universally venerated document known as Anderson's *Constitutions*³⁰ as the one common source defining the principles and rules that all Freemasonries claimed to honor and remain faithful to, notwithstanding its symbolic and at times ambiguous content. The original version of the book drafted by Reverend James Anderson was published in 1723 and four more editions followed between 1738 and 1784.³¹ In spite of its enjoying such universal recognition, the *Constitutions* has never ceased to engage Freemasonic scholars with interpretations that have long since created some of the most challenging rifts among Freemasonic organizations as well.

Included in the *Constitutions* were the Charges³² of a Freemason and the Regulations³³ of the fraternity which elaborated some of the fundamental tenets and administrative aspects of Freemasonry and its organization. The one paragraph of text forming the first of the Charges is entitled "Concerning God and Religion"³⁴ and has often created some of the most controversial interpretations in Freemasonic history. Pauline Chakmakjian argues that the evolution of the *Constitutions* throughout the eighteenth century resulted in different levels of reference to deism in this first Charge and even possibly giving consent to atheism.³⁵ Two revised versions came out in 1815 and 1819 following the union of the two Grand Lodges in England,

³⁰ James Anderson, *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons, Containing the History, Charges, Regulations, &c. of that most Ancient and Right Worshipful Fraternity* (London: William Hunter, 1723).

³¹ "Book of Constitutions," UGLE, <https://www.ugle.org.uk/about-us/book-constitutions>.

³² See Glossary in Appendix A.

³³ See Glossary in Appendix A.

³⁴ Anderson, *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons*, 49–57.

³⁵ Pauline Chakmakjian, "Theological Lying and Religious Radicalism in Anderson's Constitutions," *Aries* 8, no.2 (Jan. 2008): 179–80.

the Antients [*sic*] and the Moderns, to form the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) in 1813.³⁶ Chakmajian asserts that “the overall tone of the 1815 first Charge reflected a more secular attitude within Freemasonic society as a whole” and as such “succeeded in proclaiming what might be viewed as just Freemasonic law with respect to freedom of religion.”³⁷ This liberal conceptualization of a fraternity that would not be bound by a particular persuasion or denomination became the essential characteristic of Freemasonry that was able to attract adherents to the fraternity from all religious and cultural traditions.

The inclination towards religious tolerance as preached by the first Charge was consolidated by the presence of another long-established tradition also mentioned in the Charges, which was a denouncement of political engagement against the ruling authority and the state, thereby discouraging the religious and political debates and disputes in the immediate lodge environment. This created the ideal type of intellectual and spiritual environment which was sought for by many an enlightened individual as well as members of religious and ethnic minorities who felt the social threat of dominant groups in the so-called “profane” world outside the Freemasonic realm of the lodge. On the other hand, the original intent of the discouragement of political disputes in the lodges could be associated with the existence of major conflicts that dominated Britain’s political scene during the period when the first Grand Lodge of speculative Freemasonry was formed in 1717. The earliest efforts of speculative Freemasonry to form lodges in Britain and then the ventures of British Freemasons to establish new lodges in France had been highly associated with the political struggles between the reigning monarch and the rival claimants at the time. The House of Hanover had recently been established when

³⁶ “Book of Constitutions.”

³⁷ Chakmakjian, “Theological Lying,” 190.

George I was crowned as the first Hanoverian monarch of Great Britain and Ireland in 1714. The struggle of Jacobites who supported the restoration of the House of Stuart to the British throne since the Glorious Revolution of 1688 continued against the Hanoverians.³⁸ Ric Berman argues that the regulations incorporated into the *Constitutions* of Anderson were intertwined with the political aspirations of the pro-Hanoverian faction.³⁹ As portrayed by Berman, the formative years of the English Grand Lodge at the beginning of the eighteenth century, were closely associated with the political conflict between the pro-Hannoverians and the Jacobites. Under their newly formed Grand Lodge, the English Freemasons were “directed by a leadership motivated by a powerful desire to safeguard the Hanoverian succession.” The new regulations, as conceived in the *Constitutions* of 1723, “superimposed an implicit if not explicit Hanoverian agenda onto Freemasonry and, among other aspects, revised radically the Masonic oaths to ensure that each Freemason was obliged to swear to conform to and respect the law and the magistracy, be a peaceable subject of the Crown and not to become involved in any Jacobite plots or anti-government conspiracies.”⁴⁰

On the other hand, during the same period, members of the Jacobite faction were known to be active participants of Freemasonry in France which would be the first country in Continental Europe where Freemasonry would take root. The first lodges in Paris were formed from 1726 onwards under the auspices of the Jacobites and the first Grand Masters of the French Grand Lodge were British Jacobites.⁴¹ A significant name among these early Freemasons in France was Andrew Ramsay, who

³⁸ Bruce Lenman, *The Jacobite Cause* (Glasgow: Richard Drew, 1986), 7.

³⁹ Ric Berman, *Schism: The Battle That Forged Freemasonry* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2013).

⁴⁰ Berman, 1–2.

⁴¹ Jan A.M. Snoek and Henrik Bogdan, “The History of Freemasonry: An Overview,” in *Handbook of Freemasonry*, eds. Henrik Bogdan, Jan A.M. Snoek (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 19–20.

sought the origins of the Freemasonic order in Scotland rather than England due to his Jacobite sympathies. Another prominent Jacobite was Charles Radclyffe Derwentwater who was elected *Grand Maître* (Grand Master) between 1736 and 1738. He was captured during the Jacobite Risings of 1745 and executed the next year.⁴²

While holding on to its original tenets and regulations, Freemasonry developed as a dynamic order as it reached diverse cultures and geographies constantly adapting to its new surroundings and evolving as required. When sociopolitical circumstances dictated, Freemasons individually took action or participated in one camp or another in social and military conflicts as well as revolutionary endeavors often related to nationalistic aspirations.

The idealistic principle of avoiding religious and political debates and rivalry in the lodges⁴³ did not prevent the eventual rifts dividing Freemasons in most of the Freemasonic world throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During this period, many political processes leading to transformations in the structures of nations and states, such as the American Revolution, the French Revolution, Napoléon's Empire and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 all caused rifts among Freemasons who were often drawn to opposite sides of conflicts.⁴⁴

Both politics and religion were defining factors in the formation of fracture zones among the Freemasonic organizations as well. To a great extent, speculative

⁴² Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, "Masonic Connections and Rivalries Between France and Britain," in *British Sociability in the Long Eighteenth Century*, eds. Valérie Capdeville and Alain Kerhervé (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2019), 109–25.

⁴³ The time-honored custom of refraining from political and religious discussions was at a much later date stipulated in a declaration from 1929 by the British Grand Lodges entitled *Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition*. See Jan A.M. Snoek, "Relationships between Grand Lodges," in *Handbook of Freemasonry*, eds. Henrik Bogdan, Jan A.M. Snoek (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 379–80.

⁴⁴ François Rognon, "Freemasonry and War," in *Handbook of Freemasonry*, eds. Henrik Bogdan, Jan A.M. Snoek (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 485, 490.

Freemasonry since its spread from Britain into continental Europe after 1725⁴⁵ developed in mainly two distinct directions in the context of their relations with the dominant Church denomination in a given territory. The contact of the fraternity with the religious authority as well as the ruling power was mostly of an antagonistic nature in Catholic countries, where the fraternity's ideals were identified with liberalism and perceived as a threat by these authorities. On the other hand, in Great Britain, the United States and the Nordic countries, Freemasonry enjoyed a higher degree of prestige and acceptance, especially due to a significant presence of non-Catholic clergy within the fraternity, as well as the involvement of the British and Swedish Kings as Grand Masters in their respective countries.⁴⁶

The tolerant nature of Freemasonry towards different denominations and religions in its admittance to lodges and meetings proved to be a concern for the Catholic Church, which prohibited mixing of Catholics with non-Catholics in such meetings.⁴⁷ The Catholic Church declared its condemnation of Freemasonry as early as 1738 through the papal bull issued by Pope Clement XII under the title of *In Eminenti Apostolatus Specula*. On the other hand, such action against Freemasonry was not limited to religious authorities. Throughout the nineteenth century a long list of rulers and governments of European states issued similar prohibitions against the meetings of Freemasons.⁴⁸

Despite the continuous antagonism of the Catholic Church towards Freemasonry throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the latter's relations with the Protestant Church was on much better terms. The alignment of the early organization of speculative Freemasonry in Britain with the Hanoverian cause and its

⁴⁵ Snoek and Bogdan, "The History," 18.

⁴⁶ José A. Ferrer Benimeli, "Freemasonry and the Catholic Church," in *Handbook of Freemasonry*, eds. Henrik Bogdan, Jan A.M. Snoek (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 142.

⁴⁷ Benimeli, 140.

⁴⁸ Benimeli, 139.

later development in Protestant states like Sweden resulted in an association of the fraternity with the conservative establishment in these countries, while it was mostly considered a subversive organization in the Catholic and Orthodox countries of Europe.⁴⁹ Such an association brought about a mutual understanding with the Protestant churches, which was reflected in the ritual content and philosophical teachings of the fraternity in these countries.⁵⁰

The polarization resulting from the distinct political and religious environments of European Freemasonries was represented on one side by the Latin branch of Freemasonry which developed in the predominantly Catholic countries and by the Anglo-Saxon Freemasonry on the other. The process causing the formation of such a polarity among distinct Freemasonries during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had its impact in the way Freemasonic thought and organization spread to new geographies and how they evolved there. Otto Bachmann, a past Grand Master of the Swiss Grand Lodge Alpina, argued that the philosophical evolution and re-formulation process of Anderson's first Charge through the eighteenth century transformed the original religious tolerance and all-encompassing aspiration of speculative Freemasonry, which had found its utmost expression in the 1738 version, into a more dogmatic outlook predominantly within the British Freemasonry, leading to further polarization among Freemasonries of the world.⁵¹

During a period of increasing antagonistic relations with the Catholic Church, the Belgian Grand Orient in 1872 and then that of the French in 1877 resolved to

⁴⁹ Guy Liagre, "Freemasonry and Protestantism," in *Handbook of Freemasonry*, eds. Henrik Bogdan, Jan A.M. Snoek (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 162.

⁵⁰ Joachim Berger, "European Freemasonries, 1850–1935: Networks and Transnational Movements," EGO-European History Online, published on December 3, 2010, <http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/transnational-movements-and-organisations/international-religious-and-humanitarian-movements/joachim-berger-european-Freemasonries-1850-1935>.

⁵¹ Otto Bachmann, *Farmasonluk ve İçindeki Bölünmenin Nedenleri ve Sonuçları*, trans. Cemal Kıpçak (Istanbul: Hüsniyatı Matbaası, 1970), 4–9.

remove all reference to the “Grand Architect of the Universe”⁵² both in its rituals and document headings with the aim of sustaining freedom of conscience.⁵³ This resulted in the UGLE’s declaration of the Grand Orient de France as irregular, although there was no clear definition of the Freemasonic sense of regularity⁵⁴ at that time.⁵⁵

The rift formed as a consequence of this breaking of relations between the two obediences⁵⁶ gradually developed into the formation of two main camps in the world of Freemasonries which cast a shadow over all the ensuing endeavors to form multi-lateral ties among the grand bodies and to create transnational networks and organizations of Freemasons in Europe and in the world. Despite short-lived efforts, it was not possible to bring the followers of the two camps to a long-lasting combined organization notwithstanding the occasional bi-lateral relations between members of these two distinct spheres of European Freemasonry.⁵⁷ The concept of “territoriality” which related to a grand lodge’s claim to establish its own lodges in territories of other sovereign states was another important obstacle in the relations of grand lodges.⁵⁸

A significant characteristic of certain European Freemasonic organizations was the support and patronage they received from members of royal families and nobilities in their respective countries, which affected their prestige and acceptance in their homeland as well as their relations with other Freemasonries. In England,

⁵² See Glossary in Appendix A.

⁵³ Liagre, “Protestantism,” 169.

⁵⁴ See Glossary in Appendix A.

⁵⁵ Snoek, “Relationships,” 378.

⁵⁶ See Glossary in Appendix A.

⁵⁷ Berger, “European Freemasonries.”

⁵⁸ In reference to the concept of territoriality, Joachim Berger explores certain conflicting characteristics of various European Freemasonries based on their relationships with religion and politics, and discusses how these have brought about the division of the governing organizations and how they affected the efforts towards the cross-border fraternal endeavors among these organizations and their individual members. See Joachim Berger, “Regimes of Territoriality: Overseas Conflicts and Inner-European Relations, c. 1870–1930,” *Journal for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism* 5, no.1 (2014): 101–15.

Prussia, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, the heads of the national Freemasonic organizations in the 19th century were often members of the ruling dynasties. These were all predominantly Protestant countries. On the other hand, the anti-clerical position of the fraternity in the Catholic countries of Europe estranged the ruling dynasties due to their close ties with the Catholic Church.⁵⁹

As will be explored in the related sections of this work, when the bond between the political elite and the Freemasonic organization was strengthened in a particular country, national interests played a more significant role in the fraternity. The overlapping of the colonial interests of Britain with the pursuit of its national Freemasonic organizations to form lodges in its overseas territories is a case in point. In the Ottoman Empire, the close involvement of the members of the local dynasty of Egyptian viceroys in Freemasonry in the second half of the nineteenth century and the engagements with Freemasonry of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) as the dominant political power in the years leading to the First World War are both related examples. When national interests came to the fore, priorities of national politics often restricted the ability of individual Freemasonries to act in concert, but still the pursuit of transnational ties took an important place in their agendas, as will be discussed in reference to the European visits of the CUP members who juxtaposed their national political agendas with their Freemasonic identities.

Freemasonry's existence in the Ottoman Empire from the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth was a sporadic one. The Ottoman government followed other governments of Europe by forbidding Freemasonic activity with an imperial decree in 1748. This was a time when the meetings of Freemasons conducted under a cloak of secrecy were deemed as potentially

⁵⁹ Berger, "European Freemasonries."

subversive to the order of society and government.⁶⁰ The same concern was also evident when the Freemasonic activity was once again banned in the aftermath of the abolishment of the Janissary order in 1826, as will be discussed in the following section.

In the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth, many progressive intellectuals and also members of various ethnicities and denominations in the major urban centers of the Ottoman Empire were drawn to the Latin obediences. The liberal and revolutionary ideals emphasized in the discourses of these obediences appealed to the multi-national and multi-cultural composition of the Ottoman society. The rosters of lodges formed by the French and Italian obediences demonstrate the acceptance of a wide range of membership from European expatriates to local elements belonging to all major religions and denominations. On the other hand, during the same period, a lack of initiative on the part of German and Scandinavian Freemasonries to form lodges in the Ottoman Empire is noteworthy. This may be explained by the fact that these obediences identified themselves as Christian orders which restricted the external relations of these grand bodies by distancing them from transnational and international engagements with most other European Freemasonries as well.⁶¹

1.2. Early Encounters in the Ottoman Context

Freemasonry expanded across borders with its discourse of universal fraternal bonding among nations and religions. It was during its initial spread from Britain into continental Europe in the early eighteenth century that Freemasonic endeavors

⁶⁰ Benimeli, "Freemasonry," 139–40.

⁶¹ Berger, "European Freemasonries."

most likely found their way into the Ottoman Empire as well, notwithstanding the lack of evidence hitherto revealed. The presence of Freemasonic activity within the Ottoman lands in the subsequent periods would be closely related to the changing dynamics of Ottoman relations with European states and the formation of lodges would be dependent on the favorableness of the sociopolitical climate within the empire.

The roots of Freemasonry in the Ottoman Empire are found in connection to diverse phenomena, such as commercial relations, cultural exchange, advancement of technology and communication, international politics, state affairs and policies, all of which transcended national boundaries. The development of Freemasonry in the Ottoman Empire is characterized by a number of periods, namely from the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth, the post-Crimean War period, and the first decade of the twentieth century leading into the First World War.

The first quarter of the eighteenth century under the rule of Ahmed III was a time when the Ottoman Empire first opened itself to European influences. Although there is an absence of reliable documents regarding the early periods of Freemasonic activity in the Ottoman lands, there is nevertheless a somewhat common narrative in various works of history on this subject.⁶² According to this commonly adopted historical narrative, it was during the decades subsequent to Ahmed's reign that the earliest Freemasonic lodges came into being through some foreign elements who enjoyed privileged commercial and social ties within the Ottoman realm. The earliest Ottoman personalities associated with Freemasonry during this period were representatives of the state posted to France during a time when Freemasonry was just extending its influence there in the first half of the eighteenth century. Although

⁶² For an account of this early period of Ottoman Freemasonry, see Apak, *Masonluk Tarihi*, 18–19, and also Layiktez, *Türkiye'de Masonluk*, 6–8.

it has not been substantiated with documents, two candidates to such a claim are Sa'īd Efendi (the son of Yirmisekiz Meḥmed Čelebi Efendi and later Paṣha), an Ottoman diplomat posted to Paris, and Ibrāhīm Muteferriḳa who returned from Europe with an ambition to start the first printing press in Istanbul which he did in 1727.⁶³ No more than a few names, such as Khumbarad^jı Aḥmed Paṣha (originally Comte de Bonneval, a French officer who later joined Ottoman Army and converted to Islam) and Yūsuf Čelebi, an Istanbul merchant, are associated with Freemasonry during the course of the eighteenth century and the scarcity of records makes it difficult to interpret the extent of its spread among Ottoman subjects.⁶⁴ This was a period when the fraternity did not have a significant presence within the empire's territories and its scope was limited to the efforts of a few individuals who mainly acted on their own initiative, rather than a concerted action on the part of the then slowly emerging grand Freemasonic bodies of Europe.

The aforementioned commonly adopted historical narrative maintains that Freemasonry was prohibited in 1748 under the influence of the anti-Masonic stance of the authorities of state and religion.⁶⁵ An event that took place in Istanbul in the same year was mentioned in a number of early Freemasonic sources. *The Acta Latomorum* recorded the following in its chronological list of important events relating to Freemasonry for the year 1748:

The Ottoman Porte gave orders to the Grand Admiral of the Navy (Capitan-Pacha) to surround a house in Constantinople in which some Freemasons were assembled and to demolish it; the Freemasons instructed in time split up. By the intervention of the English Ambassador this affair was not followed up on

⁶³ Apak, *Masonluk Tarihi*, 18.

⁶⁴ Apak, 19.

⁶⁵ Suha Umur, "Türkiye'de Masonluğun Uyku Dönemleri," *Mimar Sinan*, no.58 (1985): 7–9. Notwithstanding this common narrative, Orhan Koloğlu is of the opinion that there is not enough evidence for such a prohibition targeting Freemasonry by the Ottoman administrations at any point in the Ottoman history. He argues that the assertions regarding the banning of Freemasonry in the 1740s and 1820s have no solid basis, and that the Ottoman bans against disruptive organizations were particularly intended to appease the Greek Patriarchate due to its accord with the Ottoman government. See Koloğlu, *Abdülhamit*, 209.

but the government notified the envoys of foreign courts not to seek to introduce new sects in the lands of the Sultan, and particularly the Freemasonry.⁶⁶

The British Ambassador to Istanbul at the time was Sir James Porter. Andreas Rizopoulos has presented Porter's report from Istanbul dated November 1748, addressed to the Duke of Bedford, which gives a narrative of the incident mentioned in the *Acta Latomorum*. The report gives an indication of the then existing efforts of the Latin clergy in Istanbul to influence the members of other communities and also the Sublime Porte for an anti-Masonic crusade. Based on this report and other sources, Rizopoulos has arrived at the conclusion that during the last decade of the first half of the eighteenth century there was already a certain degree of Freemasonic activity in Istanbul and possibly in Izmir.⁶⁷ This event from 1748 attests to the fact that the provocation of anti-Masonic sentiments had already started in the Ottoman Empire almost as early as similar conflicts arising in Western Europe.

In the Catholic countries of Europe, the inclusive practices of the Freemasonic institution towards different denominations and later its position in conformity with the Enlightenment ideology had made the Catholic Church entrench itself against Freemasonry from very early on. Its condemnation was manifested as early as 1738 with Pope Clement XII's bull *In Eminenti* which became the first of similar anti-Masonic documents to be issued by the Catholic Church. In the Ottoman Empire, where the *Fener* (Phanar) *Rum* (Greek Orthodox) Patriarchate was the religious authority recognized by the state as the representative for a number of

⁶⁶ *Acta Latomorum ou Chronologie de L'Histoire de la Franche-Maçonnerie Française et Étrangère Tome Premier* (Paris: Pierre-Elit Duffart, 1815), 62. The same text is also mentioned in *Encyclopädie Der Freimaurerei, von C. Lenning, Dritter Band, N bis Z* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1828), 542, with reference to the *Acta Latomorum*.

⁶⁷ Andreas Rizopoulos, "Freemasonry in the Ottoman Empire: A short note on French Exposures in Greek, c.1747," *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, no. 112 (1999): 140–41.

Christian communities under the Orthodox denomination,⁶⁸ the promulgations of the Roman Catholic Church were not binding for the patriarchate. However, there were intricate relations in a demographically complex city like Istanbul. Eutykhios Nésiotès, who penned two retrospective articles in the early twentieth century focusing on the relations of the Greek Orthodox Church with Freemasonry both in Greece and Turkey, asserted that despite the long-standing tension between the papacy and the patriarchate on many issues there was consensus in the eighteenth century between Rome and Phanar regarding their stance against Freemasonry.⁶⁹ The Latin (Roman Catholic) clergy in Istanbul, acting in deference to the papal bull of 1738 and along with the support of the Patriarchate, spread anti-Masonic sentiments among not only the Christian communities but also the Muslim Turks. The above mentioned incident of 1748 was a consequence of this state of affairs in Istanbul at the time.

1.2.1. Alexander Drummond

The transmission of the teachings and institutional aspects of Freemasonry across the Mediterranean basin continued throughout the eighteenth century and much of this process was due to the endeavors of a small number of individuals. One name that stands out for Freemasonry's leap into the Eastern Mediterranean in the

⁶⁸ İlber Ortaylı, "Osmanlılar'da Millet Sistemi," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi Vol:30* (Istanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2005), 67. Ortaylı expresses that "Bulgarians, Serbians, Orthodox Albanians, Greek Orthodox Arabs, along with the Hellene element, were subject to the spiritual financial, administrative, legal, censorial (censoring of education and publication) control and direction of the *Rum* Orthodox Patriarchate at Fener."

⁶⁹ In his articles, Nésiotès also argued that this opposition on the part of the Patriarchate became rather more tolerant during the last decades of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth. See Eutykhios Nésiotès, "La franc-maçonnerie et l'Église grecque," *Echos d'Orient* 15, no.95 (1912): 333–41, and Eutykhios Nésiotès, "La franc-maçonnerie et l'Église grecque en Grèce et en Turquie (1898–1908)," *Echos d'Orient* 16, no.100 (1913): 232–36.

middle of the eighteenth century is Alexander Drummond⁷⁰. According to the *Encyclopädie Der Freimaurerei*, published in three volumes between 1822 and 1828, Drummond, Worshipful Master⁷¹ of the lodge *Greenock Kilwinning*, was appointed as Provincial Grand Master by the Grand Lodge of Scotland in Edinburgh in 1739, which conferred upon him jurisdiction over the lodges in the Western part of Scotland. In 1748 during his stay as a British resident in Alexandretta, Turkey, the Grand Lodge granted him a patent through which he was authorized to establish lodges along the whole coast of the Mediterranean Sea in Europe and Asia, and to supervise them.⁷²

The only record noted by Sir David Brewster in his book *The History of Free Masonry* regarding the transactions of the Grand Lodge of Scotland for the year 1747 is in agreement with the *Encyclopädie Der Freimaurerei*. Brewster, the Scottish historian and natural philosopher, expounded in his book, published in 1804, the early origins and historical evolution of Freemasonry up to his time, also giving an account of the history of the Grand Lodge of Scotland instituted in 1736. He revealed that:

At the anniversary meeting of the Grand Lodge, it was stated by the Right Honourable the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, that his brother, Alexander Drummond, Esq, late Master of Greenock Kilwinning, and provincial Grand-Master of the west of Scotland, having taken up his residence at Alexandretta in Turkey, had erected several mason [*sic*] lodges in that part of the country; and, as he was anxious still farther to diffuse the principles of the fraternity, he begged that the Grand Lodge would grant him a provincial commission. The Grand Lodge having taken this petition into their consideration, unanimously granted his request, and gave full power to him, and any other whom he might nominate to constitute lodges in any part of Europe or Asia, bordering on the Mediterranean Sea; to superintend the same, or any others already erected in those parts of the world, and to transmit an account of his proceedings to the Grand Lodge, as soon as he found it convenient.⁷³

⁷⁰ See Appendix B.

⁷¹ See Glossary in Appendix A.

⁷² *Encyclopädie Der Freimaurerei, Erster Band, A bis G*. (Leipzig : F.A. Brockhaus, 1822), 115.

⁷³ Brewster, *The History of Free Masonry*, 165.

The appointments conferred on him made Alexander Drummond the first Scottish Provincial Grand Master “over the Western Counties of Scotland” and the first Scottish District Grand Master “over the countries in Europe and Asia bordering the Mediterranean Sea,” at the same time.⁷⁴

Drummond sailed from England in 1744 and travelled to Cyprus by way of Venice and Izmir. After a year and a half stay in Cyprus he arrived in Alexandretta (*Iskenderun* in Turkey today). He was engaged in commercial activity during his stay there in affiliation with the Levant Company and was appointed as vice-consul in 1747. He was later appointed as the British consul to Aleppo in 1751 and acted in this capacity until his resignation in 1758. Drummond was part of the learned circle of the mercantile community in Aleppo as attested by Alexander Russell’s dedication of the first edition of his book *The Natural History of Aleppo*.⁷⁵ Drummond was very active in his Freemasonic engagements during his stays in both Alexandretta and Aleppo. Later recorded accounts of his involvement mention that “in 1747 while he was a resident of Alexandretta in Turkey, he applied through his brother George Drummond for a commission from the Grand Lodge to constitute lodges in that quarter, which was granted.”⁷⁶ Rizopoulos states that Drummond acquired his charter from the Grand Lodge of Scotland on 30 November 1747 and the lodge he created in Aleppo, named *Union Lodge from Drummond Kilwinning from Greenock*, was granted a warrant on 3 February 1748, making it the first lodge chartered by the same Grand Lodge outside of Scotland. A second lodge in Aleppo was granted a warrant on 8 April 1752 by the *Canongate Kilwinning* Lodge again under the Grand Lodge

⁷⁴ “First Provincial Grand Master of Glasgow,” Provincial Grand Lodge of Glasgow, <https://www.pglglasgow.org.uk/index.php/about-the-province/19-1st-provincial-grand-master>.

⁷⁵ Maurits H. van den Boogert, “*Patrick Russell and the Republic of Letters in Aleppo*,” in *The Republic of Letters and the Levant*, eds. Alastair Hamilton, Maurits H. van den Boogert and Bart Westerweel (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005), 248–49.

⁷⁶ *The Freemasons’ Quarterly Review*, (September 30, 1841): 302.

of Scotland. Rizopoulos concludes that these two lodges founded by Drummond were the first and possibly the only “regularly constituted” lodges in the Ottoman Empire between 1744 and 1754, during a time when some of the earliest Freemasonic activities were recorded.⁷⁷ Due to the absence up to now of any records or official correspondence regarding the membership and activities of these lodges, it is not possible to state with assurance whether they had only European expatriates as members or Ottoman subjects as well.

The *Encyclopädie Der Freimaurerei* further relates to Drummond the forming of “the first lodges of the new Grand Lodge of England in 1738, in Constantinople, Smyrna and Aleppo.”⁷⁸ Apparently some confusion appears in this piece of information in regards to the date, the name of the founding grand body and also the locations of the lodges, in the light of the documented information about the conferral of the above mentioned charter for Eastern Mediterranean on Drummond by the Grand Lodge of Scotland and the warrants he was able to obtain for the lodges he founded.

Notwithstanding the lack of substantiating documents, there is mention of a lodge formed in Izmir in Drummond’s own writings.⁷⁹ In a letter written in 1745, he claims to have formed a lodge during his stay in this city. Although excerpts from his letters with accounts of his stays in Cyprus and Syria were incorporated into various books of travel literature during the eighteenth century, his mention of his

⁷⁷ Rizopoulos, “Freemasonry,” 141–42.

⁷⁸ *Encyclopädie Der Freimaurerei, Dritter Band*, 542. In addition to the information on Drummond, the name of Dr. Manassé [sic] is mentioned as the English Provincial Grand Master for Armenia and Asian Turkey, with reference to the *Almanach des Francs-Maçons* of the years 1768 (p.36) and 1769 (p.29).

⁷⁹ Thirteen letters written by Alexander Drummond between 1744 and 1750, and addressed to his brother George Drummond of Edinborough, were compiled in 1754 in London under the title of *Travels through different cities of Germany, Italy, Greece and several parts of Asia, as far as the banks of the Euphrates: in a series of letters, containing an account of what is most remarkable in their present state, as well as in their monuments of antiquity*. The title page identifies Drummond as His Majesty’s Consul at Aleppo.

Freemasonic activities were cited only much later in the nineteenth century. Excerpts from Drummond's letter from Izmir were published in the *American Masonic Record and Albany Saturday Magazine*'s June 30, 1827 issue, as "Extract from the travels of Alexander Drummond Esq. Consul at Aleppo, written at Smyrna in 1745, and published at London, in folio, 1754":

As I have mentioned the Lodge of Freemasons, I cannot help congratulating myself upon the opportunity I had of making so many worthy brethren in this place, and of forming the only Lodge that is in the Levant.⁸⁰

The excerpt continues with a poem in which Drummond lyricizes his Freemasonic deed with elaborate references to history and mythology. Drummond's social encounters in Izmir expressed in his letter were also introduced as a short note entitled "Smyrna Lodge in 1745" to the readers of the Freemasonic journal *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* in its volume from 1894.⁸¹

Drummond's stay in Izmir was a relatively short one which lasted two months. He left Izmir for good in January 1745, and as Maurits van den Boogert points out, it is rather questionable that after having "described himself as the 'father' of the 'flock' and named the lodge after himself," he chose to leave it all behind never to return.⁸² After a critical analysis of the publication process of Drummond's book, van den Boogert reaches the conclusion that the account of his forming a lodge in Izmir is possibly the result of the imprudence of the editor of the book, Tobias Smollett, who might have shuffled certain sections in his rather liberal approach to

⁸⁰ *American Masonic Record and Albany Saturday Magazine* I, no.22 (June 30, 1827): 169.

⁸¹ *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum, Being the Transactions of the Lodge Quatuor Coronati of A.F. & A.M., London, No. 2078 VII*, (March 2, 1894): 49–50. The journal quotes its source for the excerpt as *The Imperial Magazine*, London, 1760, pages 248–49 and gives this introduction: "'On Freemasonry'. From the travels of Alexander Drummond, Esq., Consul at Aleppo, wrote at Smyrna, in the year 1745" and includes an interesting editorial note at the end: "The earliest English Lodge at Smyrna of which we have any record, is Homer Lodge No. 806, warranted in 1860, or one hundred and fifteen years later. Is this Lodge recorded anywhere? On the Scotch lists for instance?"

⁸² Maurits H. van den Boogert, "Freemasonry in Eighteenth Century Izmir? A Critical Analysis of Alexander Drummond's Travels (1754)," in *Ottoman Izmir: Studies in Honour of Alexander H. de Groot*, ed. Maurits van den Boogert (Leiden: Netherlands Instituut voor Het Nabije Oosten, 2007), 112.

editing. Consequently, Drummond's description of the Izmir lodge was possibly transplanted from his writings about Aleppo where he had actually started a lodge as documented by the Grand Lodge records.⁸³ However, Drummond's remarks related to the lodge are followed by the poem mentioned above, which van den Boogert has not taken into account. In his poetry, Drummond clearly refers to a lodge raised in a place which can easily be associated with Izmir through the city's ancient river Meles and its connection to Homer, a native of the city:

... But now Britannia's gen'rous sons
A glorious lodge have rais'd,
Near the fam'd banks where Meles runs,
And Homer's cattle graz'd ...⁸⁴

It is not likely that the poem could have been moved from elsewhere in Drummond's writings. Finally, van den Boogert argues that "the lodge does not appear to be mentioned by travelers who visited Izmir after Drummond"⁸⁵, but one wonders whether the Freemasonic activity recorded in the memoirs of the German merchant Nicolas-Ernest Kleeman⁸⁶ regarding his visit to Izmir in the late 1760s could have been related to this lodge which Drummond claimed to have started himself only two decades previously. If this was the case, Freemasonry had already gained a foothold in this cosmopolitan center of the empire by the middle of the eighteenth century.

1.2.2. Ignace Mouradgea d'Ohsson

Freemasonry in Sweden flourished towards the end of the eighteenth century due to the royal patronage of Duke Charles (later King Charles XIII of Sweden, 1809–18), the younger brother of Gustav III and an ardent member of Freemasonry

⁸³ Van den Boogert, 119–20.

⁸⁴ *American Masonic Record*, 169.

⁸⁵ Van den Boogert, "Eighteenth Century Izmir," 105.

⁸⁶ See Section 1.2.3.

himself. Also the nephew of King Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia, another avid royal patron of Freemasonry, Charles developed further the Swedish Rite⁸⁷ as the Grand Master of the order and established the traditional patronage of Swedish Royalty.⁸⁸ During his regency on behalf of his nephew King Gustav IV Adolf between 1792 and 1796, Charles appointed Ignace Mouradgea d'Ohsson⁸⁹, an Ottoman subject, as the Swedish Ambassador to the Sublime Porte. Born in 1740 to an Armenian Catholic family in Istanbul, d'Ohsson had a vast knowledge of the languages and culture of the Orient.⁹⁰ At a young age he started working as an interpreter for the Swedish legation in Istanbul, following in the footsteps of his father who had done the same for many years at the Swedish Consulate in Izmir between 1738 and 1777.⁹¹ As much of an *homme des Lumières* as one could expect in the Ottoman Empire during his time, d'Ohsson dedicated a significant part of his life to creating his much acclaimed work *Tableau Général de l'Empire Othoman* published in Paris between 1787 and 1790 in two volumes. The book soon came to the attention of a group of American Freemasons in Philadelphia who had an English translation published, peculiarly presenting it as somewhat related to Freemasonry. Carter Vaughn Findley states that although pages for an English edition of d'Ohsson's work were printed, it was never published in England, only to be sent to Philadelphia later to be published around 1832, "with an altered title and a bizarre clutter of Masonic terms and symbols on the title page," a presentation which he goes on to express as the probable cause for the assertion on the Freemasonic connection

⁸⁷ See Glossary in Appendix A.

⁸⁸ Andreas Önnerfors, "Inledning," in *Mystiskt brödraskap – mäktigt nätverk: Studier i det svenska 1700-talsfrimureriet*, ed. Andreas Önnerfors (Lund: Lunds Universitet, 2006), 34.

⁸⁹ See Appendix B.

⁹⁰ *Biographie Universelle ou Dictionnaire Historique, Tome Quatrième* (Paris: Furne, Libraire-Editeur, 1833), 2105.

⁹¹ Kemal Beydilli, "D'Ohsson, Ignatius Mouradgea," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, Vol. 9* (Istanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1994), 496–97. A historic assessment regarding his original Ottoman name gives it as Muradcan Tosunyan, later gallicized as Mouradgea d'Ohsson.

of d’Ohsson.⁹² On the other hand, an English translation of d’Ohsson’s book published in Philadelphia in 1788 with the title *Oriental Antiquities and General View of the Othoman Customs, &c* is listed in the *United Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of England, Catalogue of Books in the Library at Freemason’s Hall, London* as the only copy of a book associated with d’Ohsson. The title page of this publication displays a lengthy title including an extensive epithet for d’Ohsson attributing to him a variety of qualifications related to mystical orders which reads:

Oriental antiquities, and general view of the Othoman customs, laws, and ceremonies: exhibiting many curious pieces of the Eastern Hemisphere, relative to the Christian and Jewish dispensations; with various rites and mysteries of the Oriental Freemasons. Dedicated to the King of Sweden. Translated from the French of M. de M— d’Ohsson, Knight of the Royal Masonic Orders of Vasa—Templars—Malta—Philippine—Rosa Crucian &c.—Secretary to the King of Sweden; formerly his interpreter and charge d’affaires at the Court of Constantinople.

The additions to the original title of d’Ohsson’s book are presumably the reason for the assumption of the Freemasonic association of the book and its author. Susan Nance comments that the phrase “Oriental Freemason” was an early term for Sufi Orders. Her related footnote inexplicably identifies d’Ohsson as having grown up in the Ottoman Empire as the son of an American consul for Sweden there, a mistake which can possibly be traced back to the 1838 publication *British Cyclopaedia of the Arts, Sciences, History, Geography, Literature, Natural History and Biography*, edited by Charles F. Partington, where due to a possible typo error d’Ohsson is identified as a learned “American” instead of “Armenian.”⁹³ Patrick D. Bowen expresses that “presumably the Philadelphia lodge believed that Sufis, who were

⁹² Carter Vaughn Findley, *Enlightening Europe on Islam and the Ottomans: Mouradgea d’Ohsson and His Masterpiece* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2019), 32.

⁹³ Susan Nance, *How the Arabian Nights Inspired the American Dream, 1790-1935* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 90.

discussed by d’Ohsson, were the Oriental Freemasons” and “this, then, is the earliest known example of Westerners identifying Sufis as Masons.”⁹⁴

In the final years of the eighteenth century, d’Ohsson’s name was mentioned in a conspiracy theory of the Jesuit priest Augustin Barruel, in his book *Memoires Pour Servir à l’Histoire du Jacobinisme*, which attempted to explain the French revolution as a plot masterminded by secret societies, Freemasonry in particular. Barruel speculated that d’Ohsson was the chief of the Jacobin apostles in the Orient, a position he supposedly assumed upon his return to Istanbul following the French Revolution. Barruel conjectured that “le Chevalier de Mouradgea d’Hohson [*sic*],” was initially not inclined to the cause of the Jacobins but the sums of money and pensions available to the Committee of Public Safety (*le Comité de Salut Public*) removed this initial reluctance on his part. Upon his return to Istanbul he became “*la tête des Jacobins apôtres de l’Orient*.” Soon afterwards, a certain Mr. Ruffin, an attaché at the French Embassy in Istanbul and formerly an associate of Baron de Tott in Crimea, joined d’Ohsson as his Jacobin co-apostle. A young man by the name of Lesseps was also recruited for the Jacobin missionary work which the three men carried together in Istanbul.⁹⁵ All in all, Barruel was able to devise a conspiracy theory that knitted a network of characters whose aims and interests were rather difficult to relate.

As mentioned above, the English translation of d’Ohsson’s magnum opus printed in Philadelphia in 1788 for the “Select Committee and Grand Lodge of Enquiry” lists the distinctions of the author as “Knight of the Royal Masonic Orders of Vasa—Templars—Malta—Philippine—Rosa Crucian [*sic*] &c.” While this

⁹⁴ See note 1 in Patrick D. Bowen, *A History of Conversion to Islam in the United States, Vol.1* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015), 115–16.

⁹⁵ L’Abbé Barruel, *Mémoires Pour Servir à L’Histoire du Jacobinisme, Tome Cinquième* (Hambourg : Chez P.Fauche, 1803), 211–14. The book was originally published in 1797.

ostentatious designation may be regarded as the reason for the subsequent presumption of the Freemasonic affiliation of d'Ohsson, in the original French version of the title page of the book, the only knightly title cited is the “*Chevalier de l'Ordre Royal de Wasa*” which is not directly associated with Freemasonry. The sequent Swedish order of merit, the “Royal Order of Charles XIII” on the other hand was conferred exclusively on Freemasons of the Protestant faith but it was not established until 1811, four years after d'Ohsson's decease.

A name spelled as D'Osson appears in the register of the Stockholm lodge *L'Union* from 1775.⁹⁶ Although there is no first name attached and the entry specifies him as a Count and Ambassador from the French Court (*Grefve, Ambassadeur från Franska Hofvet*), the similarity of the spelling of this unusual name as well as the date of the record makes it very plausible that it belongs to d'Ohsson. His high ranking position in the service of the Swedish state along with the imperial recognition he received at the utmost level through the conferment of several royal orders and titles certainly would render him a very appropriate candidate for the fraternity, given the much esteemed position of Freemasonry in the Swedish Empire at the time.

1.2.3. Maritime Freemasonry Fostered by Commerce

Louis Amiable⁹⁷, a well-known name in the Freemasonic circles of Istanbul in the second half of the nineteenth century, delivered a speech on November 20, 1894, to the members of the *Phare de la Renaissance* Lodge in Marseille. In his

⁹⁶ Jonas Andersson and Andreas Önnersfors, “Förteckning över svenska 1700–talsfrimurare,” in *Mystiskt brödrskap—mäktigt nätverk: Studier i det svenska 1700–talsfrimureriet*, ed. Andreas Önnersfors (Lund: Lunds Universitet, 2006), 179.

⁹⁷ See Appendix B.

speech, Amiable noted that he had lived in Istanbul from 1864 to 1879 where he had practiced law for eleven years and then had served in the capacity of legal advisor to the Sublime Porte.⁹⁸ From the beginning of 1865 to the end of 1869, he had been the Worshipful Master of the lodge *L'Union d'Orient*, “the principal lodge in Istanbul” as expressed in his own words. He had then presided for four years over the *Chapter of Rose Croix* linked to the *L'Union d'Orient*.⁹⁹ Amiable referred to the Freemasonry of Marseille as a major influence to the spread of the fraternity to the Mediterranean coast in the second half of the eighteenth century. Amiable stated:

In the second half of the last century, Freemasonry of Marseille did not only play an important role with the influence it exercised in the city; it spread in all of Provence; it extended its branches on the most distant shores of the Mediterranean; it sent its scouts as far as our colonies in both oceans.¹⁰⁰

These distant shores included those of the Ottoman lands in the Eastern Mediterranean as well. According to Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, who had his detailed research on the Marseille lodge *Saint Jean d'Écosse* based on lodge registers from 1784 and 1789, the expansion of commerce and spread of Freemasonry went hand in hand, while both their successes and failures affected each other.¹⁰¹ Freemasonry benefited from the wealth of commerce displayed through the outward grandeur of its temple building. As Beaurepaire puts it, *Saint Jean d'Écosse* was at the confluence of economic, social and Freemasonic ambitions of the merchants of Marseille.¹⁰²

The configuration of the Freemasonic network that formed under the auspices of *Saint Jean d'Écosse* closely followed the network of the ports. Acting in the form

⁹⁸ Louis Amiable, *De la Situation Maçonnique à Constantinople, en Grèce et en Italie* (Aix : J.Remondet-Aubin, 1895), 5.

⁹⁹ Amiable, 5.

¹⁰⁰ Amiable, 3.

¹⁰¹ Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, “Le rayonnement international et le recrutement étranger d'une loge maçonnique au service du négoce protestant: Saint-Jean d'Ecosse à l'Orient de Marseille au XVIIIe siècle,” *Revue Historique* 293, no.2 (April–June 1995): 264.

¹⁰² Beaurepaire, 265.

of an obedience as *la mère loge de Marseille* in competition with the Grand Orient, the main French obedience in Paris, *Saint Jean d'Écosse* created daughter lodges at the main ports of the Mediterranean. In addition to those in Malta, Genoa and Palermo, three lodges were established at the Ottoman ports: *Saint Jean d'Écosse de la Parfaite Union* in Istanbul, *Saint Jean d'Écosse de l'Amitié* in Salonica and *Saint Jean d'Écosse des Nations Réunies* in Izmir.¹⁰³

The register of the mother lodge *Saint Jean d'Écosse* of Marseille from 1789 indicates that half of the members were foreigners. While 19 members were from metropolitan France and 12 from the French colonies, there were 32 foreign members. Among them, 5 Ottoman members constituted an important element along with 6 Italians and 5 Swiss. The ethnic background of the Ottoman members is not elaborated by Beaurepaire, but they were most likely Ottoman Christians. The members of the lodge, both local and foreign, were an indication of the overlapping of merchant networks with those of the Freemasons. Jacques Seymandi, a prominent merchant of Marseille and Worshipful Master of the lodge in 1780, had commercial affairs extending to Cairo and Aleppo. Under his direction as well as other leaders of the lodge with similar connections to the Levant, *Saint Jean d'Écosse* displayed an ambitious reach by constituting daughter lodges at the Ottoman ports. The name of the Izmir lodge comprising the term “nations assembled” displayed the extent of these ambitions.¹⁰⁴ According to lodge records of 1789, Seymandi’s son attended the daughter lodge in Istanbul where he came in extension of his commercial affairs in Cairo. The capital of the empire possessed another lodge at the time, established

¹⁰³ Beaurepaire, 271.

¹⁰⁴ Beaurepaire, 272.

under the initiative of Genevan merchants who named it *Saint-Jean du Levant* or *L'Orientale de Péra*.¹⁰⁵

Another interesting component of the membership of the mother lodge in Marseille from 1784 was the names of two French consuls appointed to the *Echelles* or the ports of the Levant.¹⁰⁶ The important position of the consuls in acting as liaisons between local authorities and merchants, as well as their being important sources of information for business relations, made them an integral part of the lodge membership where the networks of these diplomats were superimposed on those of the merchants. The mother lodge also exhibited the membership of consuls resident in Marseille. Representing numerous sovereign polities like Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Sardinia, Tuscany, these consuls constituted a significant element of the aforementioned diplomatic network closely associated with that of the merchants.¹⁰⁷

As Marseille stands out as a significant example, during the eighteenth century, the spread of the ideas of Freemasonry was tied to the oceans and the major ports surrounding them. As colonial efforts gained speed, Freemasonry also found its own means of reaching new destinations through the developing commercial and military links among these ports and their hinterland. In the port cities, the intense mercantile relations necessitated the involvement of diplomatic representation to safeguard the legal and financial privileges conceded to merchants of numerous European nations. During this period, Freemasonry attracted seafaring captains as well as military personnel on board the naval and merchant vessels who in most cases became members of lodges in their native lands, and introduced their fraternity to distant territories. Diplomats were instrumental, as in the aforementioned cases of Alexander Drummond and the consul members of *Saint Jean d'Écosse* of Marseille,

¹⁰⁵ Beaurepaire, 273.

¹⁰⁶ Beaurepaire, 273.

¹⁰⁷ Beaurepaire, 274–75.

in the Freemasonic activity of those maritime urban centers where commercial dynamics resulted in a clustering of merchants and expatriates.

A chance encounter that took place during the travels of the German merchant Nicolas-Ernest Kleeman is a case in point. Published in 1780 as a French translation from the original German, Kleeman's memoirs described his journey from Vienna through Belgrade to Crimea and back to Vienna between 1768 and 1770.¹⁰⁸ On his route, Kleeman crossed the Black Sea and arrived in Istanbul. His outbound journey from Istanbul took him first to Izmir on a Swedish boat named *Freemason*, destined for Livorno. The captain of the boat was a man named Jean-Henri Wichs, who explained to Kleeman that although he was born in Sweden, he had worked in the service of the English prior to being appointed as captain of this particular boat. Kleeman described him as an affable man of confirmed integrity as well as an excellent sailor. Like the name of his vessel, the captain was identified as a Freemason who also wanted to convince Kleeman to become one, all the more so since some among the consuls and merchants of Izmir happened to be Freemasons. This note in Kleeman's accounts is interesting as it attests to the Freemasonic activity in Izmir at a relatively early stage in the organizational advancement of Freemasonry in Europe. Its solid presence at the leading port of Asia Minor may well be associated with the "seafaring capabilities" of the fraternity.

The nationality of the captain in Kleeman's account is noteworthy because of Freemasonry's considerable progress in Sweden at the time. After the introduction of the fraternity from France as early as 1730s, Sweden became one of the earliest countries to establish its own Freemasonic order. In 1752, Adolf Frederick (King of

¹⁰⁸ N.-E. Kleeman, *Voyage de Vienne à Belgrade et à Kilianova, dans le pays de Tartares Budziacs & Nogais dans la Crimée, & de Kaffa à Constantinople, au travers de la mer Noire ; avec le retour à Vienne, par Trieste. Fait dans les années 1768, 1769 & 1770, par Nicolas-Ernest Kleeman* (Neuchâtel : L'Imprimerie de la Société Typographique, 1780), 166–81.

Sweden, 1751–71) was named protector of Freemasonry in Sweden. In the decade following 1753, at least fourteen lodges were based in the Swedish Empire, receiving on average 114 members annually. The lodge *L’Innocente* was founded in Stockholm by Carl Friedrich Eckleff to work in a system pertaining to the higher degrees of the craft. A Grand Lodge was established in 1760.¹⁰⁹ Given the rapid growth of Freemasonry during this period by way of maritime connections, Kleeman’s account of a Swedish boat named Freemason with a member of the order at its helm navigating the Mediterranean waters and openly advertising his attachment to the fraternity by giving its name to his ship is quite a fitting story.

A late eighteenth century reference to another Mediterranean captain is of interest. Wilhelm Blumenhagen, a Freemason and a medical doctor in Hanover reported in *Allgemeine Anzeiger der Deutschen* about “a Tunisian frigate captain, with distinguished status, who had identified himself as a Freemason during his journey in Braunschweig, Hanover and Minden in 1789,” and added the following:

He testified that in Constantinople where he was accepted into the fraternity of Freemasons, many Muslim lodges existed which were almost completely identical in ritual with other nations’ lodges; that the Turkish brothers took the oath on the book of four prophets; that the principal purpose of these associations was to spy on the Freemasons in captivity in Turkey and then to ransom them using the lodge coffers.¹¹⁰

There is good reason to suspect that what this frigate captain alluded to as Muslim lodges were not the type of Freemasonic lodges existing in Europe at the time but rather the Sufi lodges which exhibited certain similar characteristics regarding their secretive organizations and methods of initiation through elaborate rituals.¹¹¹ Notwithstanding the difficulty of corroborating the information regarding the “Muslim lodges” in Istanbul at the end of the eighteenth century, the allegation

¹⁰⁹ Önnersfors, “Inledning,” 32–33.

¹¹⁰ *Encyclopädie Der Freimaurerei, Dritter Band*, 542–43.

¹¹¹ See Section 2.3.

regarding the ransoming of foreign members of the fraternity from captivity in the Ottoman lands stands as a noteworthy argument. Such captivity brings to mind mainly those who might have become captives due to naval engagements or possibly those in maritime commercial activity who may have fallen into the hands of Mediterranean pirates, thus ending up in the Ottoman coastal territories. At any rate, the existence of a lodge activity aiming to ransom the captives with attachment to Freemasonry might help to emphasize the existence of seafaring Freemasons at that time and thus the maritime spreading potential of the fraternity during the eighteenth century.

1.3. Freemasonry Among Officials of the Ottoman State

As Freemasonry made its entry into the Ottoman lands mainly through its seafaring elements operating along the Mediterranean, its arrival into India had also been by way of maritime networks. The entry point was Calcutta. The *Lexicon* of Albert G. Mackey indicates that:

Freemasonry was introduced into India in 1728 by Sir George Pomfret who established a lodge at Calcutta. Another was formed in 1740, and in 1779 there was scarcely a town in Hindostan in which there was not a lodge. In that year Omdit ul Omtah Bahauder, the eldest son of the nabob of the Carnatic was initiated at Trichinopoly.¹¹²

When the British Empire extended its rule into India, the East India Company assumed a very dominant presence in diffusing the political interests and cultural influence of Britain into India and by the end of the eighteenth century its leverage

¹¹² Albert G. Mackey, M.D., *A Lexicon of Freemasonry* (London and Glasgow: Richard Griffin and Company, 1860), 124. The *Lexicon*'s first edition was published in Charleston by Burges & James in 1845.

had already manifested itself in the Freemasonic domain as well.¹¹³ Many of the leading figures of the lodges had a connection with the company. It conferred great prestige on these lodges to initiate important representatives of power from the Indian states into which the British rule and political influence extended. Some members of the local ruling houses were the earliest Muslim initiates into Freemasonry. Jessica Harland-Jacobs asserts that:

When it came to admitting men of different races and creeds, British Masonry had been, over time, most receptive to Muslims. In India, Freemasonry was for most purposes, if not for all intents, an exclusively European institution that flourished among East India Company servants, government officials, the merchant and professional classes, and army officers. But based on the precedent set in 1777 with the initiation of Umdat-ul-Umrah Bahadur, several early-nineteenth-century lodges did initiate Muslims.¹¹⁴

Harland-Jacobs also states that “during the mid-nineteenth century, most of the Muslims initiated in British lodges in India belonged to the royal families of collaborating or recently conquered princely states.”¹¹⁵ On the other hand, during the first half of the nineteenth century, the admission of the indigenous candidates into British Freemasonry was a matter of ongoing debate and their inclusion on a number of cases was not the norm but usually the exception. Among the other major non-Christian groups in India, the Parsis whose elite members had strong commercial ties with the British had more advantage to be accepted, whereas the Hindus in general had the least chance.¹¹⁶ When Manockjee Cursetjee, a Parsi gentleman, was inducted into the lodge *Rising Star of Western India* in Bombay in 1843, an impediment to accepting Indians (and Parsis in particular) into British Lodges was overcome.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Jessica Harland-Jacobs has expounded on the relation of Freemasonry with colonial interests in *Builders of Empire: Freemasons and British Imperialism, 1717–1927* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007). Also see her “Freemasonry and Colonialism,” in *Handbook of Freemasonry*, eds. Henrik Bogdan and Jan A.M. Snoek (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014), 439–60.

¹¹⁴ Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire*, 220.

¹¹⁵ Harland-Jacobs, 221.

¹¹⁶ Harland-Jacobs, 223–24.

¹¹⁷ R.M.H. Patel, “The Persians and Parsis and their Masonic Connections,” *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 93 (1980): 218.

For the period between the end of the eighteenth century and the middle of the nineteenth, some parallels can be drawn for the development of Freemasonry among subjects of the Ottoman Empire and Persia. Some Muslim subjects of these polities residing in Europe for diplomatic missions, commerce and education were initiated into Freemasonry as contemporary accounts mentioned below demonstrate.

It is noteworthy that the introduction of Freemasonry into Persia was not through the Mediterranean maritime encounters of the Levant and the Middle East but through the British endeavors in India. During the first decade of the nineteenth century, Persian visitors to India, Mīr ‘Abd-al-Laṭīf Shūshtarī, a merchant, and Abu’l-Faṭḥ Solṭān-al-Wā‘eẓīn reported on their encounters with Freemasonry in India.¹¹⁸ Soon afterwards some prominent representatives of the Persian monarchy in European countries came into contact with the fraternity. Through those initiated into European Freemasonry, a number of lodges came into being in Persia in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹¹⁹ As the following examples show, by the turn of the nineteenth century, the British political encroachment into Persia coincided with the efforts of British Freemasonry to recruit its earliest Persian members into the craft and during the same period, the first permanent ambassadors of the Ottoman Empire to Britain also had their encounters with the fraternity.

British and French Freemasonries actively sought to bring dignitaries of the Muslim states of the Orient into their organization. As expounded by Harland-Jacobs in her earlier mentioned works, this effort can be associated to a certain extent with colonial interests to create spheres of influence in these states. Be that as it may, the

¹¹⁸ Hamid Algar, “Freemasonry: ii. In the Qajar Period,” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, New York, 1996-, Published on December 15, 2000, <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/Freemasonry-ii-in-the-qajar-period>.

¹¹⁹ For an informative account of the early Persian initiates into Freemasonry, as well as the later development of the fraternity within Persia, see Hamid Algar, “An Introduction to the History of Freemasonry in Iran,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 6, no. 3 (October 1970): 276–80.

effort to explore a philosophical as well as a ritualistic affinity between Freemasonry and certain orders and fraternities of Islamic mysticism to further create a mutual bond was also present. Albert Mackey described a Freemasonic rite consisting of seven degrees called the “Persian Philosophic Rite,” which was introduced to France in about 1819. He added, on the other hand, that this rite never contained many members and was already abolished at the time of his writing.¹²⁰

On the occasion of the Persian Ambassador’s initiation as a Muslim in 1807, Regnault de Saint-Jean d’Angely, the Minister of State, made this remark: “Through him, this pure light will return to its ancient cradle; Asia will recover its devout and useful institution with which she has enriched our clime.”¹²¹ These words were an allusion to the supposition of the oriental origins of Freemasonry, a common notion among European Freemasons at the time. It is not possible to determine with certainty, because of the insufficiency of documents and literature at hand, whether this type of effort to create an affinity was a successful attempt as a means to attracting potential Muslim candidates and whether culturally progressive minded Muslims also had a reciprocal interest in the Freemasonic philosophy and responded to this call favorably. However, a number of extant accounts demonstrated below show that the members of the oriental diplomatic missions in Europe experienced a further degree of interest both from and towards Freemasonry due to their special position at the junction of political spheres of influence and cultural encounters.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the destinies of two neighboring dynasties, the Ottoman and that of the newly installed Qajar of Persia, converged in the face of the Russian Empire’s threat. Both powers had outdated militaries and

¹²⁰ Mackey, *Lexicon*, 249.

¹²¹ “*Par lui, cette pure lumière retournera vers son antique berceau: l’Asie recouvrera la pieuse et utile institution dont elle a enrichi nos climats.*” See Serge Hutin, *Les Francs-Maçons* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1960), 103.

were in need of European allies. Following the French Revolution, the precarious political position of France created a rather vague state of relations with the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Selīm III. Just less than a decade later, with Napoléon's attack on Egypt and the Levant, the almost three centuries old privileged relations between France and the Ottoman Empire were torn apart.

Several years prior to Napoléon's troops' landing in Alexandria in July 1798, the Ottoman court had appointed its first permanent ambassadors to the courts of the leading European powers, hoping to receive reliable information regarding European affairs, to adapt to the diplomatic practice of European states and to forge political and military alliances through this process.¹²² The Ottoman diplomats were novices to the European ways of diplomacy and their earnest efforts in seeking the potential partnerships in the foreign courts did not always bring anticipated results. Thomas Naff asserts:

Selim's reforms, praiseworthy and courageous as they were, can hardly be said to have achieved even the moderate aims of their promoters. Neither the new techniques which were adopted, nor the principles which guided Ottoman diplomacy made the Empire appreciably stronger or foreign policy more effective, at least during Selim's reign.¹²³

Although Ottoman officials had been sent to Europe in the eighteenth century for short term diplomatic missions and state visits to negotiate peace treaties or to solicit possible political or military cooperation, the rate of communication between Europe and the Ottoman Empire was augmented during and following the reign of Selīm III allowing the admittance of European innovations and ideas.¹²⁴ This rapprochement also manifested itself in cultural exchange as "among other duties,

¹²² Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 61. Lewis states that "in 1792 Selim III resolved to establish regular and permanent Ottoman Embassies in the major European capitals. The first was in London in 1793, followed after an interval by Vienna, Berlin, and Paris, where in 1796 Seyyid Ali Efendi arrived as the first Ottoman ambassador to the French Republic."

¹²³ Thomas Naff, "Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the Reign of Selim III, 1789–1807," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 83, no.3 (August–September, 1963): 311.

¹²⁴ Naff, 315.

these ambassadors were instructed to study the institutions of the countries to which they were accredited, and to acquire ‘languages, knowledge, and sciences useful to servants of the Empire’.”¹²⁵ The several years duration of their appointments made it possible for these first diplomats posted to Europe to develop a better understanding and experience of European social institutions as well.

The first Ottoman permanent ambassador to London was Yūsuf Āgāh Efendi¹²⁶, posted between the years 1793 and 1796 during a time when many British dignitaries of both the imperial government and the Church had close affiliations with Freemasonry. The Freemasons’ Hall, dedicated in 1776, had become a prominent venue in London’s social life where, in addition to Freemasonic activity, meetings of societies, concerts, balls and charitable events were held.¹²⁷ In this social environment, representatives of foreign states pursued connections which they hoped would serve the interests of their governments. As will be demonstrated below, although their affiliation with Freemasonry cannot be substantiated with records, there is circumstantial evidence that Ottoman diplomats sent to London during this period were not far from these circles.

¹²⁵ Lewis, *Emergence*, 61.

¹²⁶ See Appendix B.

¹²⁷ “The history of Freemasons hall,” United Grand Lodge of England, <https://www.ugle.org.uk/Freemasons-hall/the-history-of-Freemasons-hall>. According to the UGLE website, “in 1774 a site located on Great Queen Street was acquired and it contained a tavern house on the street side with a garden and a second house behind it. Thomas Sandby won the competition to build a Grand Hall that covered the garden between the two houses.”



Fig.1 Painting by Thomas Stothard (1755–1834), “A Picture Paints a Thousand Words?”
History of the Royal Masonic School for Girls, posted on January 13, 2019,
<https://rmsghistoryextra.wordpress.com/2019/01/>.

A painting attributed to Thomas Stothard (1755–1834) (Fig.1) that became a well-known Freemasonic scene through its reprints in the first decades of the nineteenth century portrays a ceremonial occasion in the Freemasons’ Hall with a procession of young school girls and an audience consisting of some prominent figures of the time. In the forefront of the painting, three figures can be identified in their stately costumes as Ottoman dignitaries. Notwithstanding the uncertainty of the exact date of the painting which can be anytime in the final decade of the nineteenth century, the artist or his artistic collaborators have prudently left behind a preparatory sketch of the painting with 37 of the people marked by numbers and identified in a list. The Ottoman figures are listed as “Ussuf Aguijah Efendi [*sic*], Ambassador from the Sublime Porte at the Court of London,” “Mahmoud Raif Efendi, his Secretary” and “Emmanuel Persiany, Interpreter to the Ambassador.” This puts the Ottoman

Ambassador into the setting of a well-known annual Freemasonic event of the time, where the young female students of the then very recently established Royal Masonic School for Girls had their procession led by the founder of the school, Chevalier Ruspini.¹²⁸ Up to now, research done on Yūsuf Āgāh Efendi and his diplomatic mission seems to have either failed to take this unique painting into consideration or misinterpreted it by associating it with a different official occasion of the ambassador's participation. Consequently, an affiliation of Yūsuf Āgāh Efendi with Freemasonry has not been mentioned in association with this painting so far.¹²⁹ Given the setting of the event and its significance for the Freemasonic organization in London as well as the assembly of prominent Freemasons surrounding the Ottoman dignitaries, it is quite logical to associate Yūsuf Āgāh Efendi and his subordinates with the fraternity. A well-identified figure only a couple of men away from the Ottoman group is the Prince of Wales, the later Prince Regent (1811–20) and King George IV (1820–30). Under the auspices of the Prince himself, a lodge had been formed earlier in 1787 named *The Prince of Wales' Lodge* (No. 259). The lodge was founded with the assistance of Bartholomew Ruspini, a surgeon of Italian origin who had specialized in dentistry and had come to England to practice his profession. He was appointed as the dentist for the Prince of Wales in 1787, the same year the lodge was granted a warrant from the then Grand Master, the Duke of Cumberland. Chevalier Ruspini became the founder of the Royal Masonic School for

¹²⁸ "History of the Royal Masonic School for Girls," Royal Masonic School for Girls, <https://rmsghistoryextra.wordpress.com/2019/01/>.

¹²⁹ For a detailed study of Yūsuf Āgāh Efendi's embassy, see Mehmed Alaaddin Yalçınkaya, "The First Permanent Ottoman-Turkish Embassy in Europe: The Embassy of Yusuf Agah Efendi to London (1793–1797)" (PhD diss., Birmingham University, 1993). The author has given no mention of this painting or of any participation by the ambassador in such a setting.

Girls the next year, the purpose of which was to provide education for the Freemasons' daughters in financial need.¹³⁰

The Prince's lodge was not an ordinary one since the Prince, who most likely harbored a great deal of confidence regarding the social and political influence of the fraternity, wanted to bring together his prominent officials with the people who mattered to the interests of the British Empire, which at the time was advancing towards Persia through its newly gained territories in India, dangerously approaching a zone of confrontation with the Russian Empire. The Ottoman Ambassador and his close associates, on the other hand, might have perceived Freemasonic affiliation as a reasonable gateway into an influential political circle as well as a colorful cultural environment. Maḥmūd Rā'if Efendi, the chief secretary of Yūsuf Āgāh Efendi, composed a journal during his stay in London written originally in French and entitled *Journal du Voyage de Mahmoud Raif Efendi en Angleterre, 1793–1796*. As one of the earliest ambassadorial reports of the Ottoman Empire, and the only one written in a language other than Ottoman Turkish, the journal presents information regarding the British institutions and culture, as witnessed by an Ottoman subject.¹³¹ While these high ranking Ottoman officials were experiencing an immersion into the European cultural traditions, Yūsuf Āgāh Efendi did not shy away from posing for a European style portrait in his Oriental attire, in an act of social adaptation.¹³² The portrait's artist was Stockholm born Carl Frederik von Breda whose distinguished career in London was to later continue as the painter to the Swedish Crown.

¹³⁰ Cécile Révauger, ed., and Róbert Péter, gen.ed., *British Freemasonry 1717–1813, Vol.1: Institutions* (London, New York: Routledge, 2016), 428–29. Also see <http://www.princeofwalesslodge.com/>.

¹³¹ For an English translation of the journal, see Mehmet Alaaddin Yalçınkaya, "Mahmud Raif Efendi as the Chief Secretary of Yusuf Agah Efendi, the First Permanent Ottoman-Turkish Ambassador to London (1793–1797)," *OTAM(Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi)*, no.5 (1994): 422–34.

¹³² The painting currently resides in the Pera Museum collections in Istanbul. <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/yusuf-agah-efendi-carl-frederik-von-breda/bAExGA2Hddfjww>.

During a time when Freemasonry retained a negative image among the officials of the Ottoman government with its members deemed as unbelievers and its origins connected to the land of the infidel, any affiliation with Freemasonry had better be kept a secret matter for any government official. In the writings of the imperial historiographer Aḥmad ‘Āşım Efendi, who recorded the history of Selim III’s reign, the alleged adherence of a military officer to Freemasonry is reported on page 242 of the first volume of his history with a derogatory language reflecting his perception of Freemasonry at the time:

...after travelling a while in distant lands and residing in European countries, this degenerate, styled unfittingly to his demeanor as Hasan Ağa, an unbelieving, blasphemous, treacherous man who never cares for the precepts of Islam and who in the land of the infidel engaged in the heathen’s crafts like Freemasonry, magic, alchemy and sleight of hand...¹³³

However, a rare record of the involvement in Freemasonry of two Ottoman diplomats exists in the journal of a Persian dignitary from the turn of the nineteenth century. Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, who became a well-known figure under the title of “the Persian Prince” during his stay in London in 1800 and 1801, set down his travels in Asia, Africa and Europe between 1799 and 1803. These years overlap with the diplomatic mission of Ismā‘īl Ferrūkh Efendi¹³⁴ who took over from his predecessor Yūsuf Āgāh Efendi in 1797 and served until 1801. In his memoirs, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan recounts his encounter with Freemasonry which did not lead to his affiliation, while he reveals that the Ottoman Ambassador Ismā‘īl Ferrūkh Efendi and his secretary were both inducted:

¹³³ “...bir müddet âfâk u aktârda geşt ü seyâhat ederek memâlik-i Firengistân'da ikâmet ve fî zâtihî aslâ ahkâmı İslâmiyye'ye mübâlât eylemez mülhîd ve bî-i'tikâd ve zındık ve bed-mezheb ve hâric ez-heme-millet olmağla, kişver-i kâfiristânda fermesonlukla sihr u simyâ' ve şu'bede makûlesi kâfirce kati vâfir fûnûn-i küfriyye tahsîline müsâberet eden müsemmâ bi'n-Nakîz maktûbü'l-ism Hasan Ağa dedikleri habîs...” This transcription of the original Ottoman Turkish text is quoted from Mütercim Ahmed Âşım Efendi, *Âşım Efendi Tarihi Vol.1*, ed. Ziya Yılmaz (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu, 2015), 511.

¹³⁴ See Appendix B.

I was frequently urged, by several of the Freemasons, to become one of their brethren; but, as I was not perfectly convinced that their principles were conformable to my mode of thinking, I begged leave to decline the honour. They however prevailed upon Effendi Ismael, the Turkish ambassador, and Effendi Yusuf, his secretary, to embrace their tenets; and both these Mohammedans were initiated into all the mysteries of Freemasonry.¹³⁵

In his research based on the diary penned by Mirza Salih, one of a group of young Persian students who came to study in London in the early nineteenth century, Nile Green asserts that “in July 1800 Yusuf Aqa Effendi [*sic*], the first resident Ottoman Ambassador to London and his nephew, Yusuf ‘Aziz Effendi [*sic*], had become Freemasons at Prince of Wales Lodge No. 259 in London.”¹³⁶ However the date that Green gives does not match with the years during which Yūsuf Āgāh Efendi served as the Ottoman Ambassador in London. He also refers to Abu Taleb Khan’s memoirs for the same initiation but as quoted above, this source clearly names Ambassador Ismā‘īl Ferrūkh Efendi as the person involved. Until any contemporary mention or record of Yūsuf Āgāh Efendi’s affiliation with Freemasonry can be revealed to ascertain his joining the craft as the earliest Ottoman diplomat known to do so, we have to rely on the circumstantial evidence provided by the Stothard painting.

Green also points out the intersecting interests in Freemasonry of Ottoman and Persian dignitaries at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Only a decade after the Ottoman Ambassador Ismā‘īl Ferrūkh Efendi, this time a Persian Ambassador joined the fraternity in London in 1810, most likely as the first Persian Muslim to do so in Britain.¹³⁷ Mīrzā Abu’l-Ḥasan Khān Shīrazī was inducted upon

¹³⁵ Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa and Europe, During the Years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803, Vol. I*, trans. Charles Stewart (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1810), 194.

¹³⁶ Nile Green, *The Love of Strangers: What Six Muslim Students Learned in Jane Austen’s London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 172.

¹³⁷ Green, 171.

the proposal of Sir Gore Ouseley,¹³⁸ who was appointed as the British Ambassador to the court of Fath-‘Ali Shāh Kādjār in Persia in the same year of Abu’l-Ḥasan’s initiation. The attendance of Francis Rawdon-Hastings (Marquis of Hastings, and later the Earl of Moira) to the initiation ceremony as the then Acting Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England¹³⁹ shows the significance attached to the induction of the Persian Ambassador. The Grand Master’s attendance was reminisced three decades later in a correspondence expressing the views of Prince Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex and the then Grand Master of UGLE until his death in 1843, regarding the acceptance of Hindus and Muslims into Freemasonry which was still an ongoing debate in the 1840s. The positive outlook of the Duke of Sussex towards inclusion of different creeds into Freemasonry emphasized the universality ambitions of the fraternity:

...when once admitted into the Fraternity, all questions of religion cease, because, by the rules of our Order, matters of religion and of state policy are strictly prohibited from forming any part of discussion in a well regulated lodge. Upon this principle, Hindoos as well as Mahomedans can and ought to be received.

The Grand Master himself was present at the initiation of Mirza Abul, who was made by the late Marquis of Hastings. Three of the Persian Princes were made about six years since, as likewise the Moulavee under the King of Oude; and about the year 1776, Omdit ul Omrah Buhauder, eldest son of the Nabob of Arcot, was initiated in India, and received from the Grand Lodge a blue apron; thus proving that the predecessors of the present Grand Master entertained notions similar to his own upon this point.¹⁴⁰

The Earl of Moira was appointed as the Governor-General of India in 1812, two years after Abu’l-Ḥasan’s initiation. The appointment of both Sir Gore Ouseley and the Earl of Moira to these highest positions of foreign representation in Persia

¹³⁸ Algar, “Freemasonry in Iran,” 277.

¹³⁹ This was the Premier Grand Lodge of England, also known as the Moderns, which merged with the Ancients only three years later in 1813 to become the United Grand Lodge of England, with the Duke of Sussex as Grand Master.

¹⁴⁰ *The Freemasons Magazine and Masonic Mirror* 10, no.235 (January 2, 1864): 3. The correspondence of the Duke of Sussex from 1840 was included in the journal as part of a query, putting under discussion the inclusivity of Freemasonry under the title of “The Universality of Freemasonry,” two decades after the original correspondence took place.

and India respectively shows the close association of the diplomatic circles and East India Company's interests with the Freemasonic establishment in London at the time. Hamid Algar points out that "in the case of Mīrzā Abu'l-Ḥasan Khān Shīrazī, the evidence of political motive for the initiation is decisive [as] his *mihmāndār*, Sir Gore Ouseley, not only accompanied him on his return journey to Iran to become the new British ambassador, but was also granted an English patent as Provincial Grand Master for Iran."¹⁴¹ Green, on the other hand, argues that, as much as a colonial motive may be present behind the initiations of the Persian and Ottoman dignitaries, Muslim Freemasons also benefited from their Freemasonic affiliation "by way of elite networking and the diplomatic leverage" it promised and that "Freemason lodges offered a rare opportunity for Muslims and Christians not merely to meet on equal terms but to meet as adoptive brothers sworn to aid and promote each other's interests."¹⁴² Furthermore, in the case of the induction of the young Persian princes (Mirza Salih and Mirza Dja'far), Green asserts that, in addition to a social and political motive, "there is also good reason to connect their interest in Freemasonry to the appeal that cosmopolitan and rationalist forms of religiosity held for them by this time [as] their religious interests were not separate from their interests in the scientific new learning, which they saw echoed in the rational understandings of the divinity offered by Freemasonry and Unitarianism alike."¹⁴³

British Freemasonry was successful in recruiting further prominent figures of the Orient into its ranks in the subsequent decades. The *Lodge of Amity*, a constituent lodge of the United Grand Lodge of England, initiated Zade Meerza [*sic*], the son of the Persian Shah, and his younger brother on June 16 of 1836, the year they had

¹⁴¹ Algar, "Freemasonry in Iran," 277.

¹⁴² Green, *The Love of Strangers*, 172.

¹⁴³ Green, 174.

come to England.¹⁴⁴ The same lodge had initiated a few months earlier the Ambassador of the King of Oude.¹⁴⁵

As early as the first decade of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman and Persian diplomats also came into contact with Freemasonry in France. Due to Napoléon's benevolence towards the fraternity¹⁴⁶ through the mediation of eminent Freemasons in his close circle like François Christophe Kellermann and André Masséna, both *maréchal d'Empire*, as well as Jean-Jacques-Régis de Cambacérès, *archichancelier de l'Empire*, Freemasons gave their loyal support throughout his reign during which many officers of his army belonged to the ranks of the fraternity. In 1814, the Grand Orient would reach its most vigorous level up to that time, comprising 905 lodges with 73 military among them.¹⁴⁷

Mehmed Sa'îd Hâlet Efendi, the Ottoman Ambassador to Paris from 1803 to 1806, served during a time when the relations between France and the Ottoman Empire were rather strained because of Napoléon's occupation of Egypt. In a famous painting by Jacques-Louis David depicting the Coronation of Napoléon (Fig.2), the Ottoman Ambassador is distinctly portrayed in his official Ottoman attire standing behind the altar among other foreign diplomats and intently watching the event.¹⁴⁸

The *Encyclopädie Der Freimaurerei* states that "in October 1804, according to

¹⁴⁴ François-Timoléon Bègue-Clavel, *Histoire Pittoresque de la Franc-Maçonnerie et Des Sociétés Secrètes Anciennes et Modernes*, 3ème ed. (Paris: Pagnerre, 1844), 132. Bègue-Clavel commented that despite such diverse acquisitions from the Persian realm, a stable Freemasonic establishment was not attained. The political obstacles stemming from the Persian Cabinet were held responsible for hindering the otherwise devoted efforts of Sir Gore Ouseley, Baronet, and Provincial Grand Master representing the United Grand Lodge of England in Teheran.

¹⁴⁵ Bègue-Clavel, 132.

¹⁴⁶ Despite the lack of documents to substantiate it, the common narrative among both Freemasons and their adversaries was that Napoléon Bonaparte was initiated at a military lodge in Malta on his way to Egypt. See Hutin, *Les Franc-maçons*, 102.

¹⁴⁷ Hutin, 102.

¹⁴⁸ "Sacre de l'empereur Napoléon 1er et couronnement de l'impératrice Joséphine dans la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris, le 2 décembre 1804," Louvre Collections, <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010065720>. The painting by Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825) currently resides in the collections of the Louvre and is dated to 1806–07.

public sources, the Turkish Ambassador in Paris was admitted to Freemasonry.”¹⁴⁹

Given the favorable sociopolitical climate that Freemasonry enjoyed at the time in France due to Napoléon’s consent for its institutional development, the Ottoman Ambassador’s presumable interest in joining it becomes all the more credible.



Fig.2 “Sacre de l'empereur Napoléon 1er et couronnement de l'impératrice Joséphine dans la cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris, le 2 décembre 1804,” Painting by Jacques-Louis David, <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010065720>.

In the same decade, French Freemasonry extended its influence also among the Persian dignitaries. On November 24, 1808, Askeri Khan, the Persian Ambassador in Paris, was initiated into the fraternity by a ceremony held at the Mother Lodge of the Scottish Rite, with Claude Antoine Thory as the Worshipful Master.¹⁵⁰ Following the initiation, the Ambassador is said to have presented to the

¹⁴⁹ *Encyclopädie Der Freimaurerei, Dritter Band*, 542.

¹⁵⁰ *Encyclopädie Der Freimaurerei, Dritter Band*, 542; *Acta Latomorum*, 237–39. During the initiation, M. Robelot, the Grand Orator of the lodge, also delivered a speech as quoted in *Verbal de la Réception dans l'Ordre des Franc-Maçons du Frère Askeri-Khan, et Discours Prononcé à Cette Occasion par M. Robelot* (Paris, 1809), 16. The speech was also mentioned in the *Acta Latomorum*, 238–39, expressing that the Mother Lodge recognized the zeal of M. Robelot, and awarded him a

Mother Lodge his Damascene sabre as a gift and to have delivered a speech in these words:

Gentlemen, I promise you amity, fidelity and esteem. I was told, and I have no doubt of it, that the Freemasons are good, charitable, filled with love and attachment for their sovereigns; allow me to present you a gift worthy of the true French. Accept this sabre which has served me in twenty-seven battles; may this homage convince you of my sentiments which you have inspired and the pleasure I have of being a member of your order.¹⁵¹

The records go on to mention that the Persian Ambassador in the month following his initiation hosted Thory at his residence and consulted with him his project to establish a lodge in Isfahan. The next week after this meeting, the Ambassador was conferred the master's degree and he paid a visit to the General Archives of the Rite, also presenting on the occasion a gift purse studded with precious stones and pearls.¹⁵²

A few decades later, the *Tanzīmāt* era of reforms in the Ottoman Empire that was officially started in 1839, ushered in a new wave of modernization under European influence and increased diplomatic ties with Europe. The contact with Freemasonry for Ottoman diplomats at the time was still restricted to their tenure of office in the foreign lands, since the repercussions of the abolishment of the Janissary institution in 1826 still impeded the forming of lodges within the Ottoman lands.¹⁵³

Three highest ranking and leading Ottoman statesmen of this period were the so-called triumvirate of Muṣṭafā Reshīd Paṣha¹⁵⁴, Muḥammad Amīn 'Ālī Paṣha and Keçedjī-zāde Meḥmed Fu'ād Paṣha who were at the vanguard of reforming the Ottoman administrative system. Although, the Freemasonic affiliation of all three

medal in recognition of the excellent speech he delivered on the occasion of the Persian Ambassador's initiation.

¹⁵¹ *Acta Latomorum*, 238. Bègue-Clavel, *Histoire Pittoresque*, 131, also quoted the ambassador's speech and identified the lodge of his initiation as *Saint Alexandre d'Écosse* which was at the time the *Mère-Loge Écossaise* or the Mother Lodge of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

¹⁵² *Acta Latomorum*, 238.

¹⁵³ Umur, "Uyku Dönemleri," 9–12.

¹⁵⁴ See Appendix B.

men has been mentioned by various researchers,¹⁵⁵ that of Muṣṭafā Reshīd Paşa and Muḥammad Amīn ‘Ālī Paşa, has not been corroborated by records so far and has been limited to a supposition of their initiation at a British lodge during their diplomatic tenure together in London.¹⁵⁶ This episode is often related to the close association of Reshīd Paşa with Stratford Canning (Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe),¹⁵⁷ the British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire between 1842 and 1858, and allegedly has taken place upon suggestion of the latter. This account is further related to the opening of a lodge in the Galata district of Istanbul on the initiative of Canning which would benefit from the attendance of Ottoman bureaucrats sanctioned by Reshīd Paşa himself, the identities of whom elude us due to a lack of records.¹⁵⁸

On the other hand, the affiliation to Freemasonry of the third dominant statesman of the *Tanzīmāt* period, Keçedjī-zāde Meḥmed Fu’ād Paşa, is supported by multiple accounts from the related period. During the last decade of his life in the 1860s, Fu’ād Paşa continued vigorously with his reforms and westernization policies in the capacity of both Minister of Foreign Affairs and Grand Vizier of the empire, offices which he assumed in consecutive periods. He joined the official tour of Sultan ‘Abd al-‘Azīz to several European states including England. John Porter Brown¹⁵⁹, a frequent contributor to Freemasonic journals of Europe and America,

¹⁵⁵ In one of these sources, Davison notes that “Reshid, Ali, and Fuad were all Freemasons” and cites an article of Ebüzziya Tevfik from 1911 as the source of this information. Roderic H. Davison, “Turkish Attitudes Concerning Christian-Muslim Equality in the Nineteenth Century,” *The American Historical Review* 59, no. 4 (July 1954): 850.

¹⁵⁶ Tamer Ayan, “Büyük Devlet Adamı ve Diplomat Sadrazam Âli Paşa,” *Mimar Sinan*, no. 150 (December 2009): 36–38.

¹⁵⁷ For general information on the embassy of Canning, see G.R. Berridge, *British Heads of Mission at Constantinople 1583–1922* (Self-published at the author’s website, 2020), 30–36, <https://grberridge.diplomacy.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/BritAmbs1583-34.pdf>.

¹⁵⁸ Apak, *Masonluk Tarihi*, 21.

¹⁵⁹ See Appendix B.

reported to the *National Freemason* in a letter sent from Istanbul on October 10, 1867, in which he stated:

During the Sultan's visit to England and that of the Viceroy of Egypt, M.W.G.M [*Most Worshipful Grand Master*] of England appointed H.H. Fuad Pacha, now minister of foreign affairs of Turkey, District Grand Master for Turkey, and H.H. Halim Pacha, uncle of the Viceroy, the same for Egypt. I am not yet able to say positively whether the former has found it possible to accept of the office. His many occupations and the prejudice which, I regret to add, still exists in the minds of many of his countrymen against the Masonic order, may cause him to decline it.

My own name was before the M.W.G.M of England (the Earl of Zetland) for the position bestowed upon H.H. Fuad Pacha, but he did not think "an American gentleman could be properly named District Grand Master under the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of England." ... However, be it as it may, I shall sincerely rejoice if H.H. Fuad Pacha will accept of it, for it will be far more beneficial to the Craft in Turkey than my appointment could possibly be. H.H. became a Mason in England several years ago, but has never been connected with any Lodge here..."¹⁶⁰

Brown was quite right in his doubts, as Fu'ād Paşa declined the assignment and the position of District Grand Master was bestowed upon Brown himself.

The efforts to integrate Ottoman diplomacy into the European state system by replacing the previous unilateralism with reciprocity and establishing resident missions in the four major capitals of Europe, which started in the last decade of the eighteenth century during the reign of Selīm III, remained an aborted attempt after little more than two decades by 1821.¹⁶¹ Permanent embassies were finally established in the decades following the appointment of resident ambassadors once again to London and Paris in 1834 during the reign of Maḥmūd II.¹⁶² Through this period, the Ottoman Empire first experimented with the European form of diplomacy trying to attain full reciprocity and eventually adapted itself to continuous diplomacy through resident missions. Despite the lack of lodge records so far to substantiate the membership of the early Ottoman officials appointed to diplomatic missions in the

¹⁶⁰ *The National Freemason* IX, no.21 (November 23, 1867): 333.

¹⁶¹ J.C. Hurewitz, "Ottoman Diplomacy and the European State System," *Middle East Journal* 15, no.2 (Spring 1961): 143, 145, 148.

¹⁶² Hurewitz, 148.

European capitals, we can still find their mentions in personal memoirs and Freemasonic journals, and even rare art works like the Stothard painting as circumstantial evidence to associate these men with Freemasonry. These officials belonged to the highest echelon of Ottoman state and diplomacy. The efforts of the Freemasonic institutions in Britain and France to induct the Ottoman and Persian diplomats into their ranks, despite the then still ongoing debates of inclusion for the non-Christians as noted previously, show the significance attached to an elite network of diplomats to be superimposed on the Freemasonic network in these major centers of diplomacy and politics. This trend would become even more significant in the period following the Crimean War as the Ottoman Empire would finally find its place within the Concert of Europe.¹⁶³ This time the lodges involved would be those established in the Ottoman capital itself.

¹⁶³ Hurewitz, 152. At the Paris Congress of 1856, with the prompting of the Ottoman Foreign Minister ‘Ālī Pasha, “the Concert declared (article 7) that ‘the Sublime Porte [is] admitted to participate in the advantages of the public law and system (Concert) of Europe’,” a provision which, according to Hurewitz, could be used to suggest “Ottoman membership not in the European state system alone but in that exclusive club of the Great Powers, the Concert of Europe.”

CHAPTER II

OTTOMAN FREEMASONRY: TRANSNATIONAL CONNECTIONS AND DIVERSE INTERACTIONS

2.1. Lodges under Foreign Obediences

As the *Tanzīmāt* era reforms created an augmented pace of modernization and change in the Ottoman lands, the European influence in technology, education and social life gradually increased its penetration into the Ottoman world. The opening up of the Ottoman Empire to further European political and cultural influence came with the conjuncture created by the Crimean War in the 1850s. An immediate sociopolitical outcome of the war was the Ottoman Reform Edict of 1856 (*Işlāḥāt Khaṭṭ-ı Humāyūnu*) which iterated the status of non-Muslim communities, enhancing their access to civil equality and justice. Finding themselves in improved social circumstances, many members of these communities, who were already open to European ideas and ways of life were able to pursue closer affiliations with the European social and intellectual institutions. The social climate for Freemasonic activity had never before been so favorable.

Following the Crimean War, the forming of lodges under foreign obediences started to gather pace in the Ottoman Empire. The pattern of increased interest in forming lodges in the Ottoman Empire was a consequence of the contemporaneous appeal of establishing bilateral or multilateral relations among the Freemasonic organizations formed within the territories of various European political entities. This transnational networking intensified in the second half of the nineteenth century in accordance with the inherent grand ideal of Freemasonry to unite nations and bring humanity into accord.

In countries lacking a sovereign Freemasonic organization, foreign obediences actively sought opportunities to establish lodges of their own. The lodges formed in the Ottoman Empire during the second half of the nineteenth century worked under the European obediences, namely those of French, Italian, British, Spanish and German.¹⁶⁴ It was not until the formation in 1909 of the Ottoman Supreme Council¹⁶⁵ and the Ottoman Grand Orient that numerous lodges were formed to join the new Ottoman obedience and also a number of lodges under European obediences switched their allegiance to that of the Ottoman.¹⁶⁶

In the two decades following the Crimean War, Istanbul and a few other populous cities of the Empire saw the formation of a considerable number of lodges.¹⁶⁷ In his report of 1869, Albert G. Goodall recorded that “there is now a District Grand Lodge of England at Constantinople, having twelve lodges under its

¹⁶⁴ Egypt in its semi-autonomous status within the Ottoman Empire was an exception, since sovereign grand bodies were established there in the 1860s and 70s. See Section 3.2.

¹⁶⁵ See Glossary in Appendix A.

¹⁶⁶ See Section 4.1. on the formation of the Ottoman Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite and the Ottoman Grand Orient. The Spanish obedience lodge *Constitución* from Salonica and the Italian obedience lodge *Bisanzio Risorta* from Istanbul were among the lodges which joined the Ottoman obedience after its inception.

¹⁶⁷ Layiktez lists a total of 26 lodges under foreign obediences which have been formed during the two decades following the Crimean War (eleven lodges under the English obedience, one under Scottish, one under Spanish, two under German and eleven under Italian). See Layiktez, *Türkiye’de Masonluk*, 44–48.

jurisdiction, and altogether about thirty-five Lodges are now working in Turkey and Egypt, under authority from European Grand Bodies”¹⁶⁸. Port cities like Izmir and Alexandria had advantageous positions for this renewed interest in Freemasonry through their networks of foreign merchants and local people of commerce particularly belonging to the Christian and Jewish communities. Moreover, the capital and the major cities boasted many members of foreign missions and educational institutions as well as foreigners taking temporary residence in these cities. These elements constituted a significant part of membership in the lodges formed in these cities. In reference to his brief stay in Izmir (Smyrna) in February, 1868, Robert Morris noted that he had attended a meeting of the English obedience lodge *Homer*, specially organized for the occasion of his visit. Among the invited members of the lodge and those who participated in the meeting, he counts American, German, French and English nationals in addition to local Greeks and Armenians, where the foreign nationals constitute at least half of the names.¹⁶⁹

The rapprochement between Britain and the Ottoman Empire following the military alliance of the Crimean War also encouraged a renewed interest on the part of the British Freemasons to organize lodges in the Ottoman lands. In 1856, the lodge *Oriental* working under the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) was formed in Istanbul. This was to be the longest surviving of the English obedience lodges in Turkey which stayed active until as late as 1949.¹⁷⁰

Izmir was at the forefront of Freemasonic activity in just a matter of months following the Crimean War. A so-called “Grand Lodge of the Ancient and

¹⁶⁸ “Report of Ill. Bro. Albert G. Goodall, Grand Representative on Foreign Relations, to the Supreme Council of Sov. Gr. Ins. Gen. of the 33rd and last degree Ancient Accepted Rite, for the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, USA,” *The Freemason* 2, no.26 (September 4, 1869): 117.

¹⁶⁹ Robert Morris, *Freemasonry in the Holy Land, or Handmarks of Hiram's Builders* (New York: Masonic Publishing Company, 1872), 48–53.

¹⁷⁰ Layikteş, *Türkiye’de Masonluk*, 17.

Honourable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons of Turkey” was formed supposedly with a warrant from the Grand Lodge of Ireland. The warrant in question, Warrant No. 65, was originally issued to Albany Lodge, a military lodge to be formed under the auspices of the 72nd Foot Regiment (later renamed as the 1st Battalion Seaforth Highlanders), on December 15, 1854. According to the Grand Lodge minutes, the warrant was later carried off by a British officer named James Atkinson, the first Master of the lodge, when the regiment was stationed in the Crimea in 1854–55 and was never returned. The Grand Lodge of Ireland lost track of the warrant towards the end of the war and the associated military lodge was noted down as closed in 1855.¹⁷¹ Captain Atkinson turned up in Izmir and without any further authorization from the Grand Lodge, he managed to bring a number of Smyrniotes into his plan to establish lodges and a Grand Lodge in Izmir. *The Masonic Review* published a letter from Istanbul dated October 12, 1856, which was disclosed earlier in a New York paper. The correspondent revealed that:

At the outset the lodge of Smyrna was opened and worked with a warrant of the Grand Lodge of Ireland... as the Albany Lodge No.65. Seventeen Masons of good standing and of high rank in masonry, constituted themselves an Independent Grand Lodge of Turkey, forming their Magna Charta and recognized by all the Grand Lodges of Europe. Subsequently 48 master masons resident in Smyrna, applied by petition to the Grand lodge of Turkey for warrants to form three lodges tributary to the Grand Lodge of Turkey...so that there are now in Smyrna...three lodges called Ionia No.1, Anatolia No.2, Byzantium No.3, with 110 members in all, and 21 others under proposition. No.1 works in English, No.2 works in Italian and No.3 in the French Language...The Deputy Grand Master is Mr.C.G. Carrer; the Grand Master of the Ionia is Mr. J. Langdon, an American; The Byzantium Lodge has for its Grand Master M.Keiger, a Frenchman;...¹⁷²

Captain James Hope Atkinson, the leading actor of this Freemasonic endeavor was born in 1825 as the son of a landed family from Co. Armagh in

¹⁷¹ “Irish Warrants in Scottish Regiments,” The Grand Lodge of Antient Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland, <https://www.facebook.com/GrandLodgeScotland/posts/irish-warrants-in-scottish-regiments>; “List of Military Lodges,” The Circuit of Service Lodges, www.militarymasons.org.uk/History3.html.

¹⁷² *The Masonic Review* XVI, no.3 (December 1856): 192.

Northern Ireland. As his older brother Joseph was the heir to the family estate, James left to join the Army.¹⁷³ He chose to settle in the port city of Izmir with an affluent Levantine community following his involvement in the war and he did not wait for long before he got married into a well-established merchant family of the city. The marriage of Captain Atkinson, 72nd Highlanders, to Elfrida Mary, fourth daughter of Richard Benjamin Abbott Esq. of Smyrna took place on 28 April 1856 at the Chapel of the British Consulate, Smyrna, by the Rev W B Lewis.¹⁷⁴ Elfrida Mary Abbott was a descendent of the Abbott and Maltass families, two prominent merchant families of Izmir with an ancestry associated with the Levant Company. Her father R.B. Abbott was the owner of emery mines near the town of Selçuk and served as the British Consul of Gallipoli in 1863. She died prematurely at the age of 23 in 1860 leaving two daughters behind. Captain Atkinson joined the growing Irish diaspora in New Zealand where he died in 1865. His two daughters grew up to get married in Izmir to Counts of Italian origin.¹⁷⁵

Among the people who took part in the attempt to form the above mentioned Grand Lodge in Izmir were some prominent names of the Levantine community of the city. In a document dated 1857,¹⁷⁶ Grand Office-Bearers of the Grand Lodge is listed. The Grand Master is named as C.G.Carrer, L.L.D. in agreement with the account of the *The Masonic Review* issue referred to earlier. Constantin George Carrer was from a family of Venetian origin established at Zante [Zakynthos].¹⁷⁷ In 1861, just a few years after the Grand Lodge endeavor, he married Laura Cornélia Borrell, the daughter of Henry Perigall Borrell, a British merchant and enthusiast of

¹⁷³ Landed Families of Britain and Ireland, <https://landedfamilies.blogspot.com/2016/10/>.

¹⁷⁴ "News of Smyrna Families in Nineteenth Century British Newspapers," Levantine Heritage, http://levantineheritage.com/pdf/Smyrna_BMD_19th_century_British_Newspapers.pdf.

¹⁷⁵ "Elfrida Mary Abbott Family Tree," Geneanet,

<https://gw.geneanet.org/marmara2?lang=en&pz=mathilde&nz=d+andria&p=elfrida+mary&n=abbott>.

¹⁷⁶ Layiktez, *Türkiye'de Masonluk*, 29.

¹⁷⁷ "Constantin George Carrer Family Tree," Geneanet,

<https://gw.geneanet.org/marmara2?lang=en&pz=mathilde&nz=d+andria&p=constantin+george&n=carrer>.

numismatics and archaeology who was born in London in 1795, married in Izmir in 1820 and died in Izmir in 1851.¹⁷⁸ The Deputy Grand Master, J.B. Patterson was a first generation Scot settled in Izmir as an entrepreneur of chromium mines. His correspondence with Sir Henry Bulwer¹⁷⁹, the British Ambassador at Istanbul, reveals the ambassador's support to his business interests.¹⁸⁰ The Junior Grand Warden, Edwin Joly was the representative of various European insurance companies.¹⁸¹

The names included among the founders of this Grand Lodge endeavor in Izmir point out to an overlapping of the commercial network of merchants and foreign representatives with that of the Freemasonic network, which was a common pattern in major Ottoman cities of commerce as Freemasonry expanded with an increased pace into the Levant and elsewhere in the dominions of the major European powers. In this particular story of the Izmir Grand Lodge, an implicit aim on the part of the organizers towards enhancing the commercial ties both in the local community and with their counterparts abroad, primarily in the British Empire, is quite conceivable. However, the foundation of this Grand Lodge remained as a hastened attempt to form a fraternal network in the favorable environment of the post-war period, as it was deemed irregular by the UGLE, which is revealed in a correspondence from the Grand Secretary Gray Clarke on July 2, 1859, notifying that the lodges under UGLE's jurisdiction should not accept the Freemasons involved with the irregular Grand Lodge in Izmir.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ "Henry Perigall Borrell Family Tree," Geneanet, <https://gw.geneanet.org/marmara2?lang=en&pz=mathilde&nz=d+andria&p=henry+perigall&n=borrell>.

¹⁷⁹ See Appendix B.

¹⁸⁰ "John Borthwick Paterson," *Levantine Heritage*, <http://www.levantineheritage.com/paterson.html>.

¹⁸¹ "1891 Commercial Guide-George Poulimenos," *Levantine Heritage*, <http://levantineheritage.com/docs/>.

¹⁸² Celil Layiktez, "İngiltere Büyük Locası Arşivlerinde Türkiye ile ilgili Dokümanlar (1857-1875)," *Mimar Sinan*, no.70 (December 1988): 31.

In a letter written on April 13, 1859, Séraphin (Serovpe) Aznavour, the then Worshipful Master of the English lodge *Oriental*, reported to Prince Murat, the Grand Master of the Grand Orient de France, the information on the irregular Grand Lodge of Izmir. Aznavour's close relations with both the English and French obediences resulted from the cooperation between Istanbul lodges of different obediences at the time. In his letter, Aznavour points out the close relation between the French lodge *L'Étoile du Bosphore* and the English lodge *Oriental* which he remarked "did organize sessions together on feast days and approached each other with the mutual respect of the two nations."¹⁸³ Although competitive attempts in the formation of lodges by various obediences in their overseas territories were not uncommon during this period,¹⁸⁴ Aznavour's case reveals that within the Ottoman Empire there were instances where local and foreign Freemasons benefited from the cooperative efforts of the foreign obediences.

In early 1860s the UGLE was active in its efforts to organize an Ottoman Freemasonry under its authority. Two lodges by the names of *Deutscher Bund*¹⁸⁵ (in Istanbul) and *Homer* (in Izmir) were established in 1860.¹⁸⁶ A leading component of British Freemasonry during this period was Sir Henry Lytton Earle Bulwer, the British Ambassador to Istanbul between 1858 and 1865. Louis Amiable described him as an able diplomat and a zealous Freemason:

¹⁸³ Layiktez, *Türkiye'de Masonluk*, 24.

¹⁸⁴ Jessica Harland-Jacobs, "All in the Family: Freemasonry and the British Empire in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Journal of British Studies* 42, no.4 (October 2003): 459–60. Harland-Jacobs observes through various lodge documents that during the 1850s when the local Freemasons in British North America found themselves in a state of frustration with certain practices of their metropolitan administration, they took advantage of playing the distinct grand bodies of British Freemasonry against one another. The English, Irish and Scottish Grand Lodges competed for increasing their own membership and influence in the British colonial territories through granting warrants to lodges which were rejected by one of the other British grand bodies.

¹⁸⁵ Although this was a lodge under the English obedience, its name suggests that a majority of the members were most likely German speakers. It was not uncommon for a lodge to have a working language other than that of the national language of the obedience it belonged to.

¹⁸⁶ Layiktez, *Türkiye'de Masonluk*, 44.

Sir Henry Bulwer professed that our institution had a special mission and a big role to fulfill in Turkey where it could and had to serve the cause of civilization by doing away with antagonisms and making the fraternity of all men prevail in a land where the population is divided by differences of ethnicity, language and religion. I heard him declare in a solemn circumstance that masonic work could be more effective than the *hatti chérifs* [*khatt-i sherif*] and the *hatti houmayoums* [*khatt-i humāyūn*].¹⁸⁷

The rapid growth in membership was reflected in the forming of new lodges. In a letter sent from Istanbul on October 12, 1864, John Porter Brown introduced his affiliation to Freemasonry along with information on the newly formed Bulwer lodge dedicated to the Ambassador's name:

I took the three degrees in the M.: [*Masonic*] L.: [*Lodge*] of Chillicothe, Ohio, in 1850 and on my return here [*Istanbul*], joined with some brethren in establishing a Lodge called the 'Oriental'. When its members became somewhat numerous, with others, we formed the 'Bulwer Lodge.'¹⁸⁸

The controversy surrounding the irregular Grand Lodge in Izmir had led to the consideration of the establishment of a District Grand Lodge within the Ottoman Empire bringing together the three existing lodges of UGLE under one jurisdiction.¹⁸⁹ In late 1860, Bulwer was asked to assume the office of District Grand Master.¹⁹⁰ He was appointed as District Grand Master in 1862.¹⁹¹ By that time, the new lodge *Bulwer* was already founded in Istanbul. More lodges soon joined in the ranks of the District Grand Lodge: *La Victoire* (Izmir-1861), *St. John's* (Izmir-1863), *Eleusinian* (Izmir-1863), *Dekran* (Izmir-1864), *St. George's* (Izmir-1864), *Virtue* (*Arete*) (Istanbul-1864) and *Sion* (Izmir-1870).¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ Amiable, *Situation Maçonnique*, 5–6.

¹⁸⁸ *The National Freemason* II, no.7 (December 1864): 106.

¹⁸⁹ Layikteş, *Türkiye'de Masonluk*, 24.

¹⁹⁰ Layikteş, "İngiltere Büyük Locası," 31. In a letter dated November 9, 1860, UGLE's Grand Secretary Gray Clarke, on behalf of Grand Master Lord Zetland, notified Sir Henry Bulwer's appointment as District Grand Master.

¹⁹¹ Layikteş, *Türkiye'de Masonluk*, 27.

¹⁹² Layikteş, *Türkiye'de Masonluk*, 44. Also see Morris, *Holy Land*, 48–59, where he shares his first-hand witness accounts of the existence of some of these lodges through the eyes of an American Freemason who visited Izmir on his way to the Holy Land in 1868.

The District Grand Lodge was also involved in the administration of the first Supreme Council formed within the Ottoman territories.¹⁹³ Goodall in his earlier cited 1869 report emphasized the involvement of Hyde Clarke as the Sovereign Grand Commander¹⁹⁴ of the Ottoman Supreme Council while he also performed the duty of Acting District Deputy Grand Master of the District Grand Lodge of England after 1860. According to Goodall, “in 1864, Ill.[Illustrious] Bro.[Brother] Hyde Clarke received the 33rd degree from the Supreme Council of France and in that capacity claims to have legalized the Supreme Council For Turkey and Egypt”¹⁹⁵. However, despite the efforts of Clarke, this early attempt of an Ottoman Supreme Council was to remain short-lived phasing out in the course of the following decade.

The British Freemasonic activities were not the only ones in the Ottoman Empire during this period. Other European obediences also gradually established their lodges in the capital and some major cities, alongside those of the British. There was a good deal of cooperation among these lodges belonging to different European obediences at the time, as noted above. However, there was also an underlying sense of competition among them as the aims of the major European powers to extend their spheres of influence could not be isolated from the trans-national engagements of their Freemasonic organizations through the transmission of intellectual, social and cultural influences.

Lodges working with charters emanating from the Grand Orient de France were very successful in enlisting not only some prominent members of Istanbul’s non-Muslim communities, notably the foreign expatriates of commercial and diplomatic circles, the local Greek and Armenian populations, but also a considerable

¹⁹³ See Section 4.1.

¹⁹⁴ See Glossary in Appendix A.

¹⁹⁵ “Report of Ill. Bro. Albert G. Goodall,” 117.

number of eminent Muslims.¹⁹⁶ The French obedience lodges were among the earliest to come into existence following the Crimean War: *L'Étoile du Bosphore* (Istanbul, 1858), *L'Union d'Orient* (Istanbul, 1863), *Ser* (Istanbul, 1866), *I Proodos* (Istanbul, 1868).¹⁹⁷ The members of these lodges were often active in more than one lodge at the same time. A particular example was Louis Amiable who had significant involvement in both *L'Union d'Orient* and *I Proodos*. Amiable, who was a long time resident of Istanbul between 1864 and 1879, returned there in the summer of 1894 on an official mission of the Grand Orient de France to inspect its remaining active lodges. In his *De La Situation Maçonnique*, Amiable presented a summary of the lodges opened in Istanbul following the Crimean War¹⁹⁸. His comments on the development of Ottoman Freemasonry in the three decades prior to his inspection visit emphasized the early success of British Freemasonry especially through the efforts of Bulwer, which made it the primary obedience in Istanbul in the 1860s. However, Amiable also asserted that the denominational character, the rigorous formality and authoritarian habits of British Freemasonry were its weak points to attract those who sought in Freemasonry “a certain emancipation.”¹⁹⁹ For the inverse reasons as well as the more widespread use of the French language among Ottomans than that of English at the time, according to Amiable, the French Freemasonry was more popular in Istanbul. This had been achieved despite a lack of support from the French Embassy which reserved it for the interests of Catholic clericalism.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ See Section 2.2. on inclusivity and local elements in Ottoman Freemasonry.

¹⁹⁷ Yılmaz Suner, “1909 Öncesi Türkiye’de Masonluk Tarihi,” *Mimar Sinan*, no.130 (December 2003): 16.

¹⁹⁸ See Table 2 in Appendix C.

¹⁹⁹ Amiable, *Situation Maçonnique*, 6. Amiable related the denominational character of the British lodges to the presence of a chaplain in ecclesiastic costume, which, he stated, was a discouraging influence on those who were not British nationals. On the other hand, as is conveyed by his statements, Amiable displayed a very secular stance in his Freemasonic engagement reflecting also the position of the Grand Orient de France at the time.

²⁰⁰ Amiable, 6–7.

Amiable emphasized the diminished state of Ottoman Freemasonry at the time of his visit to Istanbul in 1894. He found the British case to be the most striking as out of five former lodges, only the *Oriental* had remained active. According to Amiable, this was due to the embassy's forsaking the use of lodges as instruments of propaganda and influence, unlike the time of Bulwer who had wanted to reinforce the British influence by expanding the action sphere of the UGLE within the Ottoman Empire.²⁰¹ In addition to the *Oriental*, there were two French lodges remaining, *L'Étoile du Bosphore* and *I Proodos*, as well as the *Italia Risorta*, and a German lodge (its name was not provided by Amiable) which was opened under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of Hamburg, while the earlier *Germania à la Corne d'Or* had disappeared by then.²⁰² According to Amiable, the Italian lodge was the most prosperous among the remaining lodges and the most numerous in its membership, albeit with a poor cosmopolitan character. Benefiting from the backing of the Italian Embassy, the lodge was able to launch annual charity balls which were attended by the ambassador himself, thus assuring an elite and numerous participation.²⁰³ Regarding philanthropic deeds, lodges of existing obediences had been in cooperation since their earliest years of activity in the post-Crimean War era by organizing social events and charities. Such an account from 1864 entitled "Masonic Ball at Constantinople" was reported in *The National Freemason* with reference to the *Levant Herald* in these words:

Not the least noticeable of the entertainments given at carnival time in Constantinople was the annual Masonic Ball at the Palais de Crystal. The arrangements were superintended by the *Italien* [sic], *Oriental*, *Bulwer*, *Union d'Orient*, *Deutscher Bund* and *Germania* lodges... The attendance numbered fully five hundred, and after defraying all expenses, a substantial sum will

²⁰¹ Amiable, 6, 7–8.

²⁰² Amiable, 8–9.

²⁰³ Amiable, 8.

remain for the furtherance of the benevolent object for which the Ball was given.²⁰⁴

An important aspect of Amiable's report was his positive interpretation of Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II's disposition towards Freemasonry, which may also be taken as the view of the French obedience at the time since Amiable was a member of the Council of the Order and Grand Orator of the Grand Collège des Rites of the Grand Orient. He expressed that the Sultan did justice to the institution and was aware of the fact that participants of Freemasonic activity were among his best subjects. As a token of this understanding, the Sultan contributed to the above mentioned annual balls, and his contribution the previous year had been 100 Turkish lira, an equivalent of 2300 francs at the time.²⁰⁵ Notwithstanding his suspicions and constant monitoring of the affairs of the lodges through his secret police, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II did not shy away from supporting their philanthropic deeds. In the late 1880s the Italian and English lodges were fairly active in raising funds for charities and the Sultan was publicly known to have contributed to these in significant amounts.²⁰⁶ This was most likely a policy to establish favorable relations with the fraternity and securing their loyalty.²⁰⁷ Given the decline in number of lodges and membership in the capital at the time, such concern and interest on the part of the Sultan may be attributed to the still significant influence and social standing of the fraternity exerted through especially its prominent foreign members. While Amiable did not relate the decline of the lodge membership and activity in the past two decades in any way to 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's rule, he nevertheless suggested that the

²⁰⁴ *The National Freemason* II, no.6 (November 1864): 86.

²⁰⁵ Amiable, 8.

²⁰⁶ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamit*, 168–72.

²⁰⁷ Orhan Koloğlu, Interview by R. Murat Tiryaki at Tuzla, Istanbul, April 15, 2018. Koloğlu expressed his views on this topic during an interview conducted by the author of this work. Also sharing an insight into the beginnings of his research into Ottoman Freemasonry, he stated that his interest in the subject was kindled by a newspaper account of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's financial support for the philanthropic acts of the lodges, which at first glance seemed like a controversial act on the part of the Sultan.

development of Ottoman Freemasonry which flourished in the period before 1870 had been arrested due to the Franco-Prussian War's repercussions that continued until his present visit.²⁰⁸

During the dynamic growth of Ottoman Freemasonry in the two decades following the Crimean War, the highest ranking Ottoman dignitary to join Freemasonry had been Crown Prince Murād who, later crowned as Murād V in 1876, remained to be the only Ottoman Sultan ever to be initiated into Freemasonry. He was initiated at the *I Proodos* lodge bringing great prestige to the French obedience lodge. His initiation into the fraternity brought royal patronage within very accessible range of the Ottoman Freemasons for a very short time. However, his three month reign ending with dethronement in 1876 fell short of fostering a more rapid flourishing of Freemasonry in the Ottoman lands. When 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II came to the throne, the French obedience lodges came under closer surveillance due to the liberal minded Ottoman members some of whom still sympathized with the deposed Sultan, as well as due to the French obedience's association with subversive political ideas of the period. The participation of its members in the attempts to rescue Murād²⁰⁹ had put the Grand Orient in a position to thwart any assumption of its institutional involvement in a political plot against the ruling monarch. The policy of caution exhibited by the French obedience in distancing itself from any probable political involvement of lodges in Istanbul had most likely caused some members to feel like they were abandoned by their obedience.²¹⁰ During 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II's reign (1876–1909), the French obedience lodges saw a gradual decline and difficulty in recruiting new members while many existing members chose to distance themselves

²⁰⁸ Amiable, 5.

²⁰⁹ See Section 3.1. on Young Ottomans and Murād V.

²¹⁰ Edhem Eldem, "Geç Osmanlı Döneminde Masonluk ve Siyaset Üzerine İzlenimler," *Toplumsal Tarih*, no. 33 (September 1996): 20–21.

from the lodge activities as it became risky for those who either held high positions of office or had close socioeconomic relations with the government.²¹¹ The ensuing debates among the members of the Istanbul lodges concerning the fundamentality of the profession of belief in a divine entity which caused divisions among European Freemasonries²¹² may have also contributed to the weakening of the integrity of the lodges and to a loss in membership as well as new recruitment.²¹³

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Ottoman Freemasonry developed in two distinct directions. One was under the influence of British Freemasonries which mainly continued the earlier tradition of sociability based on the commercial and diplomatic networks of European expatriates and officials resident in the Ottoman Empire. The second mode of Freemasonic activity in the major Ottoman cities was that of Latin Freemasonries (French, Italian primarily) which upheld the revolutionary ideology and was oriented towards furthering of reforms, oppositional political positions, as well as nationalistic aspirations.

Some British lodges formed in the earlier part of the period seem to have had relatively fewer members belonging to the Ottoman nationality no matter what ethnic origin. A striking example pertaining to the paucity of Ottoman membership was the lodge *Caledonian* No.489, located in the *Hasköy* district of Istanbul and working under the Grand Lodge of Scotland. This lodge had a composition made up of almost entirely British subjects as the lodge register displays. It was chartered in 1869 and among the 68 members who joined from other lodges or were initiated at the

²¹¹ For the change in lodge memberships see Table 1 in Appendix C.

²¹² See Section 1.1.

²¹³ Paul Dumont, "La Turquie dans les Archives du Grand Orient de France: Les Loges Maçonniques d'Obédience Française à Istanbul du Milieu du XIXe Siècle à la Veille de la Première Guerre Mondiale," in *La Franc-Maçonnerie d'Obédience Française dans l'Empire Ottoman* (Istanbul: Les Éditions Isis, 2013), 25, 29. It appears that as early as 1866 there were instances of internal disputes arising from this issue. When the Istanbul lodge *l'Union d'Orient* initiated a self-confessed atheist, Gustave Flourens, this caused quite a stir in the Freemasonic circles of the city resulting in the severing of relations by other obediences until the crisis was sorted out in the end of 1867.

Caledonian itself between the years 1869 and 1876, there was only one name that suggests local Armenian ethnicity. Moreover, the records of the professional details show that the majority of the lodge members either belonged to seafaring professions or were involved with shipbuilding or shipbroking. Only six members were recorded with professions most probably unrelated to the shipping industry: one schoolmaster, one merchant, one civil engineer and three clerks.²¹⁴

Despite the insignificant membership of Ottoman elements in the composition of at least some of the earlier British lodges, a considerable increase in their numbers was to be observed in the immediate aftermath of the Young Turk revolution. The lodge *La Turquie* No. 1049, affiliated with the Scottish obedience was granted a charter in November 5, 1908. Among the 79 members initiated at the lodge or transferred from other lodges between March 1909 and October 1913, one can count 39 names of Ottoman Muslims, 19 names of Ottoman Christian subjects almost entirely of Armenian origin and no less than 6 names of Ottoman Jews, making up a striking eighty percent of the total membership. The last record in the register is dated to February 10, 1914, which reveals an interruption of the contact with the Grand Lodge as well as possibly a suspension of the lodge activities consistent with the discontinuity of Freemasonic activity during the First World War. A noteworthy aspect of the membership is the majority of socially prominent individuals including a significant number of high ranking officials of the Ottoman state: a Minister of Commerce, two Parliament deputies, a City Prefect, two military generals, a Vice-President of Public Works and a judge among others. The diverse professions represented among the Ottoman subjects include: military and naval

²¹⁴ "The Register of the Lodge *Caledonian* (Istanbul) No.489," Archives of the Grand Lodge of Turkey, 105.01/423.

doctor, lawyer, professor, correspondent, merchant, jeweler, dentist, insurance agent, engineer, representative, military officer, architect, bank delegate, and accountant.²¹⁵

Freemasonry in the Ottoman lands in the last phase of the empire was dominated by the political and revolutionary character of the Latin camp. The lodges working under the Latin Freemasonries were more appealing in this regard to the different ethnicities of the empire, all attracted in one way or another to the political currents of the time. Thierry Zarcone argues that in addition to the Ottoman Empire, the ideological content of the Latin branch expanded its influence further East into the Persian lands and as far as Bukhara, where the ideas of reform, constitutionalism, equality and liberty were shaped within a Freemasonic framework.²¹⁶ Especially in the Balkans, the influence of Latin obediences was very visible. In Salonica, in addition to French and Italian obediences, that of the Spanish was also active. The involvement of French and Italian grand bodies in forming and running lodges in Istanbul and Izmir as well as in Cairo and Alexandria since the middle of the nineteenth century and then in Salonica during the turn of the century may also be associated with the relatively intense sociopolitical relations between these countries and the Ottoman Empire. Another significant factor was the presence in these major Ottoman cities of considerable numbers of expatriates and Ottoman natives who held these countries' citizenship. All in all, these sociopolitical factors and the appeal of the Latin culture of Freemasonry to the oppositional elements in Ottoman society contributed significantly to the advancement of Freemasonry in the Ottoman lands during this period.

²¹⁵ "The Register of the Lodge *La Turquie* (Istanbul) No. 1049," Archives of the Grand Lodge of Turkey, 105.03/425.

²¹⁶ Thierry Zarcone, "Freemasonry Revisited by the Muslim Reformists and the Sufis," in *Sufism and Sufis in Ottoman Society: Sources-Doctrine-Rituals-Turuq-Architecture, Literature and Fine Arts-Modernism*, ed. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2005), 610–11.

While Istanbul within immediate reach of Sultan ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd II’s oppressive regime declined in the number and membership of its lodges, Salonica rose as a new fertile ground for Freemasonic activity in the first decade of the twentieth century. The liberal and modernized social climate of Salonica coupled with the relatively broader privileges enjoyed by its prominent residents under the protection of Ottoman capitulations granted to European powers, provided a suitable environment for the lodges to flourish. The local proponents of the Young Turk movement felt close in spirit to the Italian organization of Freemasonry. The elements of the secret organization of the *Carboneria italiana*²¹⁷ and many aspects of the secretive practices of Freemasonry were adapted by the Young Turks for their own organization.²¹⁸ The Italian obedience lodge *Macedonia Risorta* of Salonica stood out as the lodge where some of the leading actors of the CUP were initiated into the ranks of Freemasonry.²¹⁹ In 1864 a lodge named *Macedonia* had been started in Salonica under the auspices of the *Italia* lodge from Istanbul and its name was changed into *Macedonia Risorta* when it was revived in 1901.²²⁰

In the liberal and socioculturally diverse climate of Salonica a number of lodges came into being. In addition to *Macedonia Risorta*, a new Italian obedience lodge named *Labor et Lux* was formed in 1906. *Veritas* (1904) was linked to the Grand Orient de France whereas the *L’Avenir de l’Orient* (1908) worked under the Grande Loge de France²²¹. Another French obedience lodge was named *Midhat Pasha* (1908) and it operated in the Turkish language. *Perseverancia* (1907)

²¹⁷ For detailed information on the secret organization of the Carbonari, see R. John Rath, “The Carbonari: Their Origins, Initiation Rites, and Aims,” *The American Historical Review* 69, no. 2 (January 1964): 353–70, and also, Cornelia Shiver, “The Carbonari,” *Social Science* 39, no.4 (October 1964): 234–41.

²¹⁸ Luca G. Manenti, “Massoneria Italiana, Ebraismo e Movimento dei Giovani Turchi,” *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel* 78, no. 3 (Settembre–Dicembre, 2012): 170.

²¹⁹ See Sections 3.3. on the revolution of 1908 and 4.2. on the CUP.

²²⁰ Iacovella, *Gönye ve Hilal*, 19, 37.

²²¹ Grande Loge de France was formed in 1894 as a grand body of French Freemasonry distinct from the Grand Orient de France.

belonged to the Spanish obedience, whereas *Phillipos* (1907) worked under that of Greece and *Steaoa Salonicului* (1908) under that of Romania.²²²

In conclusion, Freemasonry found a favorable environment in the Ottoman lands in the immediate aftermath of the Crimean War. Foreign residents of the Ottoman cities affiliated with European obediences, members of diplomatic missions and men of commerce were again prominent in the forming of new lodges. Being in an effective position for the creation of a network of locals with social and economic bonds to the country they represented within the Ottoman Empire, members of diplomatic missions played a significant role in the formation and support of lodges, as in the case of the British and Italian embassies, while in that of the French, expatriates with prominent professional standing like Louis Amiable were the leading actors in the forming of these post-Crimean War lodges. The merchants' networks in the port cities were again a dominant force behind Freemasonic organizations as in the case of Izmir and Salonica. Based on previous research taking into account the lodge registers during the period in question, as well as through the examination of various Freemasonic journals and magazines²²³ published in both Europe and the United States in the years following the Crimean War, a significant increase is observed in Freemasonic activity taking place in the Ottoman lands in this period. This is an indication of the increased interest of foreign obediences to penetrate into the Ottoman Empire given its improved image and the enhanced political relations in the aftermath of the Crimean War.

²²² Suner, "1909 Öncesi," 21.

²²³ During the second half of the nineteenth century, many grand bodies of Freemasonry published journals not only pertaining to their internal organization and their own members but also containing news and information about Freemasonries of the world. *The American Quarterly Review of Freemasonry* (New York City), *The Freemason's Monthly Magazine* (Boston), *The National Freemason* (Washington D.C. and New York City), *Masonic Review* (Cincinnati), *The American Freemason* (Storm Lake, Iowa), *The American Tyler-Keytone* (Ann Arbor, Michigan), *The Freemason's Magazine and Masonic Mirror* (London) and *The Freemason* (London) were among these publications which shared occasional information on Ottoman Freemasonry.

While Freemasonic activity was augmented under the auspices of foreign obediences in the 1860s and early 1870s, it experienced decline in the following decades due to the circumstances in the Ottoman Empire during the rule of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd II, as well as the internal dynamics of the foreign obediences under the influence of the state of affairs in Europe during the same period. While lodges had declined in number and membership in Istanbul at the end of the nineteenth century, Salonica became the new center for vigorous Freemasonic activity. This shift also affected the nature of Ottoman Freemasonry by evolving it towards more political involvement, which would help regenerate the lodges in the capital following the revolution of 1908.

2.2 Inclusivity and Local Elements in Ottoman Freemasonry

Although speculative Freemasonry’s underlying tenets as laid out in the *Constitutions* of 1723 possessed a rather deistic approach of excluding the obligation for an adherence to Christian faith for lodge members, there were few non-Christians throughout the eighteenth century and a proportional increase took place only in the nineteenth century.²²⁴ Umdat-ul-Umrah Bahadur was the first Muslim Freemason, who was admitted in Madras in the 1770s into the lodge *Perfect Unanimity*, affiliated with the Moderns Grand Lodge (later incorporated into UGLE). The extant information regarding two Turkish Muslim shoemakers known to have joined Edinburgh lodges in 1784 makes them the first recorded Freemasons with Ottoman origins.²²⁵

²²⁴ Róbert Péter, ed., *British Freemasonry 1717–1813, Vol.5: Representations* (London, New York: Routledge, 2016), 3.

²²⁵ Péter, 3.

The admission of Jews, who constituted the main non-Christian population in most of Europe, was in principle possible in Britain, Holland and France, while in practice many lodges declined to carry out their admission.²²⁶ German lodges and especially those of Prussia did not allow Jews most of the time. A period of Jewish participation in the Freemasonic sociability took place between 1840 and the late 1870s but even then, their admission to lodges was mainly limited to the commercial metropolises outside of Prussia, like Hamburg, Frankfurt and Leipzig.²²⁷ In the subsequent period as nationalist and anti-Semitic sentiments became more dominant, Jews once again faced exclusion unless they converted to Christianity.²²⁸ Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann asserts that universalistic concepts of Freemasonry “encompassed both exclusionary and integrative effects at different times.” He also argues that “the concept of *Bildung* emerged from the tension between the claim to moral universality and the desire for social distinctiveness – a tension that lay at the heart of the self-image of the German bourgeois culture.” This tension was reflected in Freemasonry, “a classically ‘bourgeois’ institution” of which *Bildung* was a constitutive element.²²⁹

Despite the lack of lodge registers from the period prior to the middle of the nineteenth century, circumstantial evidence suggests that the membership of lodges formed in the Ottoman Empire during this period were made up of predominantly members of the foreign communities living in the urban centers associated with the presence of a lodge. However, Ottoman lodges established in the second half of the nineteenth century in the aftermath of the Crimean War had in their rosters a blend of confessions and ethnicities from both foreign and local elements. Based on the

²²⁶ Jacob Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe 1723-1939*, trans. Leonard Oschry (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 16–19.

²²⁷ Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, “Brothers or Strangers? Jews and Freemasons in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” trans. Pamela Selwyn, *German History* 18, no.2 (April 2000): 151–52.

²²⁸ Hoffmann, 155.

²²⁹ Hoffmann, 143–44.

information revealed by the extant registers and Freemasonic journals from this period, it is evident that the lodges formed by foreign obediences were inclusive towards the local elements and the Muslim membership was also present very soon after the inception of these lodges.²³⁰ The French obedience lodges were particularly receptive towards local elements. A prime example was *L'Union d'Orient* which doubled its membership from 73 to 142 under the direction of Louis Amiable between 1865 and 1869. Most importantly, due to Amiable's policy of opening the lodge to admissions of Muslims, its Muslim membership rose from only 3 to 56 in this four year period. This rise was also a result of Amiable's initiative to have the rituals translated into Turkish for use during the labors of the lodge.²³¹ The lodge register of *L'Union d'Orient* from 1869 includes a significant number of Ottoman high functionaries. Paul Dumont reveals that:

Among others were the first aide-de-camp of the Sultan (Rauf Bey), as well as his first chamberlain (Cemil Bey), an inspector of the Ministry of Police (Abdurrahman Hilmi Efendi), two governors (Mehmed Remzi Efendi, governor of Chios, and Izzet Pasha, former governor of Jerusalem), several officers of high rank (Ahmed Aziz Pasha, brigadier general, Ibrahim Edhem Pasha, lieutenant general, etc.), four judges of the Court of Commerce and a good fifteen functionaries of all levels. This was already the embryonic stage of a true Muslim Freemasonic lobby.²³²

Although the lodge *I Proodos* (Progress in Greek) was formed primarily by Greek members to work in the Greek language, particularly under Cleanthi Scalieri's²³³ direction after 1871 it became more inclusive of the Muslim element which was represented by as many as 20 out of 68 in the years 1872–73. Scalieri's implementation of Turkish rituals in similar fashion to what Amiable had done five years earlier was once again effective.²³⁴ With the exception of the lodge *Ser* (Love

²³⁰ See Table 1 in Appendix C.

²³¹ Dumont, "La Turquie," 22–24.

²³² Dumont, 23.

²³³ See Appendix B.

²³⁴ Dumont, "La Turquie," 35–36.

in Armenian) which intended to exclusively accept Armenians and to work in the Armenian language from its inception, all lodges of the French obedience included Jewish members. *L'Étoile du Bosphore* had a policy of keeping the membership predominantly limited to non-Muslims and the very few Muslims accepted into its ranks were of very high social standing through their positions at the Ottoman government and Palace.²³⁵

The French obedience lodges were susceptible to changes in the sociopolitical environment, as French Freemasonry was often associated with diffusing radical ideas potentially subversive for the order of society and undermining the ruling power. *I Proodos* lost all its Muslim members after 1878²³⁶, when 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II tightened his surveillance over the lodges, especially after attempts to save Murād V from his palace confinement. *Ser* was able to keep most of its membership in 1880s despite the increasing pressure on Freemasonic activities from the Ottoman government, but the political conflicts involving the Armenian population of the empire through the 1890s gave the final blow to the lodge which ended its activities in 1894.²³⁷ *Ser* was the only lodge which implemented an ethnic exclusivity to its full extent. This was contradictory to the approach implemented by Amiable and Scalieri towards the unification of all Ottoman ethnic and denominational elements under the roof of the Freemasonic institution. The remarks of Amiable, who in the capacity of inspector for the Grand Orient de France convened the final meeting for the closure deliberations of the lodge, are indicative of his negative sentiment in this respect:

As to the lodge *Ser*, it is not to be desired that it is revived even if the circumstances became favorable. It was a mistake of the Grand Orient de France, in 1865, to constitute a lodge which was bound to have a character of narrow particularism, given the exclusive usage of a language which was only spoken by Armenians and not even by all of them, although all speak Turkish

²³⁵ See Table 1 in Appendix C.

²³⁶ See Table 1 in Appendix C.

²³⁷ Dumont, "La Turquie," 33.

and those among them who have received a certain culture know one or more occidental languages, particularly French.²³⁸

In the case of *L'Union d'Orient*, it was due to a change of executive policy first under the direction of Nicolas Bordéano after 1870 and then Polish Count Stanislas de Rochetin after 1872 that decline in membership set in. Bordéano was the owner of the newspaper *La Turquie* and had a close relation with Grand Vizier Muḥammad Amīn 'Ālī Paşa who was in disagreement with the Ottoman liberals. The Egyptian group in the lodge, led by Muṣṭafā Fāḍil Paşa, left soon after Bordéano's election as Worshipful Master of the lodge.²³⁹ In the case of Count de Rochetin, it was his decision to put an end to the use of Turkish language in the labors of the lodge which caused the remaining Turkish Muslims to leave.²⁴⁰

Freemasonry's appeal in Ottoman territories in the aftermath of the Reform Edict of 1856 manifested itself on both the non-Muslim communities and Muslims. As the lodge membership levels demonstrate, the most significant increase in adherence to lodges took place in the 1860s and the early 1870s. This period also coincided with the efforts to develop new regulations to administrate the non-Muslim communities particularly through their own decision-making processes in semi-autonomous fashion. As a consequence of the edict of 1856, the major non-Muslim communities formulated their regulations and submitted them to the Ottoman government. In 1863, the Armenian proposal for a constitution of their own was approved as *Nizāmnāme-i Millet-i Ermeniyyān*, the wording of which translates as "Regulation for the Armenian *Millet*." In 1865, Regulations for the Rabbinate (*Khākhāmkhāne Nizāmnāmesi*) was accepted in accordance with the reforms of the

²³⁸ Louis Amiable, *Situation Maçonnique*, 9.

²³⁹ Dumont, "La Turquie," 26.

²⁴⁰ Dumont, 26.

Jewish community in the Ottoman Empire.²⁴¹ For the Greek community, a series of laws between 1860 and 1862 formed the basis of the reforms which were similar in effect to the Armenian Constitution, albeit less formally elaborated.²⁴² The new regulations benefited these communities by restricting the power and influence of the clergy and correspondingly enhancing the rights and voice of the lay people.²⁴³ In the words of Kevork Bardakjian, “the so-called Armenian Constitution, promulgated in 1863, restricted the Patriarch’s power within the community but, for the first time, it formally recognized him as the sole representative of the entire Armenian population of the empire.”²⁴⁴ The Ottoman government supported these reforms with several aims and expectations, notably to curb the influence of foreign powers on the non-Muslim communities, to eliminate the intra-communal conflicts especially due to the legal and financial domination brought about by the Greek and Armenian hierarchies affecting the social order and peace, and also to establish an egalitarian society towards a consolidation of the empire in accordance with the Ottomanist ideology.²⁴⁵

The Armenian Constitution came as the follow-up to an ethnic awakening process through the nineteenth century of the Armenian *millet* which comprised a cultural and literary revival, the introduction of French political ideas through the educational and commercial contact of many Armenians, and the influence of the Protestant missionary work on the community.²⁴⁶ The Ottoman Armenians who attended reputable institutions of higher education in Paris in the first half of the

²⁴¹ Maurits H. van den Boogert, “Millets: Past and Present,” in *Religious Minorities in the Middle East: Domination, Self-Empowerment, Accommodation*, eds. Anh Nga Longva and Anne Sofie Roald (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), 37.

²⁴² Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 128.

²⁴³ Davison, 114.

²⁴⁴ Kevork B. Bardakjian, “The Rise of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople,” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society, Vol. I The Central Lands*, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York, London: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1982), 96.

²⁴⁵ Davison, *Reform*, 114–15.

²⁴⁶ Davison, 121–23.

nineteenth century were members of an urban bourgeois primarily from Istanbul and major cities of Anatolia.²⁴⁷ They studied at Sorbonne, l'École Grignon and la Faculté de Médecine with the support of their affluent families like the Dadians and Balian²⁴⁸ which belonged to the prominent *amira* class²⁴⁹ who constituted a financial oligarchy mainly resident in Istanbul but with offshoots in Izmir, Alexandria and Van. The *amira* were major creditors and financiers known as the *şarrāfs* for the Ottoman state.²⁵⁰ Among the young members of these families who stayed and studied in Paris in the 1830s and 40s, several entered Freemasonry. Antranik Guerdjikian, physician and later deputy of the Armenian Parliament and Krikor Aghaton, graduate of the School of Agriculture at Grignon were among the first wave of students in the 1830s and were both Freemasons.²⁵¹ In the same period, Hagop Guerdjikian²⁵² (Agop Gircikyan in Turkish), the elder brother of Antranik served as the second dragoman of the embassy of Muṣṭafā Reshīd Pasha in Paris from 1835 and as his first dragoman and later chargé d'affaires in London in 1838–39. His name is recorded in the register of the Paris lodge *La Persévérante Amitié*.²⁵³

²⁴⁷ Gérard Dédéyan refers to the spatial separation of social classes among Armenians of both Russian and Ottoman Empires, which was manifested in the contrast of “*Bolis*” and “*Yergir*.” *Bolis*, “the city,” was the cosmopolitan environment of the Ottoman capital, whereas *Yergir* was “the homeland” and referred to the settlements of the Armenian highlands with its rural population and peculiar geography, often reminiscent of a yearning to return for those who had left this land. Many of the Armenians who found themselves in the cities of Western Europe for education and commerce belonged to the privileged social class of the *Bolis*. See Gérard Dédéyan, *Histoire du Peuple Arménien*, trans. Şule Çiltaş (Istanbul: Ayrıntı, 2015), 437–39.

²⁴⁸ Jamgocyán, *Les Francs-Maçons*, 15, 20.

²⁴⁹ For an informative account of the Armenian *millet* with particular emphasis on the role of the *amira* class, see Hagop Barsoumian, “The Dual Role of the Armenian *Amira* Class within the Ottoman Government and the Armenian *Millet* (1750–1850),” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society, Vol.1 The Central Lands*, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York, London: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1982), 171–84.

²⁵⁰ Dédéyan, *Histoire*, 425. The Sultans conferred upon some of the wealthy Armenians in the service of the state the title of *amira* as early as the sixteenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century, the number of these families had reached almost one hundred, including the Dadians, Aivazians, Balian, Bezdjians, Djezairlians, Yeramians, which had evolved into true dynasties. By devolving their titles and privileges on the subsequent generations through inheritance, they formed a class perceived as a new aristocracy until the middle of the nineteenth century.

²⁵¹ Jamgocyán, *Les Francs-Maçons*, 18–19.

²⁵² See Appendix B.

²⁵³ Jamgocyán, *Les Francs-Maçons*, 15–16.

Guerdjikian was also the author of the *Treatise on Silks according to the European System* published in 1846 and a series of other treatises on the culture of cotton, rice, potato and the farming of pigs and merino sheep.²⁵⁴ In this effort, he exemplifies the Armenian citizens of the Ottoman Empire who studied in this period in various technical fields as a consequence of the Ottoman overture to European military and technological advancements started in the reign of Selīm III and continued by Maḥmūd II, and who, upon their return, contributed to the development of agriculture, medicine, architecture and industrial production in the empire.

The Armenians who ventured to France and became Freemasons in the two decades prior to the Reform Edict paved the way for other members of their community to join Freemasonry when the social climate at the Ottoman capital became favorable for lodges to operate. The lodge *Ser* became the main venue of this Freemasonic activity. The advanced ethnic consciousness of the Armenian community attained by the 1860s coupled with a high degree of commitment to solve the intra-communal conflicts focusing on the dominant power of the clergy and the *amira* class may help to explain the exclusive nature of the lodge *Ser*. The membership represented a conglomeration of different sociopolitical elements of the Armenian society. In early 1869, the lodge register consisted of 72 members among which were 16 bankers, 7 business agents and 15 merchants. Two leading intellectuals of the Armenian society, Mkrtich Beshiktashlian (Mıgırdıç Beşiktaşlıyan), famous Armenian poet and playwright, and Garabed Utujian (Garabet Ütücüyan), owner of the influential and progressive Armenian newspaper *Massis*, were also among the members, as well as Hazaros Davoud [*sic*], leader of the

²⁵⁴ Gustave Vapereau, *Dictionnaire Universel des Contemporaines* (Paris: Hachette, 1858), 19–20. The dictionary entry contains just his first name as Agop (Jacques). The sixth edition of the dictionary, published in 1893, gives his birth year as 1807 (Istanbul) and year of death as 1862 (Jerusalem).

Protestant Armenian community.²⁵⁵ Despite the diverse elements of the Armenian society representing different social, religious and economic interests, the members of *Ser* were able to accommodate their differences in the fraternal environment of the lodge. Paul Dumont asserts that the Armenian membership of *Ser* was politically moderate and mostly perceived the French obedience to be overly tolerant towards disruptive ideas. Although they stayed away from displaying radical ideas popular in Europe during this period, the outside perception of the nationalistic character of the lodge caused a more vigilant surveillance on the part of the Sultan's police in the subsequent decades.²⁵⁶

Another milieu that appealed to the pursuit of similar aims towards progress and solidarity of the Armenian community was that of The Odd Fellows, a fraternal organization with social aspirations akin to Freemasonry.²⁵⁷ A lodge was opened in Istanbul in 1862 mainly through the effort of Serovpe Aznavour, an Istanbul Armenian who was very active in his social experimentation with not only the Freemasonic organization but also that of the Odd Fellows.²⁵⁸ Aznavour had been initiated into Freemasonry at the *Jordan* lodge in London on February 17, 1854.²⁵⁹ He later joined the English lodge *Oriental* in Istanbul in 1857,²⁶⁰ and his name was also included in the register of the *Homer* lodge opened in Izmir in 1860 under the

²⁵⁵ Dumont, "La Turquie," 28. Utujian was one of the enlightened Armenian intellectuals who brought home the progressive French ideas he was imbued with during his stay and studies in Paris in the 1840s. The dichotomy in the Armenian society was expressed by the terms "*Loussavorial*, the enlightened ones, as opposed to the *Khavarial*, or obscurantists." See Davison, *Reform*, 121–22.

²⁵⁶ Dumont, "La Turquie," 29, 32.

²⁵⁷ Both organizations originated in Britain. Although Odd Fellows started as a friendly society, more like the traditional journeyman's society than Freemasonry, by the 1840s it had been transformed more towards Freemasonry, "a multiclass organization espousing morality and the promotion of individual self-improvement." See Mary Ann Clawson, "Fraternal Organizations," in *Encyclopedia of American Social History Vol. 3*, eds. Mary Kupiec Cayton, Elliott J. Gorn and Peter W. Williams (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1993), 1658.

²⁵⁸ Garabet K. Moumdjian, "Freemasonry and the Armenians in Constantinople; 1850–1870, the first Armenian Lodges," 5, https://www.academia.edu/33294424/Freemasonry_and_the_Armenians_in_Constantinople_1850_1870_the_first_Armenian_Lodges. The author has conceived this text as the first draft of a future paper.

²⁵⁹ Jamgocyan, *Les Francs-Maçons*, 48.

²⁶⁰ Jamgocyan, 50.

auspices of the United Grand Lodge of England.²⁶¹ He would later be actively involved in the forming of the lodge *Ser* in 1867. His contribution to the formation of the Odd Fellows lodge named *Orion* (*Hayg* in Armenian) in 1862 is mentioned in a letter he wrote to the editor of the Armenian journal *Massis* in 1864.²⁶² This period coincides with the growth of the Odd Fellows organization first within Britain and then in the British dominions around the world. According to Penelope Ismay:

Sometimes called the workingman's Freemasons because of the strong family resemblances between their ritualized forms of sociability, the Odd Fellows began with six lodges in Manchester in the early 1810s and, from the early 1820s, began to increase their numbers at a rather impressive rate... In the 1860s, there would be an Odd Fellow Lodge in Turkey and one in Buenos Aires. By the mid-nineteenth century, then, an Odd Fellow could leave the Social Design Lodge in Halifax, Yorkshire with a "travel card" and migrate to Hobart Town in Tasmania, over 10,000 miles away, where he could "throw his card in" with the brothers of the Southern Star Lodge.²⁶³

The one lodge mentioned by Ismay was most likely the one started by Aznavour, since his effort was a rare instance of the Odd Fellows organization reaching into the Ottoman lands. It nevertheless stands as an indicative social attempt from a time when the more educated and liberal members of the urban Armenian community were in a state of increased mobility with ever improving ties with Europe and when these fraternal affiliations acted as a catalyst to their social and cultural progress.

While the Armenian community of Istanbul was among the earliest to integrate themselves to the social and cultural milieus of Europe including that of the Freemasonic organization, the Greek community also actively sought participation in Freemasonry during this period of liberalization within the Ottoman Empire. They established their own sphere of involvement in Freemasonry which was probably best represented by the Istanbul lodge *I Proodos*. It was formed in 1868 under the

²⁶¹ Moundjian, "Freemasonry and the Armenians," 7.

²⁶² Moundjian, 5–6.

²⁶³ Penelope Ismay, *Trust Among Strangers: Friendly Societies in Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 120.

auspices of the Grand Orient de France, through primarily the efforts of Louis Amiable. Alexandre Ismyrides²⁶⁴, an Istanbul merchant also resident in London according to the lodge records, was the first Worshipful Master. In the end of 1870, Cleanthi Scalieri, registered as a stockbroker from Istanbul, was elected to this highest office of the lodge and under his lead the lodge attained a remarkable roster of multi-denominational and multi-ethnic membership.²⁶⁵ As the lodge of Crown Prince Murād's choice for his initiation into Freemasonry, *I Proodos* was active in recruiting Ottoman court and government officials into its ranks under Scalieri's leadership. In early 1873, there were 16 government employees in the lodge register with 14 Muslims among them, as well as two court officials, Seyyid Ahmed, the first Chamberlain of Murād and Mehmed Rāghib, Murād's personal employee.²⁶⁶ Working under the authority of the French obedience with a majority in its roster of Ottomans of Greek ethnicity, *I Proodos* nevertheless had 15 new Muslim members joining the lodge during the year 1872 prior to Murād's initiation on October 20. The significant number of the court and government officials who became Freemasons in the short period before and after Murād's initiation brings to mind the already existing network of Freemasons in close proximity to Murād, as well as the Young Ottoman intellectuals like Nāmık Kemāl²⁶⁷, another member of the lodge, as the probable influence for his decision to join the *I Proodos* lodge.²⁶⁸ The ascent in enrollment to the lodge from 68 in 1873 to 89 in 1876 attests to its increased prestige after the initiation of Murād, then the heir apparent to the Ottoman throne.

²⁶⁴ See Appendix B.

²⁶⁵ Constantin Svolopoulos, "L'Initiation de Mourad V à la Franc-Maçonnerie par Cl. Scalieri: Aux Origines du Mouvement Libéral en Turquie," *Balkan Studies* 21, no.2 (1980): 442.

²⁶⁶ Svolopoulos, 442.

²⁶⁷ See Appendix B.

²⁶⁸ Suha Umur, "V. Murad'ın Masonluğu Hakkında Belgeler," *Mimar Sinan*, no.18 (1976): 30–31.

Another French obedience lodge which demonstrated a high level of inclusivity was the lodge *Prométhée* formed in Jannina (*Yanya, Ioannina*) which was still under Ottoman rule in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Despite its short existence due to the local social dynamics between 1893 and 1897, it displayed an “ecumenical” character.²⁶⁹ In 1895, among the 36 members of the lodge there were 16 Greeks, 1 Armenian, 8 Jews and 8 Muslims.²⁷⁰ With only a few members from France, Italy and Central Europe, the majority were of local origin. The Muslim component was once again predominantly government functionaries and army members, including the director of the local post and telegraph office, a manager at the office of Public Debt Administration, two army officers and an interpreter of the provincial government.²⁷¹ Such an inclusive lodge environment was indicative of the social dynamics in a small city of the Balkans towards the turn of the century where many members of the different *millets* were still in the hope of a peaceful collective existence under Ottoman rule. Freemasonry’s universal tenets served as a convenient medium to uphold this hope. Be that as it may, the Greek-Ottoman War of 1897 put an end to the lodge activity and in fifteen years’ time Jannina would become part of the Greek Kingdom.

The process to arrive at new regulations was not without debates and conflicts among the members of Ottoman non-Muslim communities, or *millets*. Those who shared the ideals of the Enlightenment and were convinced in the good to be brought about by reforms saw in Freemasonry a vehicle that would not only contribute to a more peaceful existence of elements in the empire but also bring a higher degree of unity and coherence to their communities. The lodges provided an

²⁶⁹ Paul Dumont, “La Franc-Maçonnerie Dans L’Empire Ottomane: La Loge Grecque Prométhée à Jannina,” *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, no.66 (1992/4): 107.

²⁷⁰ See Table 1 in Appendix C.

²⁷¹ Dumont, “La Loge Grecque,” 108.

environment where different factions came together in fraternal relations despite their sectarian interests. Such factional components were most visible in the Armenian community and the exclusive nature of the lodge *Ser* may well point to an effort to bring these components together in the hope of resolving their differences for the betterment of the community but also as a medium to assess the increasing national sentiments in the political climate of the period.

During the two decades following the Reform Edict of 1856, most lodges reflected an inclusive attitude towards various foreign and local elements. They were an exemplary medium for the pursuit of Ottoman brotherhood of ethnicities through the liberal European ideas and the influence of Ottomanism. However, during the period following the suspension of the Constitution in early 1878, which was marked by the oppressive regime of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, the lodges lost a significant part of their membership which weakened their capability to contribute to the Ottomanist ideal of brotherhood among the empire’s diverse communities.

2.3. Sufi Encounters

By the time Sultan Maḥmūd II ascended the throne in 1808, the Janissary institution had long turned into a menace for the Ottoman government. This institution was known to be closely affiliated with Bektashism, a heterodox and secretive Sufi order which had entered Anatolia from Iran in the thirteenth century with the wandering dervishes and which displayed eclectic influences of diverse religious practices from pre-Islamic to non-Islamic traditions, including Christianity, Manichaeism and Neo-Platonism. Lacking formal organization, the order relied on secretive groupings brought together by initiatory experiences rather than sharing

any common dogma or teachings.²⁷² When Sultan Maḥmūd II decreed the abolishment of the Janissary order in 1826, he saw a threat in all secretive organizations. Fraternal and mystical sociabilities like Bektashism deemed to have associations with the Janissary order also suffered the same fate and were shut down. A dictum attributed to the Sultan by a newspaper of the period conveys the perception that members of the Bektashi order were sympathizers of Freemasonry:

The Bektaschi [*sic*] in the eyes of the Sunnis are anyhow not true believers. Their leaders profess fraternity with the Freemasons and already the saying goes: Freemason (*Farmasson*) [*sic*] is in the orient synonymous with godlessness, witchcraft and atheism.²⁷³

Since the late eighteenth century, European and American Freemasons had been excited by Oriental ideas. History and culture of ancient Egypt, the Holy Land and the lands from Eastern Mediterranean as far as India were all early inspirations for some Freemasons who explored the origins of Freemasonry in an Orient of the past.²⁷⁴ This interest in the Orient also evolved into further quests for knowledge of the philosophy, rituals and organizational aspects of the oriental Sufi orders which bore some resemblance to Freemasonry through their initiatory, mystical and secretive aspects. The Freemason orientalists like Ignace Mouradgèa d'Ohsson and John P. Brown drew attention to these connections between Freemasonry and Sufi brotherhoods (*ṭarīqa*).²⁷⁵ The perennialist or supraconfessional outlook of the dervish sociabilities formed in these Sufi orders which resembled the ecumenical aspirations

²⁷² Albert Doja, "A Political History of Bektashism from Ottoman Anatolia to Contemporary Turkey," *Journal of Church and State* 48, no.2 (Spring 2006): 424.

²⁷³ *Encyclopädie Der Freimaurerei, Dritter Band*, 543. The Encyclopedia quoted the dictum referring to the *Allgemeine Zeitung* dated 1826, No.229, page 916, which in its turn borrowed from the Parisian newspaper *L'Étoile*'s news article posted from Constantinople, dated July 11. The daily *L'Étoile* during this period reported in detail about the series of tumultuous events and bloodshed at the Ottoman capital that ensued the abolishment of the Janissary order.

²⁷⁴ Thierry Zarcone, "Freemasonry and Orientalism," *Ritual, Secrecy, and Civil Society* 3, no.1 (Spring 2015): 30–31.

²⁷⁵ Zarcone, "Orientalism," 33–34.

of Freemasonry created the idea of an oriental or Muslim Freemasonry in the writings of these Freemason orientalist.²⁷⁶

Thierry Zarcone's research on a pre-Masonic epicurean fraternity called *l'Ordre de la Grappe* (Order of the Grape) reveals that the tendency to associate Sufi brotherhoods with western fraternal sociabilities goes back to as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century.²⁷⁷ The order, which was formed in 1693 in Arles, soon established itself in the Galata district of Istanbul in 1702 with predominantly French members. When a complaint against the drinking practices of the order was taken to the court, the chief representative of the order in Istanbul was able to exonerate the organization by claiming its affinity to dervish orders.²⁷⁸ This account is a very early instance of the perception of the affinity between western fraternal sociabilities and Sufi brotherhoods.

Patrick D. Bowen argues that, although there were instances of sporadic interest in Islam and Sufism on the part of Freemasons as early as the late eighteenth century, it was not until 1860s that "Islamophilic Masonic groups" emerged when "three key developments finally brought Islam and Muslims to the attention of mainstream Freemasons in both Europe and the United States, thereby legitimizing popular Masonic interest in Islam."²⁷⁹ These key developments, according to Bowen, were firstly the Freemasonic involvement of 'Abd al-Ḳādir in mid 1860s; secondly, the claims which circulated in English and American Freemasonic journals that "Sufism, particularly in Turkey, was actually an Islamic form of Masonry"; finally, the promotional activities of Robert Morris before and after his visit to the Holy

²⁷⁶ Zarcone, 34.

²⁷⁷ Thierry Zarcone, "French Pre-Masonic Fraternities, Freemasonry and Dervish Orders in the Muslim World," in *Freemasonry and Fraternalism in the Middle East*, eds. Andreas Önnersfors and Dorothe Sommer (Sheffield: The University of Sheffield, 2008), 15–21.

²⁷⁸ Zarcone, 19–20.

²⁷⁹ Bowen, *Conversion to Islam*, 116–19.

Land in 1868. However, as the following story attests, the interest in the subject among Freemasons may be traced back to at least a couple of decades prior to what Bowen suggests.

This peculiar episode relating to Freemasonry's exposure into the Ottoman lands in the middle of the nineteenth century emerged from the Balkans in the context of Sufi brotherhood. It was not uncommon that an interesting story like this could find itself staying in circulation for many years in the Freemasonic journals around the world. Such was the account of a dervish lodge in Belgrade by the name of *Alikotsch* [*sic*][*Ali Koç* in Turkish]. Although recent research has not been able to corroborate the presence of a dervish lodge (*tekke*) by that name in Belgrade,²⁸⁰ the lodge is likely to have taken its name from Ali Koç Baba of Niğbolu, a much revered Saint among the Balkan Bektashis. A shrine for Ali Koç Baba, as well as a dervish lodge associated with it, was established during the fourteenth century in Nikopol (Niğbolu), Bulgaria.²⁸¹

The Belgrade lodge was an active one in the middle of the nineteenth century with allegedly about seventy members whose leader at the time was a certain Ismā'īl (Čolak) Mehmed Sa'īd, a name that was spelled in various forms in different sources.²⁸² The first mention of this dervish lodge in Belgrade as a fraternity akin to a Freemasonic lodge in organization and ritual tradition goes back to late 1840s. The conviction that it practiced a form of Freemasonry was so strong that there was interest from a German Freemasonic lodge to exchange members and visits with the Belgrade lodge. The interest seems to have been mutual, since the Bektashi masters of the Belgrade lodge also saw the two fraternities to be very close in their practices,

²⁸⁰ See footnote 36 in Zarcone, "French Pre-Masonic," 35.

²⁸¹ Tuba H. Çibik and Filiz Umaroğulları, "Balkanlarda Bektaşilik ve Bektaşî Tekkeleri," *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi* 6, no.1(2017): 458–81.

²⁸² A report by John Porter Brown concerning a meeting he held with the Sheikh of the lodge in 1863 revealed the accurate name. See Zarcone, "French Pre-Masonic," 39.

as the exchanged letters affirm. The first of a sequence of letters exchanged between the masters of the Leipzig lodge *Baldwin* and the Belgrade dervish lodge *Alikotsch* [*sic*] was entrusted to a merchant of Leipzig, who was also a member of the *Baldwin* lodge, in August 1847.²⁸³ The letter in Turkish language expressed that Brother Gretschel, the Worshipful Master of the *Baldwin* lodge was conferred an honorary membership of the Belgrade lodge along with a presentation of gifts, a scarf and a meerschaum pipe bowl. In reply, the Worshipful Master of the *Baldwin* lodge sent a letter and a small golden trowel, the symbolic jewel of the lodge. In the subsequent letter from Belgrade to Leipzig, signed in the name of the lodge *Alikotsch* as “Your Brother, Tjani Ismael Tscholak Mehemed Saede [*sic*]” on September 3, 1847, the greeting was as follows:

The peace of the Almighty be with thee, dear Brother and Fellow Master,- That your and our fraternity are one and the same and that all Freemasons (Becktaschias) [*sic*] in the world are related, I am now more convinced than ever, after having received from you a letter and the jewel of your lodge...²⁸⁴

During the Crimean War, the story came into circulation once again eight years after the initial correspondence between Leipzig and Belgrade. The perception prevailing among some American Freemasons was then expressed as follows:

...It appears now to be proved beyond all doubt that the Turkish brothers who exercise their masonic duties under the name of Dervishers [*sic*], are to all intents and purposes the same as our own order of Freemasons, with but very little difference in their customs and ceremonies and making use of exactly the same signs, words, and grips to recognize each other...²⁸⁵

Later following the war, a letter from Istanbul dated October 12, 1856, mentioned the Belgrade lodge:

There has been, for many years past, it is said, a masonic lodge at Belgrade on the Danube, called Ali Kotch composed of 70 members, the Grand Master of which is named Tzani Ismail Zenolah Mehmet Saadi. So says a late account of

²⁸³ *The Freemasons' Quarterly Review* (September 30, 1849): 249–51.

²⁸⁴ *The Freemasons' Monthly Magazine* IX, no.2 (December 1, 1849): 50–51. The same account with minor textual differences was published in a number of journals of the period.

²⁸⁵ *The Masonic Review* XIII, no.5 (August 1855): 276.

it which I find in *Galignani's Messenger* of April 30, 1855, taken from a Trieste paper...²⁸⁶

The account of the Belgrade dervish lodge, in addition to portraying a connection between the Bektashi dervishes and Freemasons, also attests once again to the frequent link between Freemasonry and merchants, the latter being a primary conveyor of the fraternity. The aforementioned correspondence between the lodges included a reference to “a merchant of Leipsic [*sic*] having occasion to visit Belgrade, made himself known to some parties as a member of the Lodge Baldwin at Leipsic.”²⁸⁷ This merchant, identified as Albert Schulze in another part of the correspondence, was conceivably a member of the *Balduin zur Linde* lodge of Leipzig who visited or resided in Belgrade on various occasions and also acted as the messenger between the masters of the two lodges. He attended the rituals and meetings of the dervish lodge and there was further mention of the scheduled initiation of another of his fellow countrymen, Wilhelm Anton Schulze, who may well have been a merchant as well. In his letter, the master of the Belgrade dervish lodge stated:

We expect Brother Arthur [*mentioned as Albert earlier in the document*] Schulze to pass through here shortly, when he shall likewise receive a jewel and a translation of his certificate...On the 12th September, being next Sunday eight days, we shall have a great working day and initiate several candidates; among those admitted will be your countryman, Wilhelm Anton Schulze, whom I have known upwards of eight years and consider worthy of being received into our Order.²⁸⁸

There is no account of a continuation of this interesting correspondence between the Belgrade dervish lodge and the Leipzig lodge in subsequent journals and this may be due to the premature death of Mr. Gretschel, the Worshipful Master of *Balduin zur Linde*, who was the active participant of this communication. Carl

²⁸⁶ *The Masonic Review* XVI, no.3 (December 1856): 192–93.

²⁸⁷ *The Freemasons' Monthly Magazine* IX, 50.

²⁸⁸ *The Freemasons' Monthly Magazine* IX, 51.

Christian Carus Gretschel, who was a lawyer, editor and historian, had become the Worshipful Master [*Meister vom Stuhl*] of the lodge *Balduin zur Linde* in 1842 and he died in March, 1848 in Leipzig.²⁸⁹ The story of the Belgrade lodge is an instance of the perception that existed among both European Freemasons and the members of certain Sufi brotherhoods of an affinity between the two orders.

Based on the coverage of this subject in newspapers during this period, this perception of the resemblance of especially the Bektashi order to Freemasonry and the identification of the Sufi dervishes belonging to various *tekke* and *dergāh* as “Muslim Freemasons” was a recurrent theme, although there was an inadequacy of accurate information regarding these orders and their origins. An American correspondent reported the following from Istanbul on October 12, 1856:

...I paid a visit to the Sheik of the little convent situated on the hill called “Shahidler”²⁹⁰ above the old castle of Europe. The convent is one of the now few remaining ones of the prohibited sect of the Bektashee [*sic*] Dervishes. On learning that I was a Free Mason he seemed disposed to fraternize with me and remarked that I was like those of the convent or “Tekkieh” of Ali Kotch of Belgrade... All Mussulman Dervishes are free thinkers and those of the Bektashee sect are said to be more so than any other... I apprehend that if the old Sheik of the “Shahidler” was disposed to recognize me as a fellow Dervish, it was on the ground that, in his estimation, I was a “free thinker”... The sect is prohibited on account of its connection with the Jannissaries and few convents now exist in Turkey. At Constantinople, there are but two—the one in question and another beyond the walls of the city...²⁹¹

Eventually, as more insight was attained through the writings and research of foreign origin residents and visitors of the Ottoman lands, more informed opinions started to accumulate. One particular devotee of the subject was John Porter Brown, a long-time resident of Istanbul, who worked in various capacities for the American legation, as well as being a prominent participant of Freemasonic activity in the

²⁸⁹ “Freimaurerloge Balduin zur Linde,” <http://www.leipzig-lexikon.de/gesver/balduin.htm>; “Nekrolog, Carl Christian Carus Gretschel (Redacteur der Leipziger Zeitung, Dr. jur.), Mstr. v. St. der Loge Balduin zur Linde in Leipzig,” *Freimaurer-Zeitung, Manuscript für Brüder*, no. 22 (Mai 1848): 173–76.

²⁹⁰ *Şehitler* or *Şehitlik* is a still existing Bektashi *tekke* at Rumeli Hisarı in Istanbul.

²⁹¹ “Freemasonry in Turkey,” *The Louisville Daily Journal* (November 19, 1856): 3.

city.²⁹² Brown was born in Chillicothe, Ohio, on August 17, 1814. After serving several years as a midshipman in the navy, he accompanied his uncle David Porter to Constantinople in 1832, when the latter was appointed as the first American minister to the Sublime Porte. In the following years, Brown represented the United States nine times as chargé d'affaires before he died in Constantinople on April 28, 1872. He was very studious in oriental languages and literature, gaining wide renown as an oriental scholar.²⁹³

In addition to his office of chargé d'affaires of the General Consulate, Brown also served as the chief American interpreter at the Sublime Porte and as secretary of the legation during different periods of his residence in Istanbul. He was a frequent contributor to Freemasonic journals published in England and the United States. He not only reported his views concerning the Freemasonry of the Ottoman lands and the news of significant lodge activities from Istanbul but also submitted essays on the subject of Sufism and Islamic culture from the Ottoman Empire and Persia.²⁹⁴

Brown published his book entitled *The Dervishes; or Oriental Spiritualism* in 1868 which was a detailed research into the mystical orders of Islamic tradition.²⁹⁵ The book, which identifies him on its title page as “Secretary and Dragoman of the Legation of the United States of America at Constantinople,” was the outcome of his deep interest in the subject and his collaboration with Sufi ascetics revealing the

²⁹² For a detailed study of the life and deeds of John Porter Brown, see Cary Corwin Conn, “John Porter Brown, Father of Turkish-American Relations, an Ohioan at the Sublime Porte, 1832–1872” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1973). For a short introduction to Brown’s contributions as an orientalist, see Gary Leiser, “John Porter Brown, Early American Orientalist (1814–1872),” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 140, no.1 (January–March, 2020): 183–88.

²⁹³ Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio in Two Volumes. An Encyclopedia of the State Vol. II* (Cincinnati: C.J. Krehbiel & Co., 1888), 518.

²⁹⁴ For just a few examples, see *The National Freemason* IX, no.21 (November 23, 1867): 333 with news concerning the District Grand Lodge of Turkey; *The National Freemason* VIII, no.16 (April 20, 1867): 246–47, with an essay entitled “The Peer,” posted on February 28, 1867 from Istanbul; *The National Freemason* VIII, no. 17 (April 27, 1867): 262, with an essay entitled “Freemasonry in the Orient,” posted in March 1867 from Istanbul.

²⁹⁵ John Porter Brown, *The Dervishes; Or, Oriental Spiritualism* (London: Trubner and Co., 1868).

various “paths,” or *ṭarīka*, constituting their ways of life. The book contains a few references to the supposed similarities between certain Sufi orders and Freemasonry per se, but as Brown himself shared his views on this topic on a number of other occasions by sending essays to be published in various Freemasonic journals of the period as cited below, he was unconvinced of these similarities:

The title by which, it is said, Mussulman Freemasons are known is Melāmeeyoon; and when I come to speak of this order of Mussulman Dervishes of the 'Aleide sect, the reader may judge how far the statement is incorrect...²⁹⁶

It is rather strange that the Dervishes of the Bektāshee order consider themselves quite the same as the Freemasons, and are disposed to fraternize with them.²⁹⁷

In his Freemasonic engagements, Brown was involved with a number of lodges in Istanbul. In 1869, he was appointed as District Grand Master for the Ottoman Empire under the English obedience in place of Ḥalīm Paşa, a position he held until his death. His own interest and inquiry into the relationship between certain tenets of Freemasonry and those of the dervish orders was a constructive effort at better informing the Freemasons of Europe and the United States regarding some earlier misconceptions on the subject. In addition to the book he published to inform the general public, he also addressed specifically the Freemasonic community to share his observations. Despite his own cultural and possibly spiritual pursuit of understanding the Sufi way of life beside his attachment to Freemasonry, he seems to have disagreed with those who claimed a stronger resemblance or relationship between the Sufi orders and Freemasonry.

In a letter from Istanbul dated February 12, 1865, and addressed to Doctor McMurdy of *The National Freeman*, Brown explained his attachment to Freemasonry in Istanbul as follows:

²⁹⁶ Brown, *The Dervishes*, 59.

²⁹⁷ Brown, 59.

I am one of the founders of two lodges now existing here and that I have filled two offices in the Provincial Grand Lodge of Turkey. For one year I was the Master of the Bulwer Lodge. At present I hold no office in any lodge, though I belong to the last named.²⁹⁸

He went on to disclose the reason for his research into the Sufi orders and his view of their probable relation to Freemasonry:

My connection with Masonry has led me to search after similar fraternities among Mussulmans [*sic*]. Some of my masonic brethren, natives of this country, had a firm conviction that some such existed. I, however, felt compelled to differ with them in opinion, and thought, from my limited studies, and especially of the metaphysical works of many Mussulman writers, especially of those in the quasi spiritual sects of the Dervishes, that I had good reason to do so.²⁹⁹

Following a comparative discussion of the Koran, Brown referred to the spiritual qualities of the dervish sects, but refrained from finding any similarity to western counterparts of mystical and esoteric traditions:

I have been asked whether or not I have found any connection between the rites of the Dervish orders and those of the ancient Greek mysteries and I have to answer in the negative.³⁰⁰

In his final analysis in the letter, he referred to the lack of philanthropic deeds within the dervish sects in so far as his observation went, thus alluding to a distinction with Freemasonry where such deeds would be considered an essential tenet. Other differences he remarked upon were related to the method of spiritual devotion, use of secret signs and the outlook towards general education:

I have found nothing in the Dervish orders resembling mutual benevolence; no such object as charity to the poor and the wretched; no assistance to the family of a deceased or afflicted brother; no desire to extend education and a knowledge of God's creation...Nor have I found any secret signs, though, indeed, some of the initiations with the Dervish orders are secret; and I am not aware that they have any other means of recognition than from the dress of the wearer...None devote themselves to general education... Among them are some highly educated men ...but the large majority is ignorant.³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ *The National Freemason* II, no.11 (April 1865): 171.

²⁹⁹ *The National Freemason*, 171.

³⁰⁰ *The National Freemason*, 172.

³⁰¹ *The National Freemason*, 172.

Brown mentioned, as a source of his information regarding various orders, one particular dervish who was then a member of the Bulwer Lodge.

In his work exploring the Islamic connections of Sufism and Freemasonry,³⁰² Zarcone presents the significant part played by the Islamic mystical fraternities in facilitating the integration of Freemasonry into the Muslim elements of the Ottoman society. He puts special emphasis on the Bektashi for their role in forging an “enlightened Sufism,” acting as the bond between Freemasonry and the oriental traditions of mystical fraternities. On the other hand, during the mid-nineteenth century when Freemasonry was just developing in the Ottoman Empire, it was most likely this affinity between them which created on the part of the Ottoman religious élite and the general public the perception of a kind of a heretical alliance against the mainstream Sunni faith. Brown shared the following view in his book regarding this matter:

...The name of Freemasonry in the Turkish language is *Fermāson* and is one of great reproach. It signifies atheism of the most condemnable character and this may be said of the *Bektāshees*, who, from some reason or other not clear to me, are held in small repute among other Mussulmans, even those belonging to the other Dervish orders. No one in Constantinople may consider himself at all complemented when he is called a “*Fermāson*” or a “*Bektashee*,” no more than a Protestant is when called a Methodist by a devout Catholic, or a Voltairean by an ordinary Christian.³⁰³

In the following decades, as Freemasonry found many Muslim adherents during its further development in the Ottoman lands, even from the highest echelons of the religious establishment³⁰⁴, this perception had likely improved.

In the final years of the Ottoman Empire, the association between Freemasonry and the Sufi mystical traditions reached a further dimension during the establishment of the Ottoman obedience in 1909, when the founders incorporated

³⁰² Zarcone, *Mystiques*.

³⁰³ Brown, *The Dervishes*, 59–60.

³⁰⁴ Sheikh-al Islam Mūṣā Kāẓim Efendi and Muderris Maḥmūd Esʻad Efendi were among members of Freemasonry in the period after the revolution of 1908.

into the language and rituals of Ottoman Freemasonry many terms and concepts from the Sufi tradition. According to Y. Selim Ağaoğlu and Remzi Sanver, this was a deliberate action on the part of the founding Freemasons to incorporate a cultural basis that would be readily accessible for the remaining Ottoman Muslim population of the empire, since an augmented engagement with Freemasonry among the Muslim elements had become part of a political agenda for the founders, many of whom had a significant attachment to the then dominant Committee of Union and Progress.³⁰⁵

In the light of the accounts presented above, it is conceivable that the affinity of certain mystical and practical aspects of Freemasonry with those of some Sufi brotherhoods, particularly the Bektashi, notably in their initiatory traditions, various rituals, secretive inclinations, as well as their terminological content, created a cultural convergence which helped a reconciliation of Freemasonry with the Islamic social tradition. Furthermore, this affinity was incorporated into the design of a sovereign Ottoman Freemasonic establishment, presumably with the aspiration to expand its authority into the remaining Muslim territories of the empire, while a reconsolidation of Ottoman rule in the same territories was of utmost priority for the Ottoman government.

2.4. A Case of Political Debate Among Freemasons

The interaction of Freemasonry with issues pertaining to domestic or international politics has been a complicated matter. Nationalism is one such topic. Although it is hard to confirm Freemasonry's direct influence on the formation of nationalist factions and the political consequences they created, Freemasons and their

³⁰⁵ Yavuz Selim Ağaoğlu and M. Remzi Sanver, "Freemasonry and Secular Spirituality in the Ottoman Grand East," *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 134 (2021): 195.

organizations were involved to various degrees in the forging of new national identities and cultural milieus that accompanied the building of nation-states.³⁰⁶ It was not before the Second Constitutional Era following the revolution of 1908 that Ottoman Freemasonry got entangled with nationalist politics.³⁰⁷ In the case of Egypt, it was earlier in the 1880s that the nationalist movement had close relations with the Freemasonic organization.³⁰⁸

It is generally hard to assess how much politics went into the daily interests and communications of Freemasons. By definition, since the inception of the earliest constitutions of Freemasonry, politics and religion were expected to remain avoided subjects of discussion. While national identification at the individual or organizational level of Freemasonry in Europe was rather weak before the nineteenth century, a more outspoken attitude towards national identities and movements became a more common occurrence particularly following the Napoleonic wars.³⁰⁹ As the following series of correspondences in a Freemasonic journal of nineteenth century attest, the nationalist dissention and conflict which started to ascend in the remaining European territories of the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century found reflections in the form of political arguments in the communications of Freemasons.

This peculiar instance of interest in Ottoman politics among British Freemasons pertains to a political affair of international proportions created in the person of Prince Skanderbeg, an impostor who assumed the name of a heroic Albanian leader of the fifteenth century to supposedly instigate an uprising against the Ottoman Empire in Albania in 1860s. Although the Albanian national uprising

³⁰⁶ Jeffrey Thyssens, "Freemasonry and Nationalism," in *Handbook of Freemasonry*, eds. Henrik Bogdan, Jan A.M. Snoek (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014), 469–70.

³⁰⁷ See Section 4.2. on the political entanglements of the CUP.

³⁰⁸ See Section 3.2. on Egypt.

³⁰⁹ Thyssens, "Nationalism," 469.

reached its peak much later in the first two decades of the twentieth century resulting in a final split from the Ottoman rule, the nationalist movement for Albanian independence was a matter of concern much earlier for the Ottoman government. Prince Skanderbeg's scheme was part of this concern and though his attempt lost its fervor gradually over a few years' time, it managed to worry the Ottoman authorities to a considerable degree.³¹⁰ Seemingly a futile endeavor with a possibly insincere national motive but rather one for fame and riches of a confidence man of Sicilian origin with a doubtful connection to Albanian heritage, the whole plot still achieved to entangle a broad array of names from the Risorgimento like Garibaldi and Crispi, as well as the adventurous man of letters Alexandre Dumas, père, who all shared a common adherence to Freemasonry as well.

The height of the Skanderbeg affair coincided to a great extent with the period of Alexandre Dumas' residence in Italy from 1861 to 1864. Having already an affinity with the Albanian history through incorporating into his famous novel, *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844), the daughter of the Ottoman-Albanian governor Ali Pasha of Tepelena ('Alī Paşa Tepedelenli) as a leading character, Dumas may have displayed an interest towards a self-styled leader fighting for the Albanian independence in the person of the so-called Prince Skanderbeg. Notwithstanding the ambiguity of whether his intentions were destined for a political, intellectual or material end, Dumas came to the forefront of the venture as an advocate taking advantage of his well-established fame. His publishing of a newspaper called *L'Indipendente* during his residence in Naples in support of the Risorgimento may be taken to justify his position espousing the cause of independence for the Albanians.

³¹⁰ Kuntay Gücüm, "Alexandre Dumas Babîâlî'ye Karşı: Sözde İskender Bey Vakası," *Bilim ve Gelecek*, no.83 (January 2011): 64–65.

According to the reports of the Ottoman diplomats posted to England, France and Italy at the time, who were all engaged by the Ottoman government to collect information and report on the case of Skanderbeg, there is good reason to believe that the hub of the movement was Naples.³¹¹ This may be seen as a rather intentional choice, as the ethnic Italo-Albanians in Italy, the so-called Arbëreshë, were mainly settled in the South of Italy.³¹² However, it was also surmised that Skanderbeg himself was mostly operating from London during this time, mainly recruiting elements to his ranks, eventually proclaiming his rebellion against the Ottoman rule.

Although the Skanderbeg cause had already lost its momentum in the middle of 1860s from a political perspective, several instances of correspondence in a Freemasonic journal demonstrate that the impostor was still able to attract some interest in Europe as late as 1868 before he was finally arrested for his illegal affairs. A heated correspondence among several Freemasons who chose to remain anonymous reveals that a distinguished firm of Freemasonic jewelers from London, who also happened to be Freemasons themselves, advertised their firm to be “Appointed Medallists to H.R.H. Prince Skanderbeg.” The communication thread was started by the anonymous inquiry of a Freemason signing his letter as “A Mason” about the advertisements seen in the columns of the journal:

...I have noticed for a long time a masonic advertisement in your columns, which describes the advertisers as watchmakers, jewellers, and medallists to H.R.H. Prince Skanderbeg. ...To the best of my knowledge and belief there is no Prince of that name, nor has there been for the last four hundred years, and assuredly no one entitled to the designation of H.R.H...When an eminent firm takes a leading position in the confidential occupation of supplying masonic paraphernalia, it is very desirable to know the ground on which they put forward such a novel appeal to the patronage of the Craft as the patronage of H.R.H. Prince Skanderbeg.³¹³

³¹¹ Gücüm, 65–66.

³¹² Edwin E. Jacques, *The Albanians : An Ethnic History from Prehistoric Times to the Present* (North Carolina and London: McFarland & Co., Jefferson, 1995), 194–96.

³¹³ *The Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror* XVIII (New Series), (January–June, 1868): 152.

The firm in question, named A.D. Loewenstark and Sons, was registered by its founder Abraham David Loewenstark in 1846. It had two branches in London and operated until 1895 when the business failed and its assets were sold.³¹⁴ In reply to the initial inquiry, the firm declared the validity of the existence of Prince Skanderbeg and also expressed their honest intentions regarding the use of his patronage:

Our firm having now been established twenty-four years, and always held a prominent position in masonry,... we would scorn such an advantage as "A Mason" imputes to us, as the endeavour to extend our business by advertising it to be under the patronage of a Royal Prince who is not, or ever has been, in existence. Suffice it to say that we have not only seen and spoken with H.R.H., but have also furnished him with decorations and jewels, and bear his royal warrant of appointment, signed, sealed, and attested in the ordinary manner.³¹⁵

This correspondence aroused a mixed reaction of curiosity and a degree of criticism from a number of Freemasons who inquired and posted their opinions on the identity and authenticity of the Prince in question. The content of the correspondence reveals that the Freemasons who contributed with their opinions were relatively well-informed of the nationalistic endeavors and political processes in the Balkans which related to either Ottoman rule or Austrian. On the other hand, given the lack of reliable written sources concerning the issue at the time, the views presented were prone to mistakes in their historic and geographic content. Despite the participants' efforts to restrain themselves in advocacy of the political issues of the conflict, their inclinations towards one side or the other were revealed.

A.D. Loewenstark and Sons emphasized the strictly commercial nature of their relation with the Prince. However, in their attempt to confirm the authenticity of

³¹⁴ "Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851–1951," University of Glasgow History of Art and HATII, online database 2011, http://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/view/organization.php?id=msib4_1238753723. Also see Silver Makers' Marks—London Assay Office, <https://www.silvermakersmarks.co.uk/Makers/London-AD-AJ.html>.

³¹⁵ *The Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror* XVIII, 190–91.

the Prince's identity, they displayed a political inclination in support of his political ambitions as well:

The public journals of Europe have amply discussed the subject, and long and eloquent letters in support of the patriotic party in Albania (whose headquarters, established by the 'Junta' or Provisional Government at Durazzo, were for some time the address of H.R.H.) have occasionally appeared from the distinguished pen of Dumas the elder. We may add, without wishing to draw on ourselves further discussion (into which it is impossible for us as mere men of business to enter) that H.R.H. claims the title of Prince of Croia, that he is, as we believe from good information, a native and cittadina of Venice ; that, as legal heir and representative of the great King or Prince of Epirus in the 15th century (Scanderbeg), he aspires to the dangerous honour of freeing his country from the Mussulman yoke, and of relieving Christianity of the intolerable burden imposed upon nearly eleven millions of sufferers, as well as of introducing the blessings of civilisation in regions comparatively in a state of ignorance, barbarism, and wretchedness.³¹⁶

The lack of accurate and reliable information regarding the origin and involvements of the fake Prince was then contested by the initial inquirer who had a rather good grasp of the Balkan affairs and geography. He was adamant and incredulous in his efforts to expose the falseness of the Prince's identity while presenting his view in opposition to the legitimacy of the impostor's political affairs as well as discrediting the involvement of Dumas. His cynical remarks regarding an aged Dumas and his scandalous affair with the young American actress Adah Isaacs Menken as well as his earlier relations with Garibaldi in Naples shed some light into the rather tarnished reputation of Alexandre Dumas, père, in the late 1860s:

It is very unfortunate for King or Prince Croia, or Skanderbeg, or whomsoever he may be, that Dumas should have put his mantle over H.R.H. I should be no more astonished at Dumas creating anyone Prince Skanderbeg or of Croia, than at his creating Ada Menken Duchess of Croia, or of Burgundy, or of Monte Christo. Since Dumas believed he made Garibaldi Dictator and himself King of Naples, he is capable of any extravagance of the sort... Messrs. Loewenstark cannot be responsible for the romances of Dumas; but they will not be offended to be told that it is nothing but humbug for Dumas or Skanderbeg to talk of Skanderbeg liberating eleven millions of Christians. The greater part of the eleven millions are under Christian princes, who would put Skanderbeg in the stocks were he to appear in their territories...As the eleven millions of

³¹⁶ *The Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror* XVIII, 228.

Christians are nearly all of the Greek religion, they do not want to be interfered with by a heretic ; and of the small number of Christians who are Roman Catholics, and who are chiefly Albanians carry arms and pay no taxes to the Sultan, and if any Prince Skanderbeg appeared at Durazzo would be the first to march against him. There can be little doubt the rest of the Christian Albanians would do the same.³¹⁷

These few instances of correspondence reveal that Freemasons did not always eschew political discussions with each other. On transnational issues like struggles for democracy or independence, heated debates and the exchange of rather stinging remarks would not be surprising. At times the oppositional stance between Freemasons could also be reflected in the political positions of grand bodies. When the Albanian national struggle for independence would take a more serious turn in the early twentieth century, Ottoman and Italian Grand Orients would be faced with a challenge to preserve the amicable relations established earlier.³¹⁸

2.5. American Connections

Despite their geographic separation and the diverse sociocultural environments in which they evolved, Freemasonries of the world were still closely linked through their heritage and continuous communication. American Freemasonries, which had their own peculiar and complex development due to the vast geographic dimensions of the country, had contact with Ottoman Freemasonry not only at the institutional level but also through individual Freemasons who established their own ties to organizations in the Ottoman empire.

Due to the insufficiency of research done so far in the archival material of American Freemasonries pertaining to Ottoman Freemasonry, there is yet very little information that has been revealed in regard to communication at the institutional

³¹⁷ *The Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror* XVIII, 250–51.

³¹⁸ Iacovella, *Gönye ve Hilal*, 47–50.

level.³¹⁹ The main focus of the research done so far, has been on an important liaison between the Ottoman and American Supreme Councils of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (AASR) that took place in the last few decades of the nineteenth century.³²⁰

Particularly during the second half of the nineteenth century, journals published by the American obediences³²¹ shared news of Freemasonic activities in the Ottoman lands and occasionally published short articles. These were on a variety of topics including the social engagements of Ottoman lodges, the views of individual Freemasons from both the United States and the Ottoman Empire about social and political issues or events pertaining to the Ottoman Empire, and the historical and philosophical nature of Ottoman mystical societies, to name but a few. As the Freemasonic lore extended the roots of the fraternity to the lands of ancient civilizations and particularly to the Holy Land with which Freemasonry's distant mythology is associated through many symbols and allegories pertaining to the Temple of Solomon, this part of the Ottoman Empire aroused interest in both a historical and political context.

2.5.1. Robert Morris

One of the best recorded instances of contact with Ottoman Freemasonry involving an American Freemason was when Robert Morris set on a one year journey from New York City to the Holy Land and back in 1868. Morris gave a very

³¹⁹ Orhan Koloğlu, Interview by R. Murat Tiriyaki at Tuzla, Istanbul, April 15, 2018. Koloğlu expressed his conviction that American and Ottoman Freemasonries were far apart and had hardly any ties. However, the author of this work believes that the lack of material revealing such ties is only due to the insufficiency of research done so far in American Freemasonic archives for records related to Ottoman Freemasonry, which were not researched by Koloğlu either.

³²⁰ See Section 4.1.

³²¹ See footnote 210.

detailed account of his journey in his book *Freemasonry in the Holy Land* published a few years after his expedition, where the first-hand experience of a learned American traveler in the Ottoman Empire is imparted in detail. By the time of this visit, the rituals of the AASR, a rite of Freemasonry which had many members in the USA, had been very recently revised by Albert Pike incorporating many elements from the narrative of the Old Testament as well as from medieval accounts of knighthood, thus enhancing the connections of Freemasonic literature and ritual to the history and image of the Holy Land. Pike (1809–91), the Grand Commander of the Supreme Council for the Southern Jurisdiction of the USA from 1859 until his death, worked on the revision of the rituals of the AASR between 1863 and 68 which were adopted as an official publication of the Southern Jurisdiction in 1870.³²² His book *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, published in 1871, was intended as a supplement to his earlier revision of the rituals.³²³

In his book, Morris provided a detailed record of his encounters with local Freemasons and his visits to sites that link the Freemasonic tradition to the Holy Land. While in Jerusalem he convened several Freemasonic gatherings. Among the participants of these meetings he particularly counted the names of Henry Petermann, the Prussian Consul at Jerusalem, and Captain Charles Warren, a member of *Friendship* Lodge No. 278 at Gibraltar and head of the excavations in Jerusalem held under patronage of the Palestine Exploration Fund.³²⁴ Although Morris complained that his attempts to increase the number of lodges in Palestine and Syria under English authority failed, he noted that “the Grand Orient of France issued a warrant for a second Lodge at Beyrout [*sic*], and that, up to 1872, was the

³²² Walter Lee Brown, *A Life of Albert Pike* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997), 457.

³²³ Brown, 458.

³²⁴ Morris, *Holy Land*, 463–65.

only result of my labors in this direction.”³²⁵ Morris also participated upon his return to the United States in an effort to organize *The Solomon's Lodge* at Jerusalem under American auspices, particularly with the involvement of Richard Beardsley, the American Consul in Jerusalem and a member of Freemasonry at Elkhart, Indiana.³²⁶ The information presented by Morris and his associates to the Freemasonic authorities of America and Europe in relation to these efforts to form a lodge in Jerusalem exhibits the ambitions to get American Freemasonries more actively involved in the Ottoman territories:

The Turkish Empire, masonically considered, is neutral ground: to prove this we show that the Grand Lodges of England, Scotland, France, and Italy (perhaps others), have exercised the right to establish Lodges there.

The General Grand Chapter of the United States have entered that field in establishing St. John's R. A. [*Royal Arch*] Chapter in Smyrna, Asia Minor.

Our Consul at Jerusalem, who will be the W. M. [*Worshipful Master*], is an American, and so will be at least one other petitioner. They wish to work the American Constitution and Rituals.

The petitioners will be personally vouched for by a resident Mason in Kentucky, as to standing and proficiency.³²⁷

The St. John's Royal Arch Chapter³²⁸ mentioned in this communication was formed in Izmir a few years prior to Morris' visit and he provided more detailed information regarding its history:

The dispensation for this chapter was granted by the G. G. [*General Grand*] High-Priest of the G. G. Royal Arch Chapter of the United States, May 6th, 1863. The period for the return of the dispensation (September, 1865) having been permitted, inadvertently, to elapse without the performance of that necessary duty, the labors of the chapter temporarily ceased; but movements were making to secure a new dispensation at once, and a warrant in September following. The elements incorporated in this chapter are of the very best. They work the American rituals pure and simple, and have good apartments fitted up expressly for Royal Arch use.³²⁹

³²⁵ Morris, 470–71.

³²⁶ Morris, 471.

³²⁷ Morris, 471.

³²⁸ Royal Arch Freemasonry is part of the York Rite, a particular system of Freemasonry particularly popular in the United States. Its members meet as a Chapter which confers the four associated degrees of Royal Arch Freemasonry.

³²⁹ Morris, *Holy Land*, 48.

Morris added further in a footnote:

Owing to representations I made to the proper authorities, they renewed the dispensation of this chapter in 1868, and the companions are now (in 1872) briskly at work. The chapter is reported, in the proceedings of the General Grand Royal Arch Chapter, September, 1871, as 'St. John's, Smyrna, Turkey, May, 1863. September 18, 1868.'³³⁰

As Royal Arch Freemasonry is particularly associated with American Freemasonries, the formation of a Royal Arch Chapter in Izmir attests to the presence of active American Freemasons in the city during the period in question.

The book Morris published upon his return to the US was dedicated to Mohammed Raschid [*sic*] who was the Ottoman governor of Syria at the time of his visit to the Holy Land.³³¹ Morris revealed the governor's affiliation with Freemasonry in his note of acknowledgement and was highly appreciative of his support in the carrying out of his travels through the Holy Land, which was then under the Ottoman governorship of Syria. Morris wrote in his book that his travels through Syria had been facilitated by his acquisition of two documents which he claimed to have been procured through the influence of Freemasonic relations. One was a *firman* issued by the then reigning Sultan as an "Imperial Travelling Firman of Sultan Abdul Aziz Khan, granted in favor of Robert Morris, addressed to H. E. Mohammed Raschid Pasha, Governor-General of the Vilayet of Syria."³³² The other was a *buyuruldu* (an order issued by a high officer of the state) "procured from the Governor-General, Mohammed Raschid [*sic*], a document directed to all governors of towns and villages throughout Syria, commanding them to see that I was furnished with suitable accommodations for myself and servants, together with guards in going from place to place, etc. and all at reasonable prices."³³³ Morris declared that this

³³⁰ Morris, 48.

³³¹ Morris, 3–4.

³³² Morris, 89.

³³³ Morris, 88–89.

buyuruldu had been “secured strictly through Masonic influence” as the governor himself was a Freemason.

Mehmed Rāshid Pasha was a high ranking Ottoman official whose name became familiar to Freemasons in Britain and the USA, not least because Morris’ book had acknowledged his support and it was dedicated to his name. In an obituary published several years later in the English journal *The Freemason*, his connection to British Freemasonry was expressed as follows:

H.E. Mehemed Rashid Pasha [*sic*], Minister of Foreign Affairs, lately murdered at Constantinople, was a distinguished man and a Mason. At a time when to be a Mason was to incur hostility from the late Sultan, Rashid Pasha, then Governor general of the Viceregalty of Smyrna sought initiation at the hands of Bro. Hyde Clark, at that time the acting District Grand Master of Turkey. He was by the latter initiated [*into the craft*], passed [*from the Entered Apprentice degree to the Fellowcraft degree*] and raised [*to the Master Mason degree*] in the Homer Lodge of that city, in the French language, and received the certificate of Grand Lodge. The attachment of Rashid Pasha to Masonry remained constant, and when Governor General of Syria, he gave encouragement to the Masons of that viceregalty.³³⁴

In his book, Morris also revealed that the *firman* from the Sultan had been sent “through the kind influence of Brother John P. Brown, Secretary of the American Embassy there.”³³⁵ John Porter Brown was at the height of his Freemasonic engagements at the time and the year following Morris’ visit to the Ottoman Empire, he would be appointed as District Grand Master under the authority of the United Grand Lodge of England.

2.5.2. The Morgan Affair

Anti-Masonic reactions and sociopolitical pressure against Freemasonry were most openly manifest in Europe where the religious establishments made efforts to

³³⁴ *The Freemason* IX, (July 1, 1876): 301.

³³⁵ Morris, *Holy Land*, 89.

get the ruling authorities involved in hindering the activities and organizations of Freemasonry. Even in the United States where Freemasonic affiliations of revolutionary leaders like George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and John Hancock had turned Freemasonry into a prestigious organization, a gradual rise of reactions took place in the decades following the Revolutionary War against the alleged dominance of Freemasonry in the political affairs and against the cronyism that it was blamed to have brought into both business and politics.³³⁶ An episode surrounding the kidnapping and disappearance of William Morgan, an American Freemason, triggered a transformation of these reactions into the social and political movement of Anti-Masonry. This account is also an example, as presented below, of how Freemasonic connections between geographies as separated as New York and Izmir could sometimes manifest themselves in unexpected ways.

In 1826, coincidentally on the same year as Sultan Maḥmūd II abolished the Janissary order and imposed bans on religious and mystical sociabilities thus hindering Freemasonic activity, a singular event with serious political repercussions took place in the United States. William Morgan, a Freemason in the state of New York, got himself involved in a conflict with the local Freemasons after which he set out to publish a book with the purpose of exposing the secrets and rituals of the fraternity. The ensuing episode culminated in the abduction and eventual disappearance of Morgan, for the plotting of which a number of Freemasons were the prime suspects. In the end, neither Morgan's whereabouts could be ascertained, nor could a dead body be positively identified. However, a major consequence of this event was the growth of political reactions against Freemasonry, resulting in the foundation of the Anti-Masonic Party which gradually increased its influence in the

³³⁶ Mary Ann Clawson, "Fraternal Organizations," 1658.

American politics for some years to follow. American Freemasonry suffered a serious blow under the ensuing social and political pressure as a result of which many lodges lost significant numbers of their members. Mary Ann Clawson asserts that “what is uncontested is the effect of the Anti-Masonic movement in decimating the fraternity.”³³⁷ According to Clawson, “in New York, membership plummeted from between twenty thousand and thirty thousand to 1 to 15 percent of that figure,” whereas “in Vermont and Illinois all lodges ceased operation for a time.”³³⁸

Guy Chassagnard, seeking in his blog the answer to “how the disappearance of a man could have destabilized American Freemasonry,” points out that following his abduction from Canandaigua in New York state, where he was imprisoned for some minor charges, and his ensuing disappearance, there were rather eccentric stories claiming that he kept fleeing from the retribution of Freemasons in as diverse places as Alaska, Cuba, Turkey, or even Caiman islands.³³⁹ These rumors, which emerged several years after his disappearance, served to vindicate Freemasonry from the earlier suspicions and undermined the influence of the Anti-Masonic Party. According to a rumor that emerged around 1832, some passengers on a ship from the Levant claimed that Morgan, who until that time was thought to have been murdered, had indeed become a discreet resident of Izmir. It was assumed that his disappearance had been planned by him and his accomplices as a scheme to arouse public interest and boost the sales of his book *Illustrations of Masonry*. After he had spent the money he had acquired by this means in a rather short time and having reached the end of his finances, he had supposedly become a Muslim and had obtained a job in the Ottoman government. Though there was no solid proof to back

³³⁷ Clawson, 1658.

³³⁸ Clawson, 1658.

³³⁹ Guy Chassagnard, “Comment la disparition d’un homme a-t-elle pu déstabiliser la Franc-Maçonnerie Américaine?” posted on May 12, 2015, <http://www.chassagnard.net/miscellanees/blog-61.html>.

it up, the story nevertheless caught a good deal of attention and was believed by many to reflect the truth.³⁴⁰

In the later decades, interest in the Morgan affair was rekindled especially within the Freemasonic circles who still felt that their institution was unjustly assaulted by anti-Masonic politics of the years following the affair. A lengthy report published in the *National Freemason* in 1867 elaborated on Morgan's taking residence at Izmir with reference to the accounts of his compatriots. The author of the report claimed that:

The vessel in which Morgan sailed from this country to Smyrna was the brig *Minerva*, owned by Ezra Weston of Duxbury, Mass. The captain's name was Martin Waterman. Several of our brethren, when in Smyrna, received from the American residents there such accounts as fully satisfied them that it was William Morgan.

Brother Joseph Alexander Bloom is a gentleman of high scientific attainments, who has travelled much, resided in the East for many years, was made a Mason on the same evening and at the same time with Alexander of Russia and Prince Joseph Ponietowsky (who was killed in the Battle of Leipsic [*sic*]), in the city of Paris, during the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte, in Amitie Lodge, on the 7th of September, 1805... This brother states that he resided for some time in the city of Smyrna that, in 1831, he became acquainted with an American gentleman who professed the Mohammedan faith, who went by the name of Mustapha, and was engaged at that time in teaching the English and French languages, the latter of which he understood by imperfectly.

That this man was no other than William Morgan, who with his own lips communicated the fact to Bro. Bloom, with many circumstances which our informant has, since his arrival in this country, found to be true.³⁴¹

Given the doubtful elements of the story, the reason behind Morgan's choice of Izmir, if he truly settled there, will most likely stay as a mystery. Whether this choice reflected the expectation on Morgan's part of an inconspicuous refuge in this port city with a cosmopolitan population, or whether he saw this most advanced city of the Levant rather as an opportunity to connect with local Freemasons possibly unaware of his earlier involvements in the United States given the poor state of international communication at the time, one can only speculate.

³⁴⁰ Bègue-Clavel, *Histoire Pittoresque*, 202–04.

³⁴¹ *The National Freemason* VIII, no.17 (April 27, 1867): 257–59.

Morgan's case was maybe a coincidental intersection of American Freemasonic history with that of the Ottoman Empire. However, in the light of even the limited historical records researched and interpreted up to now, the relations between them were multi-faceted both at the institutional and individual level. This is all the more striking given the geographical separation and the divergent evolution of American Freemasonries from their European counterparts in their own particular set of sociocultural circumstances.



CHAPTER III

FREEMASONRY'S EVOLUTION AS A SIGNIFICANT SOCIOPOLITICAL ELEMENT IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

3.1. Young Ottomans and the Initiation of Murād V

It is striking that, given the relatively wide choice of Istanbul lodges at the time working under a number of obediences, Crown Prince Murād's preference for admission into Freemasonry had been the lodge *I Proodos*. The reasons behind his choice of this particular lodge which had a majority of Greek ethnicity is a matter worthy of consideration.

In the two decades following the Reform Edict of 1856, a political climate conducive to the growth of liberal views among the Ottoman intelligentsia resulted in a movement known as the Young Ottomans.³⁴² Keeping what was left of the Ottoman territories united was an overarching ideology that dominated the views of its adherents who agreed on the need for a process of modernization in the empire.

³⁴² For a detailed research on Young Ottoman thought and its main proponents, see Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962).

This particular group of intellectuals shared a conviction that the recovery and progress of the empire could be through the reconciliation of Islamic faith and the European liberal thought. Their shared outlook, formed in the post-Crimean War era of reforms, focused mainly on preserving the Ottoman Empire from further disintegration. This necessitated the peaceful co-existence of the multitude of ethnicities within the empire.

According to Constantin Svolopoulos, certain members of the Ottoman Greek intelligentsia like Cleanthi Scalieri, the Worshipful Master of the lodge *I Proodos* at the time of Murād's initiation, were able to reconcile their irredentist aspirations with the imposed political realities of the time, which brought them on a somewhat common platform with the adherents of the Young Ottoman movement who expounded policies to maintain the integrity of the empire through a fraternal existence of the many ethnicities within the empire.³⁴³ Although such a political stance stood contrary to the Panhellenic interests and ideals of the time, the implementation of the liberal reforms towards equality and liberty of the constituent nations of the empire could benefit the Ottoman Greeks to become a predominant element within the empire. Political circumstances of the period legitimized the choice of such a stance. The young Greek state was probably not in the right position to pursue an irredentist agenda, since it did not wield any serious influence against the Great Powers of Europe which at the time advocated the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The encroachment of Russia into the Balkans was too imminent a danger which could cause the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in such a way that the irredentist interests of the Greek element could be crushed under the Panslavist framework of the Russian expansion, which would bring the Bulgarians and other

³⁴³ Svolopoulos, "Mourad V," 448.

Slavic nations of the Balkans in a common cause against the Greek interests and ambitions. Svolopoulos asserts that, from Scalieri's point of view, "the safeguarding of the interests and the most legitimate rights of Hellenism would be assured through the fraternization among the peoples and races of the empire, constituted into one united and coherent block, determined to resist all foreign interference and all expansionist menace coming from the outside such as Panslavism."³⁴⁴

Many of the proponents of Young Ottoman thought had close ties with Europe either through their education or social environment. Several among them affiliated themselves with Freemasonry either abroad or in Istanbul. The Freemasonic involvement of Nāmīk Kemāl, a leading proponent of the movement, is well documented as a member of the *I Proodos* lodge.³⁴⁵ Irène Melikoff draws parallels between Nāmīk Kemāl's origins as a Bektashi and his interest in Freemasonry.³⁴⁶ She also points out that his choice to become a member of a lodge that worked under the Grand Orient de France was related to his cultural inclinations. However, it may be worth adding that French Freemasonry's affinity with revolutionary thought and politics was probably the most important factor that appealed to him. Another prominent name within the Young Ottoman circle whose membership in Freemasonry can be substantiated through records is Egyptian Prince Muṣṭafā Fāḍıl Paṣhā who was also an important financier of the movement abroad. He was initiated at the lodge *L'Union d'Orient* in 1868 which was then presided over by Louis Amiable.³⁴⁷

Murād's pursuit to become a Freemason might have stemmed first from an intellectual interest in the liberal currents of Europe which were also influential in the

³⁴⁴ Svolopoulos, 448.

³⁴⁵ Svolopoulos, 442.

³⁴⁶ Irène Mélikoff, "Namık Kemal'in Bektaşiliği ve Masonluğu," *Tarih ve Toplum* 10, no.60 (1988): 17–19.

³⁴⁷ Eralp Polat, "Bir Mason'un Biyografisi: Namık Kemal K.," *Mimar Sinan*, no.134 (2004): 72.

development of Young Ottoman thought. Murād was closely acquainted with some of the Young Ottomans. Among the prominent names often cited to have occasionally met with him at his private residence at “*Fikir Tepe*” (the hill of ideas) for late night intellectual discussions was Nāmıķ Kemāl who had also been a private tutor to Murād. Others like Zīyā Pasha³⁴⁸, ‘Alī Su‘āwī and Midḥat Pasha were most likely all affiliated with Freemasonry and had been influential on Murād’s interest in the fraternity.^{349 350}

When Murād joined his uncle Sultan ‘Abd al-‘Azīz [Abdūlaziz] during his official tour of the European states in 1867, it is likely that he had social encounters with Edward, Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII), as well as some other British royalty members. Though it is hard to know the extent of what was shared during such an encounter, it has been suggested by a few researchers that Murād was talked into joining Freemasonry by the Prince during their encounter in London.³⁵¹ This, however, would have been unlikely since the Prince himself had not been initiated into Freemasonry at that particular point and even if Murād had been influenced by the British Prince leading to his subsequent decision to join Freemasonry, then he should have been expected to join one of the British lodges active in Istanbul at the time.³⁵²

³⁴⁸ See Appendix B.

³⁴⁹ Mesut Tunçel, “Masonlar ve Beşinci Sultan Murat,” *Mimar Sinan*, no.66 (1987): 7–8.

³⁵⁰ For a few remarks on Midḥat Pasha’s affiliation with Freemasonry, see Tamer Ayan, “Osmanlı Siyasi Hayatında Parlamenter Rejimin Tarihi Bir Sembölü: Sadrazam Mithat Paşa (1822–1884),” *Mimar Sinan*, no.149 (2009): 47.

³⁵¹ Umur, “V. Murad,” 29-30. Umur indicates that Ziya Şakir Soku, a prolific historian in the early Turkish Republican era, was the principle source of this misleading information. See Ziya Şakir Soku, *Çırağan Sarayı’nda Yirmi Sekiz Yıl: Beşinci Murad’ın Hayatı* (Istanbul: Anadolu Türk Kitap Deposu, 1943). A few other authors probably carried on the same information referring to this source.

³⁵² Umur, 30. Umur raises the same question which probably did not occur to researchers before him who did not have access to adequate information regarding the nature of the lodges in the period of concern. It is worth noting that Suha Umur was probably the first researcher to bring to light many previously unknown accounts regarding the Freemasonry of Murād V, through his detailed research on the original documents of the Grand Orient de France, the copies of which were bequeathed to the archives of the Grand Lodge of Turkey by Celil Layiktez.

Prince Edward was initiated into Freemasonry on December 20, 1868, in the *Swedish Grand Master's Lodge*, in the Royal Palace at Stockholm, by Charles XV, King of Sweden and Norway.³⁵³ His initiation was also recorded in the diary kept by William Howard Russell who accompanied the Prince on a journey which started in late 1868 and continued in Egypt, Istanbul and the Crimea in the first few months of 1869.³⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that Russell mentioned Freemasonry only twice in this extensive record of the journey lasting almost six months. The only mention other than the Prince's initiation in Stockholm, was related to his encounter in Cairo with a certain Hekekan Bey. Identifying him as "a Christian, and a Freemason, and a mathematician" and "a profound believer in the immense extent and profundity of ancient Egyptian knowledge," Russell was highly impressed with this short acquaintance. Hekekan Bey, an Armenian resident of Cairo, as reported by Russell, had formerly been in the service of the Viceroy but was a retired man in his old age at the time of their encounter.³⁵⁵ The name of the same gentleman is mentioned as Hekekan Effendi in an earlier British document and he is identified as an Armenian educated in England who at the time of the document was the manager of the School of Engineers at Boolaq.³⁵⁶

Ottoman Freemasonry never enjoyed a bond with the ruling dynasty like the British and Swedish Freemasonries. The Ottoman dynasty members during the decades in the middle of the nineteenth century were most likely well aware of the close relations and often direct involvement of European royalty in Freemasonry. However, such a connection was a major challenge for the Ottoman dynasty whose

³⁵³ "Famous Freemasons—King Edward VII," United Grand Lodge of England, www.ugle.org.uk/9-famous-Freemasons/188-king-edward-vii.

³⁵⁴ W.H. Russell, *A Diary in the East, During the Tour of the Prince and Princess of Wales* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1869), 13.

³⁵⁵ Russell, 98.

³⁵⁶ Arthur T. Holroyd Esq., *Egypt and Mahomed Ali Pacha in 1837: a letter containing remarks upon "Egypt as it is in 1837" addressed to the Right Hon. Viscount Palmerston, Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs* (London: James Ridgway and Sons, 1838), 9.

reigning members also carried the title of Caliph. As a result, the Ottoman royalty had kept their distance from the fraternity earlier and the initiation of Crown Prince Murād was a significant achievement for Ottoman Freemasonry. It is conceivable that the Crown Prince and two of his brothers, who also became Freemasons, were drawn to the ecumenical aspirations of Freemasonry also shared in the liberal ideals of the Young Ottomans. Three quarters of a century earlier, a group of Russian intellectuals with similar enlightened ideals had had an ill-fated encounter with the Russian rulers during the infamous ‘Novikov Affair’. For a brief period in the late eighteenth century, the intellectual circle who gathered around Nikolai Ivanovich Novikov, a renowned journalist and publisher closely associated with Enlightenment ideals, had created a Freemasonic affiliation highly imbued with the spiritual elements of Russian Orthodoxy. However, this philosophical venture with predominantly Rosicrucian overtones was soon to be deemed harmful to the Russian culture and society. The resulting awareness brought about a concerted effort on the part of the Church and State to take action against this fraternal endeavor and sealed the fate of Novikov and his circle.³⁵⁷ In the Ottoman case, the timing of the juxtaposition of Young Ottoman thought with the Freemasonic zeal of a number of its proponents proved to be propitious.

Against all odds, the three Ottoman princes were initiated into Freemasonry during the reign of their uncle ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. The Crown Prince Murād was initiated on October 20, 1872, followed by his brothers, Prince (*Shehzāde*) Nūr al-Dīn (Nûreddin)³⁵⁸ in November 1873 and Prince Kemāl al-Dīn (Kemâleddin)³⁵⁹ in

³⁵⁷ Raffaella Faggionato, *A Rosicrucian Utopia in Eighteenth Century Russia: The Masonic Circle of N.I. Novikov* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005), 1–6.

³⁵⁸ See Appendix B.

³⁵⁹ See Appendix B.

September 1875.³⁶⁰ The climax of Freemasonic activity in the Ottoman lands in the aftermath of the Crimean War came when Murād ascended the throne in 1876 as Sultan Murād V. However, the missing or unsubstantiated parts of this episode are prone to different interpretations as demonstrated in a series of papers contributed by Andreas Rizopoulos and Celil Layiktez to the English Freemasonic journal *Ars Quatuor Coronati* (AQC).³⁶¹ Rizopoulos claims that Scalieris [*sic*] (Cleanthi Scalieri), an Ottoman Greek subject and very active Freemason in Istanbul, was the main deviser of the initiation of Murād V as well as the later efforts of saving him from his internment at the Çırağan Palace following his dethronement in 1876, whereas Layiktez considers him just one of the many actors involved, Louis Amiable being one of them and probably with a more significant role. Another point of debate concerns ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd II who, according to Rizopoulos, had shown an interest in joining Freemasonry through communication with French and Italian Grand Lodges upon his enthronement but had faced rejection. Layiktez, on the other hand, finds this supposition rather far-fetched as no grand lodge would have rejected the membership of a reigning Sultan at that time.

A leading figure who viewed Murād’s internment as an unjust act and usurpment of the throne was Cleanthi Scalieri. When his efforts in the plotting and execution of Murād’s liberation from his confinement at the Çırağan Palace failed, Scalieri had to flee abroad. He continued his earnest struggle from Greece but his efforts did not come to fruition and he ultimately died in Athens in dire financial

³⁶⁰ Svolopoulos, “Mourad V,” 441, 444.

³⁶¹ Andreas Rizopoulos, “Sultan Murad V and Freemasonry: A Political Dream of the Nineteenth Century,” *Ars Quatuor Coronati*, no.104 (1991): 187–95; Andreas Rizopoulos, “Sultan Murad, Cleanthi Scalieris et al, Act III,” *Ars Quatuor Coronati*, no.108 (1995): 253–54; Celil Layiktez, “Sultan Murad V, Kleanti Skalyeri, Sultan Abdülhamit II, Young Turks and Freemasons,” *Ars Quatuor Coronati*, no.107 (1994): 230–32.

circumstances.³⁶² Edhem Eldem has shed new light on Scalieri's relation with Murād based on the memoirs and documents kept by Murād's son, Prince Şalāḥ al-Dīn (Selahaddin), which includes some hitherto unknown correspondence between Scalieri and Murād between 1883 and 1886.³⁶³ In a bitter letter written by Scalieri to Murād in January 1883, his disappointment towards his former Freemasonic circle in Istanbul is expressed with critical remarks on the latter's inert attitude in giving support to the cause of their dethroned brother and also the lack of assistance to Scalieri's own dire circumstances when his rescue attempt failed and he had to flee abroad with the help of two foreigners who were not Freemasons.³⁶⁴

By the time Murād ascended the throne, he had five brothers who had come of age. Two of them were already Freemasons as mentioned above, another one died a few months afterwards and two others never became Freemasons. These latter two Princes were to become Sultans 'Abd al-Ḥamīd and Meḥmed V Reshād. If they had shown the inclination to become Freemasons in the footsteps of their older brother Murād, one might conceive that Ottoman Freemasonry could have evolved rather differently.

Despite the raised hopes and expectations of a number of Freemasons involved in this historic episode, Murād V was to remain the sole member of the fraternity ever to enjoy the title of Sultan. Following his truncated reign lasting only three months, the short-lived rapprochement between the Ottoman dynasty and Freemasonry was replaced by a cautious relation when 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II came to the throne. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's concerns towards Freemasonry were most likely

³⁶² For a comprehensive account of Scalieri's efforts to save Murād and his subsequent time in Athens, see İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "V. Murad'ı Tekrar Padişah Yapmak İsteyen K. Skaliyeri-Aziz Bey Komitesi," *Belleten* VIII, no.30 (April 1944): 245–328. The journalist 'Alī Shefkatī (see Appendix B) was also a part of this plot and upon the failure of the attempt, he fled to Paris.

³⁶³ This collection of correspondence was published in Edhem Eldem, *V. Murad'ın Oğlu Selahaddin Efendi'nin Evrak ve Yazıları Vols. I & II* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2019 & 2021).

³⁶⁴ Eldem, "Geç Osmanlı," 22.

exacerbated due to the ensuing struggle of Murād's supporters to free him from his palace confinement and restore him to the throne.³⁶⁵ However, the Ottoman Freemasons, in addition to being bound with their fraternity's moral principle of loyalty to their state and government, were aware that any attempts against the reigning Sultan aiming Murād's restoration would jeopardize their organization, so they avoided any confrontation with the Sultan in this matter.³⁶⁶

While the Grand Orient de France, to which Murād's lodge *I Proodos* was affiliated, chose to act with prudence concerning the reigning Sultan's regime, one of its members in France was vocal in criticizing what he regarded as injustice done to Murād and openly attacked 'Abd al-Ḥamīd whom he saw as the usurper of the throne. A military doctor by training, Paul Desjardin de Réglā had stayed in Istanbul between 1886 and 1889 before he was sent away by state authorities and upon his return to France he published several books on Ottoman Empire which displayed his hostile sentiment towards the regime of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd.³⁶⁷ De Réglā delivered speeches in Paris lodges in 1892 and 1893 in favor of Murād V and with severe criticism of the Sultan which put the Grand Orient into a difficult position until the situation calmed down with his resignation (or possibly dismissal) later in 1893.³⁶⁸ Despite de Réglā's efforts, both the Grand Orient and its lodges active in Istanbul at the time distanced themselves as much as possible from this ongoing debate and chose to realign themselves with the prevailing political climate under 'Abd al-

³⁶⁵ Uzunçarşılı wrote a couple of articles related to various efforts aiming to save Murād V from his palace confinement and put him back on the throne. For a detailed account of the famous Çırağan Palace incident, see İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Ali Süâvi ve Çırağan Sarayı Vak'ası," *Belleten* VIII, no.29 (January 1944): 71–118.

³⁶⁶ Eldem, "Geç Osmanlı," 20.

³⁶⁷ The first book of Paul Desjardin de Réglā was *La Turquie officielle. Constantinople, son gouvernement, ses habitants, son présent et son avenir* (Paris: Ancienne Maison Quantin, 1891) and it was followed by *Les bas-fonds de Constantinople* (Paris: Tresse & Stock, 1892). His book reflecting his views on what he claimed to be the illegitimate dethronement of Murād was published as *Au pays de l'espionnage: Les Sultans Mourad V et Abd-ul-Hamid II* (Paris: Librairie J. Strauss, 1902).

³⁶⁸ Eldem, "Geç Osmanlı," 21–23.

Ḥamīd's rule. The surviving lodges in the Ottoman capital under the French obedience had chosen to give up on their liberal and oppositional stance and steer clear of trouble as the ruling regime started to impose stricter measures. This in all likelihood appealed to the motives of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd who found it more favorable to his political affairs to stay on good terms with the Istanbul lodges and their foreign obediences.

While the lodges in Istanbul had been a milieu for political opposition to the rule of 'Abd al-'Azīz through their inherent secretive nature, the Freemasons had to adapt themselves to the new political circumstances imposed by the 'Abd al-Ḥamīd regime. As Eldem notes, the lodges did not lead the political agenda of their time but rather were able to adapt and integrate themselves to the political environment as the changing regimes or war periods dictated.³⁶⁹ This was a characteristic of Freemasonry incorporated into its long evolution since the beginning of the eighteenth century.

During the short period of its augmented pace within the Ottoman Empire in the two decades following the Crimean War, Freemasonry attracted many Ottoman personalities of intelligentsia and state administration who subscribed to the liberal and oppositional views of the Young Ottoman movement. Although several prominent names among them have been associated with Freemasonry so far, as noted above, further research would most likely reveal others. The ultimate universal aim of drawing societies together through a fraternal bond as preached by Freemasonry provided a significant appeal to these proponents of a liberal outlook the ultimate aim of which was to sustain the peaceful coexistence of diverse Ottoman communities.

³⁶⁹ Eldem, "Geç Osmanlı," 26.

3.2. Egypt and Palestine

A political transformation, which was started under the viceroyalty of Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha in the early nineteenth century, would gradually turn Egypt into an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire.³⁷⁰ After consolidating his position as viceroy in 1811 by eliminating the remaining Mameluke rivalry, Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha embarked on a number of reforms in education, agriculture, industry and administration, aiming to make his rule powerful enough economically and militarily to break the Ottoman yoke in the long term. During his reign, the Ottoman province of Egypt expanded into the Hijaz and the Sudan. Following two wars fought under the command of his son Ibrāhīm Pasha against the Ottomans in Syria in 1831–33 and 1839–40, Muḥammad ‘Alī was able to secure the prerogative to pass the viceroyalty to his descendants, thus establishing his own dynastic rule in Egypt. During his rule, the local Egyptian elements were for the first time appointed to high offices in the government and military. Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot asserts that Muḥammad ‘Alī “created a state out of a former Ottoman province, and gave Egyptians a sense of identity and a stake in the state by dragooning them into government.”³⁷¹

During Muḥammad ‘Alī’s rule, the presence and influence of foreign diplomats, merchants and technical experts was enhanced due to the ambitious reforms he undertook. Particularly owing to this social environment with an augmented presence of Europeans already familiar or affiliated with Freemasonry,

³⁷⁰ For an insight into Egyptian rule under the Muḥammad ‘Alī dynasty from 1805 until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the peculiar development of the administrative position of Egypt under Ottoman sovereignty, see Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, *A History of Egypt: from the Arab Conquest to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 65–97.

³⁷¹ Marsot, 72.

the fraternity was able to take root within the Ottoman territories for the first time under the sanction of the ruling authority. From its earliest phase in Egypt, Freemasonry gained a predominantly political momentum that would continue until the demise of the Ottoman Empire.

Freemasonry was introduced into Egypt as a consequence of the military occupation of Napoléon between 1798 and 1801. According to Karim Wissa, the *Isis* lodge founded by general Kléber in 1799 was the first one in Egypt and “at the time of its inception those who joined were either members of Bonaparte's close entourage, soldiers in the French army, those Egyptians who were sympathetic to the French, or even those who wanted to show their zealous allegiance to the French army in return for its tolerance and protection.”³⁷² Wissa also asserts that the lodge stopped operating with the retreat of the French army and it was not until 1845 that the fraternity had a solid foothold by the forming of the lodge *Les Pyramides d'Égypte* under the auspices of the Grand Orient de France.³⁷³ However, a report from 1818, interpreted by Gérard Galtier more recently, demonstrates that Freemasonic activity continued to exist after Napoléon's retreat.³⁷⁴ The report compiled by the Austrian police concerned an “Egyptian secret society” and constituted part of the “Secret documents and official acts of the Austrian police in Italy (from June 4, 1814 to March 22, 1848)” later published in 1851. During the French occupation, the juxtaposition of the French Freemasonic institution with the European admiration for ancient Egyptian civilization had manifested itself in the formation of the earliest lodges in Alexandria and Cairo. While esoteric elements from ancient Egypt were incorporated into the rituals of these early lodges, the

³⁷² Karim Wissa, “Freemasonry in Egypt 1798-1921: A Study in Cultural and Political Encounters,” *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)* 16, no.2 (1989): 145.

³⁷³ Wissa, 145–46.

³⁷⁴ Gérard Galtier, “La société secrète égyptienne de B. Drovetti,” *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 72 (2006), Published online on September 17, 2007, <http://journals.openedition.org/cdlm/1172>.

Freemasonic engagement of the French consular diplomats like Bernardino Drovetti and Mathieu de Lesseps, who had close relations with Muḥammad ‘Alī’s government in an advisory capacity, gave Egyptian Freemasonry its political character from the very start.³⁷⁵ The report of the Austrian police was based on the information collected by an emissary of Angelo Cazzaiti, the Ottoman consul resident at Livorno, and pointed out to the shared concerns of the Austrian and Ottoman Empires about this “Egyptian secret society” which was described as an organization based on Freemasonic practices. The report claimed that Muḥammad ‘Alī “who for a long time now tends to become independent of the Sublime Porte, deploys devices of refined politics, flatters the Europeans and professes the most liberal principles is the protector of the Egyptian secret society.”³⁷⁶ Drovetti, a Piedmontese and the former consul of France in Cairo was named as the provider of financing for the society which had in its membership consuls of various great powers. The report also mentioned representatives of the viceroy posted to various European cities with the title of chargé d’affaires in the fields of commerce, culture and politics. Galtier maintains that the anti-Ottoman political objectives of the society were similar to those pursued by Napoléon’s Empire in its use of Freemasonry as a political tool in the territories under its control.³⁷⁷ This secret organization in all likelihood reflected the network of these individuals who allegedly collaborated to help local peoples to reach independence from the sovereign powers ruling particularly in Egypt, Italy and the Ionian islands.

While fraternal associations were still banned in Istanbul and elsewhere in the Ottoman lands during the first decade of the *Tanzīmāt* era, the aforementioned lodge *Les Pyramides d’Égypte* had been formed in 1845 in plain sight of Egyptian

³⁷⁵ Galtier, 12.

³⁷⁶ Galtier, 3.

³⁷⁷ Galtier, 3, 6.

authorities and was later able to receive into its ranks prominent names like ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Paşa and Amīr ‘Abd al-Ḳādir³⁷⁸ of Algeria.³⁷⁹ The latter was an already well-known figure in both Europe and the United States as early as the 1830s as a consequence of his fight against the French invasion of Algeria.³⁸⁰ After reaching an agreement with Louis-Napoléon following his many years of struggle against French occupation in Algeria and five years of internment in France, ‘Abd al-Ḳādir had settled in Damascus in 1855.³⁸¹ His affiliation to Freemasonry came in the aftermath of his involvement with the rescue of many thousands of Christians who were about to be massacred in Damascus during their bloody conflict with the Druze in 1860. After a period of correspondence with Freemasons of the Paris lodge *Henri IV* and their invitation to Freemasonry to which he responded favorably, he was initiated by the lodge *Les Pyramides d’Égypte* in Alexandria in 1864.³⁸²

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the political overtones of Egyptian Freemasonry were gradually enhanced, primarily due to the direct involvement of the members of the ruling dynasty. The descendants of Muḥammad ‘Alī Paşa, who had initially ruled the Egyptian province with the title of *wālī* (provincial governor), later ruled in autonomous fashion under the title of Khedive. While Khedive Ismā‘īl Paşa (the son of Ibrāhīm Paşa) and Tawfīk Paşa (Ismā‘īl’s son and successor) acted as patrons of the fraternity, the leading contenders of the

³⁷⁸ See Appendix B.

³⁷⁹ Wissa, “Freemasonry in Egypt,” 146. Wissa cites Jurji Zaydan’s *Tarikh al-masuniyya* as the source of this information on membership.

³⁸⁰ Adil Baktıaya, “1830: Fransa’nın Cezayir’i İşgali, Abdülkadir’in Yükselişi ve Amerikan Kamuoyunda ‘Abdülkadir’ Hayranlığı [1830: French Occupation in Algeria, the Rise of Abd el Qadir and the Abd el Qadir admiration in USA],” *Ortadoğu Etütleri* 2, no.2 (January 2010): 143–69. The author presents a multitude of evidence pointing to the fame of ‘Abd al-Ḳādir which has reached as far as the other side of the Atlantic, as revealed through many articles published in the American press, and through more extreme examples of poems and musical compositions dedicated to him and even a town named Elkader in Iowa.

³⁸¹ For a detailed account of ‘Abd al-Ḳādir’s life and philosophical engagements in Damascus as well as his involvement with Freemasonry as noted by Robert Morris based on his own encounters with the man only a few years after his initiation, see *Holy Land*, 573–95.

³⁸² Alphonse-Marius Gossez, “Abd-el-Kader franc-maçon,” *La Révolution de 1848 et les révolutions du XIXe siècle* 35, no.164 (Mars–Avril–Mai, 1938): 53.

title of Khedive like ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Pasha (the youngest son of Muḥammad ‘Alī) and Muṣṭafā Fāḍil Pasha, both born in 1830, the same year as Ismā‘īl, affiliated themselves with Freemasonry during the same period, presumably as a vehicle towards forming their own political networks.³⁸³ In their wake, a membership from a wide spectrum of political and commercial élite joined the multitude of lodges formed in particularly Cairo and Alexandria. Wissa argues that “membership of a masonic lodge strengthened class ties among the aristocracy in Egypt at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.”³⁸⁴ He also asserts that during this period “the secret society was more of a political institution where the term ‘political’ rather than ‘esoteric’ Freemasonry is more appropriate to describe the society’s status in Egypt.”³⁸⁵ Under the influence of the two distinct modes of Freemasonry, namely the British and French, the élite were divided in such a way that “most of the members of the French-influenced lodges were more inclined to be liberal-secular and politically active as opposed to the more religious-conservative and wealthy cotton merchants and the propertied class, which tended to join the British-influenced lodges.”³⁸⁶

During the rule of Ismā‘īl, Egypt went through significant changes regarding the nature of its administration. In the first ten years of his reign, Ismā‘īl was able to procure a number of decrees (*firman*s) from the Sultan through his use of diplomatic means often incurring payments and gifts, in stark contrast to the military ventures of his predecessors.³⁸⁷ Firstly, a change in the law regulating succession to the throne

³⁸³ Muṣṭafā Fāḍil Pasha, who had formerly served as the Minister of Finance of the Ottoman Empire and later head of the Council of Treasury, joined the Istanbul lodge *L’Union d’Orient* in 1868. He led a group of his close associates to become members, forming his own circle of Egyptians within the lodge. See Dumont, “La Turquie,” 24.

³⁸⁴ Wissa, “Freemasonry in Egypt,” 157.

³⁸⁵ Wissa, 158.

³⁸⁶ Wissa, 157.

³⁸⁷ Alexander Schölch, *Egypt for Egyptians! The Socio-political Crisis in Egypt 1878–1882* (London: Ithaca Press, 1981), 11.

was implemented by a *firman* dated May 27, 1866, whereby primogeniture was to replace the former rule of succession based on seniority. Afterwards, he was able to establish the new title of Khedive for himself and his successors with a *firman* dated June 8, 1867. As Alexander Schölch puts it “Egyptian autonomy had reached a point only one step away from independence.”³⁸⁸ Ismā‘īl’s inclination towards diplomacy rather than military confrontation in his political relations with particularly the Ottoman Sultan might help to explain, at least to some extent, his serious interest in Freemasonry with most likely a motive to benefit from the fraternity’s transnational ties with Europe.

Ismā‘īl’s uncle, ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Pasha stood out as a leading figure of Egyptian Freemasonry in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Reginald McBean claims that ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm was an initiate of the *Bulwer* lodge of Cairo³⁸⁹ whereas Wissa notes that he was a member of the lodge *Les Pyramides d’Égypte*, which is an older lodge than Bulwer.³⁹⁰ On the other hand, in a report presented to the Supreme Council for the Northern Jurisdiction of USA by Albert G. Goodall in 1869, the founder of the Ottoman Supreme Council in 1861, who was none other than ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm, was mentioned as a “French brother,” which should probably be accepted as a reference to his association at the time with the Grand Orient de France to which the lodge *Les Pyramides d’Égypte* was affiliated.³⁹¹ All these distinct bits of information may be taken to indicate the Freemasonic mobility of ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm who had been affiliated with a few different Freemasonic bodies concurrently or successively during his several decades’ long involvement in the fraternity. After he

³⁸⁸ Schölch, 12.

³⁸⁹ Reginald Gambier McBean, *A Complete History of the Ancient and Primitive Rite* (Palermo, 1923), 11, http://www.themasonictrowel.com/ebooks/memphis/McBean_-_Official_History_Of_The_Ancient_And_Primitive_Rite.pdf.

³⁹⁰ Wissa, “Freemasonry in Egypt,” 146. Wissa cites Zaydan as his source.

³⁹¹ *The Freemason* II, no.26 (September 4, 1869): 117.

was forced to leave Egypt in 1868 by Khedive Ismā'īl in the aftermath of the aforementioned decree of succession, which impeded 'Abd al-Ḥalīm's right of accession as Khedive, his political struggle against Ismā'īl continued. His diverse efforts in various Freemasonic bodies both before and after this date were most likely politically motivated as part of his quest to restore his former claim to the Khedivate by resorting to his fraternal connections as leverage.³⁹²

The development of Egyptian Freemasonry in the second half of the nineteenth century was connected not only to the activities of foreign obediences but also to the efforts aiming to constitute a sovereign grand body. A distinguished name of Egyptian Freemasonry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Joseph Sakakini Bey, wrote a report in 1910 which presented a retrospective evaluation of the major stages of Egyptian Freemasonry during this period. According to Sakakini Bey:

Egyptian Freemasonry was based on the Oriental Rite of Memphis, by virtue of a patent emanating from Paris, dated 1863... Later, with the decision of Jacques Etienne Marconis, who had reactivated and reorganized the Rite in the Valley³⁹³ of Paris, Egypt was accorded another patent with the distinctive title of Grand Orient d'Égypte.³⁹⁴

The Grand Orient of Egypt was thus authorized in 1864 as the first Freemasonic grand body in a Muslim country. This was actually the crowning achievement of a process which had started with the forming of a Provincial Grand Council in 1856 in Alexandria as a regional obedience to work in the "Rite of Memphis." This rite, which had earlier origins from the turn of the nineteenth century associated with the then prevalent interest in ancient Egyptian civilization as

³⁹² Landau, "Prolegomena," 149–59. Based on a number of sources including the contemporary reports of the French, Italian and British Consuls-General in Egypt, Landau elaborates with much detail the political efforts of 'Abd al-Ḥalīm to claim the khedivate in the period from 1867 to as late as 1882 when the British occupation of Egypt took place.

³⁹³ The term "valley" in the Freemasonic sense denotes a geographical region where a number of local Freemasonic bodies have been constituted.

³⁹⁴ Joseph Sakakini Bey, *Rapport concernant l'irregularité de la Gr[ande] L[oge] d'Égypte* (1910), 3–4.

a result of Napoléon's Egyptian campaign, was reconstituted by Jacques Étienne Marconis de Nègre in 1838 in Paris. It was by a charter from Marconis de Nègre himself that the aforementioned regional obedience of the rite was established in Alexandria in 1856. The Rite of Memphis was soon incorporated into the jurisdiction of the Grand Orient de France in 1862,³⁹⁵ and it was from this Freemasonic organization that the final patent mentioned by Sakakini Bey was accorded in 1864.

Upon incorporation of various lodges working in the Rite of Memphis under the French and Italian jurisdiction up to that time, Grand Orient of Egypt was consolidated as a sovereign body. In 1867, it came under the direction of 'Abd al-Ḥalīm as Grand Master, and Marquis Joseph de Beauregard, a French citizen, as pro Grand Master,³⁹⁶ the former preserving his title until December 20, 1872, albeit nominally after he was banished from Egypt in late 1868.³⁹⁷ Solutore Avventore Zola³⁹⁸, an Italian expatriate, was appointed as the new Grand Master of the obedience, by authorization from Ismā'īl in 1872.³⁹⁹ Originally from Piedmont, Zola had fought as an artillery officer beside Giuseppe Garibaldi during the Italian war of unification. In 1862, he moved to Egypt as a public works engineer and then became a member of the Grand Orient of Egypt, before becoming its Grand Master. He assumed in 1874 the highest title of the rite as "Grand Hierophant" succeeding

³⁹⁵ Albert G. Mackey, *An Encyclopedia*, 496–97. Mackey explains: "In the year 1862, Marconis, still faithful to the system which he had invented, applied to the Grand Master of France to give to it a new life. The Grand College of Rites was consulted on the subject, and the Council of the Order having made a favorable decree, the Rite of Memphis was admitted, in November, 1862, among those Masonic systems which acknowledge obedience to the Grand Orient of France."

³⁹⁶ The Pro Grand Master acts as an advisor to the Grand Master and acts in his capacity when the latter cannot be present, often due to royal engagements if he is of royal blood as was the case for 'Abd al-Ḥalīm.

³⁹⁷ Sakakini Bey, *Rapport*, 4.

³⁹⁸ See Appendix B.

³⁹⁹ Sakakini Bey, *Rapport*, 4–5. Sakakini claimed in his report that "following certain steps taken at the khedivial palace and the support of a certain consular authority," Solutore Avventore Zola was presented to Khedive Ismā'īl, to take charge of the Grand Orient of Egypt. Sakakini did not reveal the identity of the consular authority he mentioned. He also informed that Zola had been a student of the Salesians at the Institute of Don Bosco in Turin, before he was initiated to Freemasonry in Alexandria at the lodge *Les Pyramides d'Égypte*.

Marconis de Nègre. In 1876, Zola conferred the highest degrees of the rite on Garibaldi, with the title of “Grand Master of Honor ad vitam of the Sovereign Sanctuary of Egypt.”⁴⁰⁰ Garibaldi would go on to unite the two connected rites, the Rite of Memphis and the Rite of Misraim into one unified rite called the Rite of Memphis-Misraim in 1881.

The choice of the Rite of Memphis as the working rite of the Grand Orient of Egypt shows the dominant influence in Egypt of French and Italian Freemasonries in which this rite had found a revitalizing interest in the first half of the nineteenth century, despite its lack of recognition in the Anglo-American Freemasonries.⁴⁰¹ The British got involved in Freemasonic activities with particularly the foundation of the District Grand Lodge of Egypt and the Sudan in Cairo in 1867 under the auspices of the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE).⁴⁰² The forming of a separate District Grand Lodge in Egypt, while one formed earlier in 1862 in Istanbul was still functional under the District Deputy Grand Master Hyde Clarke, shows the significance of the Freemasonic activity in Egypt for British Freemasonry. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Pasha was a leading figure in the British Freemasonic organization as well. In 1865, he became a member of the then newly constituted lodge *Bulwer* affiliated with the UGLE and was appointed District Grand Master for Egypt, in which capacity he served until his exile in 1868. The British vice-consul Raphael Borg succeeded him in this office until 1878.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰⁰ “Salvatore-Avventore Zola,” Gran Logia de España del Rito Español—Menfis&Mizraim, <https://www.glere-mm.com/salvatore-avventore-zola/>.

⁴⁰¹ Sakakini Bey, *Rapport*, 6. Sakakini asserted that the United Grand Lodge of England did not accept nor recognize the Rite of Memphis. For the American view, he indicated as evidence a letter from Albert Pike, the Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States, sent on April 3, 1876, to Zola. Pike expressed that “[the Rite of Memphis] confined to a few locations, is not recognized in this country as a legitimate Rite, and is here of no value to its possessors.”

⁴⁰² Wissa, “Freemasonry in Egypt,” 146.

⁴⁰³ Barbara De Poli, “Italians, Freemasons and the Dawn of Egyptian Nationalism,” *The Journal of North African Studies* (Published Online: March 2, 2021): 9,

During the 1870s, Zola took some steps to receive the recognition of British Freemasonry through the incorporation of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (AASR) into the domain of the Grand Orient of Egypt. In 1875, the Grand Orient reached an accord with the Supreme Council of the AASR, established in Alexandria in 1864 by virtue of a patent emanating from the Supreme Council of Naples and then presided over by Sovereign Grand Commander, Domenico Sciarrone.⁴⁰⁴ Upon obtaining a subsequent recognition from the UGLE for the Grand Orient's supremacy over the AASR, Zola carried on to constitute in 1876 the Grand Lodge of Egypt, which had jurisdiction to form lodges governing the first three "symbolic" degrees⁴⁰⁵ of this particular rite.⁴⁰⁶ While the forming of a grand lodge sanctioned by British Freemasonry led to a competitive relation with the French sanctioned Grand Orient, the former influence of Italian Freemasons went into decline.⁴⁰⁷ The influence of British Freemasonry among Egyptian Freemasons was augmented in parallel to the increasing influence of Britain in the Egyptian politics.

During the same decade, which was both a highly political period of the fraternity as well as a period of development for the nationalist movement, a high profile member of Egyptian Freemasonry was Djamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī⁴⁰⁸. His stay in Egypt between 1871 and 1879 was politically very active. Afghānī was attracted into Freemasonry most likely to expedite his endeavors of reform and his political pursuits against the increased European interventions in Egypt during a time of

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13629387.2021.1891533>.

⁴⁰⁴ Sakakini Bey, *Rapport*, 5, 7.

⁴⁰⁵ See Glossary in Appendix A.

⁴⁰⁶ Sakakini Bey, *Rapport*, 7–8.

⁴⁰⁷ De Poli, "Italians, Freemasons," 13.

⁴⁰⁸ See Appendix B. For an extensive study of Al-Afghani, see Nikki R. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn "al-Afghānī": A Political Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), and also A. Albert Kudsi-Zadeh, "The Legacy of Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī in Egypt" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1968).

increasing economic hardship.⁴⁰⁹ Afghānī joined the lodge *Star of the East*, which was affiliated with the UGLE, possibly through the encouragement of the British Vice-Consul Raphael Borg.⁴¹⁰ This lodge had a number of members from the Egyptian élite, including Tawfīk Paṣḥa, the later khedive, and Muḥammad ʿAbduḥ, a mentee of Afghānī and the later Grand Mufti of Egypt. Afghānī subsequently became the Worshipful Master of the lodge but possibly due to political disagreement, he had to leave the lodge, after which his inclination shifted towards the French obedience⁴¹¹ as it was traditionally perceived as more encouraging towards political involvement for the attainment of the ideals of liberty and equality.⁴¹² Such mobility in the Freemasonic engagements of Afghānī may be taken to be an indication of his experimentation with different Freemasonic bodies to serve his political aspirations.

The case of Afghānī also points out a particular characteristic of Egyptian Freemasonry which was the competitive activities of the French and British obediences. As the British occupation of 1882 coincided with the ideological schism between the British and French Freemasonries, their position also became more intertwined with the political developments in Egypt. In the second half of the nineteenth century, many notables (*aʿyān*) were members of a network of prosperous cotton merchants who saw a good opportunity in Freemasonry to sustain their commercial relations within the country and without. British Freemasonry's stronger emphasis on philanthropic deeds and solidarity in economic interests of its members made it the preferred obedience among this economic élite of the country.⁴¹³ On the other hand, the rift between the more liberal minded and the more conservative

⁴⁰⁹ A. Albert Kudsi-Zadeh, "Afghānī and Freemasonry in Egypt," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92, no.1 (January–March, 1972): 27.

⁴¹⁰ Kudsi-Zadeh, 27.

⁴¹¹ Kudsi-Zadeh, 30.

⁴¹² Wissa, "Freemasonry in Egypt," 148–49; cf. Zarcone, "Freemasonry Revisited," 590–93.

⁴¹³ Wissa, 152–53.

segments of the society was reflected in their orientation towards Freemasonry as well. The former was identified as the more urban and professional class which also entertained a more secular view of society. These people were particularly attracted to the anti-clerical and politically involved stance of the French obedience.⁴¹⁴ The more conservative segment, on the other hand, predominantly consisted of the landed class and particularly those in the production and commerce of cotton. As mentioned earlier, they found in the British Freemasonry the type of sociability which appealed to their interests and social expectations.

Another significant characteristic of Egyptian Freemasonry was its association with the rise of Egyptian nationalist movement. According to Jacob Landau “it was almost inevitable that some Egyptians should use for their purposes the Freemasonic chapters, during Ismā’il’s rule—years that were a time of fermentation for the nationalist movement in Egypt.” Barbara De Poli suggests a close association between the Egyptian nationalist movement and the Risorgimento culture which significant numbers of Italian refugees to Egypt brought with them during the migratory waves of 1821, 1830 and 1848.⁴¹⁵

The hypothesized connection between Freemasonry and nationalist movements is alluded to by both Landau and De Poli by referring to the Egyptian case and that of the Young Turks, a few decades apart. Landau argues that the use of the Freemasonic organization for nationalist politics was repeated, on a larger and more successful pattern, in Salonica, where the Young Turk movement exploited the local Freemasonic organization for the preparation of the revolution.⁴¹⁶ Despite the obvious similarity regarding the convergence of revolutionary ideals within the framework of the Freemasonic organization, one might detect differences between

⁴¹⁴ Wissa, 150–52, 157.

⁴¹⁵ De Poli, “Italians, Freemasons,” 5, 21–22.

⁴¹⁶ Landau, “Prolegomena,” 141. Landau uses Ramsaur’s views as the basis of his argument.

the Egyptian case and that of the later Young Turks, which was not only beyond the scope of Landau's research but also probably not plainly visible to him due to the lack of sources regarding Salonican Freemasonry at his time of writing. While Egyptian Freemasonry primarily involved the aristocracy and the landed notables as the main endorers of the lodges, the significant actors of the Young Turk ideology who joined Freemasonry were primarily members of the military and intelligentsia. The latter were accompanied in the lodges by urban professionals and business men, a majority of whom were members of the local Jewish and Christian communities due to the particular demographic structure of Salonica at the time. However, many prominent members of Egyptian military who took part in the formation of the National Party in 1879 were not members of the Freemasonic lodges but rather belonged to another secret organization which Landau refers to as "the officers' society."⁴¹⁷

Another aspect of Egyptian Freemasonry that needs to be discussed is its position within the broader picture of Ottoman Freemasonry. Landau states that he was unable to uncover any connections between the Freemasons of Egypt, Palestine and Syria.⁴¹⁸ Fortunately, some later research made it possible to discern some significant connections between these regions. Léon Zeldis points out as many as fourteen lodges which were most likely formed under the authority of the Egyptian obedience from the last decade of the nineteenth century until 1932 when a national obedience was formed in Palestine by the unification of the extant lodges.⁴¹⁹

From the turn of the twentieth century until the beginning of the First World War, Palestine stood out as one of the active realms of Freemasonry within the

⁴¹⁷ Landau, 143–47.

⁴¹⁸ Landau, 176 [endnote 59].

⁴¹⁹ Léon Zeldis, "Les premières loges de Palestine et leurs relations avec la Franc-maçonnerie égyptienne," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, no.72 (2006): 4–7.

empire territories. From the very start, the lodges were a significant social environment bringing together members of different religions, confessions and ethnicities.⁴²⁰ Campos points out the contribution of these members in “creating a new social network which aspired to transcend communal boundaries for the economic, cultural and political betterment of Palestine and the Ottoman Empire.”⁴²¹ Acting as an embodiment of the Ottomanist ideal of co-existence under the same polity, these lodges comprised, to a significant extent, members of the emerging *efendiyya* class of Ottoman society.⁴²² The Jaffa lodge *Le Port du Temple de Salomon* was founded in August 1891 with a local membership of Arab and Jewish individuals. This lodge had close ties with Egypt through a patent acquired from the Egyptian obedience.⁴²³

The association of Egyptian Freemasonic institutions with the Freemasons of Syria and Palestine helped develop a configuration of relations confined to these southern territories of the Ottoman Empire. Notwithstanding the occasional contact through individual involvements, like the case of ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Pasha, the Freemasonic endeavors in the northern and southern territories of the Ottoman Empire developed to a great extent independently of one another.

In the light of the aforementioned aspects of Egyptian Freemasonry, several conclusions may be drawn. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Egyptian

⁴²⁰ Sommer, *Syria and the Levant*, 215–20.

⁴²¹ Michelle Campos, “Freemasonry in Ottoman Palestine,” *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no.22–23 (2005): 38. In her research of the Palestinian lodges with a particular focus on the Jaffa lodge *Barkai*, Campos has examined the membership statistics based on the lodge correspondence and membership records kept in the archives of the Grand Orient de France.

⁴²² For a discussion of the historical development of the *efendiyya* class with a particular focus on Egypt, see Lucie Ryzova, *L’effendiyya ou la modernité contestée* (Le Caire: CEDEJ-Égypte/Soudan, 2004), <http://books.openedition.org/cedej/934>.

⁴²³ Campos, “Ottoman Palestine,” 44. Citing Zeldis, Campos points out that while the lodge *Le Port du Temple de Salomon* was initially affiliated with the Egyptian obedience, it later sought an affiliation with the Grand Orient de France, which it succeeded in 1906, changing its name to *Barkai*, meaning ‘dawn’ in Hebrew. However, Zeldis in his article considers *Barkai* as a new lodge formed after the decline and disappearance of the lodge *Le Port du Temple de Salomon*; cf. Zeldis, “Les premières loges,” 4.

Freemasonry developed under the authority of foreign obediences with a dominant participation of European diplomats, merchants and refugees. The Freemasonic activity was sanctioned by the viceroyalty as a vehicle towards strengthening of ties with the European powers with a view to an eventual independence from the Ottoman rule under the direction of Muḥammad 'Alī dynasty. In the 1860s Freemasonic activity gained momentum, when the geopolitical climate was more conducive to closer relations with Europe especially during the planning and construction of the Suez Canal. Both the French and British obediences were most active in their Freemasonic organization of lodges during this decade and the next, while the governments of France and Britain were involved in a competitive diplomacy centered around the planning and construction of the Suez Canal to gain the favor of the Egyptian viceroy while preserving their interests in the relations with the Ottoman Sultan who still held on to his position as suzerain.⁴²⁴ It was during this period that a sovereign grand body came into being as the first of its kind in a Muslim polity. In the next few decades, the nationalist movement developed close relations with the Freemasonic institution through the figures like Djamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduḥ, and Ya'qūb Ṣannū'. Although it is not possible to assess the extent of influence in the politics of the period exerted by the various elements of the Freemasonic organization in Egypt with absolute certainty, it is evident from the aforementioned cases and relations that the lodges formed the type of networking environment which brought together the foreign officials of diplomacy with the high ranking officials of the Egyptian government, as well as the powerful individuals of industry and finance.

⁴²⁴ K. Bell, "British Policy towards the Construction of the Suez Canal, 1859–65," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 15 (1965): 121–43.

3.3. Salonica and the Young Turk Revolution: A New Dynamism Injected

Soon after the suspension of the constitution of 1876, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd II’s rule gradually grew more oppressive, while resentment towards his general acts and affairs, both domestic and international, also grew. An oppositional stance became more common among the intelligentsia of the empire. Consequently, any groups harboring liberal views and an inclination towards opposition became a natural target for the Sultan. The lodges during the reign of his uncle ‘Abd al-‘Azīz had served as a venue for the oppositional elements due to their relatively concealed manner of convening and social discretion. In addition to this tendency in the lodges, the potential connection between Freemasons and a plot to restore his deposed brother was a major reason that ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd had a suspicious eye on the fraternity. With the constant monitoring and scrutiny of Freemasonic activities, both the number of lodges and their membership showed a significant decline. In particular, the Muslim element almost completely abandoned the membership. While *L’Étoile du Bosphore* counted 38 members in 1876, only 10 members were left in its register in the 1890s and none were Muslims. *I Proodos* which counted 89 members in 1876, with almost one third Muslims, lost all of its Muslim membership in the end of 1878 and gradually declined to 28 members in 1900.⁴²⁵

The oppressive rule through most of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd II’s reign coincided with the rising of nationalist movements in many of the remaining territories of the empire.⁴²⁶ According to Kemal Karpat, the war against Russia in 1877–78 was an important turning point and the Berlin Treaty introduced the European concept of the

⁴²⁵ See Table 1 in Appendix C.

⁴²⁶ For an introductory essay on this subject, see William W. Haddad, “Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire,” in *Nationalism in a Non-National State: The Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire*, eds. William W. Haddad and William Ochsenwald (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1977), 3–24.

nation-state into the Ottoman realm for the first time.⁴²⁷ At the turn of the twentieth century, lodges in the Balkans formed a fertile ground for the sharing of universal ideals which could address both nationalist and Ottomanist ideologies. Revolutionary ideas and opposition to the authoritarian regime emanated from these secret bases.⁴²⁸ As Freemasons were sworn to secrecy as a primary principle of the order, the lodge environment attracted those who were inclined towards such ideology and action.

The Young Turk movement⁴²⁹ as the precursor to the CUP and its relations with the Jews, the Freemasons and other active political groups of the period within the scope of power politics has been a subject of interest to numerous historians. The extent of the influence of the Jews and Freemasons on the formative years as well as the post-revolutionary period of the CUP has been a topic under debate. These relations have often been evaluated on the basis of significant themes like anti-Semitism and Zionism, while the Freemasonic connection was also touched upon within the context of its Jewish adherents.

Bernard Lewis argued that there seemed to be “no evidence at all, in the voluminous Turkish literature on the Young Turks, that Jews ever played a part of any significance in their councils, either before or after the Revolution, or that the Masonic lodges were ever more than an occasional cover for their secret meetings.”⁴³⁰ Feroz Ahmad, on the other hand, asserted that British Foreign Office Reports, the dispatches of the Istanbul correspondent of the *Times*, and the conservative press of the Ottoman capital propounded “the outstanding role of the

⁴²⁷ Kemal H. Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2002), 547.

⁴²⁸ Although the extent of the engagement of lodges with such endeavors is open to debate, most authors including Koloğlu, Iacovella and Dumont are in agreement regarding the significant contribution of Salonican lodges to the sociopolitical process that led to the Young Turk revolution in 1908.

⁴²⁹ On the ideological roots and later evolution of the Young Turk movement, see Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁴³⁰ Lewis, *Emergence*, 212.

Jews in the CUP movement,” whereas “all these sources misunderstood the true character of the movement and therefore misrepresented it as a Jewish-Freemason conspiracy manipulated by the Jews for their own ends.” Ahmad assessed that “Ottoman Jews did play an important part in the Unionist movement before and after 1908, but never as the force capable of manipulating the movement for their own ends.”⁴³¹ The role of the British Foreign Office mentioned by Ahmad in relation to the creation of a Jewish-Freemason conspiracy theory was expounded by Elie Kedourie. According to him, the reports of the British Embassy in Istanbul, which were written with an undercurrent of anti-Semitism, created a story “all bound together by the occult ties of Freemasonry” where “the Committee of Union and Progress, Freemasonry and Judaism were inextricably connected.”⁴³² Kedourie argued that “rule by doctrinaire officers such as the Young Turks was an ominous development in the Ottoman Empire, but to represent it as the outcome of a Judeo-masonic conspiracy was entirely to miss its significance.” However, these “fictions,” as Kedourie calls them, had a significant influence on the British Foreign Office and “helped to persuade the British government to fall for and take up Zionism” in a rather ironic development.⁴³³

While the above mentioned historians saw the Jewish and Freemasonic connections of the Young Turks as either exaggerated or at least misinterpreted. Robert Olson expressed that “the historiography of the Young Turks, the Jews and Zionism should be updated and revised to include revisionist Zionist sources” mostly excluded from earlier research by others. In the light of these sources and also

⁴³¹ Feroz Ahmad, “Unionist Relations with the Greek, Armenian and Jewish Communities of the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1914,” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society, Vol.1 The Central Lands*, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York, London: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1982), 425.

⁴³² Elie Kedourie, “Young Turks, Freemasons and Jews,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 7, no.1 (January 1971): 91,93.

⁴³³ Kedourie, 92, 94.

Dumont's research revealing the activities of Freemasonic lodges of Salonica, he argued that "the role and relationship of Freemasons, Jews and Ottomans and Young Turks was more interconnected than previously thought," albeit not necessarily yielding "more or significant influence for either group after the Young Turks came to power."⁴³⁴ As a result of the research done by Dumont and later by Iacovella on the registers of Salonica and Istanbul lodges belonging to the same period of interest,⁴³⁵ it was revealed that the early organization of the CUP and these lodges had close connections. Many of the leading figures of the CUP could now be associated with Freemasonry through the lodge records.⁴³⁶ While Dumont asserted that the nature and extent of the probable influence exercised by these lodges, or Freemasons in general, on the later political role and deeds of the CUP is a matter open to debate, it would be safe to say that the reciprocal relation between the Ottoman Freemasons and their political environment caused shifts and transformations for both sides.

Regarding the nature of relations between the Young Turks and other groups, Şükrü Hanioglu shifted the focus from the Jews to the Greek ethnicity of the empire. The sources he chose mainly from the Greek literature on the subject portrayed a quite different story going back to 1870s where the origins of the Young Turks were connected to relations with prominent Greek individuals inducted into Freemasonry, with a view to creating "a new Byzantine state to unite Turks and Greeks under the shadow of an enlightened Ottoman Sultan," for which the candidate agreed upon at

⁴³⁴ Robert Olson, "The Young Turks and the Jews: A Historiographical Revision," *Turcica*, XVIII (1986): 235.

⁴³⁵ Paul Dumont, "La Franc-Maçonnerie d'Obédience Française à Salonique au Début de XXe Siècle," *Turcica*, XVI (1984); Dumont, "La Turquie"; Iacovella, *Gönye ve Hilal*.

⁴³⁶ See Table 4 in Appendix C.

the time was Murād V.⁴³⁷ Although Hanioglu's narrative is consistent from his own point of view in its portrayal of a Freemasonry in support of the political aims of certain Greek elements of the empire, a number of his statements based on the Greek sources available to him are rather vague. Scalieri's assuming a position of high authority in what Hanioglu calls the "Paris branch of the Union" in 1870s or his reference to "fanciful aspirations of eastern Masonary [*sic*]" where the nature of an eastern Freemasonry is unclear, are among these ambiguities.⁴³⁸ Also, Hanioglu cites from the work of Pollatos that "Scalieri established under the auspices of the French obedience the *Envar-i Sharkiye* lodge which conducted its affairs in Turkish...From this nucleus the faction of the Young Turks was born."⁴³⁹ However, the cited lodge, a project of Murād V and Scalieri, was most likely never materialized and thus was not affiliated with the French obedience.⁴⁴⁰ Hanioglu wrote in conclusion that "the Freemasons understood that their alliance with the Young Turks had been based on mutual interest and that similar alliances had been contracted with Armenian, Bulgarian and Albanian communities in 1907-08."⁴⁴¹ However, the nature and scope of the interest on the part of the Freemasons in forging this alliance with the Young Turks has been left unclear.

⁴³⁷ Şükrü Hanioglu, "Notes on the Young Turks and the Freemasons, 1875–1908," *Middle Eastern Studies* 25, no.2 (April 1989): 186–87.

⁴³⁸ Hanioglu, 186.

⁴³⁹ Hanioglu, 187.

⁴⁴⁰ For a survey of Ottoman lodges working under the French obedience, see Dumont, "La Turquie."

⁴⁴¹ Hanioglu, "Young Turks," 194.

3.3.1. Salonica: The Rebirth of Ottoman Freemasonry and its Emergence from Secrecy

While the remaining lodges in Istanbul more or less disappeared or existed in the form of a social club of foreigners living in the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the twentieth century, the Balkans became the scene of some bold efforts to create new locations for the fraternal endeavors.⁴⁴² Salonica with its peculiar demographic and geographic characteristics would play a significant role in the future of the empire, also emerging as the leading venue of Freemasonic activity during this period.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Salonica was the main port of the Balkans as well as the cultural and financial capital of Macedonia. The rural areas of this multi-ethnic and multi-cultural province of the Ottoman Empire teemed with clashes of nationalist bands which had given rise to the Macedonian Question, an essential element of the much broader Eastern Question that surrounded the dismantling process of the Ottoman Empire. The irregular groups of fighting men were linked to their respective secret organizations headquartered in urban centers, Salonica being the major one. A group of Ottoman army officers and civil servants of the state joined forces with some prominent members of the local community to form a secret organization serving the Ottomanist ideology of the earlier generation of Young Ottomans. These proponents of the Young Turk movement had a revolutionary fervor to pursue the toppling of the Sultan and to realize the ideal of the “unity of elements” within the Ottoman Empire. Their secret society named *‘Othmanlı Hürriyet D̡jem’iyyeti* (Ottoman Freedom Society) would soon evolve into the CUP.

⁴⁴² In addition to the Balkans, a significant growth of Freemasonic activity took place in the Levant. Several lodges came into being in Palestine with a membership that transcended inter-communal boundaries. See Campos, “Ottoman Palestine” and Zeldis, “Les Premières loges.”

The Union and Progress movement, which gave its name to what became the CUP, had its earlier origins in a society formed in 1889 by the students of the Imperial School of Medicine in Istanbul.⁴⁴³ Its members were exiled from the capital along with other leading members of the Young Turk movement in the late 1890's. When the aforementioned Ottoman Freedom Society was later independently formed in 1906 in Salonica, it established contact with certain Young Turk leaders who had operated from European cities like Paris and Geneva during the early years of the twentieth century. In September 1907 this society evolved into the CUP, capitalizing on the more acknowledged name of the former Istanbul society.⁴⁴⁴

Up to three years prior to the formation of the Ottoman Freedom Society, the founding members had run their preparatory operations in conjunction with their Freemasonic involvement in Salonica lodges, primarily the Italian obedience lodge *Macedonia Risorta*, which was founded in 1901, and the French obedience lodge *Veritas*, founded in 1904. To reach their political aims, they had sheltered their secret activities under the roofs of these Freemasons' lodges, in a way embedding their own political fraternity within the relatively safe confines of the lodge realm. This relative safety stemmed from the privileges and immunity conceded to citizens of foreign powers acting or residing within the Ottoman Empire. The extraterritoriality that was provided by the capitulations made it possible for foreign citizens to get involved in an environment of sociability that was much less penetrable to the watchful eye of the Sultan. The capitulations took as their basis the Islamic law and from very early on, the Ottomans gave concessions to the peoples living in the

⁴⁴³ For a detailed study on the origins and development of the CUP between 1889 and 1902, see Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük (1889–1902)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1985), 173–394.

⁴⁴⁴ Ozan Arslan and Çınar Özen, “The Rebirth of the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress in Macedonia through the Italian Freemasonry,” *Oriente Moderno, Nuova Serie* 24 (85), no.1 (2005): 93–94, 106–07. In the article, the name of the '*Othmanlı Hürriyet Djem'iyyeti*' is translated as Ottoman Liberty Committee.

territories they conquered. Many of the provisions of the capitulations were amended over time in accordance with the requirements of custom and usage. The principal privileges granted to foreigners were personal, juridical and economic. As Lucius E. Thayer put it, they were all safeguarded by the provision that “any act of an arbitrary nature on the part of a native official which controverts a privilege of long standing was considered *ultra vires*.” The inviolability of a foreigner’s domicile was guaranteed by the capitulations and entrance was forbidden to local authorities except in cases of urgent necessity. Even then, the consul had to be notified first.⁴⁴⁵ The properties which enjoyed such immunity could double as venues for secret meetings that served the purposes of both the Freemasons and the secret organization of the Union and Progress movement.

A rather noteworthy component of the Freemasonic organization in Salonica was related to the prominent Jewish community in the city, some of whom were attached to different lodges of Latin obediences. In addition to those of the Italian and French, the Spanish obedience was rather exceptionally represented in Salonica. The first of its lodges in Salonica, the *Perseverancia* [#292] received its charter from the Spanish obedience on April 6, 1907. The lodge *Fazilette* [#310] was also formed in Salonica on April 22, 1909. In the wake of these Salonican lodges, the lodge *Constitución* [#309] under the same obedience was chartered on January 25, 1909 to operate in Istanbul and *Ouhouvet* [Ukhuwwet][#314] in Edirne in the autumn of the same year.⁴⁴⁶ The Worshipful Master of *Constitución* was Djāwid Bey, a prominent

⁴⁴⁵ Lucius Ellsworth Thayer, “The Capitulations of the Ottoman Empire and the Question of their Abrogation as it Affects the United States,” *American Journal of International Law* 17, no.2 (1923): 215–18.

⁴⁴⁶ For a detailed study of these Spanish obedience lodges of the Ottoman Empire, see Eduardo Enríquez del Arbol, “Masonería y diáspora Sefardi en el siglo XX: El origen de las logias otomanas (1907–1909),” in *Masonería española y Americana, Vol. 1*, ed. José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli (Zaragoza: Centro de Estudios Históricos de la Masonería Española, 1993), 551–90. Also see “Belgelerle Türkiye’de Milli Masonluğun Kuruluş Yılı: 1909,” *Mimar Sinan*, no.157 (December 2012): 9.

Salonica Jew and the Minister of Finance on several appointments by the Union and Progress government.

Despite its absence until this point in time from other cities of the empire, where a lodge working under its auspices was opened in Istanbul only after the inception of the Second Constitutional Era, the considerable influence of the Spanish obedience in Salonica may be explained by the presence of Sephardic Jews who were a predominant element of the city population since their settlement at the end of the fifteenth century, following their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula. The Sephardim constituted the majority of the Jewish population of this dynamic Mediterranean port city and Ladino was still their traditional language as part of the prevalent Judeo-Spanish culture.⁴⁴⁷

In the second half of the nineteenth century as reforms pertaining to non-Muslim elements of the Ottoman Empire came into being, the Jewish community like their Christian counterparts had felt the challenge and importance of maintaining a sociopolitical position that would secure their continuity and prosperity in this very cosmopolitan part of the empire. While the clashes among the nationalist factions of Macedonia, primarily those of the Greeks and Bulgarians, made the region increasingly unstable in the last decade of the nineteenth century, many Jews realized that a transition from the Ottoman to either Bulgarian or Greek rule would hardly be beneficial to their community. As the nationalist discourse of both the Greek and Bulgarian underground organizations evolved more towards a discriminatory prioritization of Christianity which was also reflected in their actions towards the

⁴⁴⁷ On the Jewish community of Salonica during the period of transition from Ottoman rule to the Kingdom of Greece, see Devin E. Naar, *Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 1–35.

urban and rural populations, many in the Jewish community were more concerned for their future.⁴⁴⁸

Until the incorporation of Salonica into the Kingdom of Greece as a consequence of the Balkan War of 1912, many of the Jewish residents of the city kept a loyal disposition towards the ideology of Ottomanism which aimed at keeping the remaining Ottoman territories in the Balkans and elsewhere intact, with a view to creating a peaceful coexistence among the elements living in these territories (*ittihād-ı 'anāsır*). As Salonica's daily life grew gradually more perilous in the first decade of the twentieth century, some members of the Jewish community joined the Freemasonry of Latin obediences with possibly the expectation of a somewhat safe and secret environment where they could contribute to an assessment and planning of action for the social and political well-being of the Salonican society in general and the Jewish community in particular.

The shared interest in the Ottomanist ideology united some Jewish individuals under the roofs of the Latin obedience lodges in Salonica with the Young Turks organized in the recently established CUP. A prominent individual who possibly contributed the most to helping the organization find a convenient shelter within the secretive confines of the Freemasonic establishment was Emmanuel Carasso⁴⁴⁹, a Jewish lawyer born in Salonica, who had a close relation with Tal'at Bey and other prominent members of the CUP.⁴⁵⁰ Carasso's connections with the Italian Grand Orient in the person of Grand Master Ettore Ferrari not only gave new momentum to Salonica's Freemasonic activity but also helped the CUP receive the

⁴⁴⁸ For an account of the sociopolitical upheavals in Macedonia during the period 1878–1908, as well as an assessment of the position of the Jewish community in reference to the Young Turk politics, see Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians Muslims and Jews, 1430–1950* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 238–71.

⁴⁴⁹ See Appendix B.

⁴⁵⁰ Stanford J. Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1991), 217–18.

Grand Orient's endorsement at the institutional level for its secret organization within the framework of Freemasonry.⁴⁵¹ Ettore Ferrari served as the Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Italy between 1904 and 1917. Before that, he visited Istanbul, Izmir and Salonica in 1900 as the then Deputy Grand Master, with a view to "awakening" the Italian lodges in those cities. His efforts paid off and the *Macedonia* lodge in Salonica was restructured as *Macedonia Risorta*. Angelo Iacovella argues that, in the light of events and records, the relation between the awakening of the *Macedonia* lodge and the birth of the CUP is irrefutable. He presents the content of a speech delivered by Ettore Ferrari himself to an Ottoman delegation in 1910 as a confirmation of this close tie between the two organizations.⁴⁵²

Having blossomed in the bosom of the lodges active in Salonica under primarily the Italian obedience, the Committee thus benefited from both the secretive nature of the Freemasonic organization and the additional immunity of capitulations extended to foreign sociabilities. It is hardly any coincidence that they were integrated into the Latin camp of Freemasonry which was conducive to their revolutionary deeds and aspirations.

On one of the first few days following the Young Turk revolution of July 1908, the celebrating crowds in the streets of Salonica witnessed the proud procession of the members of the Freemasons' lodges of the city in attires openly exhibiting their Freemasonic regalia.⁴⁵³ The Freemasons of Salonica rejoiced in the restoration of the constitution of 1876. The members of the local lodges emerged from their secrecy and displayed their pride of having taken a significant role in the

⁴⁵¹ On Emmanuel Carasso and his significance for Ottoman Freemasonry, as well as the political relations between Italy and Ottoman Empire, see Emanuela Locci, "La figura di Emanuele Carasso nei rapporti tra Italia e Turchia," *Hiram*, no.4 (2011): 83–96. A Turkish translation of this article by O. Umut Turan was published in *Mimar Sinan*, no.160 (2013): 35–48.

⁴⁵² Iacovella, *Gönye ve Hilal*, 36–37.

⁴⁵³ Apak, *Masonluk Tarihi*, 40.

state of affairs. The social visibility of the Freemasons during the reign of ‘Abd al-Hamīd had been mostly limited to philanthropic deeds and gatherings occasionally covered in the local press.⁴⁵⁴ The Freemasonic organization had hardly aligned or involved itself in the political movements and factions up to that time. Now, this bold action of the Salonican Freemasons openly exposed their position and ideology within the political environment created by the revolution. Soon afterwards, meetings of Freemasons at the capital in praise of the revolution were reported in widely circulated newspapers.⁴⁵⁵

In the few years following the revolution which witnessed the stepping of the CUP into a dominant political position, Freemasonry’s existence and organization within the Ottoman lands took a new form and intensity. This predominantly European institution occupied a place within the Ottoman state and society which it had never attained before. The extent of the role played by Freemasonry during this period is open to debate. However, even within a limited window confined to only a few historic sources and documents, the level and nature of involvement from significant individuals of the Ottoman state and society portrays the enhanced role and position of the Freemasonic institution during this period.

Although the aforementioned research of historians on the subject has focused on estimating the extent of the Jewish and Freemasonic influence on the formation and subsequent policies of the CUP, an examination of the opposite aspect, i.e., the consequences of this relation on the part of Freemasonry itself were mostly overlooked. The Jewish community’s interest in the Freemasonic organization, as well as the latter’s close contact with the CUP and the Young Turk

⁴⁵⁴ Koloğlu, *Abdülhamit*, 165–74.

⁴⁵⁵ A meeting of writers and journalists that took place at the Pera Palace hotel on August 19, 1908, was reported in the *İkdam* newspaper the next day as a “meeting of the city’s Freemasons.” The names of the participants of the occasion were also revealed.

movement, led Ottoman Freemasonry into a more visible presence within Ottoman politics, albeit with the ensuing challenges of a politically charged environment both within and without the organization. In the last decade of the empire's history, Freemasonry's contribution to the revolutionary process and its involvement in politics became subjects of debate in the public arena making Freemasonry more publicly visible than before, as will be discussed in the final chapter.

3.3.2. Towards an Ottoman Freemasonry under a National Obedience

In less than a year after the restoration of the constitutional monarchy in 1908, the Ottoman capital saw a head-on confrontation of the supporters of progress and freedom from autocratic rule with the reactionary and sectarian factions. The crisis culminated in the arrival of the *Hareket Ordusu* (Army of Action) from Salonica eventually causing the deposition of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd II from power and the downfall of his regime of oppression. The military intervention from Salonica was closely associated with the CUP organization and in its aftermath the CUP acquired a more prominent position in the politics of the Ottoman capital.

Following the quick succession of events that unfolded with the reinstatement of the constitutional monarchy and ousting of Sultan ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, Freemasonry found a most favorable position in the Ottoman lands and emerged as a significant actor in the sociopolitical climate of the empire. The political circumstances were conducive to the flourishing of Freemasonic activity which started to shift once again towards the capital. Once the constitutional government was restored in 1908, the close affiliation of many of the Committee members with the lodges created the most politicized period of Ottoman Freemasonry and made it visible to the public eye.

Soon afterwards, the lodges would become closely linked with the political ambitions of the CUP and a grand body as the first national Ottoman obedience would be formed in close affiliation with it.

Some prominent members of the CUP like Meḥmed Ṭal'at Bey (Ṭal'at Pasha)⁴⁵⁶ and Djāwid Bey, who were also Freemasons, had first-hand experience of how certain organizational characteristics and secretive aspects of Freemasonry could facilitate the formation and growth of revolutionary groups and affiliations. The majority of the ten founders of the Ottoman Freedom Society, the precursor to the CUP, had been Freemasons whereas its central committee (*hey'et-i 'āliye*) which was made up of four members, namely, Meḥmed Ṭal'at, Raḥmī [Evrano], Midḥat Shükür [Bleda], and Ismā'īl Djānbulāt, had been all Freemasons.⁴⁵⁷

As noted earlier, the ideological scope of Latin Freemasonries created a suitable environment within the lodges of these obediences for the development of a revolutionary spirit. In that regard, it was not coincidental that in an urban center as sociopolitically complex and active as Salonica, the secret political organization of the Young Turk movement reached a mature state within the Latin obedience lodges there. In particular, the Italian obedience claimed to have played an important part in the birth and growth of the Young Turk movement leading to the Union and Progress organization in Salonica, and often maintained its support and close relations with the subsequent political engagements of the organization following the overthrow of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd.⁴⁵⁸

Following the Young Turk revolution, as the CUP gained a significant presence in the restored constitutional government in Istanbul, some of its Salonican members had newly attained positions in the Parliament or were poised to take

⁴⁵⁶ See Appendix B.

⁴⁵⁷ See Table 4 in Appendix C.

⁴⁵⁸ Iacovella, *Gönye ve Hilal*, 7–8.

advantage of the new sociopolitical environment at the capital. The young and dynamic Freemasonry of Salonica helped revive the Freemasonic activity in Istanbul. While the Italian obedience lodge *Bisanzio Risorta* had been opened some months before the revolution in early 1908, *Italia Risorta* which had operated between 1868 and 1900 was reactivated in the end of 1908. *Calcedonia* started working in 1909 on the Asian side of Istanbul.⁴⁵⁹

The French lodges in Istanbul had ceased operating for a number of years, even decades in the case of a couple of them. *L'Étoile du Bosphore*, started in 1858 as the earliest among the French lodges of Istanbul from the second half of the nineteenth century, had also been the longest to survive when it suspended its activities in 1901. *L'Union d'Orient* founded in 1863, had become dormant as early as 1874. The lodge *Ser*, established in 1866 with predominantly Armenian members, had ended in 1894. The Greek majority lodge *I Proodos*, founded in 1868, had ceased its existence by the end of 1901.⁴⁶⁰ The new dynamism injected to the Freemasonry of the capital from Salonica stirred a good deal of excitement among some former members of the aborted French obedience lodges of Istanbul as well. The time was ripe they argued, as there were now more candidates than ever before willing to join the craft due to the close relations between Freemasonry and those who were politically empowered with the restoration of the constitution. Marachian (Maraşyan in Turkish), a former member of the French obedience lodge *L'Etoile du Bosphore*, wrote to the Grand Orient reporting the joyful atmosphere in Istanbul among young people following the revolution. He urged the Grand Orient to increase its efforts to recruit these candidates to expand its influence in Ottoman Freemasonry

⁴⁵⁹ "Türkiye'deki İtalyan Locaları," *Mimar Sinan*, no.156 (October 2012): 53–56.

⁴⁶⁰ Dumont, "La Turquie," 13–20, 20–27, 28–34, 34–41.

and “rekindle the extinguished flame of French Freemasonry in Constantinople.”⁴⁶¹ On the other hand, it would be under the auspices of a number of Salonican Freemasons that the next French obedience lodge, *La Renaissance* would be established in Istanbul, in August 1908, in the immediate aftermath of the revolution. As the political ambitions of the CUP were now transferred from Salonica to the capital, so were the Freemasonic aspirations of the Salonican Freemasons. Two leading figures of the French obedience lodge *Veritas* of Salonica, Michel Noradounghian⁴⁶² (Noradunkyan in Turkish) and David Cohen⁴⁶³ (Kohen in Turkish) petitioned the Grand Orient de France to take advantage of the favorable political climate to restore the former prestigious position of the French obedience in Istanbul. Both men, the latter being the Worshipful Master of the lodge *Veritas*, had settled in Istanbul for personal reasons. They corresponded diligently with the Grand Orient reporting on their Freemasonic involvements and aspirations as well as the political developments at the capital.⁴⁶⁴ They were soon to become eminent names during the foundation processes of the Ottoman Supreme Council and the Ottoman Grand Orient, successively. Convinced in the high merits of the Young Turk ideals, the cooperative efforts of these men, an Armenian and a Jew, as citizens of the Ottoman Empire were emblematic of the high hopes ushered in by the restoration of the constitution among the various ethnic elements of the empire. Despite their continuing allegiance to the ideals and administrative traditions of the French obedience, as their correspondence with the Grand Orient de France attests, they also realized the importance of establishing an Ottoman obedience for the Young Turk Freemasons. In that regard, they epitomized the will among Ottoman Freemasons of

⁴⁶¹ Anduze, *La Franc-Maçonnerie*, 28–30.

⁴⁶² See Appendix B.

⁴⁶³ See Appendix B.

⁴⁶⁴ Anduze, *La Franc-Maçonnerie*, 32–35.

different national and ethnic origins to form a national obedience that would represent this diversity with a fresh view of freedom in accordance with the ideology preached by the new Ottoman political elite.

It has been argued that the foreign obedience lodges formed in the Ottoman territories in the second half of the nineteenth century served to a certain degree the commercial and political interests of the imperialistic states to which these obediences belonged.⁴⁶⁵ On the other hand, after the forging of a very close relationship with the CUP, Ottoman Freemasonry evolved towards becoming a vehicle of Ottoman imperial interests to bind the elements within the remaining territories of the empire. In the few years after the Young Turk revolution of 1908, in addition to the foreign obedience lodges noted above, a significant number of new lodges formed particularly following the foundation of the Ottoman Supreme Council and Grand Orient in 1909.⁴⁶⁶ Freemasonry gained a momentum unseen up to that time and the growth in membership for the lodges was concomitant with the increase of adherents to the CUP's cause many of whom perceived the two pursuits to be closely linked.

⁴⁶⁵ Paul Dumont, "Ottoman Freemasonry and Laicity," in *Freemasonry and Fraternalism in the Middle East*, eds. Andreas Önnarfors and Dorothe Sommer (Sheffield: The University of Sheffield, 2008), 155. Dumont states that "strong parallels between the Masonic geography of the [Ottoman] Empire and that of European colonial expansion" can be easily observed. He argues that "it was not by mere chance that lodges were most numerous in regions most open to Western penetration (Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Cyprus), or in places characterized by their political instability (Macedonia)."

⁴⁶⁶ At least 11 new lodges were opened in Istanbul in 1909 and 1910. In 1910 and 1911, at least 16 lodges were formed in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon under the auspices of the Ottoman obedience. See Tamer Ayan, "Türkiye Masonluk Tarihinin Anahatları," *Mimar Sinan*, no.104 (June 1997): 16–17.

CHAPTER IV

OTTOMAN NATIONAL OBEDIENCE AND THE POLITICAL ENTANGLEMENTS OF OTTOMAN FREEMASONRY

4.1. Establishment of a National Obedience in the Ottoman Empire

An important aspect of the evolution of speculative Freemasonry through the eighteenth century was the creation of multiple degree systems called “rites”⁴⁶⁷ into which a diverse philosophical and esoteric content was incorporated. Albert Mackey defined “rite” as follows:

As a Masonic term, it signifies a method of conferring Masonic light by a collection and distribution of degrees. It is, in other words, the method and order observed in the government of a Masonic system. The original system of Speculative Masonry consisted of only the three symbolic degrees, called, therefore, Ancient Craft Masonry... On the continent of Europe, the organization of new systems began at a much earlier period, and by the invention of what are known as the high degrees a multitude of Rites was established. All of these agreed in one important essential. They were built upon the three symbolic degrees, which, in every instance, constituted the fundamental basis upon which they were erected. They were intended as an expansion and development of the Masonic ideas contained in these degrees.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁷ See Glossary in Appendix A.

⁴⁶⁸ Mackey, *An Encyclopaedia*, 649.

Various rites were already established as early as the turn of the nineteenth century. Among these, the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (AASR) was the most successful to establish itself both in Europe and North America. Charles McClenachan described the early phase of the rite as follows:

At or about the period of the Masonic revival and excitement in the early part of the 18th century, there was felt a desire for a deeper research into the arcana of Freemasonry, and a thorough examination of the esoteric doctrines of the Order... With this purpose in view, attempts were made to establish separate and distinct organizations, wherein these sublime truths might be revealed and cultivated. Nearly all these projects were ephemeral, and were outlived by their projectors, while the “Rite of Perfection” the germ of the organization of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish rite—based upon the pure principles of Masonry, and the elucidation of occult mysteries, containing twenty-five degrees—gradually approached development.⁴⁶⁹

While the AASR completed its early phase in Europe during the eighteenth century,⁴⁷⁰ its governing bodies called Supreme Councils, which were formed in various sovereign nations throughout the nineteenth century, traced their origins back to the “Supreme Council of the thirty-third degree⁴⁷¹ for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America,” or the Mother Council⁴⁷². McClenachan described the formation of the two major Supreme Councils of the USA as follows:

The first Supreme Council ever established under the new constitution of 1786, was that at Charleston, whose jurisdiction extended, constitutionally, over the whole of the United States, until they constituted the Northern Supreme Council. Then the Northern and Southern Jurisdictions were geographically defined. On the 31st of May, 1801, the Supreme Council of the thirty-third degree for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America, was opened with the high honors of Masonry, by Brothers John Mitchell and Frederick Dalcho, Sovereign Grand Inspectors-General.⁴⁷³

By the time the Supreme Council for the Southern Jurisdiction of the USA was opened in 1801 in Charleston, South Carolina, as the first of its kind to act as a

⁴⁶⁹ Charles T. McClenachan, *The Book of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry: Containing Instructions in All the Degrees from the Third to the Thirty-Third, and Last Degree of the Rite* (New York: Masonic Publishing and Manufacturing Co., 1868), 14–15.

⁴⁷⁰ Arturo de Hoyos, *The Scottish Rite Ritual Monitor and Guide*, 3rd ed. (Washington D.C.: The Supreme Council, 33°, Southern Jurisdiction, 2010), 100–11.

⁴⁷¹ Thirty-third degree is the highest degree bestowed upon members of the AASR.

⁴⁷² See Glossary in Appendix A.

⁴⁷³ McClenachan, *The Book of the Ancient*, 17.

governing body of the rite, the AASR had already been restructured into a thirty-three degree system, based on its then new Constitution of 1786. Its principle of associating a single governing body, or Supreme Council, with each national territory made it possible for these organizations to extend their relations through transnational connections to other Supreme Councils in Europe and elsewhere. Freemasonry in many European countries took advantage of this particular capability of AASR to form transnational ties. The networks created by the interconnections of various Grand Lodges followed a similar structure to those formed by the transnational relations of Supreme Councils governing the implementation of the AASR.⁴⁷⁴ While the obediences in the form of Grand Orients or Grand Lodges held jurisdiction over the formation and administration of the three “symbolic” degrees of Freemasonry, the organization of appendant systems of rites and their related degrees fell on governing bodies like the Supreme Councils of the AASR.

In various Freemasonries of the world there had been periods when their members were more inclined to embrace politics as a means of taking action against oppressors threatening the liberties in their immediate environments.⁴⁷⁵ The period leading to the overthrow of Sultan ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd was such a period for Ottoman Freemasonry when Ottoman Freemasons were more or less united in the pursuit of the same goal. However, in the aftermath of the restoration of the constitutional

⁴⁷⁴ Berger, “European Freemasonries,” 3–4. According to Joachim Berger: “An intrinsically transnational system of Freemasonry was the AASR, distinguished through its organization into 33 degrees. The supreme councils were connected to one another via specific structures of communication, and the spread of the Scottish rite in Europe reveals networks within which different camps also emerged. The supreme councils of the rite first appeared in the ‘Latin’ countries (France in 1804, Spain in 1811, Belgium in 1817, Portugal in 1842/1869, Italy in 1887, Switzerland in 1873 and the Netherlands in 1913). In addition, supreme councils emerged in Hungary (1871), Greece (1872), Turkey (1909), Serbia (1912), Poland (1922), Czechoslovakia (1922) and Rumania (1923). The rite also established a foothold on the British Isles (Ireland in 1826, England in 1845 and Scotland in 1846). Although the British Grand Lodges there officially ignored the Supreme Councils, in practice there were numerous personal interconnections. In contrast, the grand lodges of Denmark, Sweden and Norway did not tolerate alternatives to the order's ten-degree system in their ‘dominion’.”

⁴⁷⁵ Rognon, “Freemasonry and War,” 485.

monarchy, as the Ottoman territories came under new foreign threats and also, as internal conflicts propelled by the rising nationalistic sentiments and endeavors reached new levels particularly in the more ethnically complex parts of the empire, many Freemasons were faced with these newly formed challenging political environments. While some maintained an attachment to their foreign obediences, others entertained the idea of organizing Ottoman Freemasonry under a national obedience which would best serve the sociopolitical interests of the empire.

The establishment of a national obedience and the administrative grand bodies associated with it was the most important development in the history of Ottoman Freemasonry. For at least a century and a half, the lodges had formed and existed under foreign obediences. The foundation of an Ottoman obedience brought with it the territorial jurisdiction to establish lodges within the Ottoman lands which in turn had sociopolitical consequences due to the close association of the political entity of the CUP and the new obedience.

There was a sense of urgency and competitive haste in the way a number of Ottoman Freemasons embarked on their attempt to form this ruling authority of Freemasonry encompassing the whole Ottoman territories. When the CUP stepped into the political power zone following the restoration of the constitution, its Freemason members were already aware of the political potential of the lodges working under foreign obediences which could tend to be motivated by radical sentiments and work against their initial ambitions of unifying various elements within the empire. A presumable aim was thus to keep the organizational potential of Freemasonry in check through the establishment of a national obedience, since this potential was evidenced in the birth of the Union and Progress movement in close association with the lodges of Salonica. It was important, in that regard, to control

the Freemasonic activity within the Ottoman Empire, which otherwise could turn into political endeavors under the influence of foreign obediences and help create new nuclei of action potentially hostile to the new regime. Hence, some Ottoman Freemasons were soon engaged in conceiving a shift from a Freemasonic activity exclusive to the foreign obediences towards one under a national obedience.

The new ruling élite of the Second Constitutional Era also intended to explore Freemasonry's potential contribution to the establishment of harmonious relations between the Ottoman government and the ruling political entities of Europe, as was demonstrated soon afterwards by the Ottoman Freemasons' visits and contacts abroad.⁴⁷⁶ In order to benefit the most from these efforts, Ottoman Freemasonry had to be on an equal footing with its foreign counterparts and in that regard a national organization was necessary. For that purpose, the efforts to form a sovereign authority to regulate the Freemasonic activity within the Ottoman Empire started very soon after the restoration of the constitution in July 1908.⁴⁷⁷ These efforts towards a sovereign organization also aimed at securing the involvement of some leading members of the Union and Progress movement as further discussed below.

The foundation of a national obedience in the Ottoman Empire was first of all a top-down process which was contrary to the expected norms of forming a Grand Lodge or Grand Orient in conformity with the so-called regularity principle. The regular bottom-up approach would incur lodges to be independently formed by the free initiative of a number of Freemasons duly initiated into the craft under the auspices of an established Grand Lodge. Then, these lodges in their turn were

⁴⁷⁶ See Section 4.2.

⁴⁷⁷ Mushîr Fu'ād Paşa, an exiled opponent of 'Abd al-Ḥamîd, held meetings for the formation of a national obedience upon his return from Damascus in August 1908. In early April 1909, Muḥammad 'Urî Paşa, an Egyptian Freemason, and Nicola Forte, the Worshipful Master of the Italian lodge *Bisanzio Risorta*, participated in the formation of a Grand Orient, which remained an abortive effort after its first meeting. See Ergin Koparan, "Osmanlı Masonluğunda Mehmet Örfî Kardeş," *Mimar Sinan*, no.178 (March 2018): 28–30.

expected to come together in forming a new Grand Lodge. However, the founders of the new Ottoman national obedience chose to go with a top-down approach by first forming a Supreme Council taking advantage of the foundation procedure of this governing body in accordance with the then accepted regulations of this particular rite.

The Constitutions of 1786 of the AASR which is accepted as having been drafted under the auspices of Frederick II ‘the Great’, King of Prussia, has remained as a regulatory document of the AASR to this day as it had been during the time the Ottoman Supreme Council was formed. The first section under Article II defines the thirty-third degree of the rite as follows:

The thirty-third degree confers on Masons, who are legally invested with the position, the titles, position, privileges and authority of Sovereign Grand Inspectors General of the Order.⁴⁷⁸

The third section under Article II goes on to describe the composition of a Supreme Council as follows:

A meeting of the members of this Grade is entitled a Council of the Thirty-third Degree or of Puissant Grand Inspectors General of the Order; this Council being composed as follows: 1. In places correct for the establishment of a Supreme Council of this Degree, the most senior Inspector in rank is herewith authorized to promote another brother to the same dignity, after having assured himself that the latter has truly merited it by his character, his knowledge and the ranks with which he is invested, and he will administer the oath to him. 2. These two brothers jointly and in the same manner confer the degree on another brother.⁴⁷⁹

As the original document of its foundation attests, for the composition of the Ottoman Supreme Council, the procedure expounded in the constitution article quoted above was implemented during its first meeting on March, 3, 1909.⁴⁸⁰ Given the lack of an active AASR Freemasonry in the Ottoman Empire at the time and

⁴⁷⁸ Alexander Cosby Fishburn Jackson, *Rose-Croix: The History of the Ancient and Accepted Rite for England and Wales* (Shepperton: Lewis Masonic, 1980), 268.

⁴⁷⁹ Jackson, 268.

⁴⁸⁰ “Osmanlı Yüksek Şûrası’nın Reorganizasyonu Zaptı, 3 Mart 1909,” *Mimar Sinan*, no.157 (December 2012): 17–20.

consequently the lack of an adequate number of thirty-third degree Freemasons, the procedure was implemented through the Egyptian Prince ‘Azīz Ḥasan Paşa⁴⁸¹ on whom the degree was conferred by the Egyptian Supreme Council recognized earlier.⁴⁸² ‘Azīz Ḥasan Paşa first conferred the degree on one of the Freemasons present, namely on Meḥmed Ṭal’at Bey, and the two in their turn conferred on a third one continuing a chain of conferrals in this manner until the adequate number to compose the Supreme Council was attained.

Following the foundation of the Supreme Council, its members convened along with a number of representatives from the existing foreign obedience lodges and proclaimed the foundation of *Mashrīk-ı A’zam-ı ‘Othmānī* or the Ottoman Grand Orient. Following a preliminary meeting on July 13, 1909,⁴⁸³ the Grand Orient was formed on August 1, 1909,⁴⁸⁴ and announced to the Freemasonic authorities of the world through a circular dated August 10, 1909⁴⁸⁵. The lodges to work under this new obedience were either formed from scratch by the authority of the Ottoman Supreme Council, or existing lodges were transferred from other obediences.

This course of action towards the realization of an Ottoman Grand Orient through the initial formation of a Supreme Council of the AASR resulted in complications. First of all, its recognition by its counterparts was challenged by the concept of regularity, an evolving phenomenon at the time, the significance of which was increased by the fragile relations among the grand lodges of Europe and America, following the severing of relations between those of the British and a

⁴⁸¹ See Appendix B.

⁴⁸² On the life and political affairs of Prince ‘Azīz Ḥasan Paşa, see Mustafa İnce, “An Egyptian Prince in Ottoman Politics: Aziz Hasan Paşa and His Activities in the Late Ottoman Empire,” *International Journal of Turcologia* XII, no.24 (Fall 2017): 109–26.

⁴⁸³ “Sirküler No 2, 13 Temmuz 1909,” *Mimar Sinan*, no.157 (December 2012): 27–29.

⁴⁸⁴ “Sirküler No 4, 01.08.1909,” *Mimar Sinan*, no.157 (December 2012): 33–45.

⁴⁸⁵ “Her İki Yarımküreye Yayılmış Muntazam Masonik Otoritelere Tamim: 10.08.1909,” *Mimar Sinan*, no.157 (December 2012): 55–58.

number of Latin Freemasonries three decades ago.⁴⁸⁶ A claim to regularity was made by grand lodges by devising a legitimate chain of past recognitions linking organizations to each other. The foundation of the Ottoman Grand Orient by the governing authority of a rite, a Supreme Council in this case, was a condition of irregularity. However, as the concept of regularity was mainly devised by the Anglo-American camp of Freemasonries, there were others in the opposing camp, which were readily inclined to recognize the young Ottoman obedience.

The new Supreme Council also sought recognition from its counterparts on the basis of an earlier recognition obtained from the aforementioned Mother Council in the 1860s for the first Ottoman Supreme Council formed in 1861. So, the foundation of the new Supreme Council was devised rather as a reorganization, which was most likely regarded as the best step to take in order to legitimize the new organization by linking it to a previously acknowledged one.

The first meeting which convened to form the Supreme Council on March 3, 1909, presided by the Egyptian Prince ‘Azīz Ḥasan Pasha, did not mention the formerly established Supreme Council and its recognition at the time by the Southern Jurisdiction of the USA. However, in the next meeting on June 25, 1909 which convened to elect its officers,⁴⁸⁷ this previous recognition was explicitly written into the declaration of the council. This seems to imply a new strategy designed after the first meeting to incorporate the previous recognition from 1860s into the foundation process of the new Ottoman Supreme Council. An important participant at this second meeting was Joseph Sakakini, then a thirty-third degree Freemason from Alexandria and a member of the Egyptian Grand Lodge and Supreme Council. Taking authority from the Egyptian Supreme Council which was recognized earlier

⁴⁸⁶ See Section 1.1.

⁴⁸⁷ “Osmanlı Yüksek Şûrası’nın 25 Haziran 1909 Tarihli Toplantısının Zaptı,” Mimar Sinan, no.157 (December 2012): 21–22.

by the 1907 International Conference of Supreme Councils, his approval of the newly formed Ottoman Supreme Council's legitimacy through its connection to the earlier organization established in 1861 was based on the latter's recognition by the Southern Jurisdiction of the USA in 1869. Thus, the long dormant legacy of an Ottoman Supreme Council formed previously was duly resurrected to fulfill the claim to regularity of this new organization.

The first Supreme Council to have formed in the Ottoman lands had been an attempt under the guidance of the Egyptian Prince 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Pasha⁴⁸⁸, who was the uncle of Prince 'Azīz Ḥasan Pasha, the leading figure of its reorganization later in 1909. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Pasha had become a member of the Supreme Council of the French obedience in Egypt, under whose authority he had endeavored to establish the Ottoman Supreme Council.⁴⁸⁹ Although this Council seems to have become somewhat inactive in a few years, it was nonetheless able to establish contact with the Mother Council with a claim to recognition. This communication was mentioned in a letter by Albert Pike, the then Sovereign Grand Commander of the Council, addressed to the Grand Chancellor of the Council. Pike's comments regarding the granting of such recognition are rather ambiguous. The letter containing information on the Ottoman Supreme Council as well as other newly formed national Supreme Councils was published with the *Transactions of the Supreme Council of the 33rd Degree for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States* which mainly contained the proceedings of the two meetings of the said Supreme Council held in 1868 at Charleston and St. Louis, presided over by the then Sovereign Grand Commander Albert Pike.⁴⁹⁰ In the letter addressed to the Grand Chancellor of the Supreme

⁴⁸⁸ See Section 3.2.

⁴⁸⁹ Apak, *Masonluk Tarihi*, 55.

⁴⁹⁰ *Transactions of the Supreme Council of the 33rd Degree for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States, Grand Orient of Charleston, May 1868, Orient of St. Louis, Sept. 1868* (New York: Masonic

Council of the Southern Jurisdiction, Pike quoted from a report presented earlier by Albert G. Goodall, the Grand Representative on Foreign Relations, to the Supreme Council for the Northern Jurisdiction:

Ill.[*Illustrious*] Bro.[*Brother*] Goodall says: "In 1861, a French Brother,⁴⁹¹ claiming to have the 33rd degree from the Supreme Council of France, constituted a Supreme Council of the 33rd degree, Ancient and Accepted Rite, at Constantinople, for Turkey and Egypt; but there appears to have been some irregularity and want of proper authority in establishing such a Grand Body, and it remained in a dormant condition. In 1864, Ill. Bro. Hyde Clarke received the 33rd degree from the Supreme Council of France, and in that capacity claims to have legalized the Supreme Council for Turkey and Egypt, and changed its Orient or Valley to Smyrna, where it now exercises Masonic authority based on the Constitutions of 1762 and 1786, and has three Symbolic Lodges, seven Rose Croix Chapters, and three Consistories under its jurisdiction. Ill. Bro. Hyde Clarke is still the Sov. [*Sovereign*] Grand Commander; but since his departure from Turkey, nearly two years ago, Ill. Bro. Constantine G. Carrere, 33rd, is conducting the duties of that office, with Joseph Langdon, 33rd, Sec. Gen. H. E. As yet they have not been recognized by any foreign Masonic body; and the question is simply whether Ill. Bro. Hyde Clarke possessed the proper authority to reorganize the Supreme Council, give the 33rd degree, and grant warrants to Lodges, Chapters and Consistories."

After a lengthy discussion regarding the difficulties in proving the regularity of origin for various existing grand bodies, Pike emphasized the eminence of Hyde Clarke as evidence to the credibility of his authority to regularize the Ottoman Supreme Council, which Pike was willing to recognize the legitimacy of. On the other hand, he was not yet fully convinced to grant it until further information was gathered:

...it will not be wise to recognize any new one hereafter, that has not a respectable constituency and is not a real Power. If it should hereafter be made to appear to us that the Supreme Council of Turkey and Egypt is such a body, we shall, unless authority to create it was wholly wanting and it is clearly illegitimate, be ready to enter into amicable relations with it. For the present, inasmuch as it has not succeeded in obtaining recognition from the very body

Publishing Company, 1869). For a facsimile of the pages related to the Ottoman Supreme Council, see *Mimar Sinan*, no.157 (December 2012): 71–75. This is the document referred to by Sakakini as proof of the previous recognition by the Mother Council, as mentioned earlier.

⁴⁹¹ The "French Brother" mentioned in the letter is presumably 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Pasha who was a member of the Supreme Council of the French obedience in Egypt when he endeavored to form the Ottoman Supreme Council, as expressed by Apak in *Masonluk Tarihi*, 55.

by whose authority it is claimed to exist, it will be wise and proper, I think, to request from it information in regard to the number and strength of the bodies that obey it, and as to the authority by virtue of which it was established; and until such information is had, to delay contracting an alliance or relations of amity with it.

As the initial formation of the Ottoman Supreme Council in 1861 was not able to survive into the next decade, the communication with the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States seems to have ended soon after its first mention in the transactions of the Mother Council in 1869. An address Pike delivered to the Supreme Council in conjunction with the meeting of the Supreme Council of the Southern Jurisdiction convened in Baltimore in May, 1870, was published as “the Alloquium of the Sovereign Grand Commander” in the appendix section of the transactions of the meeting. Under the heading of “Supreme Councils of Our Correspondence,” Pike included his comments about his earlier letter and the claims to recognition of a number of national Supreme Councils including that of the Ottoman:

After our adjournment at St. Louis [*convened in Sep., 1868*], I was led to examine the claims to recognition of the bodies claiming supremacy over the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in Italy, Portugal, Mexico, and Turkey. This examination and the conclusions to which I came, are embodied in the Letter written by me to our Brother, the Grand Chancellor, which I thought it best to publish with our Transactions of 1868, instead of embodying it in this address. The whole will, no doubt, receive the careful consideration of the Committee on Foreign Correspondence; and if I have in any respect fallen into error, whatever is amiss can be corrected.⁴⁹² ...I have heard nothing further from the Supreme Council of Mexico, since the publication of our transactions; and have nothing to add to what is contained in my letter to the Ill.: [*Illustrious*] Grand Chancellor, published with these transactions, in regard to the Ancient and Accepted Rite in Portugal, Italy, Turkey and Mexico... ...in respect to the body in Mexico, asking recognition; and in regard to it, and to the bodies in Italy, Portugal, and Turkey, I wish what I have written to be carefully considered and examined, that any error into which I have fallen may be arrested. Owing chiefly to the unfortunate connections formed between Supreme Councils and Grand Orients, and denials of the legitimacy of one by the other, whenever dissensions have arisen, it is almost impossible to arrive at

⁴⁹² *Transactions of the Supreme Council of the 33rd Degree for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States, Orient of Baltimore, May 1870* (New York: Masonic Publishing Company, 1870), 123.

certainty in respect to foreign bodies, especially as we are seldom furnished with all the materials for judgment.⁴⁹³

Notwithstanding the ambiguity of these comments by Albert Pike, the Official Bulletin of the Supreme Council of the Southern Jurisdiction in 1880 declared the Ottoman Supreme Council to be a regular and recognized one, showing the above cited pages from the Transactions of 1869 as the reference to this recognition:

The S.: C.: [*Supreme Council*] for Turkey and Egypt had been set up in 1861 by a S.:I.:G.: [*Sovereign Grand Inspector General*] from the S.:C.: of France and was afterwards reconstituted and reorganized by Ill.: Bro.: [*Illustrious Brother*] Hyde Clarke, who transferred its seat to Smyrna. This S.: C.: wherefrom that from Egypt and Arabia was derived, is considered both by Ill.: Bro.: Goodall in his so-often-quoted report and by Bro.: Findel, in his History of Masonry, as a regular and recognized S.: C.: (See Official Transactions of Charleston for 1869, pages 175-78).⁴⁹⁴

The reorganization of the Ottoman Supreme Council was carried out based on this declaration of the Mother Council's recognition, as portrayed in the above cited record of the 1909 meeting. This recognition and the relevant pronouncement of regularity were of great importance for the reorganization of the Ottoman Supreme Council and the subsequent formation of the Ottoman Grand Orient, given the territoriality claims of the Ottoman obedience to becoming the sole authority within the Ottoman lands.

In conclusion, the choice of the formation process for the national administrative body of Ottoman Freemasonry through the reorganization of the Ottoman Supreme Council might be linked to different concerns or possible aims on the part of the Freemasons involved. First of all, it was a rather difficult task to bring together the different lodges of the capital and other parts of the empire. In the few decades before the formation of the Ottoman Grand Orient, the schism between the

⁴⁹³ *Transactions*, 138.

⁴⁹⁴ *Official Bulletin of the Supreme Council of the 33rd Degree for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States* IV, no.1 (January 1, 1880).

two main camps of European Freemasonries had deemed their penetration into the so to speak “unclaimed territories” a rather competitive endeavor. The Ottoman lands, not possessing a national grand body at the time, constituted such a territory and as explained earlier, lodges were formed under the aegis of various European Grand Lodges or Orients. These lodges had to follow the principles of the governing bodies they belonged to, which made it difficult to act together given the divided position of European Freemasonries. Moreover, the affairs of the lodges were not immune to the political aims of the sovereign nations where the metropolitan organizations of these lodges resided. During a time when imperial pursuits put the powerful European nations in a state of rivalry, the idealistic notions of universal peace and harmony fell short of uniting lodges which worked under different obediences. Given this amalgamation of lodges in the Ottoman lands, it was a challenging task for Ottoman Freemasons to bring them together under the authority of a national obedience.

Secondly, the reason for the creation of a Supreme Council with precedence over a Grand Orient might be associated with its practical aspects. The foundation of new lodges under the auspices of a Supreme Council formed through an expedited procedure was an efficient solution. Also, given the prevalence of the rite in many European Freemasonries at the time, the prospect of becoming part of the established AASR network was also a motivation. However, this effort required assistance from other Supreme Councils active in continental Europe. The Belgian and Italian Supreme Councils were sympathetic with this endeavor and both of them were directly involved in the reorganization process.⁴⁹⁵ Once the Ottoman Supreme Council was thus formed, new lodges were constituted by its initiative⁴⁹⁶ which

⁴⁹⁵ Koparan, “Osmanlı Masonluğunda,” 30–32.

⁴⁹⁶ Ayan, “Türkiye Masonluk,” 13. In the initial attempt to bring lodges under the umbrella of the Ottoman Supreme Council, the lodges *Vatan*, *Muhibban-ı Hürriyet*, *Şafak* and *Vefa* were formed and two lodges existing under the Egyptian obedience, *Resne* and *Uhuvvet-i Osmaniyye*, were transferred

joined in their turn to operate under the aegis of the Ottoman Grand Orient. A number of existing lodges also switched allegiance to this new authority with a territorial claim to all Ottoman Freemasonry.⁴⁹⁷

Furthermore, the close relation of the Ottoman obedience with the CUP members enabled its recognition by the state authority which was a prerequisite for a grand body to be established within the territories of a sovereign state and to receive international recognition.⁴⁹⁸ In the Ottoman case, the state's recognition of a national grand body had thus been possible with the advent of the Second Constitutional Era following the Young Turk revolution.

4.2. The Domestic and International Entanglements of Ottoman Freemasonry during the CUP Era and the First World War

4.2.1 The Political Environment Leading to the Revolution and the CUP's Enhanced Role

The process of the birth of the Ottoman obedience cannot be evaluated apart from the sociopolitical conjuncture of the period during which the CUP became a dominant political power. Ottoman relations with Britain especially played a significant role during this period. A couple of years earlier, the agreements leading to the Triple Entente which created the alliance of Great Britain, Russia and France had been finalized with the Anglo-Russian Convention, signed on August 31, 1907,

to its administration. Another lodge which was born from the French obedience lodge *La Renaissance* and named *Terakki ve İttihat Hakiki Muhipleri* also joined the new Supreme Council.

⁴⁹⁷ Ayan, 16. The Spanish obedience lodge *Constitución* and the Italian obedience lodge *Bisanzio Risorta* were two such lodges which transferred their allegiance to the new Ottoman obedience.

⁴⁹⁸ Berger, "European Freemasonries," 4. Berger asserts that "while lodges were founded clandestinely in states where Freemasonry was forbidden or not officially permitted, these could not create grand lodges recognized by the state and acquire international representation."

in St. Petersburg. The subsequent meeting of King Edward VII and Czar Nicholas II in Reval (today's Tallinn) in June 1908 where negotiations took place regarding the future of Macedonia, stirred anxiety among the Young Turks and was one of the factors that precipitated the Young Turk revolution to take place the next month. According to E.F. Knight, who published his book the year following the revolution:

It had been calculated by the Young Turks that the time would not be ripe for their great coup until the autumn of 1909, but the menace of further foreign intervention in Macedonia and an active campaign against the Committee, which was opened by the Palace at the beginning of 1908, precipitated the revolt...; ...intended co-operation of England and Russia greatly alarmed the Committee, such intervention, in the opinion of its leaders, necessarily leading to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, and to an immediate foreign domination of Macedonia...⁴⁹⁹

Shortly before the Reval meeting, the Committee had drawn up a manifesto⁵⁰⁰ upon secret meetings in Salonica in May 1908, and had sent it to the European governments. However, no reaction came from them. Knight goes on to say:

On June 10 that is, a week or so after the Committee had issued this manifesto King Edward VII met the Tsar at Reval, and shortly afterwards the details of the Anglo- Russian scheme for the pacification and better rule of Macedonia was communicated to the Powers. This forced the hands of the Committee; it was realised that the blow for Ottoman liberty must be struck soon, or it would be too late...⁵⁰¹

A similar view regarding the significance of the Reval meeting in hastening the outbreak of the Young Turk revolution was expressed from the American perspective with a retrospective evaluation a decade later.⁵⁰² Şükrü Hanioglu asserts in a similar vein that “had the Reval meeting of June 1908 between the Russian czar

⁴⁹⁹ E.F. Knight, *The Awakening of Turkey: A History of the Turkish Revolution* (London: John Milne, 1909), 129–30.

⁵⁰⁰ The manifesto claimed that the efforts of the European Powers to introduce reforms into Macedonia had been unsuccessful and injurious to Ottomans. Despite the failure of the measures they adopted, the Powers were still about to make Macedonia the arena of yet further experiments. The CUP asserted that “these plans of England and Russia would sever Macedonia from the Ottoman Empire” and that they could not accept “these proposed measures which would lead to the general ruin of the empire.” See Knight, 130–34.

⁵⁰¹ Knight, 134.

⁵⁰² Frank Maloy Anderson, Amos Shartle Hershey, and National Board For Historical Service, *Handbook for the Diplomatic History of Europe, Asia, and Africa, 1870–1914* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O, 1918), 371.

[sic] and the British king not taken place, the CPU [sic] would have commenced its campaign to foment unrest at a relatively late date.”⁵⁰³ Although the significance of this impact in bringing about the revolution, according to Donald Quataert, has been discredited later by some historians, no alternative has emerged.⁵⁰⁴

The efforts of the CUP to improve the relations with Britain following the Revolution of 1908 would eventually fail due to the complexity of certain issues and the clashing interests. However, this failure was not just the result of the recent preponderance of the CUP but came at the end of a long period of ebbs and flows of the relations between the two empires in the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth while the fluctuating state affairs and political interests quite often dictated the public sentiments as well. The favorable relations in the post-Crimean War era and the acceptance of Ottoman Empire into the Concert of Europe had suffered a blow especially after the Bulgarian problems of 1876 when the Ottoman administration was highly denounced in the British press creating a negative public sentiment against the Ottomans. The subsequent British occupation of Egypt in 1882 was a sore point for the Ottoman Empire. This major takeover also changed the political outlook of Britain and the internal politics of Egypt gained priority within British foreign relations with the Ottomans. In the first decade of the twentieth century, as Britain kept on putting pressure on the Ottoman administration for further reforms in the country's rule and economy, it also wanted to preserve the concessions and capitulations in the way they were formerly established to Britain's benefit. Furthermore, despite the frequent intrusions into Ottoman affairs, the

⁵⁰³ Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902–1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 237.

⁵⁰⁴ Donald Quataert, “The 1908 Young Turk Revolution: Old and New Approaches,” *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 13, no.1 (July 1979): 23.

independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire was advocated until as late as the early Second Constitution Era, albeit it with gradually less intensity.⁵⁰⁵

The retrospective view suggesting the gradual decline of relations between the British and Ottoman Empires since the favorable policy of the conservative government of Benjamin Disraeli to prop up the Ottoman Empire against the expansion of Russia, also argues that the rise of mutual enmity reached a peak with the aforementioned Reval meeting between Russia and Britain in 1908 aimed at checking the increasing German influence on the Ottoman Empire. Evidence remaining from only a few years prior shows that the general sentiment prevailing in Istanbul towards Britain was rather positive during the early years of the century, according to some British subjects living in the city. A couple of letters from 1902, penned by Sir James William Whittall (1838–1910), founder of the British Chamber of Commerce of Turkey and a prominent member of the British community in Istanbul, testify to the position of such leading men of commerce in the city as a major source of information for the embassy due to their close relations with the Ottoman administrative and commercial networks. In the two most probably consecutive letters addressed to the then British Ambassador Sir Nicholas Roderick O'Connor (1843–1908), dated March 14, 1902 and Good Friday 1902, respectively, Whittall wrote:

- (1) I have had conversations with my usual informants on Turkish affairs...They all agree that now is the time for H.M. Govt. to get what it wants, for the Turks generally look upon England as their sole "harbour of refuge" & if pressed by her will yield to her demands easily. There is much talk in Palace circles of combinations for giving Italy, Austria & Russia further slices of Turkish territory & they look upon these rumours as omens of what will happen sooner or later. The fact is there is a great uneasiness all round & no man call his soul his own.
- (2) My Turkish friend who two years ago used to rap out against England told me that it was wonderful how all the Turks now regard England as their

⁵⁰⁵ Joseph Heller, *British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire 1908-1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1983), 1–16.

only possible deliverer. Not one in a thousand, he added, thinks otherwise. As for the Germans, they are hated, he said, & looked upon as blood suckers—as for the Russians they are feared.⁵⁰⁶

Although the views conveyed to Whittall by his purportedly important local acquaintances are possibly biased by a motive to appeal to the expectations of their interlocutor, they nevertheless reflect the fluctuating sentiments among the Ottoman officials and public, given the ever changing political positions of European powers in their efforts to make the most out of the imminent resolution of the Eastern Question. The observations of Whittall are also premonitions of the political events to unfold in a few years' time when the rising tensions in Macedonia would come to a head.

The change of regime in July 1908 ushered in a short period of a “wait and see” strategy for Britain. Since the British Foreign Office had previously shown a lack of interest in regards to the Young Turk movement, the revolution caught it seemingly unprepared and with rather insufficient knowledge of the leading cadre of the movement now politically represented in the CUP.⁵⁰⁷ Initially an encouraging attitude was exhibited towards the new regime by the British Foreign Office. The Sultan had close relations with Germany, but now that the Young Turks were in power, there was an opportunity to usurp the dominant position of Germany. The perception of the initial negative sentiment towards Germany was reflected in a couple of letters written within the same year of the revolution, by another prominent member of the British community in Istanbul, Sir Edwin Pears, who was a British barrister practicing law at the Ottoman consular courts. After settling in Istanbul in 1873, he had occasionally contributed articles to the British Press as early as the

⁵⁰⁶ Two Letters from J. William Whittall to Sir Nicholas Roderick O'Connor, <https://www.bibelotslondon.com/turkey-archive-of-signed-letters-queen-victorias-ambassador-young-turks-1902-10-4387-p.asp>.

⁵⁰⁷ Heller, *British Policy*, 6–7.

Bulgarian uprising of 1876. In his letter from Istanbul dated August 22, 1908, and addressed to Lady O'Connor, a few months after the decease of her husband the late British Ambassador, Sir Edwin Pears shared his observations regarding the view towards Germany in the immediate aftermath of the revolution:⁵⁰⁸

Now as to Germany; her prestige has gone it is really remarkable how strong anti-German feeling is. An attempt was made, very curious & ingenious, to get von der Golz named, if not as Minister of War at least as Inspector General of the Army, but the Committee which is the actual ruler would not listen a bit.

Although Pears did not have an anti-CUP sentiment, he still had his doubts as to the future of the revolution. He wrote: "Everyone appears to have full confidence in the continuance of the present regime, but as I have indicated I have misgivings."

In a subsequent letter dated December 21, 1908, and again addressed to Lady O'Connor, Pears was still highly satisfied with the favorable feeling in the Ottoman government towards Britain and the unpopular standing of Germany at the time:⁵⁰⁹

We had wonderful doings as you will see by the papers on Thursday last at the opening of the Turkish Parliament. We have often wondered what Sir Nicholas would have thought of it. Let me give you one illustration of the way he has been spoken of lately. I was present at a meeting of the Revolutionary Committee where England was greatly glorified, we being now first in popular estimation & Germany last. One of the speakers said that they all recognised that while Sir Nicholas was working for the welfare of all the population of Macedonia, he was opposed by all the palace influence, that England's object as presented by him was for the good of the whole country, that he was not seeking concessions for British subjects which were ruinous to the country. Therefore, said he, we regard England our friend.

However, this positive mood was soon to deteriorate as the British Foreign Office chose to secure its good relations with Russia, albeit at the expense of the Ottomans, completing its transition towards a policy favoring the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire acting in conformity with the other major powers. The unfolding of political

⁵⁰⁸ Letter from Sir Edwin Pears to Lady O'Connor, dated August 22, 1908, <https://www.bibelotslondon.com/turkey-archive-of-signed-letters-queen-victorias-ambassador-young-turks-1902-10-4387-p.asp>.

⁵⁰⁹ Letter from Sir Edwin Pears to Lady O'Connor, dated December 21, 1908, <https://www.bibelotslondon.com/turkey-archive-of-signed-letters-queen-victorias-ambassador-young-turks-1902-10-4387-p.asp>.

events before and after the 1908 Revolution influenced not only the British attitude towards the new Young Turk regime but also that of British Freemasonry towards the young Ottoman obedience, as discussed further below.

4.2.2. The Shared Efforts of the Ottoman Obedience and the CUP

There was a deliberate effort in the formation of the Ottoman obedience to bring together Freemasons of different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds as manifested by the diverse composition of the founding members.⁵¹⁰ The idea of a supra-national fraternal organization was in agreement with the Young Turk political ideology to keep the empire's diverse elements together in its remaining territories. On the other hand, only the Freemasonries of the Latin branch were involved in the endeavor to establish the Ottoman obedience. In addition to the members of the lodges newly formed under the auspices of the reorganized Ottoman Supreme Council of the AASR, all the Freemasons who took part in the process leading to the formation of the Ottoman Grand Orient in the summer of 1909 were members of the Latin obediences, predominantly Italian and to a lesser extent, French and Spanish.⁵¹¹ The Grande Oriente d'Italia stood out as the main endorser of the foundation of an Ottoman national obedience. It presented itself as the fosterer of the Young Turk revolution not only by having provided the secluded environment for the Ottoman Freedom Society's development into the CUP in Salonica but also by having nurtured in its bosom many members of the Carbonari movement as well as the notable figures of the Risorgimento, Garibaldi and Mazzini, who had set an example

⁵¹⁰ For the names of the Ottoman Freemasons who took part in the foundation of the Ottoman Supreme Council and the Ottoman Grand Orient, see Tables 5a-5b and 6a-6b in Appendix C.

⁵¹¹ See Tables 6a-6b in Appendix C.

for the Young Turk Freemasons in their secret endeavors towards revolution.⁵¹² While the support from the Italian obedience was more open and prompt, that of the French came with considerable delay despite the constant petitions by some members of the obedience at the Ottoman capital, like Noradounghian and Cohen.⁵¹³ It was not until early 1911 that the Grand Orient de France finally established official amicable relations with the Ottoman obedience. In a letter by Vadécard, the General Secretary of the Grand Orient de France, addressed to the French obedience lodge *La Renaissance*, on January 16, 1911, he informed the members that since the Grand Orient de France maintained fraternal relations with the “*Grand Orient Ottoman*,” they needed to treat the lodges and Freemasons of this obedience amicably.⁵¹⁴

It is only possible to speculate on the initial reluctance on the part of the Grand Orient de France to recognize the legitimacy of the young Ottoman obedience, given the insufficiency of available documentation. Some cases of expedited promotions to higher degrees and certain other allegations of irregularity may have kept the French obedience’s recognition pending. However, such deviations from customary procedures and formal practices do not seem to have deterred the Italian obedience from its early recognition of the Ottoman obedience, while at the same time it maintained its status of amicable relations with the French obedience. The close affiliation of Istanbul Freemasons with the cause of the CUP may have also played a part on the initial ambivalence of the French obedience in recognizing its Ottoman counterpart given the political commitment of France to the Triple Entente.

⁵¹² Iacovella, *Gönye ve Hilal*, 11, 33, 37–38. A conference given by Ettore Ferrari, a renowned sculptor and the then Grand Master of the Grande Oriente d'Italia, during which he expounded the contribution of the Italian obedience lodge *Macedonia Risorta* to the Young Turk movement and the formation of the CUP organization, was attended in Genoa by a group of Young Turks on an official visit to Italy in May, 1910.

⁵¹³ See Section 3.3.

⁵¹⁴ Anduze, *La Franc-Maçonnerie*, 98–99.

On the part of the British, an aloof attitude towards the new Ottoman obedience was most likely politically motivated as the Ottoman Freemasons' attempts to form their national obedience was seen as closely affiliated with the political ambitions and concerns of the CUP. On the other hand, given the divided stance of European Freemasonries at the time, it was also a reaction to the involvement of Latin Freemasonries in the young obedience's foundation.

The reciprocal relationship between the newly formed Ottoman obedience and the political entity of the CUP is evident from the significant number of founding members related to the CUP.⁵¹⁵ As the Committee ascended into the ruling power zone, it not only needed to consolidate its domestic position within the Empire but also vied for international recognition by the European powers. For the new Ottoman obedience, on the other hand, such recognition was primarily dependent on its recognition by the Ottoman state, since the emergence of Grand Lodges in European imperial territories was associated with their status of recognition by their respective states. The Grand Lodge of Hungary was formed after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 (*Ausgleich*) which re-established the former sovereignty of the Kingdom of Hungary, whereas the Grand Lodge of Vienna emerged only after 1918.⁵¹⁶ Now that the CUP had a powerful participation in the Ottoman government, a national obedience in the Ottoman territories was sanctioned for the first time by its state and it was ready to seek recognition among foreign obediences. This pursuit for international association soon overlapped with the political aspirations and struggles of a rapidly dissociating empire and its government. A number of delegations representing the Ottoman people and their government embarked on visits to European states following the Young Turk revolution. Among them were some CUP

⁵¹⁵ See Table 4 in Appendix C for members of the CUP affiliated with Freemasonry.

⁵¹⁶ Berger, "European Freemasonries."

members who were also Freemasons. As the following episodes demonstrate, they attended meetings with both government officials and Freemasonic bodies.

During a very early international engagement on behalf of the CUP, the visit of a small Young Turk delegation to Paris is worthy of interest.⁵¹⁷ Two leading members of the Committee, Doctor Nāzım Bey and lieutenant-colonel Aḥmed Djemāl (later Djemāl Paṣha)⁵¹⁸ were accompanied by a Salonican merchant, Henri de Toledo, and in Paris a seasoned advocate of the Young Turk cause, Aḥmed Riḍā (Rıẓā) Bey also joined them. Just a few months had passed since the revolution but the political agenda of the CUP was already teeming with international problems for the Ottoman government. Bulgaria's declaration of independence, the Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Cretan proclamation of union with Greece all had taken place within a few days of one another in early October.⁵¹⁹ The Paris visit was a swiftly organized one which took place only days later in mid-October and lasted for a few weeks. It seems that this initiative to obtain support from the French government for the ongoing tribulations of the Ottoman Empire and to develop a lobby for the CUP capitalizing on the existing sympathy for the Young Turk revolution in France was not sanctioned by the Ottoman government as a whole, as the CUP was not yet the dominant power within the government. Despite several successful social encounters and maybe some progress in matters pertaining to education and commerce, the visit was without any concrete result for Ottoman international politics. A propitious social engagement on the part of Doctor Nāzım and Aḥmed Djemāl resulted in several cordial meetings with the Freemasons of Paris. While Aḥmed Djemāl was a member of the Salonica lodge *Veritas*, Doctor

⁵¹⁷ Paul Dumont, "Une Délégation Jeune-Turque à Paris," *Balkan Studies*, no.28/2 (1987): 297–325. Dumont uses a collection of personal notes and documents left behind by this small delegation of CUP members to present a picture of their activities.

⁵¹⁸ See Appendix B.

⁵¹⁹ Anderson and Hershey, *Handbook*, 380–85, 397.

Nâzım was not a Freemason as he stated at the beginning of his speech delivered at a reception at the Grand Orient on November 7, 1908. However, the content of the speech shows he was well-versed in the ideology of Freemasonry. According to Paul Dumont's interpretation, the two Young Turks sought the support of the French obedience for the Ottoman cause in the ongoing Balkan crisis. Although they probably overestimated the influence to be wielded by the French Freemasonic institution on international affairs, the French obedience still maintained a positive stance on the subsequent political challenges of the Ottoman administration.⁵²⁰ Celil Layiktez, on the other hand, refers to the powerful speech of Dr. Nâzım where he solicited the support of the French people and Freemasons in the struggle to make freedom of thought prevail in the world, and asserts that the message delivered on behalf of the Central Committee of the CUP was influential to enlist the support of the French public until the First World War.⁵²¹

Another interesting international engagement where the interests of the CUP and the then very young Ottoman obedience overlapped was a visit to Austria-Hungary held in late 1909. The crisis created by the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in October 1908 by Austria-Hungary, after having stirred a good deal of frustration and protestation on the part of the Ottoman administration and public, had subsided after the Ottoman government signed an agreement in early 1909 relinquishing any remaining claims in Bosnia in return for a payment in appraisal of the Ottoman public land. The boycotting of Austrian products and enterprises in the major Ottoman cities which continued for some time resulted in an unexpected act of public solidarity which inflicted significant losses to the Austro-Hungarian merchants and companies. Later in the same year, in an attempt of international

⁵²⁰ Dumont, "Une Délégation," 317–25.

⁵²¹ Layiktez, *Türkiye'de Masonluk*, 114.

public relations to improve its image in the eyes of the Ottoman general public, Austria-Hungary extended an invitation for a travel organization to include a diverse group of Ottoman citizens from all walks of life. More than two hundred Ottomans were to be hosted at the major cities of Austria-Hungary for more than a month including visits to factories and schools to offer the participating Ottomans a cultural and industrial experience of the empire. Although this whole event does not seem to have occupied any major place in the rather convoluted domestic and international political affairs of the Ottoman administration at the time, a Freemasonic encounter that took place in Budapest is worthy of interest.

In a news article of a Freemasonic journal of the period, the social encounter of a so-called Young Turk party of “230 persons of various classes of Ottoman society” with Hungarian Freemasons at a “solemn assembly” in Budapest organized by the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary was reported by the title of “a Turko-Hungarian Fete.” According to the article, dated September 5, 1910, and based on the account of *The Bulletin for the International Bureau for Masonic Affairs*, published at Berne, Switzerland, the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary commissioned the lodges *Comenius*, *Democratia*, *Elizabeth*, *Patria* and *Neuschloss the Old Fatihful Ones* to organize the event in Budapest on October 22, 1909.⁵²² For the occasion, Hungarian Freemasons welcomed a group of Ottoman Freemasons as representatives of Young Turks whom they perceived to have recently brought freedom to the Ottoman lands formerly suffering under the brutal rule of a despot. The perception of the close relation between Freemasonry and the Young Turk revolution was evident in this welcome and the Hungarian Freemasons were not an exception regarding this opinion commonly held by other European obediences as well.

⁵²² C.E.Cullen, “A Turko-Hungarian Fete,” *The American Tyler-Keystone* XXV, (1910–1911): 110.

A rather striking aspect of the speeches delivered at the gathering organized by the Hungarian Grand Lodge was the nature of the views pertaining to Freemasonry as expressed by the prominent members of the lodges present at the event. These ideas clearly exposed the Hungarian obedience as one with a very liberal stance and with rather radical leanings towards political affairs. The Hungarian Freemasons expressed their admiration for the struggle of their “Young Turk brethren” to establish freedom and fraternity within the Ottoman lands. A significant demonstration of transnational fraternal affiliation was a shared protestation of the very recent tragic event of the execution of Francisco Ferrer Guardia, a Catalan radical freethinker, libertarian pedagogue and Freemason.⁵²³ The radical, libertarian and predominantly anti-clerical leanings of the Hungarian Freemasonic institution, similar to those exemplified in the person of Ferrer, were clearly voiced in the outcry of those who took the floor.

The Hungarian Freemasons presented a rather vivid example of how, in certain European cultures of Freemasonry, the radical and anti-clerical sentiments went hand in hand with each other. The speech of a Hungarian Freemason, Armand Sasvari, from the *Democratia* lodge was representative of the anti-clerical sentiments present at the meeting with the Ottoman party. Moreover, the radical views addressed to the Young Turks were enhanced with a clear anti-militaristic outlook as well:

You will wage an implacable war against all the causes of weakness in the Mohametan world. The Koran itself condemns all that may constitute an obstacle to the triumph of the Mohametans, for the power of Islam must be your supreme aim. You will combat your adversaries and your oppressors with their own arms. Let us hope that it will not be necessary to enrich Krupp,

⁵²³ Léo Campion, *Le Drapeau noir, l'Équerre et le Compas* (Brussels: Éditions Alternative Libertaire, 2012), 66–73, https://libertaire.pagesperso-orange.fr/drapeau_noir_equerre_compas.pdf. Francisco Ferrer Guardia (Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia in Catalan) was initiated into Freemasonry in 1884 at the lodge *La Verdad* in Barcelona. At the Budapest gathering, it is probable that there were Ottoman Freemasons who belonged to the Salonica lodge with the same name but in Latin: *Veritas*.

Skoda, Schneider and Manfred Weiss. It will perhaps suffice to realize the social and economic reforms...to enforce the Masonic ideas in all the branches of your social, agricultural, industrial and commercial activity, without forgetting your judicial and political administration. But what Masonic ideas?⁵²⁴

As the answer to his own ambitious question, Sasvari went on with a critical evaluation of the various Freemasonries of Europe at the time which was a bold and informative interpretation expressing a comparative view of the Anglo-Saxon and Latin Freemasonries already in conflict for a few decades at that time. The social and political challenges of the Freemasonic institution as a whole were evident in these critical remarks:

For these ideas differ somewhat. Shall you borrow them from the Slavonians? The contingent they supply to Freemasonry is very small. In Germany the Masons are inclined to maintain the established order, even if at times it is detestable. Their conceptions are timidly liberal, often frankly intolerant for everything that is not Lutheran or Calvinist. In the great countries of the Anglo-Saxon race, charity is practiced on an immense scale but applicants who are not Christians or who do not belong to the Caucasian race are not accepted. As if civilization did not have its source in Persian Egypt [*sic*], in Mesopotamia, and in the isles and peninsulas of the Eastern part of the Mediterranean. As if Japan had not passed through its stupendous revival. You might feel inclined to adopt the ideas of the Latin Masonic lodges. You may see prevailing there rather impetuously the boldness of free thought, socialistic claims, and the desire for absolute equality.⁵²⁵

Sasvari went on to declare the position of the Hungarian Freemasonry among the various Freemasonic cultures presented and in doing so he was most likely encouraged by the presence of Ottoman Freemasons who were members of Latin obediences and presumably shared similar anti-clerical views:

Among these various tendencies which are rather heterogeneous Hungarian Freemasonry has made its choice. The majority of our lodges affirm ideas which are called heathen and clearly reject ideas which are called Christian. What will the Ottoman brethren do? Will they be on the side of the so-called Christians, so contrary to their traditions of tolerance?⁵²⁶

⁵²⁴ Cullen, "A Turko-Hungarian Fete," 110.

⁵²⁵ Cullen, 110.

⁵²⁶ Cullen, 110.

Recognizing Ottoman Freemasonry as a notable contributor to the overthrow of a ruler, perceived as a despot by the European general public, the Hungarian Freemasons expressed their commendation for the Ottoman Freemasons present at the meeting, correspondingly exalting the significance of Freemasonry in the Ottoman revolution. Prof. Ignác Pfeifer, as he addressed the Ottoman Freemasons in appreciation of their struggles against despotism, also alluded to the high ideals of Freemasonry albeit with a rather militant emphasis:

If Masonry contents itself with contemplation it ends in stagnation. It is only militant Masonry that overawes and fulfills its mission. You have led Masonry into the way of aggregation where it will become strong like an army ready for fighting. Our Ottoman brethren here present have shown that Masonry which is ready to fight for liberty is strong enough to triumph over tyranny...The real historical glories we appreciate are those which have everywhere broken the chains of despotism and given liberty to millions of human creatures. Our Turkish brethren have made history in this sense; they have shed little blood, but this little has fertilized the soil of a great Empire.⁵²⁷

Aware of their Ottoman counterparts' affiliation with Latin Freemasonries, the Hungarians did not shy away from exposing their ideological stance with clear messages.

Excerpts from the speeches of two participating Ottoman Freemasons from Salonica do not exhibit anti-clerical sentiments similar to those of the Hungarian Freemasons but are certainly in a similar vein when it comes to radical revolutionary spirit. These Salonica Freemasons who had also been active proponents of the Young Turk revolution were Kāzım Nāmī Bey⁵²⁸ and Sam Lévy⁵²⁹. The name of the former appears in the cited article as “Bro. Kiazam Namyk Bey [*sic*] (*Macedonia Resorta*).” In all likelihood this should refer to Meḥmed Kāzım Nāmī (Duru), who was an army officer, a pedagogue and a founding member of the Ottoman Freedom Society in Salonica which later evolved into the CUP. In various sources he is depicted as a

⁵²⁷ Cullen, 110.

⁵²⁸ See Appendix B.

⁵²⁹ See Appendix B.

member of the Salonica lodge *Macedonia Risorta*. His birth name was Mehmed Kāzım, whereas Nāmī was a later assumed name he probably came up with for writing poetry. His name and birthdate (1876) match the records of a certain Kāzım Mehmed in the lodge registers, with an initiation date of March 27, 1906.⁵³⁰ This initiation date agrees with his known life and activities during that period, as he was appointed in 1903 as the aide-de-camp of the Third Army executive command in Salonica and later in September 1906 he became one of the founders of the Ottoman Freedom Society. A minor flaw in this theory arises due to the listing of his profession as civil servant in the extant lodge record. At the time of his initiation he was an officer as well as a teacher at various Salonica schools. However, he resigned from the Army in 1910 and the rest of his career was as a civil servant involved in educational affairs. So, it may be assumed that this was either a choice of representation in the records or possibly a later update of the registers which span a period of membership until 1923.

In his memoirs, which Kāzım Nāmī wrote during a much later part of his life, there is no reference to any Freemasonic event during his visit to Budapest, possibly as a personal preference to avoid associating this official visit with Freemasonry. This is not surprising given the rather scarce reference in his memoirs to his involvement in Freemasonry. However, he gives a noteworthy account of his engagement in the organizing of the Salonican participants for the journey in question to the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. He points out that on various occasions he delivered speeches which he confesses to have felt rather uneasy about. He also mentions a visit to a school in Budapest where young girls were trained to become

⁵³⁰ Iacovella, *Gönye ve Hilal*, 60.

teachers for nursery schools. Highly impressed by this visit, Kāzım Nāmī organized a nursery school upon his return to Salonica.⁵³¹

The other Ottoman Freemason cited to have delivered a speech at the event was Sam Lévy who was a member of a prominent Jewish family of Salonica. Being a true polyglot with as diverse languages as Judeo-Spanish, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Serbian, French and Hebrew under his belt, he worked as an interpreter for the Ottoman Municipality of Salonica. Having studied at the Sorbonne and lived in France a considerable amount of time, he contributed to the Salonica newspaper *Le Journal de Salonique* which had been started by his father Saadi Lévy in 1895. He later assumed its editorship as well as that of his father's other newspaper *Epoca*.⁵³²

The enthusiastic speeches delivered by the two Ottoman Freemasons were testimony to the then prevalent optimistic political climate within the Ottoman Empire only a few months subsequent to the overthrow of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd II. An avid supporter and participant of the Young Turk movement, Sam Lévy spoke with a very clear statement of the close connection between the revolution and the Freemasonry of Salonica:

You are well aware, my dear Brethren, that it was in our lodges and especially in those of Salonica that was prepared, to a great extent, this gigantic piece of work which overturned the old despotic form of government in order to put in its place the constitutional rule of liberty. Equality and government will be established, that we demolished the bastions of Abdul Hamid's autocracy and that our Revolution became an Evolution of peace.⁵³³

Kāzım Nāmī in his speech also referred to the significance of the lodges in preparation of the revolution:

⁵³¹ Kazım Nami Duru, *İttihat ve Terakki Hatıralarım* (Istanbul: Sucuoğlu Matbaası, 1957), 37–38.

⁵³² See Joëlle Dalègre, “‘Le plus beau rêve réalisé’: Le Journal de Salonique et les Jeunes-Turcs, 1er juillet 1908-30 juin 1909,” *Cahiers Balkaniques*, no.40 (2012), <http://journals.openedition.org/ceb/1062>.

⁵³³ Cullen, “A Turko-Hungarian Fete,” 111.

Our hearts are filled with gratitude and will never forget that the spark which set fire to the powder-magazine flashed forth from the Masonic Lodges. The masonic light burned in secret. But its power was miraculous.⁵³⁴

In another Freemasonic journal of the period, the same gathering at Budapest is narrated under the title of “an international masonic event” referring to the same Bulletin as its source.⁵³⁵ However in this account one more Ottoman Freemason is mentioned to have given a speech. Rıdā Tewfîk (*Rıza Tevfik*) Bey, who at the time was a leading proponent of the CUP and a deputy of the Parliament since the first elections following the revolution, was a man known for his literary prowess, particularly as a poet, and for his deep interest in philosophy, the latter earning him the nickname “feylesof” or the philosopher.⁵³⁶ Among his intellectual engagements was his lifelong involvement in Sufism which was an integral part of his association with the mystical aspects of Freemasonry. According to Thierry Zarcone, Rıdā Tewfîk, a “politician, Freemason, philosopher and ‘enlightened’ Sufi,” had a pivotal position as the proponent of a new kind of Sufism which facilitated both the penetration of occidental ideas and the integration of ‘modernity’ into the Muslim Ottoman society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵³⁷ Just a few months prior to this event in Budapest, Rıdā Tewfîk had taken part in the formation of both the Ottoman Supreme Council of the AASR and the Ottoman Grand Orient. In the reorganization meeting of the Supreme Council, Rıdā Tewfîk was among the participant members who were all bestowed the thirty-third degree on this special occasion.⁵³⁸ In the first meeting of the Ottoman Grand Orient on August 1, 1909, Rıdā Tewfîk was elected the Grand Orator, quite a fitting office for his well-known

⁵³⁴ Cullen, 111.

⁵³⁵ “An International Masonic Event,” *The American Freemason* I, no.1 (November 1909): 312.

⁵³⁶ Abdullah Uçman, “Rıza Tevfik Bölükbaşı,” in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.35 (İstanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2008), 68–70.

⁵³⁷ Zarcone, *Mystiques*, 329–55.

⁵³⁸ “Osmanlı Yüksek Şûrası,” 19.

oratorical prowess.⁵³⁹ Some years later, he served as the Grand Master of the Ottoman Grand Orient between 1918 and 1920, during which he would leave a rather controversial legacy through his effort towards purging of the former Union and Progress affiliates from Freemasonic membership under the Grand Orient.

In his speech during the Budapest meeting, which pointed to the ideals of Freemasonry and the Young Turk aspirations towards their realization, Rıdā Tewfîk's words were rather subtle in their reference to the challenges of the fraternity and tactfully critical about the shortcomings of political affairs even in those countries claiming to be enlightened:

Universal Freemasonry has been fighting for centuries for Liberty, Equality and Fraternity and in Europe and America it has considerably contributed to the transformation of the world, to the preparation of numerous political and social reforms, to the establishment of rights for all, and to the alleviation of human suffering. Nevertheless, we are far from the day when Masonry will have realized all its aspirations and will be able to consider its mission as accomplished. The nations still exhaust their strength in preparing for fratricidal combats... and if this is so in the most enlightened countries where Masonry has been preaching the word for centuries and has united tens of thousands of the noblest men, how could we triumph at short notice in the Ottoman Empire where everything is still to be done? We look forward to the future, however, with full confidence... The Young Turk Committee from the outset has been inspired in all its actions by the great Masonic influence which combats prejudices, and unites the various races in the common aspirations of the whole of mankind. This Committee has formed in Turkey an army of free-thinking men. These have made successful assaults upon the worm-eaten edifice of despotism, which was corroded by the microbes of obscurantism.⁵⁴⁰

In the immediate aftermath of the Young Turk revolution and the initial phase of the gradual rise of the CUP, the liberal discourse expressed by some adherents of the CUP, as exemplified above, demonstrated that they perceived Freemasonry as a vehicle which served their radical political pursuits. This was even the case for the CUP members who were not Freemasons, as the episode above regarding Doctor Nâzım Bey suggests. At least in this period, the ambitions of the CUP to unite the

⁵³⁹ "Réunion tenue au Temple Maçonnique à l'Orient de Constantinople le 1^{er} Août 1909," *Mimar Sinan*, no.157 (December 2012): 35, 37.

⁵⁴⁰ "An International Masonic Event," 312.

various elements within the Ottoman territories and the universal fraternal ambitions of the newly formed Ottoman obedience coincided. However, the subsequent political and social developments hindered the realization of both ambitions.

4.2.3. The Challenges Facing Ottoman Freemasonry during the Few Years Prior to the First World War

The challenges faced by the Ottoman national obedience from the very start are intricately intertwined with the political troubles of the CUP itself, starting in the immediate aftermath of the latter's accession into the political arena of the empire. In the first phase of the Second Constitutional Era before the counter-revolution attempt of March 31, 1909, (April 13 according to the later adopted modern calendar), the CUP was only partially dominant in the government, the majority of whose appointees were still closely affiliated with the former regime. Both during this initial period and the following one in the immediate aftermath of the March 31 Incident, breakaways within the CUP's leading cadres occurred in considerable numbers. These did not hesitate to turn against the political entity of the movement, the Union and Progress Party, and oppositional factions came into being very rapidly.⁵⁴¹

A controversial topic is the position and involvement of Freemasonry during the several distinct periods of the CUP's existence as the most prominent element of Ottoman politics from 1908 to 1918. The contribution of the Salonican lodges to the

⁵⁴¹ The period during which the Union and Progress movement came out of its secret organizational status into the political limelight, as well as the subsequent periods of its rise into dominant political power where it stayed until the end of World War I, has been the subject of numerous works of research throughout the twentieth century. For a few well-known examples, see Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908–1914* (London: Oxford University press, 1969); Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler (Cilt 1): İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi 1908–1918* (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1984); Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler (Cilt 3): İttihat ve Terakki* (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1989); Sina Akşin, *100 Soruda Jön Türkler ve İttihat ve Terakki* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1980).

formative years of the movement through their organizational and spatial capabilities which provided the much needed shelter for the development of the then secret organization is well-attested.⁵⁴² The statements of the CUP members expressed in the subsequent years also support this general opinion.⁵⁴³ On the other hand, the extent of the contribution of the Freemasonic institution at large to the success of the revolution itself as well as the degree to which Freemasonry was later affiliated with the organization and political apparatus of the CUP are open to debate. Orhan Koloğlu claims that the movement's leaders saw in Freemasonry a means to their radical political aims before the revolution and then a vehicle to help establish beneficial relations with the European powers in keeping with the Ottoman interests, although the efforts towards recognition of a national Ottoman Grand Orient by its foreign counterparts were eclipsed soon after its inception by the complications of international politics.⁵⁴⁴ The consecutive failures and challenges of the CUP in the political arena were conveyed into the international relations of the Ottoman obedience as well, arresting its progress in the face of hostile attitudes from its foreign counterparts.

The CUP members who joined Freemasonry constituted only a minor part of the organization as a whole. However, the presence of high ranking members of government and intellectuals of the late Ottoman era among Freemasons augmented the interest shown towards the institution by both domestic and foreign journals and newspapers like *Medjmu'a-i Ebu'l-Diyā'* (*Mecmua-i Ebüzziya*), *Osmanischer Lloyd* and *The Times*, which revealed the role and weight of Freemasonry in the state affairs of the period. Anti-Masonic views and publications were particularly on the rise. In 1911, Shehbenderzāde Filibeli Aḥmed Ḥilmī Efendi, the publisher of the

⁵⁴² See Section 3.3.

⁵⁴³ Duru, *İttihat ve Terakki*, 14.

⁵⁴⁴ Koloğlu, *İttihatçılar*.

newspaper *Hikmet*, published in fascicles the Léo Taxil book *Les mystères de la Franc-maçonnerie*, originally published in 1886. The exposure of this anti-Masonic publication to the Ottoman public, albeit with a 25 year delay, was combined with the aim of exposing the connection of the CUP with the Freemasonic institution. Ebu'l-Ḍiyā' Tewfīk (*Ebüzziya Tevfik*) wrote an article on June 16, 1911, in favor of Freemasonry in response to the publication of Léo Taxil's book and to an article published in the *Times*.⁵⁴⁵ Ebüzziya was an important journalist who often wrote in a vein similar to the intellectual aspirations of progressive minded writers of the post-Tanzīmāt era, while he also held on to an Ottomanist stance advocating the union of elements within the empire and the keeping of the imperial territories intact. Following his exile during the final years of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's rule of oppression, he was involved in politics after the Young Turk revolution, when he became a Parliamentary deputy as a member of the Union and Progress Party. In subsequent years, he was often occupied in polemical discussions of the period through the output of his own journal *Medjmu'a-i Ebu'l-Ḍiyā'*. After the publication of Ebüzziya's article of June 16, a debate between writers ensued as an anonymous article was published in the newspaper *Shehrāh*, in reply to that of Ebüzziya, who in return penned another one on June 30, 1911, once again defending the universal values of Freemasonry and justifying its veil of secrecy in its contribution to the formation and the cause of the CUP.⁵⁴⁶ An important aspect of Ebüzziya's comments was his acknowledgment of Freemasonry's engagements as a political vehicle. The favorable stance of the writer, however, would soon evolve into an unfavorable one

⁵⁴⁵ For a transliteration of the whole article of June 16, 1911, originally published in Ottoman Turkish in *Mecmua-i Ebüzziya*'s issue no.100, see Yavuz Selim Ağaoğlu, "Meşrutiyet Sonrası Osmanlı Basınında Masonluk I," *Mimar Sinan*, no.170 (March 2016): 19–26.

⁵⁴⁶ A transliteration to modern Turkish of this second article published on June 30, 1911, in *Mecmua-i Ebüzziya*, no.102, is included in Yavuz Selim Ağaoğlu, "Meşrutiyet Sonrası Osmanlı Basınında Masonluk 2- Mecmua-i Ebüzziya Sayı 102," *Mimar Sinan*, no.171 (June 2016): 44–51.

in the course of only five months as a consequence of the heated political debates of the period, as revealed later in this chapter.

The public interest in the relation of the CUP with the Freemasonic institution was also justified by the Freemasonic affiliation of a few names within the CUP leadership like Mehmed Tal'at Bey and Djāwid Bey, and later within the principal cadres of other factions that split from the main organization, like Rıdā Tewfîk Bey. Another justification stemmed from the continuing secrecy aspect of the CUP which lingered on until as late as August 1912 when its annual congress was for the first time held in Istanbul and monitored by a government inspector.

As the oppositional voices against the CUP and its leadership rose gradually through 1910 and 1911, various allegations were circulated through a collaborative effort of the opposition factions, their affiliated press outlets as well as foreign political networks. The most widely posited theory was that of a conspiracy of Freemasonry and Jews of Salonica which supposedly had taken control of the CUP from the very beginning. These conspiracy theories were brought to the public attention every now and then through these years by the opposition elements within the parliament, like the *Ahālî Fırkası* founded in 1910 and led by İsmâ'îl Hakkı Bey, the deputy of Gümölcine (Komotini), and the *Hizb-i Djedîd*, a faction formed within the CUP led by Mîralây (Colonel) Sâdık Bey and 'Abd al-'Azîz Medjîdî Efendi, both of which later evolved into the main oppositional party *Hürriyet ve İ'tilâf Fırkası* (Freedom and Accord Party) formed on November 21, 1911. A number of newspapers also provided the support to voice their criticism.⁵⁴⁷ On the other hand, members of the British diplomatic mission in Istanbul during the period between the

⁵⁴⁷ Koloğlu, *İttihatçılar*, 159–206. For a retrospective view of the subject, also see Mim Kemal Öke, *Kutsal Topraklarda Siyonistler ve Masonlar: İhânetler, Komplolar, Aldanmalar* (Istanbul: Çağ yayınları, 1990) and Mim Kemal Öke, "Young Turks, Freemasons, Jews and the Question of Zionism in the Ottoman Empire," in *Proceedings of the IIIrd Congress on the Social and Economic History of Turkey, Princeton University 24–26 August 1983* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1990), 29–46.

revolution and the First World War furnished the British Foreign Office with an anti-CUP sentiment to a great extent, as demonstrated below.

Although there was seemingly approval from the major European powers regarding the revolution of 1908 in the beginning, the subsequent transformation of the movement into the political entity of the CUP suffered from major challenges with the wars in the Balkans and Tripoli, causing deterioration in relations with particularly the Entente powers. As nationalistic policies complicated the Balkan issues, the continuation of the former Pan-Islamic policy constituted potential threats to the colonial interests of particularly the British Empire concerning a vast territory from the Middle East to Iran and India. In addition to the tough negotiations of such issues like the Baghdad-Gulf Railway and the control of the Persian Gulf, the British concerns to preserve its accord with Russia made it difficult for the Ottoman government to win over the British from the very start. The concerns on the part of Britain were intensified by the personal contributions of the leading members of the diplomatic mission in Istanbul through their reports which enhanced the British anti-Ottoman and anti-CUP stance.⁵⁴⁸

The hostile nature of the British policy had already reached a high point by the time of the Young Turk revolution and despite a temporary period of sympathy in its immediate aftermath, the ensuing antipathy of the Foreign Office towards the Ottoman Empire was to be epitomized in the person of the British Ambassador Sir Gerard Lowther in the years following the revolution. Lowther was appointed to the Sublime Porte very soon after the revolution of July 1908, succeeding the few months' office of George Head Barclay who was appointed as minister plenipotentiary after Sir Nicholas Roderick O'Connor died in March 1908 while still

⁵⁴⁸ Kedourie, "Young Turks," 92–93.

in post. O'Connor had witnessed the height of Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's oppressive rule during his long tenure since 1898 but Lowther arrived in a radically changed political atmosphere. His lack of experience in Ottoman affairs was most likely offset by the presence of Gerald Henry Fitzmaurice, who acted as the bridge between O'Connor and Lowther as a long time dragoman of the British Embassy since 1897 and the chief dragoman since 1907.⁵⁴⁹

The disillusionments of the CUP in the Ottoman foreign affairs, as well as the increasing opposition it experienced domestically, caused it to turn towards a German alliance and also adopt a gradually more nationalistic stance contrary to the earlier expectations of the non-Muslim elements. Lowther, who had been skeptical of an enduring success on the part of the CUP since the day of his appointment to Istanbul, had justified his suspicions with the eventual failure of the CUP's policy of uniting the Ottoman elements. A particular letter which he sent on May 29, 1910, to Sir Charles Hardinge, the then Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office was published by Elie Kedourie.⁵⁵⁰ Although signed by Lowther himself, the letter was most likely written by Fitzmaurice as claimed in one of his private correspondences.⁵⁵¹ Fitzmaurice was presumably the main source of the embassy's incoming information through his own social connections encompassing a wide range of acquaintances, the result of many years of networking during his long tenure in Istanbul. The detailed ideas and views expressed in the letter show a strong resemblance to those which were recorded in the annual report of the same year, sent from the British Embassy in Istanbul to the British Foreign Office. The "Turkey,

⁵⁴⁹ Based on his archival research on Fitzmaurice, G.R. Berridge has published the biography *Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939), Chief Dragoman of the British Embassy in Turkey* (Leiden, Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 2007). Berridge has also published a collection of Fitzmaurice's letters to George Lloyd under the title *Tilkidom and the Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2007).

⁵⁵⁰ Kedourie, "Young Turks," 94–103.

⁵⁵¹ Berridge, *Gerald Fitzmaurice*, 147.

Annual Report” of 1910 exhibited an exaggerated dislike of the CUP and its political actions within and without the empire as well as an effort to discredit it through associating it with an alleged conspiracy of Zionists and Freemasons, purportedly against the interests of the Christian elements as well as the Arab populations of the empire. In the report, the British Embassy’s views of the CUP included the supposition of a strong influence of the Salonican Jews and Zionist aspirations on its members and policies through particularly the collaboration of the Freemasonic organization:

It was now becoming more and more evident that the Committee of Union and Progress was succeeding in drawing into its meshes supporters by means of a spurious Freemasonry. The influential new deputy for Salonica, Carasso, was the founder of a lodge in connection with Italian Freemasonry. He induced officers and civilians to adopt Freemasonry with a view to exercising Jewish influence over the new dispensation in Turkey, and to many it appeared as if the new movement were rather a Jewish rather than a Turkish revolution. Djavid Bey, another deputy for Salonica and a clever and gifted crypto-Jew and Freemason, was made Minister of Finance, while Talaat Bey, also a Freemason, became Minister of the Interior. Hakkı Pasha, the Grand Vizier, was also approached, and many officers of the court-martial were Freemasons. Within a year twelve new lodges were started in Constantinople, and many in all the towns of Macedonia. Officials holding important and minor posts were given to understand that their position, advancement and consequently their livelihood, depended upon their being ‘brethren’. Some were induced to join by being told that Egypt, Crete and other questions affecting the national greatness of the country would be settled in favour of Turkey. They claimed to follow the ancient Scottish rite. All these lodges were mainly directed or inspired by Jews; the Greek, Armenian and other native Christian elements being almost entirely non-represented...From the foregoing inspection of Young Turkey movement in its present stage, it would appear to be principally Jewish and Turkish as opposed to other Ottoman elements, e.g., Arabs, Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians, etc.⁵⁵²

This supposed Zionist connection was also associated with a concern regarding the position of Russia with whom Britain had formed friendly relations at the time:

Nazim Bey, a very influential member of the Salonica committee, and said to be of Jewish extraction, has visited the Paris branch of the Judaeo Colonisation Association, and has advocated the importing of 200.000 Roumanian [*sic*] Jews into Macedonia and some millions of Russian Jews into Mesopotamia. Israel

⁵⁵² “Turkey, Annual Report, 1910” from Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey (February 14, 1911), Turkey-Annual Reports-(1909–1913), FO 424/250, 3, www.archivesdirect.amdigital.co.uk.

Zangwill has favoured a similar policy. Mesopotamia and Palestine are however only the ultimate goal of the Jews. The immediate end for which they are working is the practically exclusive economic capture of Turkey. This aspect of the Turkish revolution has an important political bearing on the problems of the Near East. The Jew hates Russia and its Government, and the fact that England is now friendly to Russia has the effect of creating a certain anti-British sentiment in committee circles.⁵⁵³

The report used a derogatory language towards Ottoman Freemasonry particularly based on its affiliation with the CUP. The exaggerated and contemptuous remarks were most plausibly a result of the desire to exert more influence on the British Foreign Office with these views, as much as they were a reflection of Fitzmaurice's and Lowther's personal outlook on the Young Turk revolution and the policies of the CUP. In most likelihood the Foreign Office's approach also influenced the outlook of British Freemasonries and they chose to preserve their hostile position which was also expressed in the report in a condescending manner:

This Freemasonry which has been spoken of fraternised at first with the members of a new British lodge founded in Constantinople shortly after the establishment of the constitution, but the latter soon began to discover that the ways of the native lodges, which were mostly run by Jews, were but a travesty and a prostitution of true Freemasonry, and eventually the Grand Lodge of Scotland pronounced them spurious, with the result that the English lodge closed its doors to all new masons here.⁵⁵⁴

These few years in the history of the Ottoman Empire were the first time Freemasonry had received so much mention in the British Foreign Office reports and correspondence, which may be explained by the increased significance of Freemasonry in its affiliation with the political apparatus of the state.

Sir Edwin Pears, having lived in Istanbul for more than 30 years at the time of the Young Turk Revolution, had an intimate understanding of Ottoman politics as well as a first-hand experience of living through this period at the capital. In his memoirs some of his recollections were related to the speculation of the CUP being a

⁵⁵³ "Turkey, Annual Report, 1910," 3.

⁵⁵⁴ "Turkey, Annual Report, 1910," 3.

conspiracy of Jews, atheists and Freemasons. Pears associated the opposition's portrayal of the CUP in such a conspiracy with the gradual accumulation of reactions against the CUP in the few years following the revolution:

While it is true that the great majority of the nation, irrespective of race and creed, were delighted to see the power of Abdul Hamid checked, the subsequent reforms which the makers of the Revolution judged necessary, in the first instance to maintain themselves in power, and in the second to provide for free government, created a great many reactionaries. All the dismissed employés throughout the capital, and indeed throughout the empire, naturally preferred the old régime. The thousands of spies saw their occupation gone. These were the two most important classes in the country who were discontented with the new Government. A third class, happily less important in point of numbers, were much counted upon by the reactionaries. These were the Moslem fanatics. One of the earliest cries raised against the members of the Committee of Union and Progress was that they consisted of Jews, atheists, and Freemasons. It was a dangerous cry, for several reasons.⁵⁵⁵

Pears claimed that the general disposition of the Turk had often been rather unfavorable towards the Jew, the prejudice being stronger especially among the poor Turks. His reasoning then as to the source of this association of the CUP with the Jews was expressed in these words:

The element of truth in that portion of the accusation against the Committee relating to Israelites was that in the Committee certain men of exceptional intelligence became from the first specially prominent. One amongst them, Jevad Bey [*sic*][*a misspelling of Djāvīd Bey*], shortly afterwards appointed Minister of Finance, was a man of financial ability and possessed of a great faculty for explaining what he meant. A native of Salonica, he is reputed to belong to a Crypto-Jewish sect largely represented in that city, and known as Dunmays [*sic*][*dönmes*], which professes Moslemism, but in secret practises the rites of the Jewish faith.⁵⁵⁶

As a Freemason himself and a British subject during a time when the relations between the CUP and Britain were not of an amicable nature, Pears' views on this subject are noteworthy. The fact that he remained unconvinced as to the plausibility of the said conspiracy theory may be to a certain extent due to his affiliation with Freemasonry as well as his general sympathy towards the Young

⁵⁵⁵ Sir Edwin Pears, *Forty Years in Constantinople: The recollections of Sir Edwin Pears 1873–1915* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1916), 257–58.

⁵⁵⁶ Sir Edwin Pears, 258.

Turk revolution. However, his observations of the political climate at the time reflected that at least for some segments of society these speculations were to some extent effective. Be that as it may, Pears' overall conclusion was that these suggestions of conspiracy brought hardly any harm on the cause of Young Turks:

As a mason [*sic*] myself, I can assert that very few indeed of the Party were masons before the Revolution. The fact which lent vividness to the term as revolutionary was that in the Italian Lodge in Salonica some members of the Committee had been accepted and, according to general repute, employed the Lodge as a means of keeping the movements of the revolutionary body from the outside world. The cry that the opponents of Abdul Hamid were Freemasons had indeed the effect of causing a great many Turks to desire to become masons, and indeed gave Freemasonry a lift in the country such as it had never had before. The Revolution, however, would not have made much progress if its supporters had been limited to Jews, atheists, and Freemasons. The cry that the revolutionary party consisted of them was really dangerous only in name. I doubt whether it did the cause of Young Turkey any harm whatever, except perhaps among the adherents of the Roman Catholic Church.⁵⁵⁷

The harm incurred on the public image of the CUP, on the other hand, may have been more significant than what was perceived by Pears. An interesting source that gives a good snapshot of the turning tides in the public view of the domestic affairs of the CUP and its affiliation with Freemasonry is an article written by Ebu'l-Diyā' Tewfīk (*Ebüzziya Teyfik*). Although he had shared certain ideals of the transformation brought about by the revolution and initially had been politically aligned with the CUP, also publishing his aforementioned writings in favor of Freemasonry, the article Ebüzziya published at the end of 1911 showed a clear transformation in his political views and displayed certain suspicions towards the political alliances of the CUP, especially expressed from a more conservative Ottomanist view that he preserved until his demise in early 1913. This was the last of the three articles related to Freemasonry, published by Ebüzziya between the months of June and November in 1911, and was entitled "Italian Lodges of Freemasonry and

⁵⁵⁷ Sir Edwin Pears, 258–59.

Zionism.”⁵⁵⁸ Although he was never initiated into Freemasonry, he expressed in this article that he had previously sympathized with the philanthropic deeds and universal aims of the Freemasonic institution. Despite his initial approval of the affiliation of the Young Turks and the Union and Progress movement with Freemasonry, Ebüzziya had taken a counter stance at this particular state of Ottoman politics, and his changing views were rigorously articulated in this article. The article clearly demonstrated the public dispute during the period in question concerning the alleged Zionist aims of certain members of the CUP and their supposed manipulation of the Ottoman Freemasonic organization in accordance with these ulterior motives.

In the few years from the proud procession of the Salonican Freemasons celebrating the Young Turk revolution in their Freemasonic attire, to the formation of the authoritative regime of the CUP amid oppositional fractures, the Freemasonic institution experienced not only praise and recognition as one of the facilitators of the revolution but also a good deal of negative propaganda based on the claims of its participation in conspiracies against the integrity of the empire and the domination of Islam in its remaining territories. While the political entanglements of Ottoman Freemasonry during this period enhanced its role and significance in the sociopolitical environment of the empire to a level never attained by the Ottoman Freemasons before, they also contributed to fractures in its organization and membership through its being carried into public debates mostly injurious to its image and standing, which had, for a brief period in the aftermath of the revolution, transcended the previous harm of many decades of anti-Masonic prejudices.

⁵⁵⁸ Ebüzziya Tefvik (Ebu'l-Diyā' Tewfik), “İtalyan Farmason Locaları ve Siyonizm,” *Medjmu'a-i Ebu'l-Diyā'* 12, no.121 (25 *Dhu al-qa'da* 1329 / November 17, 1911): 129–34. A transliteration of this article into the Latin alphabet and its translation into English are given in Appendix E, as it provides a rare insight into the dominant and rivaling views of the period from the pen of one of its prominent intellectuals.

4.2.4. The First World War: The Final Stage and a New Beginning

During the few years leading to the First World War, the lodges, which still preserved a composite membership of different ethnic and religious elements, had many active members that belonged to the CUP movement. However, due to the intertwining of political life with associations including that of Freemasonry, a polarization of political positions also developed among Freemasons, particularly in the lodges of the Ottoman capital. There were Freemason members in both the CUP and its opposition.

Following the loss of Balkan territories prior to the First World War, the Ottoman Empire had to confine itself to Anatolia and the Middle East. After Salonica and other major urban centers of the Balkans were severed from the empire, the territorial sovereignty of the Ottoman Grand Orient over the lodges in that region ceased accordingly. During the war, Freemasonic activity had an intermittent existence. After the Ottomans entered the war, the remaining lodges in Istanbul had to suspend their activities with the orders of Enver Pasha who wielded immense power as the Minister of War and de facto leader of the CUP since the domination of the party by the military wing after the coup of January 1913. It was not until the end of 1916 that the Ottoman Grand Orient resumed its activities. During this period a unique incident took place where the incumbent Grand Master of the Ottoman obedience, Fā'ik Suleymān Pasha, was killed on active military duty as the commander of the second corps on the Eastern front with the rank of major general on August 30, 1916.⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁹ Fā'ik Suleymān Pasha was initiated in Salonica and took active part during the establishment of the Ottoman Grand Orient as a representative of the Salonica lodge *Macedonia Risorta*. He was elected Grand Master for the term 1915–18. See “Belgelerle Türkiye’de,” 42.

Although the pre-war polarization that also influenced the members of the Grand Orient might not have surfaced during the war years when all were engaged in the war effort of the empire, the Ottoman defeat at the end of the war would bring matters to a head. Soon after the Unionist government resigned and the leading CUP members fled the country with the signing of the Armistice of Mudros in a few weeks, the political opposition in its reorganized form sought to subdue the remaining presence of the CUP. A similar purge also took place within the organization of the Ottoman national obedience. The administration under the leadership of Rıdā Tewfîk Bey, the Grand Master of the Ottoman Grand Orient since August 1918 and also for many years a proponent of the opposition against the CUP, did not hesitate to eliminate the Freemasons with CUP affiliation from lodge membership in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Unionist government led by Tal'at Pasha, the founding member and first Grand Master of the Ottoman obedience.

The recently published minutes of the meetings attended by the Grand Officers of the Ottoman Grand Orient between 1917 and 1920 shed light on this hitherto very little known period of the Ottoman obedience.⁵⁶⁰ The minutes reflect that the executive organ of the Grand Orient was in an effort not only to regulate its own affairs with its lodges and other obediences but also to address issues related to the sociopolitical environment within the empire. A striking feature of the composition of the Grand Officers during this period is the ongoing presence of non-Muslim members, albeit with gradually less representation from both the Jewish and

⁵⁶⁰ A recent chance encounter and subsequent acquisition by the Grand Lodge of Turkey of a document containing the minutes of the meetings held by the Board of Grand Officers of the Ottoman Grand Orient between 1917 and 1920 has resulted in a thorough research and publication of this invaluable document. See Yavuz Selim Ağaoğlu, *Osmanlı Masonluğu 1917–1920: Dâimî Hey'et-i Muazzama Zabıtları 29 Ocak 1917–7 Mayıs 1920* (Istanbul: HKEMBL Derneği İktisadi İşletmesi, 2018).

Christian elements towards the end of the period. Notwithstanding the military and sociopolitical conflicts during this time, a religious and ethnic diversity most likely existed within most of the still remaining lodges of the obedience as well.⁵⁶¹

It is interesting to observe that the Ottoman obedience was still seeking to maintain its ties with foreign obediences, despite the adverse circumstances of the war period. Given the wartime severance of most relations among the obediences of the nations fighting against each other in the two camps forming the Allied and Central Powers, the inter-obedience ties were mainly reduced to those within each camp. A Freemasonic congress in Berlin held between July 19 and 22 in 1918, just a few months before the end of the war, was attended by the obediences within the territories of the Central Powers, namely those of Germany, the Ottoman Empire, Hungary and Bulgaria.⁵⁶² This interesting collaboration of these obediences might be taken as an indication of the various efforts made by the Ottoman Freemasons to seek opportunities of cooperation for the betterment of the adverse socioeconomic conditions of their country.

Hardly any account has surfaced regarding the circumstances of the Anatolian lodges which were created in a number of urban centers during the few years prior to the World War. The lodges formed in the Anatolian towns of Sivas, Malatya and Elazığ between 1913 and 1914 had lost their membership and were most likely obliged to discontinue their activity during the war years.⁵⁶³ At the end of the war, the Ottoman obedience lost its sovereignty over the lodges in the former Middle Eastern provinces of the empire as a consequence of the loss of these territories to

⁵⁶¹ In early 1917, five out of the fifteen Grand Officers were non-Muslims, with four Jews among them and one Armenian. In early 1919, there were three Christians (one of them Armenian) and 2 Jews among sixteen, whereas in early 1920, the numbers were down to one Jew and one Armenian among sixteen. There was still an interest among both Muslim and non-Muslim elements to become members of the lodges under the Ottoman obedience as attested by the details of the initiations mentioned in the minutes of the meetings. See Ağaoğlu, 19, 25–26, 28, 41.

⁵⁶² Ağaoğlu, 49.

⁵⁶³ Ağaoğlu, 43.

foreign powers. By 1920, there were only nine lodges left under the Ottoman Grand Orient, all of them in Istanbul, while the number of their members was barely above 300.⁵⁶⁴

One might assume that a similar situation was also valid for the lodges of foreign obediences still working in the remaining Ottoman territories. Some extant membership records of a lodge also attest to this factor. The register of the lodge *Logos* located in Istanbul and chartered by the Grand Lodge of Scotland as No.1083 on February 2, 1911, reveals that no initiations were recorded between the years 1914 and 1921.⁵⁶⁵ In addition to the eleven chartered members, i.e. the founders of the lodge, seven were initiated in 1911, seven in 1912, two in 1913 and three in 1914. After a seeming hiatus without any admission of new members, six were initiated in 1921, six in 1922, ten in 1924 and four in 1925. No further initiation was noted and the last recorded date on the register is May 1928, meaning that probably at some point before this final date, the lodge ended its activities. The register displays some other interesting bits of information. The chartered members were a blend of primarily British subjects and ethnic Greeks as their names suggest. Among this multinational group of eleven chartered members, six had been affiliated from the Istanbul lodge *La Turquie* No:1049 (formed in 1908) working under the Grand Lodge of Scotland; one had been affiliated from the Istanbul lodge *Oriental* No: 687 (formed in 1856); one had been affiliated from a lodge belonging to the Italian obedience and finally three from a lodge belonging to the Greek obedience. This type of mobility among different lodges and obediences attest to the dynamic characteristics of Freemasonic activity within the Ottoman territories during this period as well as in the previous decades. An interesting inference is that with the

⁵⁶⁴ Ağaoğlu, 44.

⁵⁶⁵ "The Register of the Lodge *Logos* (Istanbul)," Archives of the Grand Lodge of Turkey, 105.05/427.

exception of a few chartered members, all the subsequent members initiated at this lodge were ethnic Greeks, which may be accepted as an indication that many Ottoman Christians were still inclined to join foreign obedience lodges during the period in question. The register lacks the information on the nationalities of origin; however, the professions are listed. The diversity of these professions attests to the broad spectrum of the economic and social backgrounds of the members. Among the noted professions are lawyer, engineer, banking clerk, merchant, entrepreneur, doctor, architect, confectioner, ship agent, army captain and insurance agent. Probably the two members with the most unusual professions for a Freemasonic lodge are a second deacon of the Patriarchate and a priest. Due to the current unavailability of the minutes of the meetings kept by this lodge, it is not possible to comment on the issues debated or to know whether politics penetrated into the affairs of the lodge given the fragility and complexity of the sociopolitical environment in this period.

Given the insufficiency of records uncovered up to now revealing the internal affairs of most lodges, it is therefore difficult to argue in favor of a political climate in the lodges during the last few decades prior to the First World War, especially in those with a predominant non-Muslim membership and affiliated with the foreign obediences. The extent to which the members of the latter displayed an inclination to harbor nationalistic aspirations with separatist views or to serve the irredentist efforts of external actors is open to debate. Although there is good reason to believe that both the Greek and Armenian elements within the lodge membership favored unity of the empire in the second half of the nineteenth century as noted in the previous chapters, following the Young Turk revolution a gradual rise in separatist and irredentist motives may be said to have manifested itself under the roofs of certain

lodges. Paul Dumont asserts that despite the predominant ethnic Greek membership of the lodges *Melès* (founded in Izmir in 1867), *I Proodos* (founded in Istanbul in 1868), *Homère* (founded in Izmir after 1908) and *Prométhée* (founded in Ioannina, Turkish Yanya, in 1893) which all worked under the French obedience, their members were most likely inclined towards an Ottomanist disposition in accordance with the French ideals of fraternity among various elements of the empire. However, this position changed significantly with the gradual increase of nationalist tendencies of the CUP policy in the aftermath of the Young Turk revolution and with the ethnic non-Muslim elements turning towards their own nationalist aspirations and irredentist agendas.⁵⁶⁶ On the other hand, the political engagements of Freemasons were mainly an intellectual endeavor within the then prevalent political environment where armies and armed organizations determined the outcome at the end of the day. Nevertheless, the political attitude of the leadership of some of the foreign obedience lodges especially at the end of the First World War was in alignment with the policies of the victorious powers towards the dismemberment of the remains of the Ottoman Empire which is rather indicative of some of the deep fractures among the Freemasons of the Ottoman lands. In reference to some Freemasonic journals published in Europe at the time and correspondence held by a couple of these lodges with the French obedience, Dumont emphasizes the position of some non-Muslim members who spared no efforts to sway the French obedience towards giving open support to the forming of an independent Armenia as well as to the irredentist aims of Greece.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁶ Paul Dumont, "La Loge Grecque," 106, 109, 110.

⁵⁶⁷ Paul Dumont, "La Franc-Maçonnerie D'Obédience Française et la Lutte d'Indépendance Turquie (1919–1923)," *Cahiers du Groupe d'Etudes sur la Turquie Contemporaine (GETCH)*, Paris, MSH, no.1 (1984–85).

As divisions developed inside the Union and Progress organization as well as in the general political climate of the empire in the few years following the Young Turk revolution and further deepened while the empire drifted into the First World War, Ottoman Freemasonry was also adversely affected from these divisions which were felt within the lodges. During the world war, most lodges had to discontinue their activities as a result of the harsh wartime conditions of daily life as well as the state imposed restrictions on the lodges. At the end of the war, Ottoman Freemasonry was purged of its former leadership and prominent members who belonged to the CUP organization. During this time of restructuring of the national obedience towards its future state under the Turkish Republic, some of the Istanbul lodges still working under foreign obediences associated themselves with nationalistic aspirations of minorities but this would phase out shortly afterwards as the provisional government of Ankara extended its political domination to Istanbul.

As was the case through the challenging circumstances in the second half of the nineteenth century, Ottoman Freemasonry was able to adapt and position itself in the political environment of the revolutionary period of the first decade of the twentieth century as well as the ensuing CUP era and the First World War. In the aftermath of the war, a new era for the Freemasonic organization was ushered in by consolidating a national Freemasonry in what was left of the former Ottoman lands.

CONCLUSION

Despite speculative Freemasonry's claim to uphold universal fraternity by being tolerant and inclusive towards all creeds and races as preached in its very early constitutional tenets, practices of exclusivity existed from its earliest stages. This exclusivity whenever practiced within the religious sphere made it rather difficult for non-Christian elements to attach themselves to the fraternity. In Europe the question of exclusivity was mainly a matter pertaining to the membership of Jews and was practiced in varying degrees by distinct Freemasonries. It was in the British dominions of the Indian subcontinent that the first signs of inclusivity towards local Muslim subjects emerged presumably motivated by the imperial intentions of assimilation and colonial expansion.

For the early period of the existence of Freemasonic activity within the Ottoman Empire, no extant registers have been uncovered so far, and based on the very limited information available, the membership remained detached from the local Ottoman communities and exclusive to the Christian foreigners. Early Freemasonic encounters in the eighteenth century involved predominantly the men of commerce and foreign representatives residing in the major ports and centers of commerce like Izmir, Aleppo and Alexandretta (Iskenderun). In these cities, as part of the broader diplomatic network of expatriates, the British consular officials formed closely knit

networks with the representatives of the Levant Company and other commercial enterprises of European origin. A good example is the significant efforts of Alexander Drummond, who is associated with the formation of the earliest lodge in the Ottoman Empire based on the extant archival information and his own personal correspondence. Although the extent of his success in recruiting members of the cosmopolitan communities in these centers is difficult to assess, the membership was most likely exclusive to the members of the foreign commercial networks.

It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that Ottoman subjects started to respond to the call of Freemasonry, and as the earliest extant registers belonging to this period demonstrate, their membership became gradually more dominant. A significant characteristic of the Ottoman lodges working under foreign obediences during this time is their inclusivity towards all local elements of the empire regardless of religious and ethnic background. This growth in membership and inclusivity was not only a result of both the rising interest among Ottoman subjects towards modern European ideals, and towards liberal views and intellectual currents which Freemasonry represented as an institution, but also a factor of the colonial aims and interests towards political and cultural expansion on the part of the imperial powers, to the implementation of which their metropolitan puissances of Freemasonry contributed through the organization of lodges within the Ottoman Empire with diverse memberships inclusive of various elements of Ottoman society.

Half a century before the foreign obedience lodges showed any notable presence within the Ottoman Empire, some Ottoman diplomats posted to European capitals, like London and Paris, had already come into contact with Freemasonry. Despite the scarcity of available written and other circumstantial evidence, it is

possible to trace the Freemasonic connections of a number of Ottoman and Persian diplomats during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, putting them among the earliest Muslims to be affiliated with the fraternity. During the same period as the first permanent diplomatic missions established by the Ottoman Empire in Europe, Ottoman subjects found the opportunity to come into contact with European culture through education and commercial activity in major European centers. Among these subjects were members of the Armenian *amira* class who attended the higher education institutions and became active members of the cultural and intellectual circles in centers like Paris and London. The affiliation with Freemasonry of some of these Ottoman expatriates and émigrés are recorded in the registers of a number of French and British lodges from this period.

As appreciable numbers of Ottoman subjects responded to the cultural rapprochement between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, especially following the proclamation of the *Khatt-ı Sherif* of *Gülkhāne* which started the *Tanzīmāt* era of reforms, an influx of émigrés into the Ottoman Empire took place during the turbulent years of social and political upheaval in Europe during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The members of oppositional elements from primarily the French, Italian and Habsburg dominions constituted a multi-national aggregation of political émigrés that was integrated as a new component into the so-called Levantine communities of Izmir and Istanbul predominantly composed of mercantile families. Alexandria and Cairo, as commercial and political centers of Egypt also constituted an important entry point into the Ottoman Empire. Especially Italian émigrés were already familiar with the revolutionary and secretive organizational aspects of Freemasonry, which provided a suitable type of sociability for these individuals by integrating them to a social network of European expatriates and local

elements. The future prominent position of the Italian obedience within Ottoman Freemasonry especially in Egypt during the second half of the nineteenth century would be a consequence of the dynamic bonds of sociability formed during this period by the émigrés from Italy and to some extent other Habsburg dominions.

The Crimean War was a watershed regarding the European relations of the Ottoman Empire. A direct consequence was the Reform Edict of 1856 which brought with it new regulations on the social, economic and legal aspects of the lives of Ottoman subjects, as well as an increased influence of the European cultural and social institutions. Freemasonry as an organization representing Enlightenment ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity appealed to a new form of Ottoman élite made up primarily of highly educated bureaucrats and intellectuals. Broadly acting as participants of a sociopolitical movement born from the frustration of the insufficiency of state reforms up to that point, these “Young Ottomans” advocated the modernization of the empire in the European lines of constitutional government. The secretive nature and the ideological aspects of their own society brought a number of the proponents of this movement closer to Freemasonry which had found a renewed dynamic of expansion in the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of the Crimean War. This dynamism was further enhanced with the adherence of some of these oppositional elements in pursuit of the liberal and secretive environment of the lodges as a vehicle to their aspirations towards constitutional rule within the empire. The Young Ottoman movement had a major patron in the person of Crown Prince Murād who later became Sultan in 1876. The new Sultan not only entertained the liberal ideals of the Young Ottomans but also was a member of Freemasonry at the time of his enthronement. Although this fortuitous juxtaposition of royalty and Freemasonry was prematurely truncated in a very short time due to the end of

Murād's three month reign, the Young Ottomans were still to reach their ultimate aim of installing the constitutional government through their understanding with the succeeding Sultan 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II.

'Abd al-Ḥamīd's rule soon turned into a despotic regime by the closure of the Parliament and partial suspension of the Constitution, and the subsequent era of oppression not only threatened the lives and political pursuits of the Young Ottomans and those with oppositional views but also was a period of gradual decline for the existing lodges of foreign obediences which had grown considerably in both number and membership during the two decades following the Crimean War. As the extant lodge registers demonstrate, the lodges lost almost their entire Muslim membership within the first few years of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd's reign.

The last two decades of the nineteenth century saw the gradual phasing out of most of the lodges in the Ottoman capital and the remaining ones mostly restricted their activities to social bonding and philanthropic deeds. As long as these lodges distanced themselves from oppositional politics, they even received occasional financial contribution from the Sultan himself for their charitable pursuits, thus ushering in a period of Ottoman Freemasonry closely monitored but sanctioned in this form by the Sultan and his government.

It is hard to deny the significant role of the Freemasonic organization within the broader picture of the sociopolitical state of affairs of the Ottoman Empire, which is easily attested by the interest of many prominent individuals of society and state in becoming affiliated with it. Notwithstanding its universal principal of accepting members from all walks of life, in most cases Freemasonry was able to attract people already in possession of high social standing who were most likely in the hope of furthering their status through the diverse social networks Freemasonry offered. Men

of commerce were in most cases in pursuit of enlarging their commercial networks and acquaintances, whereas members of diplomatic missions looked for opportunities to expand their contacts within circles of expatriates as well as looking for ways to establish close relations with local administrators to enhance inter-governmental relations with a view to the improvement of the interests and spheres of influence of their native states. An additional benefit for diplomats was often an opportunity to permeate into the cultural life of their host environment, as was most likely the case for the early Ottoman Ambassadors when they were posted to the different cultural environment of the European capitals. The challenge of a similar cultural immersion into the European culture in the case of the early social encounters of the Ottoman Christians during their educational endeavors in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century, as well as the later social experiences of the liberal Ottoman intellectuals and political dissidents, led some of these individuals to pursue an affiliation with Freemasonry.

A significant question in the exposure of Freemasonry into the Ottoman lands was its reconciliation with Islamic culture. An important element of convergence between Islam and Freemasonry was Sufism. During the nineteenth century, there were cultural encounters, in particularly the Balkans, between European Freemasons and Sufis practicing mystical Islamic traditions. The leaders of their respective lodges attempted to draw the two orders closer to each other based on certain similarities of organization and tradition, which they emphasized, as demonstrated in a number of extant correspondence. The convergence between the two traditions showed its impact also during the formation stage of the Ottoman national obedience by way of its peculiar ritual composition and terminology. The Sufi cultural elements injected into Ottoman Freemasonry especially in this later period, helped the efforts

to reconcile the Freemasonic order with Islam, despite its origins as a predominantly European and Christian order.

The position of the Freemasonic institution in relation to the dominant religious establishment and the ruling power in both the European countries and the Ottoman Empire was a matter of significance. Countries with Catholic predominance tended to have anti-clerical Freemasonries with revolutionary inclinations. The Grand Orient de France was the inheritor of the French Enlightenment ideals as well as those of the French Revolution. The cultural and political accumulation of these periods led French Freemasonry towards an anti-clerical stance and revolutionary character. The Grand Orient de France was the largest and most influential of a group of Freemasonries which could be dubbed the Latin branch of Freemasonry. In the case of the Young Ottoman movement during the reign of Sultan ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the French obedience lodges provided the secretive environment, where the shared political aspirations of all local elements towards a constitutional regime could be associated with the revolutionary character of the French obedience. As the drift between the Latin and Anglo-American branches of world Freemasonries became more emphasized in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the liberal position of the Latin branch became more influential on Ottoman Freemasonry. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the rising dominance of Salonican lodges almost all of which belonged to Latin Freemasonries became closely associated with the subsequent Young Turk Revolution and the birth of the CUP.

As the extant records demonstrate, certain lodges working under the obediences of Latin Freemasonries in the second half of the nineteenth century were more inclusive towards Ottoman subjects of all denominations than their British counterparts. Even lodges characterized by a majority of membership of a certain

denomination or ethnicity, particularly belonging to the Armenian or Greek communities, included a considerable Muslim membership during the two decades following the Crimean War when Freemasonic activity increased to a significant level. During the same period when British Freemasonries came to prominence within the Ottoman Empire, their lodges were to a great extent less inclusive of non-Christian subjects in their membership due to stronger Christian traditions of these Freemasonries. These lodges were also more characterized by a membership profile of European expatriates from Christian nations, whereas the composition of most Latin obedience lodges had a more dominantly local character, as previously presented archival material demonstrates. Certain British lodges also displayed a peculiar composition of members whose majority was involved in professions associated with certain sectors like the shipping industry. Notwithstanding these earlier characteristics and compositions of lodges belonging to British obediences, again previously presented lodge records remaining from the immediate aftermath of the Young Turk revolution display a stark contrast. The significant increase in the number of Ottoman subjects, both Muslim and non-Muslim, reflected in the lodge registers of both British and Latin obedience lodges during this period may be associated with the highly increased interest in Freemasonic activity regardless of the obediences, due to the publicly acknowledged connections of the Young Turk movement and the CUP with the Freemasonic institution, particularly in Salonica.

In addition to the distinctive characteristics of the Latin and British obedience lodges, in the light of the various stages in the evolution of Freemasonry within the Ottoman lands it is possible to discern two main geographical axes, namely a northern and a southern one. The northern axis included Istanbul and Salonica, along with a strong presence in Izmir. The southern axis, on the other hand, extended from

Cairo and Alexandria in Egypt to Palestine and Syria. The principal centers forming these two main axes had, more often than not, relations within their own axes. Yet, efforts of certain individuals occasionally reached over from one axis to another and created common bonds. The endeavors of ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Pasha or ‘Azīz Ḥasan Pasha brought what might be considered broadly as the two spheres of Freemasonic activity in the Ottoman Empire closer to each other. The language was an important factor in the distinction between the two axes. Notwithstanding the predominant use of French or English in the lodges affiliated with foreign obediences for the purposes of correspondence and Freemasonic labor during lodge meetings, Arabic in the south and Turkish in the north constituted a common bond for the Ottoman Freemasons in these regions in general. The historic literature concerning these axes has also developed in distinct manner where the researchers have rarely addressed so far the overlapping issues and connections between them.

Despite the differences based on the political characteristics of their own geographic environments and the corresponding variations in the composition of the lodge memberships, there were some shared aspects between the northern and southern axes. Firstly, the development of lodges in the principal centers of both axes was for a long time under the auspices of foreign obediences. The practices of both British and Latin modes of Freemasonic organization were concurrently established in both axes. This created an often competitive involvement of their respective obediences. A rather common element was the priority of the commercial interests in the British organization with occasional political overtones. The members of lodges under the British obediences mostly exhibited a high level of solidarity and philanthropy among their members for both their economic and social welfare. The Latin organization on the other hand, primarily under the influence of French and

Italian obediences, was more defined by its attachment to revolutionary ideas and actions against despotism, as well as its advocating with a humanitarian and rational spirit the sociopolitical equality and fraternity of the ethnic and religious elements living under the same polity. The processes leading to the formation of the CUP in Salonica during the oppressive rule of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd II and that of *al-Ḥizb al-Waṭanī* in Egypt were cases that witnessed differing degrees of involvement from the obediences of the two modes of Freemasonic organization.

Secondly, the formation of national obediences took place in both axes, albeit with several decades time in-between and as a result of distinct processes. In both cases, an attempt to curb the domination of foreign obediences with a view to restricting the political influence of their respective states was evident. The Egyptian national obedience formed in the 1870s established close ties with Palestine through lodges founded under its aegis, whereas the later Ottoman national obedience formed in 1909 was a result of the close collaboration of lodges primarily in Istanbul and Salonica. During the formation of the latter, individual and organizational contribution from the Egyptian national obedience was available but the unification of the two obediences was not a matter to be easily implemented, despite the later attempts of the Ottoman Grand Orient in Istanbul to extend its domination to Egypt and Palestine in close association with the political interests of the CUP dominated government at the capital of the empire.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Egypt constituted a vibrant environment for its Freemasonic institution to flourish. Nominally still an Ottoman province, Egypt was ruled autonomously after 1867 under the Khedives, who were members of the Muḥammad 'Alī dynasty. More open to European social endeavors than their Ottoman counterparts at this time, the Egyptian ruling class was very

closely affiliated with Freemasonry, even presiding over the institution at times, not unlike their royal counterparts in Europe. This close involvement created a highly political environment within the lodges and a fairly competitive existence for the rival camps of French and British Freemasonries. The political weight of Britain was augmented after its military intervention in 1882, turning Egypt into a de facto British protectorate, albeit under the nominal sovereignty of the Ottoman Sultan. The subsequent active scene of Freemasonry witnessed the rapid development of the young national obedience of Egypt which had some influence in the later formation of the Ottoman national obedience as well. Egyptian Freemasonry is one that cannot be fully understood without evaluating its close connection with the general politics in the Ottoman Empire as well as its position in relation to the broader sphere of Freemasonry in Europe and the rest of the empire territories.

While Egyptian Freemasonry had its political involvement during the second half of the nineteenth century, Salonica had its turn when the CUP assumed its dominant political role in the aftermath of the revolution in 1908. CUP's close association with Freemasonry in the organization's early development in Salonica reached a whole new level when many leading proponents of the CUP participated in the formation process of an Ottoman national obedience in 1909. A notable aspect of this effort was the affiliation of the newly formed Ottoman Grand Orient with the Ottoman Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (AASR) which was established first and then created the former. AASR had in its organization an inherent territorial character. In each sovereign territory, there could be one Supreme Council as the governing puissance of the local lodges within that territory. This aspect of the formation of a Supreme Council made it possible to avoid competition with the already active obediences in the empire. Moreover, a transnational network

of Supreme Councils was to a certain extent functional in Europe and for a sovereign Ottoman Freemasonry, this was a practical way to be connected to European Freemasonries. However, its entanglement within the complexities of Ottoman politics soon became the major challenge of Ottoman Freemasonry and while its Freemasonic regularity was called into question by particularly the British obediences, its actions and relations as a characteristically secretive organization sparked conspiracy theories strengthening the anti-Masonic sentiment ever present within the Ottoman public.

In the short period during which the CUP was a significant power element in the Ottoman government, its political associations with the Freemasonic institution became a cause of concern for the British government, which perceived it as a part of the CUP's designs that jeopardized the British interests, as available Foreign Office records demonstrate. Despite the lack of historic documents available, it is conceivable that the political entanglements of Egyptian Freemasonry during the previous few decades, whereby it was integrated into the political rivalries of the leading actors of power, was a factor for the British to be cautious in the case of the CUP this time. The negative stance of the British Foreign Office concerning the close association between Freemasonry and the CUP led government was exacerbated by the caustic reports sent from the British diplomatic mission in Istanbul. There is reason to believe that the deliberate efforts of the British embassy in casting a negative image of the CUP contributed not only to the worsening of relations between the two countries in the process leading to the First World War but to the creation of an anti-CUP sentiment in the public opinion within the Ottoman Empire as well. Given the failure of the CUP to deal with the immediate problems of the empire, these efforts succeeded in undermining the political integrity of the CUP

and only a couple of years after the reinstatement of the constitutional regime, polemics and bitter opposition were already on their way to disrupting the CUP organization as well as interrupting the progressive and unifying policies which constituted its initial basis of existence.

In the last phase of the Ottoman Empire, the domestic and international entanglements of the politically dominant CUP brought it into a closer relation with Freemasonry. In their relation, the expectation of gain was reciprocal. The CUP in most likelihood saw in Freemasonry's transnational connections and capabilities a vehicle to further its political ambitions. In an attempt to curb the varied political expectations and aspirations of foreign obediences and their affiliated lodges within the empire, a national organization of Freemasonry came into being and became involved in the sociopolitical life of the empire due to its close association with the CUP. Despite controversial accusations and conspiracy theories against the Freemasonic institution during the period in question, its adherents and the number of lodges increased significantly. This increase is all the more striking given the fact that the Young Turk movement and its political apparatus the CUP, then acting most visibly, no longer needed the secret environment provided by Freemasonry. The notable attachment of the prominent officials of the state may on the one hand be attributed to an expectation of favorable connections for their individual advancements but it is also likely that many of them believed in a construct of Freemasonry parallel to the CUP's political power axis which could contribute to the solution of certain conflicts within and without the empire in favor of the Ottoman government. Unfortunately, the Freemasonic world was one that was already divided into separate camps and a unanimous response to Ottoman complications from different Freemasonries was not possible.

During most of the nineteenth century, the common bond between lodges formed under the foreign obediences had been an Ottomanist view towards the sustenance of a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural empire. In the first years of the CUP's close association with Freemasonry, the same bond was still evident. However, at the very end of the Ottoman Empire, with the inevitable impact of the political circumstances of war, the fracture zones were also transferred to the lodges of the then recently formed Ottoman national obedience as well as those of the foreign obediences. While the administrative organ and the lodges of the Ottoman Grand Orient still preserved to a certain extent their diverse membership, there were instances where foreign obedience lodges were engaged in wartime or post-war politics which defied the fraternal bonds and ambitions established earlier. The First World War did not put an end to the controversies over the nature of Freemasonry's claims towards a universal fraternal ideology, but that story would be the subject of another study.

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APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY OF FREEMASONIC TERMS

Charges, also known as **The Old Charges of the Free and Accepted Masons** contain instructions for the execution of different duties by Freemasons. Elaborated under six general headings, they were based on the records containing the ancient regulations of the Freemasonic order collected during the publication of the book of *Constitutions* under the supervision of James Anderson.

Grand Architect of the Universe is the Freemasonic conception of a Supreme Being governing the order of the universe, the form or symbolism of which is left to a Freemason's own religious views and perception of the concept of deity.

Lodge, in the Freemasonic sense, has two meanings: 1. An assembly of Freemasons holding meetings and working together, 2. The site where they gather, work and perform rituals together.

Mother Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (AASR): A significant aspect of American Freemasonry was the establishment of the Supreme Council for the Southern Jurisdiction of the USA as the first Supreme Council to function as a governing structure of the AASR in 1801. Despite its European

philosophical origins from the middle of the eighteenth century, the rite took a much more complex form during the nineteenth century in the USA by a redefining of the rituals and philosophical content of the so-called “appendant degrees” beyond the first three symbolic degrees of Freemasonry, put under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Councils of the rite. In this new construct, the American version of the rite served as the norm which came to be accepted later by the European Freemasonries as well.

Obedience in its Freemasonic usage is an association of lodges under a common organization and administration. Lodges active within a sovereign territory unite under a grand body in the form of a **Grand Lodge** or **Grand Orient**. Though the difference between the two terms from an administrative viewpoint is rather negligible, an obedience where the member lodges practice a common rite is often called a Grand Lodge, whereas one that contains lodges belonging to different rites is called a Grand Orient. An obedience often has national character and is an autonomous entity within its national territories, bonding with foreign obediences only through mutual recognition. In countries spanning vast territories, multiple obediences exist. A plurality of obediences within a nation also exists when different principles and policies cause a disruption of a single Freemasonic organization and administration, creating multiple umbrella associations. Under certain circumstances, foreign obediences can organize lodges in a sovereign territory in the absence of its own obedience, which was the case for the Ottoman Empire during the period prior to the organization of the Ottoman Grand Orient.

Operative Freemasonry refers to the performing of the original trade of masonry as a profession. The exact origins of operative Freemasonry and its organization are open to debate. Many legends and early traditions of the masonic

guilds as well as the original tools of the craft have been integrated into modern Freemasonry in the form of symbols, metaphors and ritual elements.

Regularity, a complicated term in its Freemasonic usage, has often a connotation akin to legitimacy and recognition of a Freemasonic organization vis-à-vis others deemed irregular. It often denotes “regularity of origin” in which sense it refers to a Grand Lodge established by a duly recognized Grand Lodge or by three or more regularly constituted lodges. In defining the regularity of a Grand Lodge, ‘territoriality’ is also emphasized, where there can be only one regular Grand Lodge within a national territory. Commonly accepted norms of recognition and regularity of Grand Lodges were laid out by the British Grand Lodges in 1929 by a declaration entitled *Basic Principles for Grand Lodge Recognition*.

Regulations contained directions for the government of the Freemasonic organization and was published in the first edition of Anderson’s book of *Constitutions* in 1723 under the title of “General Regulations.” Alterations were made in the second edition of the book in 1738 turning the original version into “Old Regulations.”

Rite, in the common Freemasonic usage, is a system consisting of a varying number of “degrees” governed by an appendant body of Freemasonry which a Freemason may voluntarily join following the attainment of the three essential “symbolic” or “Craft” degrees of “entered apprentice,” “fellow craft” and “master Mason.” There are numerous rites with which Freemasonic organizations associate themselves, including The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, The York Rite, The French Rite, The Ancient and Primitive Rite of Memphis-Misraïm, to name but a few.

Sovereign Grand Commander is the elected presiding officer of a Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite which is an assembly of Sovereign Grand Inspectors-General belonging to the thirty-third and last degree of the rite.

Speculative Freemasonry often denotes the form of modern Freemasonry, which dates back to the seventeenth century, when certain people from outside the trade of masonry started to be accepted into masonic lodges under the moniker of “Free and Accepted Masons.” The subsequent transformation from operative to accepted or “speculative” membership brought about the evolution into modern lodges where the operative element is only represented through the symbols and rituals associated with the ancient tools, customs and legends of the original trade.

Supreme Council is the governing and regulating organization of the multiple degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite within a specific territory. Whereas the first three “symbolic” degrees of “entered apprentice,” “fellow craft” and “master Mason” are regulated by a Grand Lodge or Grand Orient, the Supreme Council is entitled to the “jurisdiction” that bestows the degrees from 4 to 33.

Symbolic Degrees, also called **Craft Degrees**, are the “entered apprentice,” “fellow craft” and “master Mason” degrees, bestowed under the authority of a Grand Lodge with sovereign jurisdiction over the lodges under its control.

Worshipful Master is the highest office of a lodge the possessor of which is elected by the lodge members for a predetermined period. He presides over the other officers of the lodge in the performance of rituals and carrying out of all the lodge business.

APPENDIX B

SOME PROMINENT FIGURES IN THE HISTORY OF OTTOMAN FREEMASONRY

The prominent names presented in this glossary are only a humble selection of the multitude of names mentioned in this work or elsewhere pertaining to a span of two hundred years of Freemasonic history. Nevertheless, they serve to represent the national, ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of those affiliated with Freemasonry within the context of its history in relation to the Ottoman Empire. In this section and throughout the rest of this work (except Appendix E as noted), the Ottoman period names have been written using the transliteration system of the 2nd edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* (EI²).

‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Pasha (1830–94)

The youngest son of Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha of Egypt. He is associated with the foundation of the first Ottoman Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in 1861 and became its first Sovereign Grand Commander. His son

Saʿīd Ḥalīm Paşa (1865–1921) was Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire between 1913 and 1917.

Aḥmed Dīemāl (Dīemāl Paşa) (1872–1922)

A leading participant of the Young Turk revolution and member of the CUP executive committee (*merkez-i ʿumūmī*) after the revolution. He is considered to be a part of the triumvirate, with the Paşas Enver and Talʿat, which ruled the Ottoman Empire during WWI. He was initiated into Freemasonry at the Salonica lodge *Veritas*.

ʿAlī Sheḥkātī (1848–96)

Journalist and early proponent of the Young Turk movement. Writing in constant opposition to ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd II, he published newspapers in Europe. He was a member of the lodge *I Proodos* and participated in the secret plot to free Murād V from his confinement at the Çırağan Palace as a member of the Scalieri-Aziz Bey Committee. He had to flee to Paris after the failed attempt.

Alexander Drummond (1698–1769)

Born in the Edinburgh parish and for some time an employee of the customs office, he was admitted to Freemasonry at the Lodge *Greenock Kilwinning* No:12 in 1738 and was later appointed as a Provincial Grand Master under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. During his extensive travels and stay in the Levant, he was appointed vice-consul in Alexandretta (modern day Iskenderun) in 1747 and later, consul in Aleppo in 1751. He is credited with founding the first overseas lodge chartered by the Grand Lodge of Scotland at Aleppo in 1747.

Alexandre Ismyrides

A member of the Greek community of Istanbul, he was the founder and first Worshipful Master of the *I Proodos* Lodge in 1868. In the lodge register, his name

was recorded as a merchant based in London. At a later date his name was also included in the roster of the Société Astronomique de France as a member from 1892 and his address at the time was recorded as the office of the bankers Mavrogordato A.P. et Fils at the Halil Pacha Han in Galata.

Amīr ‘Abd al-Ḳādir (1808–83)

Leader of the resistance against the French invasion of Algeria following the capture of Algiers in 1830. After fighting against the French until 1847, he finally surrendered and was imprisoned in France until 1852. Pardoned by Louis-Napoléon, he was allocated a pension from the French state and went to live in retirement first at Bursa in 1853 and then at Damascus after 1855. His efforts to protect a significant Christian population from massacre in the hands of the Druze in 1860 gained him a very favorable reputation in Europe. In 1864, upon his accepting the invitation of the lodge *Henri IV* of the Grand Orient de France, he was made a Freemason by a delegated initiation ceremony held at the *Loge des Pyramides* in Alexandria, Egypt.

‘Azīz Ḥasan Paşa (1873–1925)

Grandson of Khedive Ismā‘īl and cousin of Khedive ‘Abbās II Ḥilmi. He served with the rank of *mīr-livā* (brigadier general) in the Ottoman Army after the Young Turk revolution. At the beginning of WWI he was exiled from Egypt to Italy by the British for his anti-British affairs with a view to an independent Egypt. Along with Joseph Sakakini, he took it upon himself to implement the foundation of the Ottoman Supreme Council in accordance with the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite regulations and was also instrumental in the formation of the Ottoman Grand Orient several months later.

Cleanthi Scalieri (1833–92)

Born in Istanbul to an established family of Greek descent, he dealt with finance as a stockbroker. He was a founding member of the *I Proodos* lodge in 1868 and became its Worshipful Master in 1870. He was instrumental in the initiation of Murād V and was later involved in the secret plot to free him from his confinement, after which he fled to Athens with Naḳshibend Kalfa, another accomplice in the failed Çırağan Palace incident. Following years of negotiations with the ruling Sultan, he died in Athens.

David Joseph Cohen (David Josef Kohen) (1865–1949)

Born as a member of the Jewish community in Salonica, he worked there as an insurance agent of the German company Victoria de Berlin. He was initiated at the Italian obedience lodge *Macedonia Risorta* in 1902 and two years later became a founding member of the French obedience lodge *Veritas* in Salonica where he also served as Worshipful Master. He subsequently became a resident of Istanbul and following the Young Turk revolution he was one of the founders of the lodge *La Renaissance* affiliated with the Grand Orient de France. As a member of this lodge, he took part in the formation processes of both the Ottoman Supreme Council and the Ottoman Grand Orient.

Djāmāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838–97)

Islamic reformer and political activist. He was very actively involved in Egyptian Freemasonry during his stay there between 1871 and 1879, although he was a controversial figure often associated with bringing a great deal of political entanglements into his Freemasonic involvement through his oppositional activity against the rule of Khedive Ismāʿīl and his anticolonialist stance against the foreign interventions into the Egyptian affairs. Along with a number of other lodges, he was

affiliated with the lodge *Star of the East* working under the United Grand Lodge of England, in which he took office as Worshipful Master in 1878.

Emmanuel Carasso (Emanuel Karasu) (1862–1934)

Salonica lawyer of Sephardic Jewish descent. He was a prominent member of the Young Turk movement and the CUP. Following the revolution of 1908, he became a deputy from Salonica in the Ottoman Parliament. He was one of the earliest members of the Salonica lodge *Macedonia Risorta* and also served as its Worshipful Master. He was most likely instrumental in the early development of the CUP organization by encouraging its members to use the lodge medium for their secret meetings.

Hagop Guerdjikian (Agop Gircikyan Efendi) (1806–65)

One of the Armenians in the close entourage of Muṣṭafā Reshīd Pasha during his ambassadorial office in Paris and then in London. He served as the second dragoman of the embassy in Paris and as chargé d'affaires in London. He also wrote a series of treatises on agriculture including one devoted to sericulture and published in 1846. While in Paris he became a member of the lodge *La Persévérante Amitié* of the Grand Orient de France.

Henry Bulwer (Sir William Henry Lytton Earle Bulwer) (1801–72)

British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire between 1858 and 1865 as the successor to the long-time ambassador Stratford Canning (1st Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe). In 1862 he was appointed by the United Grand Lodge of England as the District Grand Master for the Ottoman Empire. A lodge carrying his own name was opened in Istanbul in 1861. By the end of his tenure, the number of lodges under the English obedience in Istanbul and Izmir had risen to ten if not more.

Ignace Mouradgea d'Ohsson (1740–1807)

Diplomat and distinguished man of letters with an Armenian origin. As a polyglot, he served from an early age at the Swedish embassy in Istanbul. He first became its chargé d'affaires in 1782 and then was appointed as the minister of Sweden at the Sublime Porte. His major work *Tableau general de l'Empire othoman* was published in two volumes between 1787 and 1790. His association with Freemasonry is derived from Swedish lodge records, as well his close relation with the Swedish aristocracy many of whom were closely linked to Freemasonry at his time.

Ismā'īl Ferrūkh Efendi (1747?–1840)

Born on the Black Sea Coast of Ukraine as the son of a merchant, he later entered state service and was appointed as the second Ottoman Ambassador to London between 1797 and 1800. His embassy followed that of Yūsuf Āgāh Efendi. Abu Taleb Khan's memoirs from the years of his stay in London in 1800 and 1801 is the only extant source clearly mentioning Ismā'īl Ferrūkh Efendi's name with a claim of his Freemasonic initiation while in London. Upon his return from London, he was associated with the founding of an intellectual society dubbed the *Beshiktāsh Djem'iyyet-i İlmiyyesi* (Beşiktaş Society of Science), which was claimed by some writers to have been influenced by Freemasonry in its organizational aspects.

John Porter Brown (1814–72)

Born in Ohio, USA, he came to Istanbul in 1832 to work as the secretary to his uncle Commodore David Porter, who then served as the first minister of the American legation to the Sublime Porte. During his forty years of residence in the Ottoman Empire, he was a member of the American legation in many capacities, including dragoman, chargé d'affaires and consul. In addition to his translations from the Turkish, Persian and Arabic folk and mystic literature, he published his detailed

research into Sufism under the title of *The Dervishes; Or, Oriental Spiritualism*. Initiated in Ohio, he took part in the foundation of the English obedience lodge *Oriental* in Istanbul and later served as the Worshipful Master of the *Bulwer* lodge under the same obedience. The United Grand Lodge of England appointed him as District Grand Master for the Ottoman Empire in 1869, which he continued until his death.

Kāzım Nāmī Bey (1876–1967)

Educationist, writer and journalist. In 1906, he was among the ten founders of the Ottoman Freedom Society in Salonica, while he was a member of the Ottoman military. He later quit the military profession and engaged in education. He was initiated at the Salonica lodge *Macedonia Risorta* in 1906.

Kemāl al-Dīn (Prince) (Şehzâde Ahmed Kemâleddin) (1848–1905)

The fourth in age among the eight sons of Sultan ‘Abd al-Medjīd who survived to an adult age. He was the younger brother of Sultans Murād V and ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd II. He was initiated in 1874, at the same lodge *I Proodos* as his brothers Murād and Nūr al-Dīn. He supported the cause of Murād’s restoration to the throne which proved to be futile.

Louis Amiable (1837–97)

Lawyer and founder of the Bar Association of Istanbul. He served as the mayor of the 5th district of Paris between 1888 and 1891. During his long séjour in Istanbul after 1864 where he was initially a legal counsellor to the Sublime Porte, he was an active Freemason with association to several of the lodges under the French obedience. In addition to serving as the Worshipful Master of the lodge *l’Union d’Orient* between 1865 and 1870, he was also a founding member of the lodge *I*

Proodos in 1868 to which Murād V was initiated in 1872. The initiation ceremony took place at Amiable's house in Istanbul.

Mehmed Tal'at Bey (Tal'at Pasha)(1874–1921)

One of the founders of the Ottoman Freedom Society in Salonica and later a leading proponent of the CUP. Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire from February 1917 to October 1918. He was initiated at the Salonica lodge *Macedonia Risorta* in 1903. He was an active participant of the formation process of a national Ottoman obedience and became the first Grand Master of the Ottoman Grand Orient upon its foundation in August 1909.

Michel Noradounghian (1873–1951?)

Born to an Armenian family of Istanbul, he was involved in the family business of insurance and commerce. While resident in Salonica he was initiated at the lodge *Veritas*, in the records of which he was registered as the Macedonia regional director of Société Générale d'Assurance. Once back in Istanbul, he took part as a founder of the lodge *La Renaissance* and then was very actively involved in the formation processes of both the Ottoman Supreme Council and the Ottoman Grand Orient. Later in life he moved to Romania and continued his Freemasonic involvement there as well, where he served as the Sovereign Grand Commander of the Romanian Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite between 1944 and 1951.

Murād V (1840–1904)

Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. His reign lasted only three months before he was dethroned in August 1876 due to a mental illness. His initiation into Freemasonry is well documented and took place on October 20, 1872 as recorded in the detailed correspondence held by Cleanthi Scalieri, then Worshipful Master of the

lodge *I Proodos*, with the Grand Orient de France. Upon his deposition, he was kept in confinement for the rest of his life and several plots to save him, which involved the names of a few Ottoman Freemasons, came to nothing.

Muṣṭafā Reshīd Pasha (1800–58)

Leading statesman and diplomat of the *Tanzīmāt* era. He was appointed as ambassador to France and Britain before serving as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and then six times as the Grand Vizier of the empire. Given the lack of concrete documents, his association with Freemasonry can only be speculated through the Freemasonic affiliation of some of his associates during his embassies as well as his close relations with a number of prominent figures known to be Freemasons.

Nāmīk Kemāl (1840–88)

A leading intellectual of his period, he was an influential writer and journalist who significantly contributed to the Young Ottoman movement which paved the way to the proclamation of the Constitution in 1876. He was in the close circle of Murād V and was a member of the same lodge *I Proodos* as can be traced from the extant lodge records.

Nūr al-Dīn (Prince) (Şehzâde Ahmed Nûreddin) (1852–84)

The sixth in age among the eight sons of Sultan ‘Abd al-Medjīd who survived to an adult age. He was initiated in 1873 at the lodge *I Proodos* one year after his brother Murād’s initiation at the same lodge. When ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd II came to the throne, he was the third in the line of succession after his brother Kemāl al-Dīn but his chance of access to the throne was precluded by his premature death of tuberculosis.

Solutore (Salvatore) Avventore Zola

Originally a native of Piedmont, he came to Egypt in the early 1860s after taking part in the military endeavours of Garibaldi towards the unification of Italy. During a period when Egyptian Freemasonry had close connections with the political elite and their aspirations, he became the Grand Master of the newly formed National Grand Orient of Egypt under the auspices of Khedive Ismāʿīl in 1872. After many years of close affiliation with the Rite of Memphis, he reached its ultimate title of “Grand Hierophant” in 1874, after the demise of the rite’s founder Marconis de Nègre. However, after relinquishing his titles and offices of Freemasonry in the early 1880s, he turned to Catholicism in the final years of his life denouncing Freemasonry.

Sam Lévy (1870–1959)

After his studies at the school of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Salonica and then the Sorbonne in Paris, he worked as an editor for the journals *La Epoca* and *Journal de Salonique* which his father Saadi Lévy published in Salonica. He stayed in Zemlin (near Belgrade) where he published two journals to his name. An avid supporter of the Young Turk movement he continued his journalism in Salonica following the Young Turk revolution. After the city passed to the Greek kingdom, he left for Paris. His affiliation with Salonican Freemasonry was attested by a Freemasonic gathering in Budapest, which he joined with several members of the CUP who also belonged to the fraternity.

Yūsuf Āgāh Efendi (1744–1824)

The son of a Muslim family from the Peloponnese, he entered state service to work in various positions of the Treasury and Chancery departments. He was appointed by Selīm III as the first resident Ottoman Ambassador to London between 1793 and 1796. His association with Freemasonry can only be speculated through his

close association with the British élite, many of whom were affiliated with the fraternity as a rare painting from the period depicts.

Ẓiyā (Ḍiyā) Pasha (1829–80)

A literary man and member of the Young Ottoman circle of the *Tanzīmāt* era, he served in various high administrative positions in Ottoman provinces and also as a member of the judiciary and legislative councils of state. During the time he lived in Europe along with other Young Ottoman Society members, he was influential through his contribution to radical journals. Although there are no extant records of his initiation, he is believed to have been affiliated with a French obedience lodge. He is also depicted as a major intellectual influence on the choice of Murād V to become a Freemason.

APPENDIX C

TABLES

Table 1: The changes in membership of the lodges under the French obedience.*

Name of the Lodge (Years of activity)	Year	Number of members	Membership
<i>L'Étoile du Bosphore</i> (1858 to 1901)	1860	39	French majority; one Mexican, one Polish, several Italians; the rest consisted of Istanbul Jews and one Turkish Muslim (Hilmi Efendi, secretary at the Sublime Porte).
	1876	38	No more French majority; (Mehmed Kamil Bey, Sultan's usher for ambassadors).
	1890s	10	Most French had left; several Greeks; 2 or 3 Armenians; a few Jews under Italian protection.
<i>L'Union d'Orient</i> (1863 to 1874)	1863	30	Majority of Jews; a considerable number of Armenians and 2 Greeks.
	1864	59	
	1865	73	Only 3 Muslims.
	1867	114	16 Muslims.
	1868	128	41 Muslims.
	1869	142	40 of French, Italian and Central European Origin; 10 Jews; 17 Greeks; 19 Armenians; 56 Muslims.
	1870-1874		Major loss of membership; first the Muslims left, then others from Ottoman minorities.
<i>Ser</i> (1866 to 1894)	1866	18	Armenian membership
	1868-1869	77	Armenian membership
	1877	65	
	1879	38	
	1886	49	
	1887	59	
<i>I Proodos</i> (1868 to 1901)	1868	15	
	1870	34	

	1872-1873	68	1 French, 1 Italian, 2 of Central European origin; 39 Greeks; 20 Muslims; 5 Jews.
	1876	89	
	1877	51	
	1880	45	No Muslims left since end of 1878.
	1882	77	New members mostly Jews and Greeks; 5-6 new Muslim members.
	1884	46	
	1893	30	
	1900	28	
<i>La Renaissance</i> (1908 to 1935)	1910	20	3 French; majority of Greeks; several Jews and Armenians; 1 Turkish Muslim.
<i>Prométhée</i> (1893 to 1897)	1895	36	3 of French, Italian and Central European origin; 16 Greeks; 1 Armenian; 8 Jews; 8 Muslims.

* The data for this table is compiled from the information presented in Paul Dumont, “La Turquie dans les Archives du Grand Orient de France: Les Loges Maçonnes d’Obédience Française à Istanbul du Milieu du XIXe Siècle à la Veille de la Première Guerre Mondiale,” in *La Franc-Maçonnerie d’Obédience Française dans l’Empire Ottoman* (Istanbul: Les Éditions Isis, 2013), 11–50. Three lodge registers given in their entirety which belong to *L’Union d’Orient* (1869), *I Proodos* (1872–73) and *Prométhée* (1895), are published in the Turkish edition of Dumont’s book entitled *Osmanlılık, Ulusçu Akımlar ve Masonluk*, trans. Ali Berktaş, 4th ed. (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2018), 160–63, 196–97, 200. The numbers given in the table regarding membership is approximate since they are based only on names and birthplaces (when available).

Table 2: Ottoman lodges under foreign obediences.*

Name of the lodge	Obedience	Location	Working language
<i>Oriental</i>	British	Istanbul	English
<i>Bulwer</i>	British	Istanbul	English
<i>Leinster</i>	British	Istanbul	English
<i>Deutscher Bund</i>	British	Istanbul	German
<i>Aréti (Virtue)</i>	British	Istanbul	Greek
<i>L’Étoile du Bosphore</i>	French	Istanbul	French
<i>L’Union ‘Orient</i>	French	Istanbul- 1862	French-Turkish
<i>Ser</i>	French	Istanbul- 1865	Armenian
<i>Proodos</i>	French	Istanbul- 1868	Greek
<i>Chapitre (Chapter)</i>	French	Istanbul- 1868	French
<i>Germania à la Corne d’Or</i>	German (Grand Lodge of Hamburg)		German
<i>Italia</i>	Italian	Istanbul- 1863 (ended in 1867)	Italian
<i>Italia Risorta</i>	Italian	Istanbul- 1868	Italian
<i>Speranza</i>	Italian	Istanbul (short existence)	Italian

* The content of this table is based on the information given in Louis Amiable’s *De La Situation Maçonnique à Constantinople en Grèce et en Italie* (Aix: J. Remondet-Aubin, 1895). The names of the lodges are given according to the spellings of Amiable. A foundation date is included for the lodges he has specified one. The

Chapter for higher degrees was opened in 1868 to serve all four lodges of the French obedience.

Table 3: The Italian lodges in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century.*

Name of the Lodge	Location	Year
<i>Italia</i>	Istanbul	1863
<i>Italia Risorta</i>	Istanbul	1867
<i>Fenice</i>	Istanbul	1868
<i>Sincerita</i>	Istanbul	1868
<i>Speranza</i>	Istanbul	1868
<i>Luce dell'Oriente</i>	Istanbul (Büyükdere)	1873
<i>Anacleto Cricca</i>	Manisa	1867
<i>Macedonia</i>	Salonica	1864
<i>Stella Ionia</i>	Izmir	1864
<i>Fenice</i>	Izmir	1867
<i>Orhaniye</i>	Izmir	1868
<i>Armenak</i>	Izmir	1872

* This table is given by Angelo Iacovella in *Gönye ve Hilal: İttihad-Terakki ve Masonluk [Il Triangolo e la Mezzaluna]*, trans. Tülin Altınova (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1998), 25. Iacovella notes that the Istanbul lodges *Fenice*, *Sincerita* and *Speranza*, due to their scarce membership, were united into the lodge *Le Tre in Una*, which later became *Aziziye*.

Table 4: Members of the Committee of Union and Progress affiliated with Freemasonry.*

Name	Lodge
Ahmed Cemal Bey (later Pasha)	Veritas
Edib Servet (Tör)	Macedonia Risorta
Emanuele Carasso	Macedonia Risorta
Faik Nüzhet (Terem)	Veritas
Faik Süleyman (Pasha)	Veritas
Fazlı Necip Bey	Veritas
İsmail Hakkı Canbulat	Veritas
Kazım Nami (Duru)	Macedonia Risorta
Kazım (Özalp) (later Pasha)	Macedonia Risorta
Manyasizade Refik Bey	Macedonia Risorta
Mehmed Cavit Bey	Macedonia Risorta
Mehmed Servet (Yesari)	Veritas
Mehmed Talat Bey (later Pasha)	Macedonia Risorta
Midhat Şükrü (Bleda)	Macedonia Risorta
Osman Adil Bey	Veritas
Rahmi Evrenos (Arslan)	Macedonia Risorta

*This table is based on the information given by Orhan Koloğlu, *İttihatçılar ve Masonlar* (Istanbul: Pozitif, 2012), 43, and by Celil Layiktez, *Türkiye’de Masonluk Tarihi, Vol.1* (Istanbul: Yenilik Basımevi, 1999), 99.

Table 5a: Founding members of the Ottoman Supreme Council*

Name	Occupation
Aziz Hasan Paşa	Egyptian Prince
Mehmed Talat Bey	Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies
Djavid Bey	Member of the Chamber of Deputies (later Minister of Finance)
Rahmy [<i>Rahmi</i>] Bey	Member of the Chamber of Deputies
Midhat Chukri [<i>Şükrü</i>] Bey	Member of the Chamber of Deputies
Dr. Rıza Tevfik Bey	Member of the Chamber of Deputies
Nessim Mazliah	Member of the Chamber of Deputies
Michel Noradounghian	Merchant
David J. Cohen	Representative of Victoria de Berlin Insurance Company
Osman Adil	Real Estate Owner
Assim [<i>Asım</i>] Bey	Chief Secretary of the Chamber of Deputies
Mehmed Aarif [<i>Arif</i>]	[Attorney]
Mehmed Fouad Houlousi [<i>Fuad Hulusi</i>]	Judge
Galib Bey	Member of the Senate

*This table is based on the foundation document of the Ottoman Supreme Council, “Belge 1 : Osmanlı Yüksek Şûrası’nın Reorganizasyonu Zaptı, 3 Mart 1909,” *Mimar Sinan*, no.157 (December 2012): 17–18. [Additional information is given in brackets].

Table 5b: The additional members of the Supreme Council who were raised to the thirty-third degree on March 18 and 20, 1909.*

Name	Occupation
Hüseyin Cahit (Yalçın)	Journalist
Osman Talat	[Attorney]
Galip Paşa	Commander of the Gendarmerie
Emanuel Karasu [<i>Emanuele Carasso</i>]	Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Attorney
Sarım Kibar	[Merchant]
Katipzade Sabri Bey	[Merchant]

* *Mimar Sinan*, no.157 (December 2012): 20. [Additional information is given in brackets].

Table 6a: Founding members of the Ottoman Grand Orient*

Name	Lodge	Obedience
Yorgi Chassiotis	La Renaissance	French
Andre Antipas	Bisanzio Risorta	Italian
Victor Mordo	Bisanzio Risorta	Italian
Em.Feizi Menahem	Bisanzio Risorta	Italian
Jacques Souhami	Bisanzio Risorta	Italian

Victor Algrante	Bisanzio Risorta	Italian
Edouard de Nari	Bisanzio Risorta	Italian
Osman Talat	Constitución	Spanish
Jean Siotis	La Renaissance	French
Rafaele Ricci	Italia Risorta	Italian
Aziz Hasan [Pasha]		
David J. Cohen	La Renaissance	French
Michel Noradounghian	La Renaissance	French
Bohor Camhi	Macedonia Risorta	Italian

*The names in the table were the participants of the preliminary meeting held on July 13, 1909 as noted in the memorandum circulated afterwards: “Belge No. 3 - Sirküler No 2, 13 Temmuz 1909,” *Mimar Sinan*, no.157 (December 2012): 27–29.

Table 6b: Founding members of the Ottoman Grand Orient*

Name of delegate	Lodge	Obedience /Jurisdiction
Aziz Hasan [Pasha]	Vatan	Ottoman Supreme Council
Joseph Sakakini	Vatan	Ottoman Supreme Council
[Edouard] De Nari	Bisanzio Risorta	Italian (later Ottoman GO)
Victor Algrante	Bisanzio Risorta	Italian (later Ottoman GO)
A. Salem	Veritas	French
David J. Cohen	La Renaissance	French
Michel Noradounghian	La Renaissance	French
Solon E. Casanova	La Renaissance	French
Osman Fehmi Niazi [Niyazi]	Resne	Egyptian (later Ottoman GO)
Dr. Mehmed Ali [Baba]	Mouhiban Hurriet [<i>Muhibban-ı Hürriyet</i>]	Ottoman Supreme Council
Nail Rechid	Vefa	Ottoman Supreme Council
Dr. [İlyas] Modiano	Chaffak [<i>Şafak</i>]	Ottoman Supreme Council
Dr. Jacques [Jak] Souhami	Chaffak [<i>Şafak</i>]	Ottoman Supreme Council
Faik [Süleyman][Pasha]	Macedonia Risorta	Italian
Osman Talat	Constitución	Spanish (later Ottoman GO)
Nadra Moutran	Uhuvvet-i Osmaniyye [<i>La Fraternité Ottomane</i>]	Egyptian (later Ottoman GO)
Raphael Torel		
Em. Feizi Menahem	Bisanzio Risorta	Italian (later Ottoman GO)
Victor Mordo	Bisanzio Risorta	Italian (later Ottoman GO)
Bohor Camhi	Macedonia Risorta	Italian
Osman Saib	Vefa	Ottoman Supreme Council
Nuri Nazif	Vefa	Ottoman Supreme Council
Tevfik	Vefa	Ottoman Supreme Council
Hercule Diamantopulo	Mouhiban Hurriet [<i>Muhibban-ı Hürriyet</i>]	Ottoman Supreme Council
Rafaele Ricci	Italia Risorta	Italian
Diran Kelekian		
Dario Errera	Constitución	Spanish (later Ottoman GO)
H. Kazim		
H. Hilmi	Resne	Egyptian (later Ottoman GO)
Jacques Calderon	Bisanzio Risorta	Italian (later Ottoman GO)
L. Comendinger		
Sadik	Vefa	Ottoman Supreme Council
Ahmed Nessim	Vatan	Ottoman Supreme Council

* The names in the table include the delegates of various lodges and other participants who attended the inaugural meeting of the Ottoman Grand Orient on

August 1, 1909: “Belge No. 5 Sirküler No 4, 01.08.1909,” *Mimar Sinan*, no.157 (December 2012): 32–45.

Note: The spelling and transliteration of the names in the tables are kept in accordance with their usage in the respective sources of reference for each table.



APPENDIX D

LIST OF OTTOMAN LODGES CITED IN THIS WORK

A list of the Ottoman lodges cited in this work is given below for convenience of reference. Although the list includes the names of a considerable number of lodges which have been revealed in various works of historical research into Ottoman Freemasonry up to now, it is far from being exhaustive. The foundation and discontinuation dates of the lodges are included in the list only to the extent that they have been referred to in this work. The lodges affiliated to the Ottoman Supreme Council after its reorganization in 1909 are not included here since they are referred to in Tables 6a and 6b.

Name of Lodge	Place	Name of Obedience	Start	End
<i>Arete (Virtue)</i>	Istanbul	United Grand Lodge of England	1864	
<i>Bisanzio Risorta</i>	Istanbul	Grande Oriente d'Italia	1908	
<i>Bulwer</i>	Istanbul	United Grand Lodge of England	1862	
<i>Bulwer</i>	Cairo	United Grand Lodge of England	1860s	
<i>Calcedonia</i>	Istanbul	Grande Oriente d'Italia	1909	
<i>Caledonian</i>	Istanbul	Grand Lodge of Scotland	1869	
<i>Constitución</i>	Istanbul	Gran Oriente Español	1909	
<i>Dekran</i>	Izmir	United Grand Lodge of England	1864	
<i>Deutscher Bund</i>	Istanbul	United Grand Lodge of England	1860	
<i>Eleusinian</i>	Izmir	United Grand Lodge of England	1863	
<i>Fazilette</i>	Salonica	Gran Oriente Español	1909	
<i>Homer</i>	Izmir	United Grand Lodge of England	1860	

<i>Homère</i>	Izmir	Grand Orient de France	1908	
<i>I Proodos</i>	Istanbul	Grand Orient de France	1868	1901
<i>Isis</i>	Alexandria	Grand Orient de France	1799	
<i>Italia</i>	Istanbul	Grande Oriente d'Italia	1863	1867
<i>Italia Risorta</i>	Istanbul	Grande Oriente d'Italia	1868	
<i>L'Étoile du Bosphore</i>	Istanbul	Grand Orient de France	1858	1901
<i>La Renaissance</i>	Istanbul	Grand Orient de France	1908	
<i>La Turquie</i>	Istanbul	Grand Lodge of Scotland	1908	
<i>La Victoire</i>	Izmir	United Grand Lodge of England	1861	
<i>Labor et Lux</i>	Salonica	Grande Oriente d'Italia	1906	
<i>L'Avenir de l'Orient</i>	Salonica	Grande Loge de France	1908	
<i>Le Port du Temple de Salomon</i>	Jaffa	Grand Lodge of Egypt	1891	
<i>Les Pyramides d'Égypte</i>	Cairo	Grand Orient de France	1845	
<i>Logos</i>	Istanbul	Grand Lodge of Scotland	1911	1928
<i>L'Union d'Orient</i>	Istanbul	Grand Orient de France	1863	1874
<i>Macedonia</i>	Salonica	Grande Oriente d'Italia	1864	
<i>Macedonia Risorta</i>	Salonica	Grande Oriente d'Italia	1901	
<i>Melès</i>	Izmir	Grand Orient de France	1867	
<i>Midhat Pasha</i>	Salonica	Grande Loge de France (?)	1908	
<i>Oriental</i>	Izmir	United Grand Lodge of England	1856	1949
<i>Ouhouvet</i>	Edirne	Gran Oriente Español	1909	
<i>Perseverancia</i>	Salonica	Gran Oriente Español	1907	
<i>Phillipos</i>	Salonica	Grand Orient of Greece	1907	
<i>Prométhée</i>	Ioannina	Grand Orient de France	1893	1897
<i>Sain Jean d'Écosse de la Parfaite Union</i>	Istanbul	La Mère Loge de Marseille	active in 1780s	
<i>Sain Jean d'Écosse de l'Amitié</i>	Salonica	La Mère Loge de Marseille	active in 1780s	
<i>Sain Jean d'Écosse des Nations Réunies</i>	Izmir	La Mère Loge de Marseille	active in 1780s	
<i>Saint Jean du Levant</i>	Istanbul	Grande Loge de Genève	active in 1780s	
<i>Ser</i>	Istanbul	Grand Orient de France	1866	1894
<i>Sion</i>	Izmir	United Grand Lodge of England	1870	
<i>St. John's</i>	Izmir	United Grand Lodge of England	1863	
<i>St. George's</i>	Izmir	United Grand Lodge of England	1864	
<i>Star of the East</i>	Cairo	United Grand Lodge of England		
<i>Steaoa Salonicului</i>	Salonica	Grand Lodge of Romania	1908	
<i>Veritas</i>	Salonica	Grand Orient de France	1904	

APPENDIX E

EBÜZZİYA TEVFIK’S ARTICLE

A transliteration into Latin characters of Ebüzzıya Tefk’s article “*İtalyan Farmason Locaları ve Siyonizm* [The Italian Freemasonic Lodges and Zionism],” originally written in Ottoman script, has not been published so far. It is included here as a useful reference for researchers of Freemasonic history. The transliteration system of *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, the Turkish version of the Encyclopedia of Islam, was used as it provides an easier depiction of sounds in accordance with their usage in modern Turkish. On the other hand, words belonging originally to Turkish language and the conjugated forms of Turkish verbs have been transliterated as they would be written in modern Turkish alphabet. The foreign words like the *Times* have been given in their original spelling in square brackets instead of a direct transliteration. Following the transliterated version of the article, its English translation is also presented.

İtalyan Farmason Locaları ve Siyonizm

[*Mecmū'a-i Ebu'zziyā* 12, no.121 (25 Zu'l-ka'da 1329 / 17 November, 1911)]

[p.129] Mecmū'a-i Ebu'zziyānın yüzüncü nüshasında [farmasonluk] 'ünvānıyla bir maḳāle neşr etmiş idik. Bu maḳāleyi yazmakdan maḳşadımız o günlerde farmason tarīḳ ve cem'iyyeti haḳḳında ba'zı efkār-ı maḥşūşa eşḫābı tarafından li-garażın vāḳi' olan neşriyātdan efkār-ı 'āmmenin ḥāşıl ettiği zehāb-ı saḳīmi taşḫīḥ idi. Hattā [*Times*] gazetesi Kāhire muḥābirinin farmasonluk vesīlesiyle İttihād ve Terakḳī cem'iyyeti haḳḳında revā gördüğü ta'n ve isnādı 'aynen ī'lān ile berāber, lāzım 'add eylediğimiz izāḥātı vermişdik. Çünkü o sırada Fransız erbāb-ı kaleminden televvūn-i fikr ve meslekle müştehir [*Léo Taxil*]'in – ki bir gün bī-bākāne ī'lān-ı rafz ile müftehir olursa ertesi günü münāfīkāne tā'ib ve müstaḡfir olmak 'ādetidir – farmasonluk haḳḳında vehm ve ḥayālden mürekkeb bir eseri tercüme ve neşr edilmekte idi. [p.130] Bu kitāb, yazdığı her satır ve belki her kelime fikr-i menfa'ate ḥādim olan bir kalemin maḥşūlu olmasından dolayı bizce muzırr idi. O sebeble şāḥibinin māhiyyetini ta'yīn ile berāber farmasonluğun esās teşekkülüyle maḳşad ve gāyesi haḳḳında bī-ṭaraf eşḫāb-ı neşriyātın āsāriyla istiḫād etmişdik.

O maḳālemizin ḥātimesinde şöyle bir fıkramız vardı: [şübhe yokdur ki aḳvāl ve ilkāāt-ı bāṭıla pek az zamānda kendini gösterir. Güneş balçıkla sıvanamayacağı gibi nūr-ı 'irfāna karşı hiç bir vāḳit zālām-ı cehl ve 'udvān pāydār olamaz. Faḳat bāṭılın buṭlānını bildiği ḥāde ḥalka haḳḳ şūretinde telḳinde bulunanlar olur; ve nūr-ı 'irfānda henüz maḡrib ihticābından maşriḳ infilākına intikāl etmemiş bulunursa 'avāmın cehlinden istifāde edenler dā'imā fırsatdan intihāz edecektir. Ve bu ḥāllerden de memleket için bī-iştibāḥ pek vaḥīm netīceler ḥasıl olacaktır.]

Bu fıkradan sonra farmasonluk hakkında *[Times]*ın Kâhire muhâbiri tarafından yazılan mektûbu reddetmek *[Osmanischer Lloyd]*un neşr ettiği makâleyi derc eylemişdik ki onun ba'zı fıkralarını burada tekrâr edeceğiz. Çünkü bize ba'zı veķāi'-i âhîre farmasonluğun bizim memleketimizde oynamak istediğı vahāmet-i encām oyunları bize ı'lân ve efhām eylemiştir. Biz ise farmasonluğun esāsını fikr-i te'āvüne müstenid ve her türlü 'avāmil-i mezhebiyyeden vāreste bildiğimizden o nokta-i nazardan müdāfa'âtde bulunmuşduk. Çünkü her ne üzerine olursa olsun bir bahışde maṭmah-ı nazar-ı haķıķat olmak lâzım gelir. Farmasonluk ise muķaddemā dahî denildiğı vechle mu'aḥḥaren hükümāt-ı muṭlaķaya karşı ahālî-i mazlûmeyi ḥimāye mesleğini iltizām eylemişdi, zîrā Avrupada ruhbāniyyet hükümāt-ı muṭlaķaya medār-ı kuvvet ve istinād olduğundan farmason locaları da bu kuvvete karşı şûret-i teşekküllerinden istifāde etmek ve bināen-'aleyh efkār-ı inķılabiyyeyi tervīce vesātet eylemek istemişlerdir, ki en büyük eķer-i muvaffaķiyyeti olan İtalya hükümetinin şûret-i teşekkülü bunun bürhānıdır.

[Osmanischer Lloyd] reddiyesinin bir fıkrasında şöyle söylüyordu:

[p.131] “Muhālîfin takımı, kabînenin Sûriyeyi Yahūdîlere satacağı şāyi'asını neşr ettikleri vakit farmasonluğa dînsizlik isnādından mâ'adā bir de bu cem'iyetin nüfûz ve te'sîrini bütün cihāna teşmîl edebilmek maķşadıyla Yahūdîler tarafından te'sîs edildiğı şānî'asını da ihtirā' eylemişlerdi.”

*[Osmanischer Lloyd]*un bu fıkrasıyla farmasonlukdan ziyāde Yahūdîleri iltizām etmiş olduğunu biz şimdi anlıyoruz. İ'tirāf ederiz ki 'umûmî bir maķşadla yazıldığına ķā'il olduğumuz o makālede bir de maķşad-ı maḥşuş bulunduğuna ihtimāl vermemiş

Türkçesi şâfderûnluk eylemiş idik, insân dâ'imâ hâtasını idrâk ve taşhîh ede ede kesb-i kemâl eder.

Evet! Farmason cem'iyetini Yahûdîler teşkîl etmemiştir. Bu pek doğrudur. Fakat şimdi anlıyoruz ki şu beş on sene zarfında Selânikde açılan farmason localarını hem Yahûdîler te'sîs etmiş, hem de mü'essisi olan bu Yahûdîler İtalya tâb'iyetinde bulunmuşdur; maḳşad-ı te'sîsi ise siyonist âmâl ve teşebbüsâtını tervîcden 'ibâretidir.

[İttihâd ve Teraḳḳî] erbâbı ise bu cem'iyetin şüret-i teşekkülüyle politikaya olan ḥidmetinden istifâde etmiş ve mensûbîni arasında ḥükm-fermâ olan ketm-i esrârı maḳâsıd-ı inḳılâbiyyesine muvâfıḳ bulduğu için bir zamân onun himâyesine daḥl olmuş. Bir cem'iyet-i inḳılâbiyye için bu hâl hiç bir vakit mücib-i intikâd olamaz. Bir cem'iyet ḥafiyye-i siyasiyye maḳşadına vâsıl oluncaya kadar her vâsıtaya mürâca'at eder, her vâsıtayı âlet-i merâm edinir. Her vâsıtadan istifâde eder. Farmason locaları ise “sa'âdet-i 'umûmiyye-i beşeriyyeyi tezyîde sa'y etmek vazîfe-i muhsinesiyle” müteşekkîl ve [ketm-i esrâr] ile mükellef oldukları cihetle bir cem'iyet-i inḳılâbiyyeye pek büyük ḥidmet îfâ edebilirler.

İşte Selânik farmason locaları daḥî İttihâd ve Teraḳḳî cem'iyet-i inḳılâbiyyesine bu maḳşadda mu'în olmuşdur.

[p.132] Zekî Bey muhâkemesi sırasında ba'zı ifşâât tecellî eylemiştir ki bizce cidden bâ'is-i intibâh ḥuşuşâtdandır.

Mülâzım Şa‘bân Efendinin kıra‘at ettiği lâyihanın ba‘zı mevâddını şerh ve izâha münhasır olan ifâdâtı şâyân-ı tezķardır. Bu zât, müdde‘î-i şahşî vekîlinin su‘âllerinden birine verdiği cevâbda:

“Merkez-i ‘umûmîde dört veyâhûd beş mes‘ele üzerine mübâhase cereyân etti. Evvelâ Türkiyede masonluk, siyonistlik...”

“...Hep hâlden ve sū‘-i idâreden, efkâr-ı ‘umûmiyyede emniyet kalmadığından ve sonra da Türkiyede masonluk perdesi altında siyonistlik cereyânından ve bu cereyânda Tal‘at ¹ ve Cāvid Beylerin siyonistliğe rağbet etmelerinden bahis olundu...”

“...masonluğun tedricî, tedricî orduya girecek dereceye geldiğini söylediler. Biz ordunun bundan münezzeh olmasını isteriz. Cāvid Beyin mâliye nezâretinde siyonistlik ile de iştigâli söylendi...”

Şu ifâdâtdan istidlâl olunuyor ki Selânikdeki farmason locaları farmasonluğun esâsını, menvîât-ı mahşuşalarına âlet etmek isteyen Yahûdîler tarafından te’sîs ve güşâd edilmiş ve 10 Temmuz inkılâbından sonra âmâl-i kavmiyyelerini tervîce isti‘dād-ı fıtrîsi olan ba‘zı mensûbînini mevķî‘-i iktidâra sevk ile istifâde etmek istemiştir.

Şûret-i huşûşiy்யede bir kavmin ba‘zı âmâlî ile iştigâle haşr mesâ‘î eder bir farmason locası taşavvur olunamaz. Dünyânın her tarafında farmason locaları vardır. Bunlarda huşûşât-i ictimâ‘iyye ve medenîyye ve ba‘zı hâlâtda maķâşid-i siyâsiyye ve ‘umûmî şûretde mevâdd-ı iktisâdiyye müzâkere olunabilir. Faķat meşelâ şûret-i huşûşiy்யede bir hâlkın menâfi‘-i şarrâfiyye ve ticâriyyesi mevzû‘-ı bahis olamaz.

¹ Tal‘at isminin siyonist kelimesiyle kaķ‘â münâsebeti yokdur.

[p.133] Bu olamadığı gibi bulunduğu memleketin siyaseten ve ictimā'en menāfi'ni muhıll ve mazarratını müntic mesā'il ve maķāşide daķı localar ālet edilemez. Edilir ise esās teşekkülleri i'tibāryla farmasonlukdan çıkılmış ve şarf-ı memlekete karşı iltizām-ı ihānet edilmiş olur.

Siyonistlik ise arz-ı mev'üdda bir hükümet-i İsrā'iliyye teşkılinden 'ibāretdir ki o da 'Osmānlı İmparatorluğundan koca bir parçayı ya'ni Filistīn kıt'asını koparıp almak ve orada yeniden bir Yahūda krallığı te'sīs eylemekdir.

Bugün bir devlet-i ecnebiyyenin Afrikadaki bir vilāyet-i cesīmemizi istilāya kıyāmı, mülkümüzde krallık teşkılı ile iştiğāl eder bir cemā'at ile muķāyese edilecek olursa İtalyanları tābi'-i ihtirāşāt ve faķať ecnebī bir düşman olduklarından dolayı ma'zur görebiliriz. Hāl bu ki Selānikde mü'essisleri İtalyan Yahūdīsi ve mensūbını 'Osmānlı Mūsevīsi olarak teşekkül etmiş olan farmason localarını āğüş-ı vefāmızda beslemek, himāye etmek, huşūşāt-ı ictimā'ya ve siyāsiyyemize teşrīk eylemek, bā-huşūş işlerine girüb de onlarla hemşī'ār bulunmak gibi gafletlere düşersek, huşūşen ve huşūşen taşavvurāt-ı ma'lūmelerini tervīce yardım edersek düşman-ı hāricī ile beynimizdeki fark pek 'azīm, ya'nī bizim hişşemize işābet eden kısım fevķa'l-gāye sakīm olur.

İtalya tecāvüzātı başladığı bir sırada Parisin [*Grand Otel*]inde toplanmış olan siyonist erkān ve ekābirinin Trāblusa 'ıvaż olmak üzere üç milyon Fransız Lirası teklīfini müzākere ettikleri şāyi'olmuş idi.

Bu erkân ve ekâbirîn cümlesi ‘an-aşl-ı Selânik ahâlî-i Müseviyyesinden olduğu hâlde mu’ahharen İtalya tâbi‘yetine girmiş farmasonlardan ‘ibâret bulunmuştur. Dahâ garîbi onlardan biri bu meclisde işbât-i vücûd ettikten sonra der-sa‘âdete gelmiştir ki buradaki İtalyanları def‘e muvaffak olamadığımız bir zamânda böyle mühimm bir İtalyanın sellemehü’s-selâm İstanbula gelişi ‘âdetâ terğîm-i unûf-ı ‘Osmâniyyân yolunda bir cesâretidir. Hâl bu ki şadr-ı â‘zam hazretleri meclis-i mebûsânda: “Hâricden gelen İtalyanları da kabûl etmiyoruz. [p.135] Onların pasaportlarını vize etmemek için süferāmıza, şehbenderlerimize emr verdik” demişler idi. Garîbdir ki bu emri verdik dedikleri gün ânifen söylediğimiz şahşı Sirkeci garında şimendüferden çıkarken görmüş idik. Hâlâ da bî-pervâ Galata ve Beyoğlunda kâr ve kirdâr ile iştiğâl etmektedir.

Mâ-haşal hükûmet ‘aczone haml olunabilecek her hâlinde teyakkuş ve intibâh üzere bulunmakla mükellefdir. Binâen-‘aleyh, Selânik farmason localarına şu sırada naşb-ı enzâr diğkat ve ona muğtedir olamadığı hâlde hâricde bulunan ve İtalyan olan mensübîninin mülke girmemesi esbâbını istikmâle şarf-ı kudret etmesini hükûmete ihtâr ederiz. Çünkü farmasonluk maskesi altında gizlenen siyonist çehrelerini görmeğe dahâ ziyâde taḥammül edilemez. Zîrâ bunlar, memleketin hâl-i buḥrânından dahî te’mîn-i maḳşada medâr olabilecek hisşeler çıkarabilirler.

Ve huşušen burada bulundukca şeytân-ı zalîl gibi ba‘zı zevâta ḥulûl ederek serâ’ir-i siyâsiyye-i hükûmeti istirâk ve mensûb ve müntemî bulundukları tarafa, ki düşmanımızdır; ihbâr ve iblâğa sâ‘î ve muvaffak olmalarından korkulur.

Italian Freemasonic Lodges and Zionism

[*Mecmū'a-i Ebuẓẓiyā* 12, no.121 (25 Zū'l-ḳa'da 1329 / 17 November, 1911)]

[p.129]In the one hundredth issue of the *Mecmū'a-i Ebuẓẓiyā* we had published an article under the name of 'Freemasonry'. The purpose of writing this article was to revise the erroneous assumptions created in the public opinion through the malevolent publications reflecting certain personal views regarding the teaching and society of Freemasonry. Moreover, upon sharing in similitude the defamation and slander circulated by the Cairo correspondent of the *Times* newspaper against the Committee of Union and Progress with reference to Freemasonry, we had given the explanations as deemed necessary, because during that time a work on Freemasonry was being translated and published reflecting the suspicion and imagination of its French author Léo Taxil, who is famous for the fickleness of his opinion and style whereby he one day boasts recklessly his renunciation and the next day sanctimoniously atones as a habit. [p.130]This book in our opinion was harmful in the way it was the creation of an author whose every line and word served his self-seeking. For that reason, as well as assessing the nature of its author, we had referred to the works of objective writers regarding the essential organization and purpose of Freemasonry.

At the end of our said article, we had this statement:

[There is no doubt that false statements and inculcations show their influence in rather short time. As the sun cannot be smeared over with slime, the darkness of ignorance and hate can never prevail over the light of erudition. Yet, while aware of the futility of falsity, some will still impose it to the society in the semblance of truth;

and if the light of erudition cannot shift from setting in the west to dawning in the east, those who take advantage of the ignorance of the populace will always exploit the opportunity and without doubt, grim consequences for the country will develop from these circumstances.]

After this statement, we had presented the article published by the *Osmanischer Lloyd* in rebuttal of the letter written by the Cairo correspondent of the *Times* about Freemasonry and we will repeat some of its narrative here, as a number of later events have revealed to us the plots destined to grave results, which Freemasonry is willing to scheme in our homeland. We, on the other hand, had stood in defense having understood the essence of Freemasonry to be based on an idea of solidarity and devoid of all sectarian aims, because any account, in no matter which subject, has to be from a truthful point of view. Freemasonry, as mentioned earlier, had in due course assumed the position of supporting the oppressed people against absolutist governments. Since the Church acted as the pivot of power and support for the absolutist governments of Europe, the Freemasonic lodges had undertaken a stance against this power by utilizing their own sociability and as a vehicle to support the revolutionary ideals, the proof of which is the way the Italian state has been formed as its utmost deed of achievement.

Osmanicher Lloyd, in one anecdote included in its rebuttal, had this to say:

[p.131]“When they disseminated the rumour that the Cabinet would sell Syria to the Jews, the opposition party in addition to attributing atheism to Freemasonry had also fabricated the figment that the organization was established by the Jews, with a view to making its ascendancy and influence appear to extend to the whole world.”

We now understand that *Osmanischer Lloyd* had the intention of favouring the Jews rather than Freemasonry in this anecdote. We confess that rather in an act of naïveté we had not supposed the presence of a deliberate intention in this article by taking it for granted that it was written with a general purpose. One can reach a state of perfection only through a constant grasp and rectification of one's errors.

Yes! The Freemasonic organization was not established by the Jews. This is very much the truth. However, we now understand that in the last five to ten years, not only that the Freemasonic lodges opened in Salonica have been established by Jews but these founding Jews have belonged to Italian nationality as well; the purpose of its establishment, on the other hand, consists of giving support to Zionist initiatives and aspirations.

The members of Union and Progress had benefited from this institution's utility in politics through its mode of organization and finding the secret keeping which was in effect among its adherents to be of convenience for their revolutionary ambitions, had once acted under its auspices. This conduct can at no time be a cause of criticism for a revolutionary society. An organization will have recourse to every vehicle and will render every vehicle a means to its end until it achieves its secret political aims. It will exploit any vehicle. Freemasonic lodges in that regard may render great service to a revolutionary organization as they are established with "the benevolent duty of striving to enhance the collective felicity of humanity" and are charged with secret keeping.

The Freemasonic lodges of Salonica have thus assisted the revolutionary organization of Union and Progress in this objective.

[p.132]During the Zekî Bey trial some revelations have emerged which in our opinion are indeed matters to arouse caution.

The statements of Lieutenant Şa'bân Efendi pertaining to the commentary of some matters from the memorandum which he read, are worthy of bearing in mind. This person, in his reply to one of the questions asked by the plaintiff's attorney [said]:

“At the Central Committee, four or five matters were put under debate. First of all, Freemasonry and Zionism in Turkey...”

“The current state of affairs and the bad governance, the lack of trust in public opinion, and then the progress of Zionism behind the veil of Freemasonry and the esteem of Tal'at¹ and Cāvid Bey towards Zionism, were all discussed.”

“...they expressed that Freemasonry gradually reached the point of entering into the Army. We would like the Army to be kept clear of this. Cāvid Bey's engagement with Zionism at the Ministry of Finance was also mentioned...”

It can be inferred from those statements that the Freemasonic lodges of Salonica have been established and launched by Jews who aspired to use selfishly the basis of Freemasonry for their own ends and after the Revolution of July 10, they have sought to benefit by bringing some of their members with an innate ability to promote their ethnic ambitions, to positions of power.

It is not possible to conceive a Freemasonic lodge which is exclusively dedicated to engagement in certain aspirations of a particular people. There are Freemasonic lodges in all parts of the world. In these lodges, social and civil matters, in some circumstances political goals and generally economic issues can be debated. However, the financial and commercial interests of a particular class of people for instance should not be a subject of discussion.

¹ The name Ṭal'at has no relation whatsoever to the word Zionist.

[p.133] Moreover, the lodges should not be rendered an instrument to affairs and aims regarding the politics and society of the homeland which violate its interests and inflict harm to. If done so, this would be an abandonment of the essential tenets of Freemasonry and would constitute treason against the interests of the homeland.

Zionism is about establishing an Israelite government in the Promised Land and this would mean to sever a huge piece, i.e. the land of Palestine, from the Ottoman Empire and to form there once again a Jewish Kingdom.

Today if we compare a foreign state's attempt for an invasion of a large province of ours in Africa with the engagement of a community in the establishment of a kingdom in our territory, the Italians notwithstanding their being subject to greed may still be justified as a foreign enemy. On the other hand, if we fall into the error of nurturing in our bosom the Freemasonic lodges which have been formed in Salonica by Italian Jewish founders and Ottoman Jewish members, or safeguarding them and involving them in our social and political affairs, especially participating in a common goal with them, and if we particularly assist in the progress of their

evident designs, we will have proved far worse than the foreign enemy, making our share in the outcome utterly injurious.

When Italian assault started, it became publicly known that the prominent Zionist figures had gathered at the Grand Hotel of Paris and were debating the offer of three million French francs as the price of Tripoli.

This group of prominent men consisted of Freemasons who were originally members of the Jewish community in Salonica and had subsequently acquired Italian nationality. Even more curiously, one of these men after appearing at this gathering has come to Istanbul and this reckless visit of an Italian during a time when we were not able to expel the Italians here, is such a show of courage to further rub the Ottoman noses in it. Yet, His Excellency the Grand Vizier had spoken at the Chamber of Deputies: “We don’t accept the Italians coming from abroad either. **[p.134]** We have ordered our ambassadors and consuls not to issue visas to their passports.” It is rather odd that we have seen the above mentioned person at the Sirkeci train station coming out of the train on the very same day that they claimed to have issued this order. He is still blatantly engaged in business and profit at Galata and Beyoğlu.

In conclusion, the government is responsible for staying vigilant at every situation that could lead to a weakness on its part. In that regard, we warn the government to pay utmost attention at this moment to the Freemasonic lodges of Salonica and, if not capable of that, to enforce the means of not letting their Italian members abroad into our territory, because it is not tolerable any more to see their Zionist faces hidden

behind the mask of Freemasonry, for they can avail themselves of the means towards the attainment of their goals even in the nation's time of crisis.

Especially, so long as they remain here, one would fear that they may try and succeed in wielding an aberrant influence on certain esteemed people to steal the political secrets of the government for the sake of transmission and disclosure to the side –and it is that of the enemy– to which they relate and feel attached.

