
Oriental by Design: Ottoman Jews, Imperial Style, and the Performance of Heritage

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WHEN, IN THE EARLY 1890s, OTTOMAN JEWS began to appear in Chicago in anticipation of the 1893 World's Fair, many American observers were perplexed at first. In one author's words, the "looks and garb" of these foreign visitors to the Windy City led him "to believe them Mohammedan."¹ Others decided that they were Turks, such as the editors of *The Chicago Times Portfolio of the Midway Types*, who labeled Robert Levy—an Ottoman Jewish merchant who managed the empire's exhibit at the fair and who was photographed wearing the attire of an Ottoman Muslim religious scholar—a "typical Turk," or "Rosa"—a Jewish woman from Ottoman Salonica—a "Turkish dancer." (See Figures 1–2.) Fairgoers' disorientation was not helped by the fact that these Eastern Jews used the newly constructed mosque built on the Midway—where Muslim employees of the Ottoman exhibit regularly prayed—as the site of their Yom Kippur services.² Once they discovered that the people dressed as Muslims or Turks were Jews, however, certain visitors expressed their disappointment. One chronicler of the fair explained that visitors in the know had begun to grumble that the "Turkish village" erected on the Midway Plaisance did not really "represent Turkey," and that it was "purely a speculative enterprise of some Oriental Jews."³ Equally vexing for those who sought an unadulterated glimpse of Eastern life in Chicago, many of the performers in the Midway's Turkish Village were caught changing into Western-style suits and dresses between their Oriental acts.

During the same period, Sultan Abdülhamid II and various Ottoman officials

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¹ Isidor Lewi, "Yom Kippur on the Midway," in *Report of the Committee on Awards of the World's Columbian Commission: Special Reports on Special Subjects or Groups*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1901), 2: 1691–1694, here 1693.

² *Ibid.*

³ Denton J. Snider, *World's Fair Studies* (Chicago, 1895), 373.



FIGURE 1: Robert Levy as a Typical Turk. From *The Chicago Times Portfolio of the Midway Types*, pt. 6: “Cairo Street Number” (Chicago, 1893).

began coming to similar conclusions halfway across the globe. Concerned with managing their empire’s international image, members of the Ottoman government condemned different individuals and groups who they claimed were “causing injury and insult to Islam.” Such was the case with the “dervishes” who whirled on Fifth Avenue in New York for money and the live displays of “brawny oarsmen and lissome danc-



FIGURE 2: Rosa as a Turkish Dancer. From *The Chicago Times Portfolio of the Midway Types*, pt. 6: “Cairo Street Number” (Chicago, 1893).

ing girls” who sought to stage a reproduction of Istanbul life along the River Thames in London.⁴ Abdülhamid II intervened personally in these cases, insisting that all such performances be shut down before they made a mockery of his empire and its

⁴ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London, 1998), 150–151.

official religion. He objected that “certain gypsy and Jewish women” were being “displayed as the so-called specimens of Oriental peoples,” with “all such display . . . [being] demeaning and uncalled for.”⁵ His message, which was echoed by different Ottoman Muslim authors during the same period, suggested that Ottomans with dubious pedigrees were claiming to represent the Islamic Orient through unsavory means and for personal gain.⁶

More recently, scholars have drawn similar conclusions, positing that the scores of (principally Jewish and Christian) Levantine entrepreneurs and performers who created elaborate displays of an exotic East for different audiences did so in order to capitalize on Westerners’ expectations of a romanticized and consumable Orient.⁷ The conclusion that those who donned turbans for the camera or whirled for eager crowds were selling an illusion appears so self-evident that it is most often accompanied by little more than the scant evidence that testifies to the performances in question—whether a photograph, an American journalist’s editorial, a European traveler’s account, or a brief complaint registered in Ottoman governmental correspondence.⁸ Each focuses on the moment of performance itself; each almost invariably offers an outsider’s perspective.

But are such performances so easily legible as to justify reading (or dismissing) them with just a glance or through the passing observations of those who attended or learned of them for only a brief moment? Were the individuals who staged such displays truly so unmoored and self-interested as to render their social, cultural, and political (if not religious) milieus meaningless? None of the three criteria that have been used to render suspect the performances of Ottoman Jewish self-Orientalizers—their Jewishness, their commercial engagements, and their habit of switching

⁵ Ibid., 151. Under Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909), the Ottoman government was known to enforce Islamic morality among its subjects. Benjamin C. Fortna, “Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman ‘Secular’ Schools,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32, no. 3 (August 2000): 369–393.

⁶ In an 1891 novel, the Ottoman Muslim author Fatma Aliye has her fictional counterpart explain to a group of French women that the “Oriental” images to which they are accustomed do “not depict Turkish women,” but rather “Christian women who pose as Orientals.” Zeynep Çelik, “Speaking Back to Orientalist Discourse at the World’s Columbian Exposition,” in Holly Edwards, ed., *Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures: Orientalism in America, 1870–1930* (Princeton, N.J., 2000), 77–97, here 95; Alihé Hanoum, *Les Musulmanes contemporaines: Trois conférences*, trans. Nazimé-Roukié (Paris, 1894), 177. The Ottoman Muslim author Halil Halid similarly commented upon the invented Oriental costumes of Ottoman non-Muslims who made their living selling Oriental displays on the streets of London; Halid, *The Diary of a Turk* (London, 1903), 250.

⁷ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “A Place in the World: Jews and the Holy Land at World’s Fairs,” in Jeffrey Shandler and Beth S. Wenger, eds., *Encounters with the “Holy Land”: Place, Past and Future in American Jewish Culture* (Hanover, N.H., 1997), 60–82, here 68, 70–72; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley, Calif., 1998), 105, 100–101; Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 163; Çelik, “Speaking Back to Orientalist Discourse at the World’s Columbian Exposition,” 197, 199; Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel, and the Ottoman Harem* (New Brunswick, N.J., 2004); Susan Nance, *How the Arabian Nights Inspired the American Dream, 1790–1935* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2009).

⁸ Others who have focused on more intimate iterations of Ottoman self-Orientalizing—i.e., in photo studios or within the home—treat the phenomenon as parody: Mary Roberts, “Cultural Crossings: Sartorial Adventures, Satiric Narratives, and the Question of Indigenous Agency in Nineteenth-Century Europe and the Near East,” in Jocelyn Hackforth-Jones and Mary Roberts, eds., *Edges of Empire: Orientalism and Visual Culture* (Malden, Mass., 2005), 70–94; Nancy Micklewright, “Harem/House/Set: Domestic Interiors in Photography from the Late Ottoman World,” in Marilyn Booth, ed., *Harem Histories: Envisioning Places and Living Spaces* (Durham, N.C., 2010), 239–259; Ece Zerman, “Studying an Ottoman ‘Bourgeois’ Family: Said Bey’s Family Archive (1900–1930)” (master’s thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2013).

between “Eastern” and “Western” styles—offers sufficient reason to dismiss their Oriental displays as a form of willful misrepresentation. Such conclusions rest on problematic assumptions about authentic versus inauthentic forms of culture (or in this case “real” versus “fake” Ottomanness) that obscure Ottoman Jews’ participation in broader imperial and international trends and deepen interpretations of Jews as perpetual outsiders, or consummate cosmopolitans. In fact, much of what was *in-between* about the lives of these Ottoman Jews—including their interest in selectively borrowing from the West while also claiming to be Orientals—was also true of many middle- and upper-class Ottomans of other faiths as well as various bourgeois individuals and communities across the globe. That such individuals moved frequently and comfortably between worlds should not mislead us into concluding that the ideologies they espoused or the public personas they adopted were equally supranational. By the nineteenth century, Ottomans of various religions came to practice different forms of *self-Orientalism* (as well as anti-Westernism) as a means of identifying with their empire.

It was their very contact with and openness to different cultural spheres and national contexts that drove many of these individuals to aspire to and perform their rootedness in local, regional, and imperial spheres. Theirs was an age in which national belonging was paramount, after all, and in which being a modern citizen of the world was predicated upon being a citizen of a particular state. Urban, bourgeois Ottomans learned this lesson not only during visits abroad or while conversing with foreign tourists or dignitaries, but also from their own government officials and fellow imperial citizens. By the nineteenth century, representatives of the empire were actively invested in the project of fostering a sense of imperial identification among all Ottomans—a project that had by then begun to catch on among urban middle-class individuals across the empire.⁹ Seen anew, the self-Orientalizing impulses of Ottoman Jews such as those who showed up for the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893 appear as attempts to identify and celebrate their Ottoman imperial heritage during an era when people around the globe were turning to folkloric nationalism as an anchor in a rapidly changing world. Taking seriously this form of imperial identification among Jews who engaged in commercial pursuits not only complicates the

⁹ For attempts to foster imperial identification among Ottomans of all backgrounds, see, for example, “Bulletin de Quinzaine,” *L’Orient: Journal de défense des intérêts de l’Empire ottoman*, April 15, 1909, 67; Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (1963; repr., New York, 1973), 221–222; Joseph G. Rahme, “Namik Kemal’s Constitutional Ottomanism and Non-Muslims,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 10, no. 1 (1999): 23–39, especially 34; Yavuz Köse, “Consume Together: Some Glimpses into Ottoman Consumer Behaviour,” in Ralf Elger and Yavuz Köse, eds., *Many Ways of Speaking about the Self: Middle Eastern Ego-Documents in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, 14th–20th Century* (Wiesbaden, 2010), 201–221, here 212; Orit Bashkin, “‘Religious Hatred Shall Disappear from the Land’: Iraqi Jews as Ottoman Subjects, 1864–1913,” *International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies* 4, no. 3 (2010): 305–323; Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine* (Stanford, Calif., 2011); Mary Roberts, “Genealogies of Display: Cross-Cultural Networks at the 1880s Istanbul Exhibitions,” in Zeynep İnankur, Reina Lewis, and Mary Roberts, eds., *The Poetics and Politics of Place: Ottoman Istanbul and British Orientalism* (Istanbul, 2011), 126–142, here 127; Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (New York, 2014). Despite the promise of Ottoman imperial patriotism, different authors expressed a range of opinions concerning whether non-Muslim and non-Turkish Ottomans counted as “equally” Ottoman when compared to Muslim Turks; Johann Strauss, “Ottomanisme et ‘ottomanité’: Le témoignage linguistique,” in Hans-Lukas Kieser, ed., *Aspects of the Political Language in Turkey, 19th–20th Centuries* (Istanbul, 2002), 15–39; Ussama Makdisi, “Ottoman Orientalism,” *American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (June 2002): 768–796.

portrayal of Jews as the ultimate “Mercurians,” but also reveals the potentially productive relationship between self-exoticizing spectacle and the performance of political belonging.¹⁰

IN RECENT DECADES, A GROWING BODY of literature indebted to Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism has begun to explore the phenomenon of “self-Orientalism,” also described by different authors as “auto-Orientalism,” “internalized Orientalism,” “reverse Orientalism,” “Oriental Orientalism,” or “the Orientalism of the Orientals.”¹¹ Although the approaches and subjects of this work have varied, all such studies seek to understand the ways in which self-declared “Orientals” have participated in the production of Orientalism in different contexts. This focus on the Orientalizing of the “Orientalized” suggests the staying power of the discourse while also reminding us that, even in the presence of undeniable structural power imbalances across the globe, agency did (and does) not exist solely on one side of the dividing line in the imaginary geography of East and West.¹² According to anthropologist Richard Fox, such a move lands us “East of Said,” since, in his estimation, Said’s theory of Orientalism “does not travel as far as Orientalism itself” has and thus fails to register the ways in which Orientalist paradigms have come to structure the consciousness of Easterners in various historical contexts.¹³ Reflecting on examples drawn from his own work, Fox notes how British images of Sikhs as warriors came to shape Sikh self-perceptions in the modern period, to the point that by the 1920s,

¹⁰ Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton, N.J., 2006).

¹¹ For Edward Said’s seminal work on the topic, see his *Orientalism* (New York, 1978). For “auto-Orientalism,” see, among others, Philip Holden, “Reinscribing Orientalism: Gendering Modernity in Colonial Malaya,” *Asian Journal of Social Science* 29, no. 2 (2001): 205–218; William Mazzarella, *Shoveling Smoke: Advertising and Globalization in Contemporary India* (Durham, N.C., 2003), especially 138–141. For “internalized Orientalism,” see Geraldine Heng and Janadas Devan, “State Fatherhood: The Politics of Nationalism, Sexuality and Race in Singapore,” in Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger, eds., *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (New York, 1992), 343–364, especially 355–356; Michiel Leezenberg, “Soviet Kurdology and Kurdish Orientalism,” in Michael Kemper and Stephan Conermann, eds., *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies* (New York, 2011), 86–102. For “reverse Orientalism” as self-Orientalism, see Lila Abu-Lughod, “Writing against Culture,” in Richard G. Fox, ed., *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* (Santa Fe, N.Mex., 1991), 137–162. For “Oriental Orientalism,” see Muhammad Ali Khalidi, “Orientalisms in the Interpretation of Islamic Philosophy,” *Radical Philosophy* 135 (January/February 2006): 25–33, especially 29–31. For “the Orientalism of the Orientals,” see Arif Dirlik, “Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism,” in Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Boulder, Colo., 1997), 105–128, especially 108–117, which adapts the term from Yang Congrong, “Dongfang shehuide dongfanglun” [The Orientalism of Oriental Societies], *Dangdai* (Contemporary) 64 (August 1, 1991): 38–53.

¹² For an illuminating study that further blurs such divisions, see Nathaniel Deutsch, “‘The Asiatic Black Man’: An African American Orientalism?,” *Journal of Asian American Studies* 4, no. 3 (October 2001): 193–208.

¹³ Richard G. Fox, “East of Said,” in Michael Sprinker, ed., *Edward Said: A Critical Reader* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 144–156, here 145, 146. For related observations, see Homi Bhabha, “The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism,” in Houston A. Baker, Jr., Manthia Diawara, and Ruth H. Lindenberg, eds., *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader* (Chicago, 1996), 87–106, here 95; Richard King, “Orientalism and the Modern Myth of ‘Hinduism,’” *Numen* 46, no. 2 (1999): 146–185, here 150; Engin F. İşin, “Citizenship after Orientalism: Ottoman Citizenship,” in E. Fuat Keyman and Ahmet İgduygu, eds., *Citizenship in a Global World: European Questions and Turkish Experiences* (New York, 2005), 31–51, here 34. Although it was not the focus of his work, Said also gestured in this direction when he suggested that “the ‘Orient’ . . . participates in its own Orientalizing”; *Orientalism*, 322.

“Sikh reformers believed and practiced the Orientalist stereotypes of the Sikh” propagated by various British authors and administrators.¹⁴ Partha Chatterjee has written about how Said’s 1978 work *Orientalism* opened his eyes to the ways in which “Orientalist constructions of Indian civilization” were “avidly seized upon by the ideologues of Indian nationalism” in order to offer a reified image of an ancient and glorious Indian nation.¹⁵ Other scholars describe a process by which Chinese nationalists have mobilized Orientalist tropes to explain China’s progress according to essentialized notions of Confucianism born in the midst of globalization.¹⁶

This process was possible because Orientalism, a complex discourse and way of seeing the world, was (and is) both capacious and malleable. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it allowed various nationalists and anticolonial thinkers to adopt a dichotomous view of East and West as they searched for their own autochthonous and authentic “essences.” Many such individuals found in Orientalism positive images of the Orient, whether in the guise of an imagined mystical East or fantasies of wealth and sensuality.¹⁷ Although these visions often appeared in the form of a condescending veneration or desire, the romantic Orientalism they offered influenced the nationalist and ideological platforms of intellectuals and activists who sought to resist the hegemony of Western powers in recent centuries, including towering figures of the twentieth-century Third World such as Mohandas Gandhi.¹⁸

A separate subset of the scholarship on self-Orientalism has highlighted the more clearly strategic uses of the discourse and practice by individuals seeking political or financial profit.¹⁹ This literature is largely preoccupied with the process of self-exoticization as a calculated response to the expectations of European and American spectators and focuses on the ways that various so-called Orientals have managed to serve their own interests by performing the stereotyped roles assigned to them by others. Such works range from studies of contemporary Turkish belly dancers to histories of the Chinese American entrepreneurs who helped establish the Chinatowns of North America.²⁰ K. E. Fleming’s work on Ali Pasha, the Ottoman governor

¹⁴ Fox, “East of Said,” 146.

¹⁵ Partha Chatterjee, “Their Own Words? An Essay for Edward Said,” in Sprinker, *Edward Said*, 194–220, here 194.

¹⁶ Dirlik, “Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism”; Holden, “Reinscribing Orientalism.”

¹⁷ For the creation and uses of the “mystical” East among both “colonizer and colonized,” see King, “Orientalism and the Modern Myth of ‘Hinduism.’” For recent works that connect American capitalist aspirations with Orientalist inclinations, see Kristin L. Hoganson, *Consumers’ Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865–1920* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2007); Nance, *How the Arabian Nights Inspired the American Dream*.

¹⁸ Fox, “East of Said,” 146–153.

¹⁹ Frank F. Scherer, “Sanfancón: Orientalism, Self-Orientalization, and ‘Chinese Religion’ in Cuba,” in Patrick Taylor, ed., *Nation Dance: Religion, Identity, and Cultural Difference in the Caribbean* (Bloomington, Ind., 2001), 153–170; Saadia Toor, “Indo-Chic: The Cultural Politics of Consumption in Post-Liberalization India,” *SOAS Literary Review* 2 (July 2000): 1–33; Ann Marie Leshkovich and Carla Jones, “What Happens When Asian Chic Becomes Chic in Asia?,” *Fashion Theory* 7, no. 3/4 (2003): 281–300.

²⁰ On self-exoticism through belly dancing, see Anthony Shay and Barbara Sellers-Young, “Belly Dance: Orientalism—Exoticism—Self-Exoticism,” *Dance Research Journal* 35, no. 1 (Summer 2003): 13–37; Öykü Potuoğlu-Cook, “Beyond the Glitter: Belly Dance and Neoliberal Gentrification in Istanbul,” *Cultural Anthropology* 21, no. 4 (November 2006): 633–660. For Chinese American involvement in the development of Chinatowns, see Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver’s Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875–1980* (Montreal, 1995); Greg “Fritz” Umbach and Dan Wishnoff, “Strategic Self-Orientalism: Urban Planning Policies and the Shaping of New York City’s Chinatown, 1950–2005,” *Journal of Planning History* 7, no. 3 (2008): 214–238. See also Leshkovich and Jones, “What Happens When

of Ioannina from 1787 to 1820, offers a suggestive example of how an individual Orientalized by others could come to use Orientalist tropes to his personal advantage. In Fleming's analysis, Ali Pasha's recognition that as an Oriental he was expected "to behave in certain typecast, formulaic ways" led him to play "the part of the idiosyncratic, cruel, and illogical despot" as a cover for his shrewd political sense and his elaborate attempts to consolidate power in his hands.²¹

Understanding the impulses of those late Ottoman Jews who chose to deal in and identify with things Oriental requires an integration of the different scholarly approaches to self-Orientalism that focus on its instrumental uses and its internalization in turn.²² Doing so allows us to recognize the ways in which "playing Eastern" helped Ottoman Jews gain social, cultural, and political, as well as economic, capital.²³ It also challenges the assumption that commodified and essentialized forms of self-presentation are universally perceived as demeaning.²⁴ Indeed, the way Ottoman Jewish merchants and consumers negotiated market demands and cultural concerns together clearly suggests that performances driven by monetary considerations can also offer a powerful venue for collective self-fashioning.

IN THE POLITICAL REALM, THE SELF-ORIENTALISM of Ottoman Jews was a product both of the empire's new emphasis on imperial patriotism and of its semicolonial position vis-à-vis the powerful nations of Europe. In this context, self-Orientalism and anti-Westernism emerged in tandem as part of an intertwined global development, driven in many cases by individuals for whom the West was an intimate and ambivalent

Asian Chic Becomes Chic in Asia?," where the authors suggest that the self-Orientalizers they study "derived concrete personal, cultural, and economic benefit from actively participating in Asian Chic" (282).

²¹ K. E. Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece* (Princeton, N.J., 1999), 156.

²² For works that have begun to move scholarship on self-Orientalism in this direction, see Anne Rasmussen, "'An Evening in the Orient': The Middle Eastern Nightclub in America," in Anthony Shay and Barbara Sellers-Young, eds., *Belly Dance: Orientalism, Transnationalism, and Harem Fantasy* (Costa Mesa, Calif., 2005), 172–193; Matthew Stiffler, "Authentic Arabs, Authentic Christians: Antiochian Orthodox and the Mobilization of Cultural Identity" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2010).

²³ In developing my thinking on this subject, I have found the following literature on Native Americans playing Indian particularly helpful: L. G. Moses, "Indians on the Midway: Wild West Shows and the Indian Bureau at World's Fairs, 1893–1904," *South Dakota History* 21 (Fall 1991): 205–229; Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883–1993* (Albuquerque, N.Mex., 1999); Rosemarie K. Bank, "Representing History: Performing the Columbian Exposition," *Theatre Journal* 54, no. 4 (December 2002): 589–606; Louis S. Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and the Wild West Show* (New York, 2005); Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast* (Durham, N.C., 2005); Michael D. McNally, "The Indian Passion Play: Contesting the Real Indian in *Song of Hiawatha* Pageants, 1901–1965," *American Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (March 2006): 105–136; Sam A. Maddra, *Hostiles? The Lakota Ghost Dance and Buffalo Bill's Wild West* (Norman, Okla., 2006); Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence, Kan., 2006); Nancy Bentley, *Frantic Panoramas: American Literature and Mass Culture, 1870–1920* (Philadelphia, 2009), chap. 4; Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, Conn., 1998). The favor that show life found among many Native Americans, it should be noted, was hardly shared by all. See, for example, Raibmon, *Authentic Indians*.

²⁴ See also Daniel Usner, "ASE Address 2011: An Ethnohistory of Things: Or, How to Treat California's Canastromania," *Ethnohistory* 59, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 441–463, which argues that producing "traditional" baskets for American markets helped American Indians resist assimilationist campaigns and even had the effect of "altering the direction of government policy" (458).

enemy.²⁵ In Russia, various Slavophiles came to their rejection of the West only after adopting Western and Central European styles of dress, habits, and thought.²⁶ In their search for their Slavic origins, many came to juxtapose what they saw as the communitarian traditions and spirituality of the Eastern Orthodox Church with the rampant individualism they suggested was inherent in Western Christian traditions—both Protestant and Catholic. As they went in search of their roots, the binaries of an old, spiritual Russia versus a new, materialist West came to serve many Slavophiles well.²⁷ A similar history of entanglement with European culture can be found in the biographies of numerous colonized elites who embraced the “Orient” as a gesture of anticolonial nationalism.²⁸

Like Russian Slavophiles and anticolonial nationalists across the globe, various late Ottoman writers romanticized what they portrayed as an unsullied and authentic Eastern way of life, which they opposed to the fast-paced, materialistic, and corrupt lifestyles they associated with the West, an imagined geography in which many among them had once sought a home.²⁹ In the Ottoman context, self-declared traditionalists and disenchanted Westernizers alike began to articulate their rejection of Europeanization so as to avow their attachment to their Eastern empire.³⁰ Those who wore Western-style clothes, spoke European languages, or put on European airs risked the mockery and disdain of such individuals. Ottoman women were regularly criticized by their compatriots for following what their detractors perceived as frivolous fads emanating from Paris.³¹ Men, for their part, were reminded that it was

²⁵ For a related observation, see Jens Hanssen, “Malhamé—Malfamé: Levantine Elites and Trans-Imperial Networks in the Late Ottoman Empire,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 43, no. 1 (2011): 25–48, here 33. For a study of anti-Westernism in global perspective, see Cemil Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York, 2007).

²⁶ Marc Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia: The Eighteenth-Century Nobility* (New York, 1966), 85; Laura Engelstein, *Slavophile Empire: Imperial Russia's Illiberal Path* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2009), especially 134. Orlando Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia* (London, 2002), discusses a similar phenomenon among later generations of Russian thinkers (380, 416).

²⁷ Yuri Lotman and Boris Uspenskii, “Binary Models in the Dynamics of Russian Culture,” in Alexander D. Nakhimovsky and Alice S. Nakhimovsky, eds., *The Semiotics of Russian Cultural History: Essays* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1985), 30–66; Engelstein, *Slavophile Empire*; Figes, *Natasha's Dance*.

²⁸ Among such individuals was, of course, none other than Gandhi himself, who came to his positions on home rule and non-violence and his embrace of India's traditions of “Eastern” spirituality and democracy after a long engagement with British colonialism—in India, South Africa, and England—as well as careful readings of various European authors. On this, see, among others, Fox, “East of Said.”

²⁹ For the equation of European modernity with moral decay, see the conclusions of the journalist Ali Efendi, editor of the Ottoman Turkish journal *Basiret*: “If the meaning of civilization is immorality,” he ventured, “then we do not want that civilization.” Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (New York, 2010), 325. See also Carter Vaughn Findley, “An Ottoman Occidental in Europe: Ahmed Midhat Meets Madame Gülnar, 1889,” *American Historical Review* 103, no. 1 (February 1998): 15–49; Osman Hamdi and Victor Marie de Launay, *Les costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873/Bin İki Yüz Doksan Senesinde Elbise-i Osmaniye* (Istanbul, 1873), 6.

³⁰ For an analysis of Ottoman anti-Westernism as a form of anticolonialism, see Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia*.

³¹ Palmira Brummett, “Dogs, Women, Cholera, and Other Menaces in the Streets: Cartoon Satire in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908–11,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27, no. 4 (1995): 433–460; Haris Exertzoglu, “The Cultural Uses of Consumption: Negotiating Class, Gender, and Nation in the Ottoman Urban Centers during the 19th Century,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35, no. 1 (February 2003): 77–101; Elizabeth B. Frierson, “Gender, Consumption and Patriotism: The Emergence of an Ottoman Public Sphere,” in Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman, eds., *Public Islam and the Common Good* (Leiden, 2004), 99–125; Frierson, “Mirrors Out, Mirrors In: Domestication and Rejection of the Foreign in Late-Ottoman Women's Magazines (1875–1908),” in D.

not proper for an imperial citizen to wear European-style headgear; only the fez would do.³² According to at least one observer in early-twentieth-century Baghdad, Ottoman men who wore hats risked being stoned for what some perceived as an act of treachery.³³ Different Ottoman authors mocked “half-Westernized” types, calling such individuals “fake Turk[s] turned European.”³⁴ The implication was clear: one could be a real Ottoman only by remaining true to one’s Oriental heritage. Trying to become European left one empty, with no identity at all, the same individuals suggested.³⁵

Although they cautioned their readers against uncritically adopting the ways of the West, many Ottoman authors counseled selective borrowing rather than a complete retreat from all things European.³⁶ Writing in 1861, the Syrian Christian activist Butrus al-Bustani suggested that his native land had only just “placed its left foot on the first step of the ladder of civilization,” and that to advance further, his compatriots would have to learn to borrow from—but not blindly imitate—the West.³⁷ Nearly four decades later, the Muslim novelist Ahmet Midhat offered a more cynical

Fairchild Ruggles, ed., *Women, Patronage and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies* (Albany, N.Y., 2000), 177–204; Şerif Mardin, “Super Westernization in Urban Life in the Ottoman Empire in the Last Quarter of the 19th Century,” in Peter Benedict, Erol Tümertekin, and Fatma Mansur, eds., *Turkey: Geographical and Social Perspectives* (Leiden, 1974), 403–446; Nora Şeni, “Fashion and Women’s Clothing in the Satirical Press of Istanbul at the End of the 19th Century,” in Şirin Tekeli, ed., *Women in Modern Turkish Society: A Reader* (London, 1995), 25–45; Öyku Potuoğlu-Cook, “Night Shifts: Moral, Economic, and Cultural Politics of Turkish Belly Dance across the Fins-de-Siècle” (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 2008), 63; Rahme, “Namık Kemal’s Constitutional Ottomanism and Non-Muslims,” 30; “Dress Her Theme,” *Chicago Times*, May 17, 1893, 1; “Reforming Women’s Dress,” *ibid.*, July 15, 1893, 4.

³² On calls for men to wear the fez in the Ladino and Ottoman Turkish press, see “La gera: Patriotismo i relidjion,” *El Meseret*, April 30, 1897, 1; “Ahenk refikimiz diyor ki,” *İkdam*, May 8, 1899, 3; “Novedades lokales,” *La Buena Esperansa*, May 5, 1899, 4; “El Ahenk,” *La Buena Esperansa*, May 12, 1899, 3; “Fes o chapeo,” *El Avenir*, May 17, 1899, 1–2; *İkdam*, May 18, 1899, 3; Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans*, 141. For an Ottoman official’s position on the issue, see Henri Nahum, “Portrait d’une famille juive de Smyrne vers 1900,” in François Georgeon and Paul Dumont, eds., *Vivre dans l’Empire ottoman: Sociabilités et relations intercommunautaires (XVIII^e–XX^e siècles)* (Paris, 1997), 163–172, here 170. For debates over the use of the fez (tarbush) in the Arabic press of Ottoman Syria, see Lital Levy, “Partitioned Pasts: Arab Jewish Intellectuals and the Case of Esther Azharī Moyāl (1873–1948),” in Dyala Hamzah, ed., *The Making of the Arab Intellectual: Empire, Public Sphere and the Colonial Coordinates of Selfhood* (New York, 2012), 128–163, here 149.

³³ Aron Rodrigue, ed., *Jews and Muslims: Images of Sephardi and Eastern Jewries in Modern Times* (Seattle, 2003), 264–265. In 1909, a riot broke out in Izmir after a young boy pulled the fez from a man’s head in public. Vangelis Kechriotis, “The Enthusiasm Turns to Fear: Everyday Life Relations between Christians and Muslims in Izmir in the Aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution,” in François Georgeon, ed., *“L’ivresse de la liberté”: La révolution de 1908 dans l’Empire ottoman* (Leuven, 2012), 295–316, here 304–305.

³⁴ Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal, 1964), 284; Milena B. Methodieva, “The Debate on Parliamentarism in the Muslim Press of Bulgaria, 1895–1908,” in Christoph Herzog and Malek Sharif, eds., *The First Ottoman Experiment in Democracy* (Würzburg, 2010), 107–128, here 120.

³⁵ For the suggestion that trying to Europeanize would leave one with no character of one’s own, see Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 285; and Zainab Bahrani, Zeynep Çelik, and Edhem Eldem, eds., *Scramble for the Past: A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753–1914* (Istanbul, 2011), 419, on the Ottoman official Halil Edhem Eldem, who looked back on the late Ottoman era regretfully in 1914, suggesting that his compatriots had failed to appreciate their own heritage and that they had allowed their homes to become “subject to a strange transformation that left them looking neither *alla franca* nor *alla turca*.”

³⁶ See, for example, Rahme, “Namık Kemal’s Constitutional Ottomanism and Non-Muslims,” 31.

³⁷ Ussama Makdisi, “After 1860: Debating Religion, Reform, and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 4 (November 2002): 601–617, especially 614.

view, explaining in the Ottoman Turkish journal *Tarik* of Istanbul that his countrymen would have to take their steps carefully on “the stairwell of civilization,” for European civilization had its “bad as well as good sides.”³⁸ More worrying still, many Ottoman observers were convinced that, as Easterners, they were particularly susceptible to adopting the least savory of Western habits, rather than benefiting from the best the West had to offer. As early as 1872, the Greek Orthodox author Athanasios Vernardakis of Istanbul suggested that since his Ottoman coreligionists had “decided to become Franks [Europeans], that is, to change [their] way of life,” they had “adopted the most harmful elements of European culture.”³⁹

Ottoman Jewish journalists issued analogous warnings about the potential hazards of Westernizing during this period.⁴⁰ In 1892, hardly a year before the Chicago World’s Fair opened to the public, David Fresco, the editor of the Judeo-Spanish daily *El Tiempo* of Istanbul, reflected with ambivalence on a process he believed was already well underway. “As with all things in this base world,” he wrote, “the new civilization we have borrowed from Europe has—along with its advantages—certain defects that are easily communicated to those who adopt it.”⁴¹ A few years later, an Ottoman Jewish author from Salonica offered a similar caution to his readers. “Civilization has made a fool’s bargain with us,” he began. “We have drunk our fill of its poisoned cup without taking in any of its goodness. For nearly thirty years, we have made great efforts to copy Europe in every way without considering whether the models we imitate are ideal. The truth is that we will need to take, but also leave behind, certain elements from the ensemble of ideas and measures that together are called ‘Western civilization.’” By making this “fool’s bargain” with the West, the author mused, he and his readers remained in an uncomfortable cultural and political limbo: they were only “half-Europeanized.”⁴²

Scholars of Ottoman history have paid so much attention to the rapid Westernization of the urban non-Muslim mercantile classes in the nineteenth century that few have acknowledged the ways in which Ottoman Christians and Jews joined Muslims in expressing their disillusionment with the prospects of Europeanization.⁴³ Yet the self-Orientalizing positions of Ottomans of various faiths were intimately entangled with their growing ambivalence about their own position vis-à-vis an imagined West. Such individuals’ attachment to the Oriental entailed not only attempts to reclaim what they understood to be an Eastern way of life by drawing upon local traditions, but also Orientalist understandings of what it meant to be in, and of, the

³⁸ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 285. See also the position of another nineteenth-century Ottoman author, who expressed a similar sentiment when he concluded that “Unfortunately, modern civilization has some vices as well as many virtues”; C. Oscanyan, *The Sultan and His People* (New York, 1857), 195.

³⁹ Athanasios Vernardakis, *Peri Polyteleias* (Istanbul, 1872), 22, cited in Exertzoglu, “The Cultural Uses of Consumption,” 83. See also the lyrics of the Turkish National Anthem, penned by Mehmet Akif Ersoy, which speak of “that toothless monster called civilization.” My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for noting this example.

⁴⁰ For other examples of Ottoman Jews’ admonitions against Westernizing, see Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans*, chap. 3.

⁴¹ “El djurnalizmo djudio en Turkia,” *El Tiempo*, March 15, 1892, 6.

⁴² Damy, “Demi-européénisés,” *Le Journal de Salonique*, October 16, 1897, 1.

⁴³ For some exceptions in the literature on Ottoman Christians, see Cengiz Kırılı, “Coffeehouses: Public Opinion in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire,” in Salvatore and Eickelman, *Public Islam and the Common Good*, 75–97, here 92; Exertzoglu, “The Cultural Uses of Consumption”; Christine M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley, Calif., 2011).

East.⁴⁴ Like anti-Westernists across the globe, many late Ottoman intellectuals and activists turned to the East only after having been told that their forays into Western circles and styles had earned them little more than the outer trappings of Western culture—that they were, alas, little more than mimic men.⁴⁵ For such individuals, the value they placed on being Oriental was entangled with their adoption of the perspective of outsiders, even as it was motivated by their attempts to forge an authentic imperial identity.

By the late nineteenth century, attempts to unite Ottomans of various backgrounds were many decades old. In 1829, Sultan Mahmud II issued legislation removing the empire's historical sumptuary laws—which had separated individuals by religious, class, and professional status—and prescribed in their place the fez, tailored trousers, and a frock coat called the *istanbulin*, which all Ottoman males (save religious leaders) were to wear from that point on.⁴⁶ Introduced to reduce the visible differences between Ottoman men, Mahmud II's clothing reform was part of the drive to uniformity in male middle-class dress witnessed around the globe during the nineteenth century.⁴⁷ In this sense, the fez and frock coat served as a marker of a standardized male form of Ottoman modernity that was meant to emanate from the imperial center of Istanbul.⁴⁸

During the period known as the Tanzimat, or “Reordering,” which spanned the years 1839–1876 and witnessed intense European interference in Ottoman economic

⁴⁴ Indeed, their very use of the category “Oriental” is evidence of the novelty of their position. The self-designation became commonplace among Ottoman Jews by the nineteenth century. On the invention of the concept of Oriental Jewry in the modern period, see Daniel Schroeter, “Orientalism and the Jews of the Mediterranean,” *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 4, no. 2 (1994): 183–196.

⁴⁵ On the concept of mimic men, see V. S. Naipaul, *The Mimic Men* (London, 1967); Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” in Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York, 1994), 121–131. In the late Ottoman context, various European observers accused Ottoman Westernizers of merely “aping” Europeans, a charge that was soon picked up by Ottoman authors. For a particularly virulent manifestation of such critiques, see the suggestion of a French writer that the attempts of certain Ottoman ambassadors to “imitate the western manners they had studied” during their time abroad had “literally turned them into monkeys.” L.-P.-B. d'Aubignosc, *La nouvelle Turquie: Jugée au point où l'ont amenée les réformes du Sultan Mahmoud* (Paris, 1839), cited in Edhem Eldem, “The Turkish ‘Case,’” in Eldem, *Consuming the Orient* (Istanbul, 2007), 214–227, here 215. For Ottoman claims to this effect, see the admonitions of the author Hüseyin Rahmi, who suggested that there was little use in merely adopting the “poses, gestures, and dress” of Europeans, since “even monkeys have the ability to imitate gestures and demeanor in a very superficial way,” as well as the words of a character in Ömer Seyfeddin's 1918 story “Harem,” who exclaimed, “I hate being a monkey! I mean, imitating Westerners and Europeans!” For these quotes see Boyar and Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul*, 305, and Carel Bertram, *Imagining the Turkish House: Collective Visions of Home* (Austin, Tex., 2008), 136, respectively.

⁴⁶ On clothing laws and patterns in the late Ottoman empire, see Donald Quataert, “Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720–1829,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29, no. 3 (August 1997): 403–425.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* For the increasingly homogeneous dress codes among middle-class males in the early United States, see Michael Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy: A History of Men's Dress in the American Republic, 1760–1860* (Chicago, 2003). For the growing uniformity in middle-class male dress globally and in Ottoman contexts, respectively, see Christopher Alan Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford, 2003); Osman Hamdi and de Launay, *Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873/Bin İki Yüz Doksan Senesinde Elbise-i Osmaniye*, 5. Apparently, even the distinct ribbons that were meant to differentiate the fezzes of non-Muslim males from those of their Muslim counterparts were soon disregarded, or purposefully hidden so as to further erase their difference; Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire* (New York, 2012), 36.

⁴⁸ Clothing laws were most strictly enforced in government offices, where all male state employees were expected to wear their fezzes at all times. Boyar and Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul*, 303.

and political affairs, the Ottoman government introduced novel equalizing measures among its subjects, most notably by granting new rights to the non-Muslims of the empire.⁴⁹ This process culminated in a nationality law and a constitution that declared all imperial subjects “Ottomans,” offering the possibility of a shared imperial label for the first time. While individuals of different backgrounds resisted the various reforms—refusing, for example, to erase the professional, class, or religious affiliations associated with their dress styles by trading in their turbans for fezzes—many non-Muslims embraced the new opportunities the reforms offered.⁵⁰ From Baghdad to Aleppo to Istanbul, reports told of Christian and Jewish men adopting the fez with great alacrity.⁵¹ Although the Ottoman state announced no equivalent uniform style for Ottoman women, the clothing of upper- and middle-class women in cities across the empire similarly underwent dramatic changes during this period.⁵²

The new drive to uniformity inevitably entailed a heightened awareness of rupture and loss.⁵³ Those who mourned the passing of “traditional” ways were not simply those who resisted the reforms, but also those who had adopted them, often enthusiastically.⁵⁴ In this sense, Christopher Bayly’s suggestion that various elites

⁴⁹ Roderic H. Davison, *Nineteenth Century Ottoman Diplomacy and Reforms* (Istanbul, 1999).

⁵⁰ For resistance, see Quataert, “Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire”; Matthias B. Lehmann, *Ladino Rabbinic Literature and Ottoman Sephardic Culture* (Bloomington, Ind., 2005), 146.

⁵¹ For non-Muslim adoption of the fez, see Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 125; Serafettin Turan, *Türk Kültür Tarihi: Türk kültüründen Türkiye kuültürüne ve evrenselliğe* (Ankara, 1990), 216–222; Selçuk Esenbel, “The Anguish of Civilized Behavior: The Use of Western Cultural Forms in the Everyday Lives of the Meiji Japanese and the Ottoman Turks during the Nineteenth Century,” *Japan Review* 5 (1994): 145–185, especially 169; Quataert, “Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire,” 414; Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (New York, 2001), 137; Hayyim J. Cohen, *Jews of the Middle East, 1860–1972* (New York, 1973), 38.

⁵² Fanny Davis, *The Ottoman Lady: A Social History from 1718 to 1918* (New York, 1986); Şeni, “Fashion and Women’s Clothing in the Satirical Press of Istanbul at the End of the 19th Century,” 28–29; Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East, 1860–1950* (London, 1988); Nancy Micklewright, “Public and Private for Ottoman Women in the Nineteenth Century,” in Ruggles, *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies*, 155–176; Charlotte Jirousek, “The Transition to Mass Fashion System Dress in the Later Ottoman Empire,” in Donald Quataert, ed., *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550–1922: An Introduction* (Albany, N.Y., 2000), 201–241; Lucy M. J. Garnett, *The Women of Turkey and their Folk-Lore*, vol. 2: *The Jewish and Moslem Women* (London, 1891), 15.

⁵³ The Ottoman historian Ahmet Ersoy makes this point eloquently in his essay “Osman Hamdi Bey and the Historiophile Mood: Orientalist Vision and the Romantic Sense of the Past in Late Ottoman Culture,” in İnankur, Lewis, and Roberts, *The Poetics and Politics of Place*, 144–155, where he writes: “Ushering in a diverse array of novel institutions, reading practices, print cultures, and radically new modes of self-fashioning and expression, the Tanzimat instilled in the minds of many Ottomans a fundamental awareness of change, an irreversible sense of break and, especially in the scholarly and artistic field, a Romantic sensitivity towards irremediable loss” (146). See also the 1909 musings of the Ottoman author Celal Esad Arseven, who mourned the disappearance of traditional architecture in Istanbul; Bertram, *Imagining the Turkish House*, 85. For the fear of a “loss of authenticity” in a different Ottoman context, see Toufoul Abou-Hodeib, “Taste and Class in Late Ottoman Beirut,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 3 (2011): 475–492, especially 477.

⁵⁴ The Ottoman artist and archaeologist Osman Hamdi had spent long years in Paris, collaborated with European colleagues, and wore Western dress on a daily basis by the late nineteenth century, when he lamented the replacement of the “marvels” of Islamic art with the latest fashions from Europe, remarking that he “observed the sad spectacle of the decline in taste among the peoples of the Orient with a heavy heart.” Osman Hamdi, *Une nécropole royale à Sidon* (Paris, 1892), cited in François Georjeon, “Le génie de l’ottomanisme: Essai sur la peinture orientaliste d’Osman Hamdi (1842–1910),” *Turcica* 42 (2010): 143–166, here 153. A decade later, the Ottoman author Halil Halid, who had discarded the robe and turban of his youth for European-style clothes during his studies in the law faculty of the

across the globe “began to insist increasingly on their difference” precisely as global uniformities were on the rise rings true in this case.⁵⁵ Ottomans’ growing interest in identifying what set their empire apart spurred attempts to capture its artistic essence—what has been called in other contexts a “national style.” Indeed, around the same period in which Russian artists and composers sought to produce art in the “Russian style”—in many cases by insisting upon the Eastern elements of their empire’s heritage—Ottoman scholars, architects, and artists set themselves the task of locating their own empire’s distinctive creative “genius.”⁵⁶

By the final decades of the nineteenth century, Ottoman representatives, artists, and connoisseurs alike sought to acquire and create objects they identified with their imperial style. From Istanbul to Beirut, architects planned neo-Islamic style structures, while others prepared studies of the foundations of the empire’s architectural inheritance.⁵⁷ Ottoman artists and collectors produced and displayed Orientalist paintings portraying scenes of their empire.⁵⁸ New imperial collections also appeared on the palace grounds, including an assortment of 140 mannequins dressed in the different uniforms of the Janissary Corps, outlawed since 1826, and in the diverse civilian clothing styles banned by Mahmud II’s clothing reform in 1829.⁵⁹ By erecting these tributes to its recent past, the Ottoman government signaled its investment in preserving the memory of imperial styles now lost or endangered. While official policies discouraged Ottoman men from wearing the elaborate “Oriental” outfits

Ottoman capital, lamented the disappearance of “the ancient national costumes” of his country; *The Diary of a Turk*, 140, 193.

⁵⁵ Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 2.

⁵⁶ For the “Russian style,” see Figes, *Natasha’s Dance*; David Schimmelpennick van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration* (New Haven, Conn., 2010), chap. 9. For the Ottoman “genius” in architecture and art, see Ahmet Ersoy, “Architecture and the Search for Ottoman Origins in the Tanzimat Period,” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 117–139, especially 124; Georgeon, “Le génie de l’ottomanisme.”

⁵⁷ Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World’s Fairs* (Berkeley, Calif., 1992); Turgut Saner, *Yüzyıl İstanbul Mimarlığında “Oryantalizm”* (Istanbul, 1998); Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle, 2001); Ersoy, “Architecture and the Search for Ottoman Origins in the Tanzimat Period”; Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (New York, 2005).

⁵⁸ For the Ottoman statesman and art collector Halil Bey, see Zeynep İnankur, “Halil Şerif Paşa,” *P 2* (Summer 1996): 72–80; Zeynep Çelik, “Speaking Back to Orientalist Discourse,” in Jill Beaulieu and Mary Roberts, eds., *Orientalism’s Interlocutors: Painting, Architecture, Photography* (Durham, N.C., 2002), 19–41, here 23. On the Ottoman Orientalist painter Osman Hamdi, see İpek Aksüğüdür Duben, “Osman Hamdi ve Orientalizm,” *Tarih ve Toplum* 7, no. 41 (May 1987): 283–290; Vasıf Kortun, “Osman Hamdi Üzerine Yeni Notlar,” *ibid.*, 281–282; Edhem Eldem, “Osman Hamdi Bey ve Oryantalizm,” *Dipnot* 2 (Winter/Spring 2004): 39–67; Semra Germaner and Zeynep İnankur, *Oryantalistlerin İstanbul’u* (Istanbul, 2002); Mustafa Cezar, *Sanatta Batı’ya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi*, 2nd ed. (Istanbul, 1995); Edhem Eldem, “An Ottoman Archaeologist Caught between Two Worlds: Osman Hamdi Bey (1842–1910),” in David Shankland, ed., *Archaeology, Anthropology and Heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia: The Life and Times of F. W. Hasluck, 1878–1920*, 2 vols. (Istanbul, 2004), 1: 121–149, here 125; Eldem, *Un Ottoman en Orient: Osman Hamdi Bey en Irak, 1869–1871* (Arles, 2010); Ahmet Ersoy, “Osman Hamdi Bey ve Osmanlı kültüründe oryantalizm,” *Toplumsal Tarih* 119 (November 2003): 84–89; Ersoy, “Osman Hamdi Bey and the Historiophile Mood”; Georgeon, “Le génie de l’ottomanisme”; Wendy M. K. Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley, Calif., 2003); Çelik, “Speaking Back to Orientalist Discourse at the World’s Columbian Exposition”; and notes below. For Ottomans’ interest in art depicting the empire, see also Roberts, “Genealogies of Display.”

⁵⁹ Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 55–56.

now on display at the Imperial Museum, they simultaneously invited them to view such styles as part of their imperial patrimony.⁶⁰

In the commercial realm as well, Ottomans began to announce their taste for things Oriental. In Beirut, advertisements and newspaper editorials promoted items designed in “Oriental” style as the authentic option for Christian and Muslim consumers alike.⁶¹ Restaurants in the imperial capital advertised “Oriental” fare, as department stores, fish markets, and clock towers from Istanbul, Salonica, and Izmir began to boast neo-Islamic facades.⁶² The Singer Sewing Machine Company began to employ illustrations of its latest models placed atop a Turkish-style rug for Ottoman audiences, while other advertisers described their products—ranging from roof slates and jewelry to healing balsams and wine—as “Oriental.”⁶³

Ottoman Jews who began to establish businesses outside of the empire at the end of the century similarly promoted the Oriental—and Ottoman—self-identification of their clientele. In the early 1890s, a kosher restaurant opened in Paris by a certain Madame de Marcos championed its Oriental cuisine. An advertisement featured in a Jewish newspaper of Istanbul recommended the restaurant in particular “to the Jews of the Orient who find themselves in Paris.”⁶⁴ Within a few years, a new establishment called the Restaurant du Bosphore addressed Ottoman audiences, promising to serve “all of the Oriental Jews in Paris . . . with food from their country, always prepared in Oriental style.”⁶⁵ Remarkably, this advertisement implied that Oriental Jews could be associated not only with a specific region or tradition—the Oriental—but also with a specific country. This conclusion, combined with the geographical reference to Istanbul’s famous waterway (the Bosphorus) in the restaura-

⁶⁰ For an example of Ottoman government attempts to discourage men from wearing long robes in public, see Boyar and Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul*, 281.

⁶¹ Abou-Hodeib, “Taste and Class in Late Ottoman Beirut.”

⁶² For Oriental cuisine, see “Restaurant L’Union,” *Annuaire oriental du commerce* (1892), 114; “Brasserie Gambrinus,” *El Telegrafo*, March 1, 1894, 92; “Otel rekomendavle, kasher en Kostas,” *El Meseret*, August 2, 1901, 4; “Restaurant oriental,” *El Nuvelista/Le Nouvelliste*, March 13, 1908, 6; “Hotel de la Plage,” in R. C. Cervati, *Guide horaire général international illustré pour le voyageur en Orient* (Istanbul, 1909), 501. For Oriental-style facades on department stores, see Yavuz Köse, “Vertical Bazaars of Modernity: Western Department Stores and Their Staff in Istanbul (1889–1921),” *International Review of Social History* 54, supplement 17: *Ottoman and Republican Turkish Labour History* (December 2009): 91–114, here 96. For the “Oriental” fish market of Salonica, see Meropi Anastasiadou, *Salonique, 1830–1912: Une ville ottomane à l’âge des réformes* (Leiden, 1997), 156; for the neo-Islamic-style clock tower of Izmir, see Mehmet Bengü Uluengin, “Secularizing Anatolia Tick by Tick: Clock Towers in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, no. 1 (February 2010): 17–36, especially 25.

⁶³ For Singer sewing machines on Oriental carpets, see Elizabeth B. Frierson, “Cheap and Easy: The Creation of Consumer Culture in Late Ottoman Society,” in Quataert, *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire*, 243–260, here 244–245. For Oriental slates, see “Ardoises orientales,” *Le Journal de Salonique*, March 29, 1900, 3; for Oriental balsam, see “Balsamine Orientale Canzuch,” *Le Moniteur Oriental*, April 9, 1897, 2; for Oriental jewelry and wine, see David Florentin, *Nos devoirs comme Juifs et Ottomans* (Istanbul, 1909), 17. On one occasion, Ottomans and Europeans celebrating Sultan Abdülhamid II’s birthday in Paris even arranged to bring a chef directly from Istanbul in their search for an authentic Ottoman meal. Louis Argoud, *Souvenir des fêtes données à Paris en l’honneur de Sa Majesté impériale le Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid Kahn II Ghazi à l’occasion du glorieux anniversaire de sa naissance* (Paris, 1893).

⁶⁴ “Lokanda kasher,” *El Tiempo*, August 24, 1891, 3.

⁶⁵ Quote from “Restaurant du Bosphore,” *El Tiempo*, July 5, 1897, 3. For other advertisements for this restaurant, see “Restaurant du Bosphore,” *Journal de Salonique*, March 3, 1898, 4; “Restaurant du Bosphore,” *Archives Israélites*, July 8, 1897, 216; “Nous recommandons le Restaurant du Bosphore,” *L’Univers Israélite*, September 24, 1897, 28.

rant's name and the advertisements' careful targeting of Ottoman Jewish audiences, suggests that the Oriental clientele these establishments sought to serve was an Ottoman one. More than a decade later, new Jewish establishments in Paris continued to target Ottoman Jews who lived in or passed through the city by advertising Oriental fare.⁶⁶

During the same period, Jewish elites in Istanbul announced their Oriental tastes through the masked balls they attended. Although ballroom dances were relatively new to the Ottoman capital—products of the last decades and of European influence in the empire—by the late nineteenth century, Istanbul's Jewish community had discovered a means of giving such events an “Eastern” air. The main figure responsible for the Oriental self-fashioning of Istanbul's Jewish communal events was none other than Robert Levy, the Eastern antiquities dealer whose company had earned an Ottoman government contract to build the empire's exhibit in Chicago in 1893. Active also as a philanthropist, Levy was a founding member of the Jewish hospital in Istanbul.⁶⁷ He brought his different positions together by donating carpets from his company's collections to the hospital's annual charity balls over more than two decades.⁶⁸

Ottoman Jewish press reports marveled at these Oriental arrangements in recognizably Orientalist language, praising their “marvelous Oriental design” and “Oriental opulence” and describing them as “enchanting” events that recalled “something out of *One Thousand and One Nights*.”⁶⁹ The observation of Ottoman historian Ahmet Ersoy that the modern Ottoman search for an authentic imperial style was “heavily laden with sensibilities of the exotic and the picturesque” clearly applies to Istanbul's Jewish communal balls.⁷⁰ An image captured of one such setting in a ballroom at the Pera Palace Hotel in the Beyoğlu district of Istanbul displays Oriental carpets lining every last inch of each wall. (See Figure 3.) In the upper-right-hand corner, an Ottoman flag with crescent and star hangs from a balcony. In this way, Ottoman Jews honored their state in “Oriental style” even as they also danced among European-style objects (including a chandelier, chairs, and leather sofas) and decked themselves out in Western-style suits and gowns.

Indeed, throughout the late Ottoman era, various middle- and upper-class Ottomans sought to populate their world with signs of the “Orient” without closing off other options, and objects, from their lives. This process involved a kind of code-switching that exposed the extent to which so-called Eastern and Western modes alike formed part of Ottoman repertoires.⁷¹ As one scholar of the late Ottoman

⁶⁶ “Restauran oriental kasher,” *El Tiempo*, June 1, 1911, 11.

⁶⁷ “The Jewish Hospital Or Ahaïm at Constantinople,” *Jewish Chronicle*, July 26, 1901, 9; *Hôpital Israélite “Or-Ahaïm”—Bulletin de l'exercice 1923 et Almanach 5685 (1924–1925)* (Istanbul, 1924), n.p.

⁶⁸ On other occasions, Levy also arranged the interiors of events hosted by an Armenian society in Istanbul, the Franco-Jewish Alliance Israélite Universelle, and even those held at the palace of Abdülhamid II. “Intérieur,” *Stamboul*, February 1, 1892, 1; “Constantinople,” *Bulletin de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle* 20 (1895): 78; “Rare Turkish Embroideries,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 4, 1892, 26; F. W. Putnam, *Portrait Types of the Midway Plaisance* (St. Louis, 1894).

⁶⁹ “El balo al profito del eshpital Or Ahaim de Balat,” *El Tiempo*, March 13, 1890, 3; “El balo del eshpital Or Ahaim,” *ibid.*, February 9, 1891, 3; “El balo del eshpital Or Ahaim,” *ibid.*, February 29, 1897, 2–3; “Fiestas de bienfazensia,” *ibid.*, February 15, 1897, 4.

⁷⁰ Ersoy, “Osman Hamdi Bey and the Historiophile Mood,” 146.

⁷¹ Thus, for example, the directors of the *Journal de Salonique* served not only “Istanbul stew” and *börek “à la turque”* but also peas “à la française” for a banquet they hosted. “Un anniversaire,” *Journal*



FIGURE 3: Ballroom of the Pera Palace Hotel, Istanbul, decorated by Sadullah Robert Levy & Co., ca. 1900. From Pr textat Lecomte, *Les arts et m tiers de la Turquie et de l'Orient* (Paris, 1902), 95.

world has put it, despite the many claims to the contrary, imperial subjects “moved between . . . allegedly contrasting worlds quite easily. They could attend a *karag z* play [a form of Turkish puppet theater] one day and a European-style theatre on the next.”⁷² The distinction between “indigenous” and “foreign” that gained life in the Turkish formulations *alaturka* and *alafranga*—borrowed, not coincidentally, from a European language to indicate “Turkish” versus “European” style—was overdrawn. Even the clock tower near the mosque that bore Sultan Abd lhamid II’s name featured both the Ottoman and the European systems of telling time.⁷³

By the final decades of the nineteenth century, such mixing of Western- and Eastern-style items had become increasingly common across the globe. As middle-class Americans and Europeans added Oriental-style cozy corners and smoking parlors to their homes, “Easterners” with the means to do so assembled their own versions of such arrangements.⁷⁴ In Meiji Japan, elite residences often included both

de Salonique, November 16, 1896, 2. Various restaurants announced European and Ottoman-style food simultaneously. See, for example, “Otel internasional kasher,” *El Tiempo*, April 20, 1899, 11.

⁷² Avner Wishnitzer, “‘Our Time’: On the Durability of the Alaturka Hour System in the Late Ottoman Empire,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 16, no. 1–2 (2010): 47–69, here 62.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 65. *Alaturka* is the Turkish rendering of the Italian *alla turca*, meaning “in Turkish style.”

⁷⁴ On the “Oriental craze” in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Europe and the U.S., see Donald Quataert, *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (1993; repr., Cambridge, 2002), 141–142; Brian Spooner, “Weavers and Dealers: The Authenticity of an Oriental Carpet,” in

Japanese and Western-style sections.⁷⁵ A similar design pattern was recorded in the homes of wealthy merchants in nineteenth-century Essaouira (Mogador), Morocco, many of which boasted two separate parlors, one “decorated with European furnishings and objects (e.g., a piano, a portrait of Queen Victoria, European chairs), and a second laid out in the Moroccan fashion: low, cushioned sofas lining all sides of the wall, elaborate ceramic designs, and objects engraved in brass.”⁷⁶

In a clear reflection of this pattern, Leon Sciaky recalled “the admixture of east and west which characterized the furnishings” in his childhood house in late Ottoman Salonica. Sciaky, who hailed from an affluent Jewish family, explained that the two sides of his home “glared uneasily at each other,” most notably in the spacious upstairs living room. “One end of the uncommonly large room was distinctly Occidental,” he began. “The other end was almost bare in its simplicity. Two low, wide divans bearing a profusion of brightly colored downy pillows lined the wall.” In Sciaky’s portrayal, infused with distinctly Orientalist dichotomies of sensual East and rigid West, it was “to this side, with its proffered hedonic comfort of the East,” that the family would instinctively gravitate, whereas the “beautiful but unbending Louis XIV salon on the north side of the house was rarely used.”⁷⁷

According to Sciaky’s recollections, the primary function of the Western side of his family’s large salon was to be admired from a distance. Indeed, each time family members or guests of the house chose to sit on the pillows and divans of the Eastern side of the living room, they would have inevitably fixed their gaze across the long room toward the grandfather clock, upholstered European-style chairs, and console mirror arranged before them. Living in such a doubled space meant that choosing one side of the room over the other also entailed keeping the unchosen sphere squarely within view. This situation allowed for the simultaneous experience of different styles, modes of behavior, and relationships to things.

Such doubled spaces also offered opportunities in individual and collective self-fashioning. Albert Amateau, an Ottoman Jew who grew up in the West Anatolian town of Milas during the late Ottoman era, described a similar arrangement in his childhood home, recalling that his family “had two living rooms . . . one in Turkish

Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), 195–235; Kristin Hoganson, “Cosmopolitan Domesticity: Importing the American Dream, 1865–1920,” *American Historical Review* 107, no. 1 (February 2002): 55–83.

⁷⁵ Yoshiko Furuki, ed., *The Attic Letters: Ume Tsuda’s Correspondence to Her American Mother* (New York, 1991), 22, 116, 311; Takie Sugiyama Lebra, *Above the Clouds: Status Culture of the Modern Japanese Nobility* (Berkeley, Calif., 1993), 156; Edward Seidensticker, *Low City, High City: Tokyo from Edo to the Earthquake* (New York, 1983), 244–245; Esenbel, “The Anguish of Civilized Behavior,” 163–164, 172, 175; Jordan Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space, and Bourgeois Culture, 1880–1930* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003).

⁷⁶ Daniel J. Schroeter, *Merchants of Essaouira: Society and Imperialism in Southwestern Morocco, 1844–1886* (Cambridge, 1988), 59. In his fictional depiction of an aristocratic Muslim Azeri family in early-twentieth-century Baku, the Baku-born Russian Jewish author Lev Nussimbaum similarly portrayed a family with two distinct dining spaces—one Eastern, with floor seating, and one Western, with a table designed for the family’s Russian guests; Said Kurban, *Ali and Nino: A Love Story* (New York, 2000), 18. More recently, a *New York Times* article featured the “doubled” living room of Eman Hadad, a Palestinian American doctor living in the Bronx, who set up half of the room with Middle Eastern objects while populating the other half with American-style sofas and a coffee table. Sarah Maslin Nir, “Their Corner of the World,” *New York Times*, February 18, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/21/realestate/21cov.html>.

⁷⁷ Leon Sciaky, *Farewell to Salonica: Portrait of an Era* (New York, 1946), 9.

style with all sorts of cushions . . . and carpets on the floor . . . the other one, equally carpeted, but with chairs and easy chairs”: in short, in “European style.”⁷⁸ The grandson of Izmir’s French consul and son of a local lawyer and tobacco grower who had opted for Ottoman citizenship, Amateau was well acquainted with European as well as Ottoman customs. The presence of two living rooms was meant to allow different visitors to feel at home “in their own style,” he explained. Although Amateau did not say which space he preferred, like Sciaky he lived with both.⁷⁹

In an interview conducted late in her life, an unnamed Jewish woman who had grown up in the Balat district of late Ottoman Istanbul similarly remembered the distinct uses of her family’s two living rooms: on the first floor of her childhood home, she recalled a large room with a Turkish-style sofa and carpets where her family ate regular meals. On the second floor, the family had reserved a European-style salon for holidays and special occasions, suggesting more clearly than Amateau’s and Sciaky’s depictions that the different uses of each space might be dictated not only by preference, but also by the specific function that residents assigned to them.⁸⁰

In fact, nearly all accounts of such doubled spaces suggest that each space, and each style, had its place in a larger ensemble. Populating one’s home with Eastern and Western items signaled the ability to be at home in more than one style. In this context, self-Orientalism was not an isolated gesture, but rather a position adopted by middle- and upper-class individuals who chose to identify with the Orient as one option among others.⁸¹ As a Salonican Jewish author who complained about the uncomfortable state of being “half-Europeanized” suggested in an 1897 editorial for the *Journal de Salonique*, the Europeanizers in his midst might also elect to be Orientalizers, both selecting and rejecting “Eastern” and “Western” manners and styles in turn. While the same author advocated this carefully selective stance, others had already begun the process, perpetually shuffling between worlds—including those that coexisted within their divided living rooms. Indeed, by 1923, the year the Turkish Republic was founded, the Muslim author Ahmet Süheyl Ünver wrote that the homes of a “great many” residents of Istanbul featured Oriental rooms, suggesting that the pattern had become commonplace among affluent families of the late Ottoman capital.⁸²

Well beyond the intimate spaces of their domestic interiors, Ottomans of the middle and upper classes were also in the habit of alternating between Eastern and Western clothing styles on different occasions and in different locales. According to Cyrus Adler, an American Jewish scholar who traveled to the Ottoman capital in the early 1890s, the Jewish men he met in Istanbul wore *entaris*, or traditional robes, on

⁷⁸ “One Century in the Life of Albert J. Amateau, 1889–: The Americanization of a Sephardic Turk,” interview conducted by Rachel Amado Bortnick, 1986; transcript completed March 1989, 9.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸⁰ Marie-Christine Bornes-Varol, “The Balat Quarter and Its Image: A Study of a Jewish Neighborhood in Istanbul,” in Avigdor Levy, ed., *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, N.J., 1994), 633–644, here 638.

⁸¹ Vanessa Ogle, “Whose Time Is It? The Pluralization of Time and the Global Condition, 1870s–1940s,” *American Historical Review* 118, no. 5 (December 2013): 1376–1402, especially 1402, offers a related observation about the relative ease with which modern Middle Eastern and colonial subjects navigated different modes of telling time.

⁸² Bertram, *Imagining the Turkish House*, 72, 89.

the Sabbath and holidays and “European clothes” on weekdays.⁸³ During the first half of the nineteenth century, as growing numbers of Ottoman women began to wear dresses for the first time, many continued to wear baggy trousers and robes on a regular basis, reserving their European-style outfits for special occasions.⁸⁴ As the century progressed, Jewish and Muslim men similarly came to wear their fezzes at particular moments. As Jewish and Islamic traditions call upon men to cover their heads for prayer, the new Ottoman-style headgear that Mahmud II had instituted as part of the secular uniform of the empire took on religious functions. Indeed, more than one source indicates that Ottoman Jewish men donned the fez before meals and “while reading the Scriptures,” and that Muslim males wore their fezzes at the mosque.⁸⁵

Others changed their attire as they moved between public and private spaces. The English writer Frances Elliot wrote of her encounter with a sultana of the Ottoman capital who wore traditional clothes as her “house dress” but altered them “to suit the fashion *à la Franca*” when she stepped outside.⁸⁶ In late-nineteenth-century Salonica, the leading Jewish merchants of the city, often called *francos*, or Europeans, because of their extensive ties with Europe, were known to patronize the business of a local Jewish tailor who specialized in Turkish styles: as the son of that tailor later recalled, although they dressed *alafranca* on the street, these Europeanized elites continued to commission traditional robes for use in the home, where they “took off their frock coats and collars, got rid of their trousers, and donned their caftans for comfort.”⁸⁷ The situation was also sometimes reversed, with intimate settings serving as the arena for experimentation with Western forms: although women had long worn different attire on the street than at home, by the latter half of the nineteenth century, increasing numbers of Muslim women chose to wear European-style dresses

⁸³ On the distinct clothes that Ottoman Jews wore for the Sabbath, see Oscanyan, *The Sultan and His People*, 378–379; Garnett, *The Women of Turkey and their Folk-Lore*, 2: 47; Robyn K. Loewenthal, “Elia Carmona’s Autobiography: Judeo-Spanish Popular Press and Novel Publishing Milieu in Constantinople, Ottoman Empire, circa 1860–1932” (Ph.D. diss., University of Nebraska, 1984), 279; Ira Robinson, ed., *Cyrus Adler: Selected Letters*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1985), 1: 31; Esther Juhasz, “Costume,” in Juhasz, ed., *Sephardi Jews in the Ottoman Empire: Aspects of Material Culture* (Jerusalem, 1990), 121–171, here 129–130, 139; Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims*, 135. On Christians and Muslims wearing special clothes on Sundays and Fridays, respectively, see Victor Marie de Launay, “Costumes populaires de Constantinople,” in Fr. Ducuing, ed., *L’Exposition universelle de 1867 illustrée*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1867), 2: 134.

⁸⁴ Nancy Micklewright, “Tracing the Transformation in Women’s Dress in Nineteenth-Century Istanbul,” *Dress: The Journal of the Costume Society of America* 13 (1987): 33–43, here 33.

⁸⁵ On the practice of using fezzes as ritual head coverings, or *kippot*, among Jewish men in the empire, see Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, who notes that Jews “wore the fez while reading the Scriptures” (125), and also Robinson, *Cyrus Adler*, 31; Juhasz, “Costume,” 126–139; Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Making Jews Modern: The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires* (Bloomington, Ind., 2004), 185. A similar pattern was observed in the early twentieth century in Libya, where Jewish men were known to carry *kippot* in their pockets in order to don them in the synagogue or during prayers; Harvey E. Goldberg, “Religious Responses among North African Jews in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” in Jack Wertheimer, ed., *The Uses of Tradition: Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era* (New York, 1992), 119–144, here 132. For the religious function of fezzes among Ottoman Muslims, see Ernest Giraud, “Fez,” *Revue commerciale du Levant* 151 (October 1899): 792–804, here 795; Halid, *The Diary of a Turk*, 27.

⁸⁶ Frances Elliot, *Diary of an Idle Woman in Constantinople* (Leipzig, 1893), 299.

⁸⁷ Rena Molho, ed., *The Memoirs of Doctor Meir Yoel: An Autobiographical Source on Social Change in Salonika at the Turn of the 20th Century* (Istanbul, 2011), 21.

underneath the cloaks they wore outdoors, thus allowing them to appear “Western” in private.⁸⁸

Inhabitants of the empire also clothes-switched between Eastern and Western styles as they entered spaces they considered Ottoman or foreign in turn. In Salonica, the wives of the *franco* Jewish elites of the city often wore their “traditional” outfits in public places, but they changed into European clothes when traveling abroad.⁸⁹ Ottoman men are known to have followed a similar practice where their fezzes were concerned. Certain nineteenth-century Ottoman travelers and diplomats heading to Europe were known to trade in their fez for a hat “as soon as their train crossed the border of Bulgaria or Serbia.”⁹⁰

Still other sources point to examples of selective use of the fez within the empire itself. The Ottoman journalist and author Ahmed Rasim wrote mockingly of the Europeanized Ottomans who removed their fezzes upon entering a European-style restaurant in the Beyoğlu district of Istanbul.⁹¹ Others reportedly felt compelled to abandon their fezzes when they went to work for European firms in the empire.⁹² Yet the dictates of Ottoman patriotism meant that pressures pulled in the other direction as well: in their ethnographic description of Ottoman dress produced for Vienna’s World Exposition in 1873, the Ottoman authors Osman Hamdi Bey and Victor Marie de Launay observed that in most of the large cities of the empire, one encountered “bourgeois” types who wore European-style hats but kept a fez in their pocket in case of a chance encounter with an imperial authority figure.⁹³

The Muslim son of a high-ranking imperial official, Osman Hamdi Bey was not only an observer but also a practitioner of clothes-switching. He spent his youth studying in Paris with comparable sartorial flexibility, wearing European-style hats while attending classes at the university and his “national costume” when he visited the Ottoman ambassador or other compatriots abroad.⁹⁴ Just a few years later, when he became the Ottoman commissioner to the World’s Exhibition in Vienna, he not only presented the above-mentioned ethnographic album of regional Ottoman clothing styles, he also dressed himself in one such “Kurdish” ensemble while posing for a picture on an Oriental carpet in the photo studio of Fritz Luckhardt. (See Figure 4.) Osman Hamdi was, simply put, a man with different outfits for different occasions, including elaborate “traditional” Ottoman clothes, but also, in other instances, a tailored suit and fez, European-style hats, or no hat at all.⁹⁵ (See Figure 5.) In this,

⁸⁸ Micklewright, “Public and Private for Ottoman Women in the Nineteenth Century,” 172.

⁸⁹ Garnett, *The Women of Turkey and their Folk-Lore*, 2: 20; Molho, *The Memoirs of Doctor Meir Yoel*, 22.

⁹⁰ Klaus Kreiser, “Turban and Türban: ‘Divider between Belief and Unbelief’—A Political History of Modern Turkish Costume,” *European Review* 13, no. 3 (2005): 447–458, here 451. Having the freedom to put one’s fez back on after returning to imperial territory also reportedly brought great relief to at least one Ottoman Jewish sojourner returning from enemy waters in the midst of war. Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, *The Battlefields of Thessaly: With Personal Experiences in Turkey and Greece* (London, 1897), 321.

⁹¹ Boyar and Fleet, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul*, 293.

⁹² “Novedades locales,” *La Buena Esperansa*, May 5, 1899, 4; “Fes o chapeo,” *El Avenir*, May 17, 1899, 1–2.

⁹³ Osman Hamdi and de Launay, *Les costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873/Bin İki Yüz Doksan Senesinde Elbise-i Osmaniye*, 13.

⁹⁴ Eldem, “An Ottoman Archaeologist Caught between Two Worlds,” 125.

⁹⁵ Osman Hamdi’s “Oriental” outfit in Vienna was a composite of elements featured on different Kurdish types in his and de Launay’s *Les costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873/Bin İki Yüz Doksan*

he was much like Robert Levy, who changed his clothing styles at least as frequently, dressing not only as a “typical Turk” in a striped robe and turban, but also in the embroidered vest, loose pants, and ornamented *yatağan* sword of a West Anatolian *Zeybek* warrior, in a fez and frock coat, or in a tailored suit without a hat. (See Figures 6–7.)

Both men were also known to announce publicly their desire to defend the interests of their empire. After his appointment as director of the Ottoman Imperial Museum in 1881, Osman Hamdi helped implement a rigorous antiquities law designed to protect Ottoman relics from foreign interests. Levy, for his part, publicly decried international infringements upon Ottoman sovereignty in meetings with British and American interlocutors.⁹⁶ In 1894, still in Chicago, he organized a relief committee for victims of a major earthquake that had shaken the Ottoman capital.⁹⁷ Once back in Istanbul, he also earned the praise of local newspapers for his contributions to a charity bazaar organized by Sultan Abdülhamid II to aid wounded veterans and war orphans following the empire’s brief war with Greece in the spring of 1897.⁹⁸

Despite their similarities in life, in death Osman Hamdi and Robert Levy have parted ways. Osman Hamdi has since earned a celebrated role as an Ottoman patriot who guarded the empire’s archaeological patrimony against foreign encroachment, while Levy, less well known, surfaces in scholarly studies only occasionally, usually as an elusive if enterprising figure, but rarely as a guardian of Ottoman interests.⁹⁹ He appears to us, rather, as an “impresario and entrepreneur,” a “free-floating capitalist citizen,” or even an “entrepreneur-cum-trickster.”¹⁰⁰ One recent study described Levy as one of the many “Middle Eastern businessmen” who purportedly “declined the burden of representing the whole of the Muslim Ottoman Empire” abroad because they were Christian or Jewish.¹⁰¹ Others, as we have seen, have assumed just the opposite, suggesting that Levy purposefully wore the clothes of a Muslim in order to pass himself off “as the representative of Mohammedan Turks.”¹⁰² Despite their different conclusions, both positions suggest that in order to represent their empire, Ottoman non-Muslims would have been obliged to pretend to be something they were not. Yet clearly Ottoman Muslims and non-Muslims alike selectively crafted their public personas—presenting themselves to the world

Senesinde Elbise-i Osmaniye. On this, see Edhem Eldem, *Osman Hamdi Bey Sözlüğü* (Istanbul, 2010), 347–348. Although various portraits show Osman Hamdi in a tailored suit, either in a fez or hatless, he also regularly donned a turban and robe, “Bedouin style,” in his art studio and in likenesses he painted of himself. See, for example, Cezar, *Sanatta Batı’ya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi*; Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*; Ersoy, “Osman Hamdi Bey and the Historiophile Mood”; Çelik, “Speaking Back to Orientalist Discourse at the World’s Columbian Exposition”; Eldem, *Un Ottoman en l’Orient*.

⁹⁶ “Turkey Holds the Key,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 13, 1891, 10.

⁹⁷ “Turks Honor the Sultan,” *New York Times*, September 1, 1894, 5.

⁹⁸ “Novedades del interior,” *El Tiempo*, July 19, 1897, 2.

⁹⁹ In his extensive work on the subject, Edhem Eldem has sought to complicate the celebratory approach to Osman Hamdi as Ottoman patriot. See, for example, his “An Ottoman Archaeologist Caught between Two Worlds,” “Osman Hamdi Bey ve Oryantalizm,” and *Un Ottoman en l’Orient*.

¹⁰⁰ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture*, 80; Potuoğlu-Cook, “Night Shifts,” 97, 98.

¹⁰¹ Nance, *How the Arabian Nights Inspired the American Dream*, 156.

¹⁰² Potuoğlu-Cook, “Night Shifts,” 96.



FIGURE 4: Osman Hamdi dressed in Kurdish attire, Vienna, 1873. Private collection of Edhem Eldem.

in Eastern and Western styles in turn.¹⁰³ To assume that any one group had a monopoly on Oriental authenticity not only reifies such identities, it also fails to take into account the temporary, selective, and alternating personas that different Ot-

¹⁰³ Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte*, 175, has similarly noted that even the great “Oriental” Ottoman governor Ali Pasha interspersed shows of his Westernness in between performances of his Easternness.



FIGURE 5: Portrait of Osman Hamdi, 1875. Private collection of Edhem Eldem.

tomans adopted at different moments. It is clear that a wide range of urban Ottomans moved in and out of different styles frequently. As the Muslim feminist author Fatma Aliye had her eponymous character explain in her 1891 novel *Nisvan-ı Islam* (*Women of Islam*), “I get dressed *alaturka* or *alafranga* depending on what I feel



FIGURE 6: Robert Levy dressed as a *Zeybek* in Chicago, 1893. From *Portrait Types of the Midway*, pt. 8 (St. Louis: N. D. Thompson, 1894).

like.”¹⁰⁴ By wearing clothes associated with their empire as well as clothing from abroad, Ottoman elites could signal both their rootedness in imperial traditions and their role as modern citizens of the world.

¹⁰⁴ Çelik, “Speaking Back to Orientalist Discourse at the World’s Columbian Exposition,” 94. See also Alihé Hanoum, *Les Musulmanes contemporaines*, 138.



FIGURE 7: Portrait of Robert Levy, ca. 1900. *American Carpet and Upholstery Journal* 25, no. 10 (November 10, 1907): 103.

It is in this sense that clothes-switching, or the act of moving between differently styled outfits, finds parallels with the linguistic phenomenon of code-switching. It is not only because so many late Ottoman individuals alternated between Eastern and Western styles that making this link may be useful, but also because it can remind us that the very act of switching can index a speaker's belonging to more than one community.¹⁰⁵ That the various performers who changed outfits while at the Chicago

¹⁰⁵ For a more recent example of what I am calling "clothes-switching," see Webb Keane, "Signs Are Not the Garb of Meaning: On the Social Analysis of Material Things," in Daniel Miller, ed., *Materiality* (Durham, N.C., 2005), 182–205, who notes that "Middle-class men in Indonesian cities today have a

World's Fair did not try to hide this practice from their audiences suggests that demonstrating their fluency in Western styles may have been an equally important part of their performance.¹⁰⁶ Showing a facility with the ways of the West allowed self-declared "Orientals" to assert their modernity; yet, paradoxically, in order to prove that one was "modern," one also had to prove rootedness in a particular national tradition—in the Ottoman case, an "Oriental" one.¹⁰⁷

It is arguably for this reason that the self-Orientalizing spectacles of non-Muslim merchants and performers did not always contravene official Ottoman policies, even though imperial authorities sometimes suggested as much. Indeed, throughout the late Ottoman era, the Ottoman government sent mixed messages on the question of self-Orientalizing displays: while various sultans and officials often attempted to downplay the exotic in order to lend their empire a "civilized profile," they also encouraged and employed individuals who dressed in elaborate "Oriental" attire for various purposes.¹⁰⁸ Members of Sultan Abdülaziz's royal guard were expected to appear in the traditional costumes of their place of origin during imperial processions, while representatives of the "founding" Karakeçili tribe dressed as "Central Asian nomadic horsemen" in an annual parade during the reign of Abdülhamid II.¹⁰⁹ And while many of those in his retinue dressed in the "modern" Ottoman uniform of tailored clothes and fez, the Albanian and Arab guards in Abdülhamid II's employ sported colorful and "exotic" outfits, including "violet knee-breeches" or red *şalvar* (baggy trousers) coupled with green turbans, respectively.¹¹⁰ What is more, despite Abdülhamid II's public protests against the enlistment of non-Muslim performers to represent his empire on a global stage, it was under his administration that Ot-

rule-governed sartorial repertoire: a neotraditional outfit for weddings, safari suit for official meetings, long-sleeved batik shirt for receptions, shirt and tie for the office, sarong and *pici* for Friday prayers" (195).

¹⁰⁶ For Ottomans who clothes-switched in Chicago, see "'Far Away' Moses and His Pets," in *The Chicago Times Portfolio of the Midway Types*, pt. 6: "Cairo Street Number," n.p.; James Wilson Pierce, *Photographic History of the World's Fair and Sketch of the City of Chicago: Also a Guide to the World's Fair and Chicago* (Baltimore, 1893), 372; "Retrospect of the Folk-Lore of the Columbian Exposition," *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 7, no. 24 (January–March 1894): 51–59, here 55; "A Fair Visitor from Syria: Sorosis Entertains Mme. Hanna Korany of Beyroot," *New York Times*, February 20, 1894, 6.

¹⁰⁷ For a related observation, see Timothy Mitchell, "Making the Nation: The Politics of Heritage in Egypt," in Nezar AlSayyad, ed., *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism* (London, 2001), 212–239, here 212. For an astute analysis of middle-class moderns in the Middle East, see Keith David Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton, N.J., 2006).

¹⁰⁸ For the reference to Ottoman interest in generating a "civilized profile" abroad during this period, see Selim Deringil, "The Hamidian State and the World's Fairs: 'The Whole World Is Watching!,'" in Raoul Motika, Christoph Herzog, and Michael Ursinus, eds., *Studies in Ottoman Social and Economic Life/Studien zu Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im Osmanischen Reich* (Heidelberg, 1999), 191–207, here 191.

¹⁰⁹ Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 32. The photographic album of the empire that Abdülhamid II sent to the United States on the occasion of the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 also bore images of children from the Ottoman Tribal School dressed in *keffiyehs* and long robes alongside those of Ottoman girls dressed in Western-style dresses and male pupils in "modern" Ottoman uniforms. On this album, see *Imperial Self-Portrait: The Ottoman Empire as Revealed in the Sultan Abdul Hamid II's Photographic Albums*, Special Issue, *Journal of Turkish Studies* 12 (1988); Çelik, "Speaking Back to Orientalist Discourse at the World's Columbian Exposition"; Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 151–152, 229. On the school, see Eugene Rogan, "Aşiret Mektebi: Abdülhamid II's School for Tribes, 1892–1907," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28, no. 1 (February 1996): 83–107; Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 101–104, 109, 152; Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," 788.

¹¹⁰ Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 24.

toman officials signed a contract with the company Robert Levy represented, putting the imperial display—including its mosque on the Midway—into the hands of a private non-Muslim entrepreneur who was in the business of selling “the Orient.”¹¹¹

Government officials even encouraged people to dress in clothing styles associated with groups to which they did not belong: Osman Hamdi and de Launay, both in government employ, hired living models off the streets of Istanbul to pose as different Ottoman “types” for their 1873 photographic album of Ottoman dress, while in following decades the Ottoman Imperial Museum employed local men who posed for photographs in Janissary costumes and offered public performances to museumgoers and onlookers alike.¹¹² When in 1914 the young Atatürk (then still Mustafa Kemal) attended a masquerade ball in Sofia dressed in full Janissary attire, he did so with the official permission of the Ottoman minister of war, Enver Pasha, who arranged to have the outfit sent to Bulgaria from the Ottoman Military Museum in Istanbul. (See Figure 8.) Dressing in this elaborate attire not only piqued the interest of his fellow attendees, Mustafa Kemal would later recall, it also gave him the opportunity to speak of the “military prowess and past victories” of his empire’s armies—including the abolished Janissary Corps he had decided to temporarily represent.¹¹³

The Ottoman merchants and performers who traveled the world and served as the unofficial ambassadors of their empire were no doubt aware of the self-Orientalizing shows their state sponsored. Their choice to don Oriental garb for particular occasions signaled Ottoman participation in a global trend that saw countless individuals dressing up in their country’s “traditional” costumes for international audiences as well as regional and state holidays. The practice of clothes-switching *between* different Ottoman styles was arguably part of a larger phenomenon that saw the formation of German societies for the preservation of traditional costume, the attempts of French elites to claim provincial dress as part of their national patrimony, and the adoption by modern British and Greek statesmen of the Scottish Highlander kilt and Albanian *fustanella*, respectively, as part of their national attire.¹¹⁴ Ottoman elites’ temporary and playful embrace of the more “exotic” types of dress found in

¹¹¹ For the Ottoman government contract with Elia Souhami Sadullah & Co., the firm that Levy represented in Chicago, see Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (BOA) Y.A. Res 58/33, 25 Şevval 1309 (May 24, 1892); “Malumat-ı Dahiliye-Şikago Sergisi,” *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, 2 Zilhicce 1309 (June 28, 1892), 3; Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 155.

¹¹² Ahmet Ersoy, “A Sartorial Tribute to Late Tanzimat Ottomanism: The *Elbise-i ‘Osmāniyye* Album,” *Muqarnas* 20 (2003): 187–207, 193; Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 194–195, 197–200.

¹¹³ Andrew Mango, *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (Woodstock, N.Y., 1999), 129; Kazım Özalp and Teoman Özalp, *Atatürk’ten Anılar* (Ankara, 1992), 8–9.

¹¹⁴ James Snowden, *The Folk Dress of Europe* (St. Louis, 1979); Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley, Calif., 1990), especially 193; Susan A. Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2000), 93; Hugh Trevor-Roper, “The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland,” in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (1983; repr., New York, 1992), 15–41; Malcolm Chapman, “‘Freezing the Frame’: Dress and Ethnicity in Brittany and Gaelic Scotland,” in Joanne B. Eicher, ed., *Dress and Ethnicity: Change across Space and Time* (Washington, D.C., 1995), 7–28; Linda Welters, “Ethnicity in Greek Dress,” *ibid.*, 53–77; Patrick Young, “Fashioning Heritage: Regional Costume and Tourism in Brittany, 1890–1937,” *Journal of Social History* 42, no. 3 (Spring 2009): 631–656, especially 631. Other examples include the “national costumes” invented by nationalist leaders in Iceland and Norway, loosely based upon peasant styles; Rebecca Earle, “Nationalism and National Dress in Spanish America,” in Mina Rocas and Louise Edwards, eds., *The Politics of Dress in Asia and the Americas* (Brighton, 2010), 163–181, here 164.



FIGURE 8: The young Mustafa Kemal in Janissary attire, Sofia, 1914. Turkish Armed Forces Photograph Archive.

their empire was, in this sense, part of an international romantic and folkloric form of national or imperial identification popular throughout the period.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Alihé Hanoum, *Les Musulmanes contemporaines*, often refers to traditional Ottoman clothing styles as imperial patrimony. See p. 131, which refers to the “coiffure nationale,” and pp. 175 and 177, which speak of an Ottoman “costume national” and “habillement national,” respectively. See also the

In the Ottoman case, different performers' assemblage of more than one "Oriental" style reinforced the imperial iteration of this global development.¹¹⁶ As Robert Levy dressed in clothes recognizable as those of a Muslim religious scholar or an Aegean *Zeybek* warrior, or even in the tailored frock coat and fez introduced by Sultan Mahmud II's 1829 clothing reform, he was not simply "playing" Muslim, *Zeybek*, or modern Ottoman. By wearing the different Oriental items he pulled together at fairs and in photo studios, Levy both displayed the complex sartorial patrimony of the Ottoman state and proclaimed his right to represent that varied imperial heritage.

The same may be said of Rosa, the "Turkish dancer," who performed at the theater in the Turkish Village in Chicago in 1893. Rosa's dance repertoire was broad and included dance forms associated with various parts of the empire, including Istanbul, Salonica, and the Arabian Peninsula.¹¹⁷ As one commentator from the New York daily *The World* put it, Rosa had "visited all the great towns of the Sultan's dominions and, as the playbills would say, she had them all at her feet."¹¹⁸ The brochure issued by the theater for which she performed in Chicago similarly boasted a wide selection of numbers drawn from the empire's varied regional dance styles. So great was the need to capture the "authentic" traditions of every corner of their country, the brochure explained, that its managers had spared no expense and sent agents to the far reaches of the empire "to study those customs, manners, and costumes and engage . . . players."¹¹⁹ In this sense, even the clearly commercial undertaking of the Turkish Theatre on the Midway participated in the language of imperial auto-ethnography and treated the empire's varied repertoires as part of a larger imperial patrimony. A similar logic allowed Robert Levy and Rosa to wear or dance in different "traditional" styles associated with various Ottoman groups by suggesting that any and all of these "Oriental" styles formed part of a repertoire available to them as modern Ottomans.

IF OTTOMAN JEWS' ATTACHMENT TO the "Oriental" was already a form of imperial nostalgia and folkloric patriotism during the late Ottoman period, this trend often intensified with the disappearance of the empire. Even as Jews witnessed the passing of Ottoman rule in their native regions, their dress and interior design choices hinted at a lingering identification with their erstwhile empire as well as a continued attachment to things "Oriental." Such positions sometimes had political repercussions:

image of an upper-class Ottoman Muslim woman accompanied by the caption "A Turkish Lady Dressed as a Greek Dancer: Turkish Women Spend Much of Their Time Dressing Up," in Zeyneb Hanoum, *A Turkish Woman's European Impressions*, ed. Grace Ellison (Philadelphia, 1913), following 70.

¹¹⁶ Compare the Russian context, where certain imperial elites suggested that cultivating the traditions of the different ethnic groups of the empire was an act of Russian imperial patriotism. James Loeffler, *The Most Musical Nation: Jews and Culture in the Late Russian Empire* (New Haven, Conn., 2010), 59; Kenneth Moss, "At Home in Late Imperial Russian Modernity—Except When They Weren't: New Histories of Russian and East European Jews, 1881–1914," *Journal of Modern History* 84, no. 2 (June 2012): 401–452, 420.

¹¹⁷ Potuoğlu-Cook, "Night Shifts," 108, citing *Turkish Theatre: Souvenir Programme, Midway Plaisance, World's Fair, Chicago* (Chicago, 1893), 5, 6.

¹¹⁸ "Rosa's Wonderful Feat," *The World*, July 25, 1893, 8.

¹¹⁹ *Turkish Theatre: Souvenir Programme*, 1.

after the Balkan Wars, Jewish men who found themselves under Greek rule ran into trouble when they failed to abandon the fez in public.¹²⁰ The pattern appeared in more intimate settings as well: long after their cities were no longer Ottoman, Jewish families from Salonica to Rhodes to Ruse continued to fill their houses with “Turkish” items, including divans, carpets, and tapestries.¹²¹ In Mandate Palestine, formerly Ottoman Jews pulled “Oriental” outfits of their grandparents’ closets in order to wear them for ritual occasions, reinforcing the habit of marking sacred time by wearing “Eastern” clothes, much as Jews in Istanbul had done a century earlier when they wore special “traditional” attire for the Sabbath.¹²²

On new continents, Ottoman Jews and their descendants continued to assert their Easternness for many years, and even decades. Thus we find societies such as the Federation of Oriental Jews, the Oriental Hebrew Association, the Association culturelle orientale israélite, and the Union des Juifs orientaux established between 1909 and 1930 in cities as diverse as Paris, New York, and Cairo, as well as several “Oriental” restaurants catering to Levantine Jews in Europe and the United States well into the 1930s and 1940s.¹²³ Capitalizing upon its readers’ desire for a taste of home, the Judeo-Spanish press established by these émigré communities in early-twentieth-century New York frequently advertised Turkish tobacco, Turkish coffee, *rakı*, and “Oriental” sweets within its pages.¹²⁴ Those who sought the sounds of the old country similarly found music sold at “Oriental Music” shops, on “Oriental Spanish Records,” or presented by “Oriental” trios through the mid-twentieth century.¹²⁵ Some

¹²⁰ Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims, and Jews, 1430–1950* (New York, 2006), 283. Within a few years after the transition to Greek rule, all forty-five rabbis of Salonica publicly replaced their fezzes with a new, presumably less offensive style of headgear; “Mikrai eideseis,” *Nea Alitheia*, March 18, 1915, 2. I am grateful to Paris Papamichos Chronakis for this last citation. In other formerly Ottoman regions, the fez continued to be a marker of one’s political affiliations well into the 1930s. See Sarah D. Shields, *Fezzes in the River: Identity Politics and European Diplomacy in the Middle East on the Eve of World War II* (New York, 2011), for the fez as a sign of opposition to the new Kemalist regime in Turkey.

¹²¹ Over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these cities came under Greek, Italian, and Bulgarian rule, respectively. On Jews’ continued use of objects associated with their erstwhile empire in Ruse (formerly Rusçuk), see Elias Canetti, *The Tongue Set Free: Remembrance of a European Childhood*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York, 1979), 9. On divans and carpets in Salonican Jews’ homes long after the city came under Greek rule in 1912, see Michael Molho, *Traditions and Customs of the Sephardic Jews of Salonica*, ed. Robert Bedford, trans. Alfred A. Zara (1950; repr., New York, 2006), 138. For Oriental tapestries in a Jewish home of interwar Rhodes under Italian rule, see Rebecca Amato Levy, *I Remember Rhodes* (New York, 1989), 56.

¹²² Joseph B. Glass and Ruth Kark, *Sephardi Entrepreneurs in Jerusalem: The Valero Family, 1800–1948* (Jerusalem, 2007), 349.

¹²³ For these societies, see Aviva Ben-Ur, *Sephardic Jews in America: A Diasporic History* (New York, 2009); “The Oriental Hebrew Association,” *La Amerika*, February 13, 1914, 2; Annie Benveniste, *Le Bosphore à la Roquette: La communauté judéo-espagnole à Paris (1914–1940)* (Paris, 1989), 74–75, and Corry Guttsstadt, *Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust* (Berlin, 2008), 119; Gudrun Krämer, *The Jews in Modern Egypt, 1914–1952* (Seattle, 1989), 18. For “Oriental” restaurants owned by or advertised to formerly Ottoman Jews, see “The Oriental Life in America: Oriental Restaurant and Turkish Coffee” and “Konstantinopla” restaurant business cards, collection of Denah Lida, and *La Vara*, January 29, 1932, 7, cited in Ben-Ur, *Sephardic Jews in America*, 274–275; “Restaurant Oriental ‘Bouco,’” *Le Judaïsme Sephardi*, April 1933, 151; “Restaurant Oriental Baron,” *Le Judaïsme Sephardi*, January 1939, 17.

¹²⁴ For Turkish tobacco, see “Eskenazi Bros.,” *La Amerika*, April 19, 1912, 3. For Turkish coffee, see “Merkad kafe ande todos los turkinos,” *La Amerika*, March 26, 1915, 2; “Kafe por turkinos,” *La Amerika*, March 22, 1912, 4. For *rakı*, see “Raki turkino,” *La Amerika*, March 19, 1915, 1. For Oriental sweets, see “Constantinople Oriental Pastry Shop,” *La Vara*, March 28, 1941, 6.

¹²⁵ “Oriental Music Shop,” *La Amerika*, August 12, 1921, 6. For “Oriental Spanish Records,” see

cherished the Oriental carpets and objects they had brought with them across the ocean, while others turned to the marketplace in order to preserve their heritage, such as the Ottoman Jewish immigrant who purchased a Turkish rug from a New York dealer when his granddaughter was born, to include in her dowry.¹²⁶

Yet, in the early-twentieth-century United States, being “Oriental” suddenly also became a serious liability in a way it had not been back in the empire. Ottoman Jewish immigrants now found that in America, “Orientals” were considered aliens “ineligible for naturalized citizenship” by extension of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. As Nayan Shah has written, “The threat of being considered nonwhite, and labeled ‘Asiatic’ persistently haunted legal contests to naturalize by Syrians, Lebanese, Sephardic Jews, Turks, Persians, Afghans, Arabs and Hindus” throughout the first half of the century.¹²⁷

Facing the reality of discrimination against “Orientals” in the United States, a number of formerly “Oriental” Jews began to lobby their coreligionists to leave the burdensome label behind.¹²⁸ Given the many disincentives to identifying as Oriental that existed in the early-twentieth-century U.S., what is perhaps most remarkable about this episode is not that the term met with new opposition, but rather that Ottoman Jews and their descendants continued to use the rubric of “Oriental” at all. Some, such as the Istanbul-born Joseph Gedalecia, who helped found the Federation of Oriental Jews in 1912, actively defended the use of the designation, explaining that he believed “Oriental” was the most appropriate term to describe his community. “I feel proud to be classed with Hindus and Chinese and Japanese and other Asiatics,” he told Jewish leaders in New York during a meeting held in 1914. “Besides, the name reminds us of dear Turkey . . . The word Levantine may be more accurate, but ‘Oriental’ expresses the Turkish Jew.”¹²⁹

As “Turkey” appeared in its new guise as the modern Turkish Republic in the

“Mayesh 1367/1368,” *Sephardi Music: A Century of Recordings*, <http://www.sephardicmusic.org/labels/Mayesh/1367,1368.htm>. For the “Oriental trio,” see “Metropolitan 3002,” *ibid.*, <http://www.sephardicmusic.org/labels/Metropolitan/3002.htm>.

¹²⁶ *Embellished Lives: Customs and Costumes of the Jewish Communities of Turkey*, exhibit catalogue (Berkeley, Calif., 1989), especially 21.

¹²⁷ Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley, Calif., 2011), 235. On the ambiguous politics of whiteness in the fin-de-siècle and early-twentieth-century United States, see Joan M. Jensen, *Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America* (New Haven, Conn., 1988); Ian F. Haney-López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race*, revised ed. (New York, 2006); Sarah M. A. Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian-American Diaspora* (Berkeley, Calif., 2009); Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2006); Natalia Molina, “‘In a Race All Their Own’: The Quest to Make Mexicans Ineligible for U.S. Citizenship,” *Pacific Historical Review* 79, no. 2 (May 2010): 167–201.

¹²⁸ On this debate, see Marc D. Angel, *La America: The Sephardic Experience in the United States* (Philadelphia, 1982), 76–77, 79; Joseph M. Papo, *Sephardim in Twentieth Century America: In Search of Unity* (San Jose, Calif., 1987), 54–55; Ben-Ur, *Sephardic Jews in America*, 98–101; Aviva Ben-Ur, “Where Diasporas Met: Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews in the City of New York—A Study in Intra-Ethnic Relations, 1880–1950” (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1998), 167–175; Devin E. Naar, “Reformuler l’identité, réinventer la patrie: Juifs de langue judéo-espagnole en Amérique, entre Salonique et *Sefarad*,” in Esther Benbassa, ed., *Itinéraires sépharades: Complexité et diversité des identités* (Paris, 2010), 63–78; Naar, trans., “Sephardi but not Oriental,” in Julia Phillips Cohen and Sarah Abrevaya Stein, eds., *Sephardi Lives: A Documentary History, 1700–1950* (Stanford, Calif., 2014).

¹²⁹ Joseph Gedalecia, “Discussion,” *Jewish Charities* 4, no. 11 (June 1914): 29–31, here 29, also cited in Ben-Ur, “Where Diasporas Met,” 174.

wake of the empire's collapse, Jewish émigrés' attachment to being "Oriental" Turks increasingly became a tribute to a world that was no longer. Even after 1925, when the new republic banned the fez as an unpleasant reminder of the "Eastern" empire that had preceded it, Jews of Ottoman origin who had settled across the American landscape—from Seattle to Los Angeles to New York—continued to don their fezzes and appear in "Oriental" poses for the camera, their imperial nostalgia now turned defiant.¹³⁰

One of the most striking examples of the persistent self-Orientalism of these communities in America is the practice that grew up among the descendants of Ottoman Jews in Los Angeles of holding annual festivities known as "Turkish Nights." Initiated in the 1930s, these gatherings lasted well into the 1980s.¹³¹ On such occasions, members of the congregation dressed in Ottoman-inspired outfits—including flowing garments, headscarves, veils, fezzes, and fake beards and mustaches. They also filled the room with various props—Oriental-style carpets and architectural motifs, ouds, and nargilehs. (See Figure 9.) Descriptions of one of the first such events, held in 1934 at the newly opened Temple Tifereth Israel synagogue, noted that some four hundred people were in attendance. "We were entertained by the Oriental Orchestra of Station Keca + Knx," whose "specialty acts" included a "very attractive dancing girl," one of the organizers wrote. Far from Abdülhamid II's admonishments four decades earlier, the enthusiasm of this author was diminished neither by the commercial nature of the entertainment nor by the female dancer hired for the occasion. Even the use of temporary costumes and fake mustaches does not appear to have lessened participants' sense of the authenticity of the moment. As the author of the 1934 report put it, "the atmosphere was of the rare beauty of Constantinople."¹³²

WRITING ABOUT "THE MANY POSTCARDS documenting Armenians involved in traditional modes of production or in traditional dress" from the late Ottoman period, the art historian Nancy Micklewright has noted the irony of the fact that these "photographs, which were most likely produced by outsiders for the consumption of outsiders . . . are now being used by the descendants of the original subjects, in diaspora, to reconstruct their own history."¹³³ Yet as the above examples suggest, this pattern is perhaps more common than much historical scholarship has recognized. Indeed,

¹³⁰ See, for example, the photograph labeled "Purim Festival, Sephardic Hebrew Center, April 1951," in the collection of the Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel, Los Angeles, with members dressed in fezzes and baggy trousers and posing under a sign reading "Turks." For a photograph of an Ottoman Jew posing with a nargileh in Seattle in the early twentieth century, see "Solti Levy smoking hookah with wife Bienvenida Levy, Seattle, ca. 1905–1912," Washington State Jewish Archives Photographs, PH Coll 650, University of Washington Library, Special Collections Division, http://content.lib.washington.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/jhp&CISOPTR=294. In *Making Jews Modern*, Stein calls Sephardi Jews' continued attachment to the fez in the United States "an act of willful nostalgia" (210).

¹³¹ Personal e-mail communication with Arthur Benveniste, July 15, 2009.

¹³² Handwritten note, March 11, 1934, and printed text "The Ladinos," collection of the Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel, Los Angeles; William Kramer, "Introduction," in Kramer, *Sephardic Jews in the West Coast States*, vol. 2: *The Los Angeles Sephardic Experience* (Los Angeles, 1996), 321.

¹³³ Nancy Micklewright, "Personal, Public, and Political (Re)Constructions: Photographs and Consumption," in Quataert, *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire*, 261–288, here 286–287.



FIGURE 9: “Turkish Night” in Los Angeles, 1934. Archives of the Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel, Los Angeles.

anthropologists and scholars of tourism studies have begun to argue that commoditization can spur not only cultural preservation but also cultural production, and that even commercial attractions “specifically designed for a touristic audience” can in time be construed as part of local traditions and rituals. That which is initially perceived as inauthentic traces a short path on the road to becoming authentic.¹³⁴

Whether in the Turkish Village on Chicago’s Midway, the private living rooms and public ballrooms of Ottoman cities, Oriental restaurants in Paris, or a synagogue in Los Angeles, buying, selling, wearing, or living and dancing among products associated with their empire allowed Ottoman Jews and their descendants to announce themselves as Orientals. That they often did so selectively and in commoditized settings did not make them imposters. In fact, it made them eminently Ottoman, for—as we have seen—urban, middle-class Ottomans of various backgrounds and from different parts of the empire switched between styles frequently and with relative ease. Many of the same individuals also advocated and practiced selective self-Orientalism as a gesture of anticolonial, romantic, and folkloric imperial identification. The Ottoman Jewish merchants, performers, travelers, and émigrés who performed their

¹³⁴ Catherine M. Cameron, “The Marketing of Heritage: From the Western World to the Global Stage,” *City & Society* 20, no. 2 (December 2008): 160–168; Edward M. Bruner, “The Balinese Borderzone,” in Bruner, *Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel* (Chicago, 2005), 199–200, registers the way in which both a *kecak* dance, invented by a partnership of a German artist and Balinese dancers in the 1930s, and the frog dance, “devised for tourists” in Batuan in the 1970s, have since been “adopted by many Balinese as their own.”

Orientalness on different occasions and different stages were not immune to the practices of their neighbors or the messages sent by their state to this effect. Nor were they indifferent to a message that arrived from all quarters by the nineteenth century: to be a modern citizen of the world, one also had to be a member of a particular nation—or, as it were, a particular empire. For many without access to the Imperial Museum, this meant reaching into their storerooms and closets, or turning to the marketplace, in search of their heritage.

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