INTRODUCTION

During the last part of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries, southeast European and eastern Mediterranean societies experienced accelerated and intertwining processes which embedded them firmly within the orbit of the expanding European capitalist economy and reshaped them in various dimensions and varying degrees according to the model of European bourgeois society. Whether to deplore the lack of capitalism's destructive dynamism in the region or to welcome the progressive dynamics of social conflict which would lead to its replacement, perceptive intellectuals at the dawn of the new century responded to the ongoing transformation of their societies and the multiplication in the region of phenomena of social conflict and mass political mobilisation with a novel social imagination and sense of historicity.[1] Theirs was, at the same time, an era when national movements reached maturity and national antagonisms culminated in wars which drastically redrew the regional geopolitical map. By the early 1920s little remained of the fin-de-siècle international environment and the prewar social and political balance of power within the social formations of the region. In an 'irony of history', similar processes and common experiences were eventually perceived by the various peoples as uniquely theirs, as the politics of state nationalism endowed national historiographies with a fair amount of short-sightedness vis-à-vis the history of neighbouring societies.

The desire to overcome these filters and bring together scholars from different national historiographical traditions working on this transitional and formative period for the societies of the region was the spark for the international colloquium on 'Rival Pursuits, Common Experiences: Social Transformation and Mass Mobilisation in the Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean Cities, 1900–1923', which was held at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies in Rethymno, Crete, on 22–24 October 2009. The conference, the contributions to which form the core of the present volume, also had a further objective, as it is implied in the title. It sought to transcend historiographical divisions produced by dominant historical

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1   K. Popov, 'Pogled vărhu ikonomičeskoto razvitie na Bălgarija' [A glance at the economic development of Bulgaria], *Spisanie na Bălgarskoto Ikonomičesko Družestvo* 11/4–5 (1907), 219; G. Skliros, *To koinoniko mas zitima* [Our social question] (Athens, 1907).

constructions of space, inherited from the area studies tradition and reflecting the First World's geopolitical ordering of the globe. The discourse which constructs the Balkans and the Middle East as separate 'mesoregions' for the purposes of historical analysis not only tends to underplay the existence of significant pre-modern political, economic and cultural ties and shared legacies[2] but also precludes the comparative investigation of the transition of these neighbouring and interconnected societies to modernity. This broadening the scale of observation in the Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean 'region' does not seek to impose a new norm but rather to open, in a heuristic manner, the possibility of alternative comparisons and more nuanced and informed approaches to individual cases.

The early twentieth-century city as a project, mirror and stage

The focus of observation of this volume is the Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean city; the city as a project and mirror of the evolving social transformation and as an object of and stage for the mass mobilisations associated with it. To begin with, the processes of urbanisation which doubled and tripled the population of many important urban centres in the region within a few decades around the turn of the century, the growth of the capital cities of the region's young nation-states and also of the major port-cities of the Levant highlighted the urgent problem of urban planning and infrastructure with increasing severity. Nevertheless, as **Alexandra Yerolympos** shows in her comparative approach to Balkan cities, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century urban planning in the region was equally, if not predominantly, informed by the need for symbolic legitimation and preoccupied with the transformation of the region's urban landscapes so as to conform to the standards of 'European civilisation' and prove the national dynamism towards progress. Sweeping interventions by the state authorities and European-educated professionals, usually following political ruptures or physical catastrophes, erased on the one hand the 'oriental' Ottoman architectural heritage, and, on the other, transgressed the premodern, ethnoreligious divisions and reshaped the urban fabric so as to reflect (or predict) a modern social and economic structure. Thessaloniki's redesign after the Great Fire of 1917, as analysed by Yerolympos, provides an exemplary case of this process.

The case of the Campagnes district in the same city, discussed by **Vassilis Colonas**, illustrates, however, that spontaneous processes of 'modern zoning' along occupational and social criteria predated the authoritative intervention of

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2   M. Todorova, *Historische Vermächtnisse zwischen Europa und dem Nahen Osten*, Carl Heinrich Becher Lecture der Froitz Thyssen Stiftung 2007 (Berlin, 2007); Cf. Eadem "Spacing Europe: What is a historical region?", *East Central Europe* 32/ 1–2 (2006), 7–55.

the nation-states and were well under way in the second half of the nineteenth century in the major Ottoman port-cities of the Eastern Mediterranean – in Thessaloniki, just as in İzmir or in Beirut. Upper-class Jewish, Muslim and Greek Orthodox people lived together in the new privileged quarter, located outside the old city walls. Just as their houses followed the same basic type, adjusted to the norms of modern European-style housing, variations of architectural eclecticism and the use of different symbolic systems produced – contrapuntally – different morphologies, suitable to the identification needs and aesthetic preferences of a building's owner. While imported forms (from Europe, Istanbul or Athens) dominated in the more expensive and luxurious constructions, middle and lower-middle class residences were hybrids of traditional local features of residential architecture and elements of European eclecticism.

Similar mechanisms and trends can be observed in the field of minor, everyday materiality, examined by **Dimitrios Charitatos** on the basis of comparative research in Istanbul, Thessaloniki, Plovdiv and Bitola. The dialectics of western-style homogenisation and ethnic/national distinction, whereby the traditional found its particular usage as an identity marker, were pronounced in the case of clothing habits, for example. Moreover, the hybridisation encountered in residential architecture was also present – and perhaps more pronounced – in the field of minor materiality, especially in the use of iron architectural elements. As Charitatos shows, the use of different variations of balusters and other iron elements tended to crystallise in various 'local styles'. Again, since the use of these architectural elements in high- or low-strata residences appears to have been extremely scarce, the 'negotiation' of imported forms successfully took place – and left discernible results – in the houses of the ascending middle- and lower-middle class.

The limits of similar 'negotiations', and of urban-planning projects in general, are evident in the examination of the emergence of the social-housing question in the cities of the region. A problem already present at the beginning of the twentieth century as a result of the acceleration of industrialisation and the rural exodus, the scarcity of working-class housing assumed critical proportions in many cities with the arrival of refugees from the Balkan and First World wars. **Dobrinka Parusheva's** case study of Sofia reveals the impotence of the state, municipal and professional authorities in coping with the housing crisis and the relative weakness of the socialist and working-class movement to press effectively for institutional solutions. Away from the city centre, where architectural planning was constructing the European image of the nation, the periphery of the city was filled with shacks built overnight, probably more deplorable than those which the western travellers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries encountered with such contempt in the cities of the Ottoman Balkans. The spontaneous practices and struggles of the newcomers for housing defied planning projects; alongside

the planned programmes, they 'produced' the urban space model, making it a mirror of the accelerating social transformation.[3]

Post-First World War Bulgaria appears simultaneously more 'liberal' (or less effectively 'statist') than other Balkan and Central European countries in what concerns the state intervention in the housing market and the application of a rent-control system. **Aleksandar Miletić** offers a comparative examination of the manifestations of this pan-European phenomenon in Serbia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Poland and proves that the cases under examination show a rather strong tendency towards state intervention (in between the extreme cases of Austria and Germany and the moderate ones of France and Norway). Again, the discrepancy between official policies and legislation, on the one hand, and real outcomes, on the other, is revealed through close analysis: with the exception of Czechoslovakia and its relatively strong labour movement, landlords in the other countries took advantage of established socioeconomic and political networks and, more often than not, managed to manipulate the state to the detriment of their 'protected' tenants.

The quest for security: the 'little people' and the state

Whether it successfully assumed the role ascribed to it or not, the state became increasingly the addressee of multiple requests to harness economic and social dynamics for desirable uses and act as a buffer against the turbulences caused by the capitalist transformation of society. Again, this was a Europe-wide process, associated with the politics of mass democracy and constitutionalism that empowered previously excluded social actors, who would often – ironically – turn against this empowering mechanism and enhance the challenges to the fragile liberalism of the imperialist age. The waves and variations of this process in the Balkan and the eastern Mediterranean region – which have not been adequately researched on a comparative basis – follow different rhythms and display significant lags and overlaps stemming from the region's peripheral position. Most notably, the radical challenges to European bourgeois civilisation more or less coincided in the region with its triumph over traditional value systems and forms of social organisation.

As **Christos Hadziiossif** shows in his article on the spread of life insurance, it was the ascending lower middle classes, and especially the new petty bourgeoisie, which during the period was a resilient or even burgeoning social category, that experienced par excellence this modern 'vertigo'. Various 'little people' of the region managed to ascend socially by taking advantage of the favourable economic conjuncture at the end of the nineteenth century and the parallel tech-

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3   H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991).

nical, infrastructural and educational advances. At the same time, they appeared to be politically empowered at a collective level, but economically fragile at an individual level. These people broadened the clienteles of the life insurance business then spreading in the region. Moreover, their support for the view that the state should be an 'insurer of last resort' against the vicissitudes of the global economy acquired critical weight as did their propensity to participate in nationalist mobilisations.

Vangelis Kechriotis' analysis of the *Amaltheia* newspaper provides a glance into an interesting Ottoman variation: the case of the Smyrniote Orthodox 'middle class', a term which he uses to designate the new petty bourgeoisie, placing the emphasis on the process of the spread of European bourgeois culture into the lower – and ascending – social strata. Their largely non-Greek-speaking origins were related to their preoccupation with 'order and civilisation', an ideological idiom which enhanced their claims to participation in a European and, in this way, 'pure', non-Oriental Greek identity. Moreover, Kechriotis' analysis reveals the relational character of the social fears which provoked the evocation of state protection. Threatened by the 'explosion of otherness',[4] expressed in the claims of the working-class masses in the city's space through their noisy 'uncivilised' habits (carnival, gun firing, etc.), *Amaltheia*'s indigenous Greek-Orthodox petty-bourgeoisie turned predominantly to the Ottoman state (and army) as a defender of public order (and their own position), especially as they could not count on the mobility and the ties to the Greek kingdom that the higher Greek commercial bourgeoisie of the city enjoyed.

Demarcation from the lower popular strata seems to have been less a cause of anxiety for Athens' traditional petty bourgeoisie, which is the object of **Nikos Potamianos'** article. Even if there existed, at the cultural level, a petty-bourgeois trend to share bourgeois aversion towards popular forms of public entertainment, followed by certain advances towards the formation of a distinct petty-bourgeois culture, one encounters, at the political level, a remarkable petty-bourgeois hegemony over the popular masses, highlighted by the leading role of the professional 'corporations' in the mass protests of the first decade of the twentieth century which culminated in the demonstrations in support of the 1909 *pronunciamento*. Potamianos explores the transition from this initial 'popular unity' to the formation of a distinct petty-bourgeois class pole with the foundation of the Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants in 1919. He argues that this transition was not as much the result of intentional petty-bourgeois action as the outcome of many factors, not least the deterioration in living standards, social polarisation during the decade of war after 1912 and the gradual enhancement of the workers' movement. Remarkably, the labour legislation and the institutional

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4   F. Jameson, 'The End of Temporality', *Critical Inquiry* 29/4 (2003), 695–718.

interventions of the bourgeois state, which imposed a new framework of class-based representation of social interests, played a decisive role in this process.

If revolutionary circumstances such as the 1909 upheaval in Greece favoured the production and confirmation of 'popular unity', the Young Turk Revolution furnishes another outstanding example. **Bilge Seçkin's** article focuses on the 'theatre epidemic' which followed the revolution and which – because of its low cultural quality – has been neglected by Turkish national theatre historiography. She shows how the mass mobilisation and the participation of the people in politics were enacted through the theatrical stage. She also shows that as the patriotic plays brought thousands of people into public squares, the new ruling Committee of Union and Progress increasingly saw in the popular theatrical practices not just an unreliable ally but also a powerful means of legitimisation and forging a relationship between the state and the people.

Preludes to war and ethnic cleansing

The anxieties and challenges associated with the unequal incorporation of the region into the world capitalist economy and the parallel processes of socioeconomic transformation at the local and regional level were increasingly expressed in the language of nationalism and discharged in xenophobic aggression against religious or ethnic minorities. Behind *ala franga* 'order and civilisation', ethnic nationalism emerged and imposed itself as a hegemonic ideology and legitimating framework for the exercise of power in the weak successor states to the Ottoman Empire and, increasingly, in the empire itself. Several papers in this volume inquire into the final phases of this process by tackling a couple of significant episodes – preludes to the wars and ethnic cleansing which reshaped the political and ethnological map of the region in the 1910s and 1920s. A unifying trait of these studies is the effort to transcend the conventional approaches of political–diplomatic history, which personify the rival states by ascribing to them an immanent national will and an in-built, almost 'natural' tendency to exclude the ethnically 'alien'. On the contrary, they seek to examine the internal social, economic and political dynamics, constellations and agents which brought about and imposed this trend.

The cities of the region, especially the capitals and port-cities – recipients of migratory waves of local and interregional origin and nodes of articulation of the local with the global economy – provided fertile ground for the materialisation of this xenophobic, exclusivist logic. The exclusivist movements took, however, full advantage of the new infrastructural potential (newspapers, telegraph) for the coordination and quick dissemination of their action at the national level.

The commercial diasporas in the port cities, which were predominantly made up of Jews and Greeks, the agents and primary beneficiaries of the globalisation process, were also the primary targets and victims of the exclusivist movements. Rising indigenous bourgeoisies, seeking to gain positions vis-à-vis these diasporas, were to a greater or lesser extent involved in the relevant movements, depending on the local economic structure and political circumstances. This seems to have been less the case in Brăila during the Romanian anti-Greek movement of 1905–1906, which is analysed by **Dimitris Kontogeorgis**, than in Varna and the Bulgarian cities in 1906 or the ports of the Ottoman Empire during the anti-Greek boycott movement of 1910–14. The weight of the unresolved Agrarian Question in Romania, which provoked the 1907 peasant revolt, directed popular animosity mainly towards the leaseholders of land (*arendaşi*), predominantly Jews and to a lesser extent Greeks. Not acquiring the strength of Romanian antisemitism, the anti-Greek agitation in 1906 in Romania was additionally restricted thanks to the relative weakness in Romania (as compared, for example, with Bulgaria) of the repercussions of the struggles over Macedonia, especially in the port-cities, where the strong economic position of the Greeks also earned them respect and support. The Romanian authorities did not encounter much difficulty in pacifying the movement, after they had made use of it both in the domestic and the diplomatic fields.

On the contrary, the Bulgarian state authorities seem to have had more difficulty in pacifying the analogous anti-Greek movement, which broke out in the summer of 1906 and was unambiguously influenced by the Romanian precedent. At least the 'uncontrollable crowd' was the official excuse of the Bulgarian government, part of which seems to have been informed about, if not involved in, the outbreak of the movement. Bulgaria's political forces, with the exception of the socialist parties, on account of their stable internationalist stance, more or less shared (and used) the generalised animosity against the Greeks, which was cultivated by nationalist activists calling for revenge for the acts of terror carried out by Greek bands in Macedonia. **Andreas Lyberatos** analyses the dynamics of the movement in its successive phases and suggests that a crucial role in the mobilisations was also played by serving or dismissed civil servants, a social category both dependent on party 'protection' and facing a significant deterioration in living standards at the turn of the century. In a comparable fashion to Romania and the Ottoman Empire, state bureaucrats and professionals from the dominant ethnicity related to (or placing their hopes in) the state also played a role in xenophobic radicalisation, in a manner probably more decisive than that of the indigenous commercial bourgeoisie. As for the dominant political class, in the cases discussed above it seems that the more or less controlled and patronised outbursts of nationalist sentiment were a distraction to the limitations both in internal and foreign policy and, as such, were legitimising devices.

Roumen Avramov focuses on the most renowned and dramatic episode of the anti-Greek movement of 1906 in Bulgaria – the burning down of the town of Anchialo – and argues that economic antagonism over the main assets of the region, the salterns and the local monastery, lay behind the deplorable events, which had also a regional (rural vs. urban) dimension. The pursuit of economic interest on a 'communalist' basis is highlighted as the force which produced not only this but also other similar episodes of ethnic violence in the region. The urbicide of this small Black Sea town, which before the events had a predominantly Greek population and a small Bulgarian minority, as well as the situation which followed the pogrom and the gradual emigration of its Greek inhabitants, are analysed in detail in their various economic, political and legal dimensions on the basis of local and national Bulgarian sources. As Avramov argues, the purely economic impact of the pogrom was of a moderate scale, as the disruptions and the voids left by the emigrating Greeks in the local economy were soon filled by the activities of the dominant nationality.

Yusuf Doğan Çetinkaya's paper inscribes the anti-Greek movement of 1910–1914 in the Ottoman Empire into the general upsurge of mass politics after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, which brought to the foreground of the political arena hitherto disempowered social groups and inaugurated a new phase of mobilisations of a 'bilateral' character (top–bottom and vice versa), in sharp contrast to the celebratory, state-led mobilisations of Abdülhamid II's absolutist rule. Challenging the dominant narrative in Turkish historiography that depicts the formation of the modern Turkish nation as an elite-led process, Çetinkaya stresses the pivotal role that popular mobilisation and the anti-Greek movement of 1910–1914 played in the emergence of Muslim/Turkish nationalism. Alongside Committee of Union and Progress activists, state bureaucrats and parts of the Muslim bourgeoisie involved in it, the anti-Greek boycott movement gave the opportunity to sections of the working class, such as port-workers, to promote their class interests via nationalist agitation. This constellation of social forces expressed in the boycott movement lay behind the National Economy (*Milli İktisat*) programme which prevailed during the Second Constitutional Period.

In all the cases discussed so far, the uprooted victims of ethnic strife in one corner of the broader region were involved (and instrumentalised) in 'compensatory' action in another. It is as if this avalanche of refugee movements and revenge violence was preparing the societies of the region for the approaching general – armed – confrontation. This mechanism is revealed with the utmost clarity in the case of the Muslims of the Cretan countryside, discussed in **Stefanos Poulios's** article. Contrary to mainstream Greek historiography that speaks of Muslim emigration as a result of the 'peaceful redistribution of wealth', Poulios documents the systematic destruction of the rural property and crops of lowland Muslim proprietors from 1889 to 1897, perpetrated by Christian highland bands with the

aim of usurping or acquiring, under favourable terms, the land of the former. The result of this economic and physical pressure was the influx of uprooted Muslims to the island's cities, where they felt protected by the Ottoman army. This violent urbanisation – a prelude to their definitive expulsion – contributed to the conflagration of the anti-Christian riots in the cities of the island and, at a later stage, to the transfer of animosity towards the Greeks of Asia Minor, where a significant part of the Muslim Cretan refugees ended up.

Evrydiki Sifneos' paper brings us, finally, to Odessa, a city with a long tradition of anti-Jewish pogroms, in which the Greeks had played a role (in 1821, 1859 and 1871). Comparing the cases of the Greek and the Jewish colonies of the city, Sifneos stresses the different and relatively positive and tolerant attitude of the Russian state and society towards the Greeks. This attitude was predicated on the common religion, yet the issue of the size of the two colonies and the different class composition and participation of their members in the economic process also appear as important differentiating factors. Responding to the attitudes of the host society, the Greek community of Odessa, at least as far as its position is revealed in the city's Greek press (from 1906 onwards), displayed a consistent political 'egocentrism'. Preoccupied with its internal affairs, the community increasingly referred to the realities and political conflicts of the Greek state (the Venizelist–royalist struggle) and the outcome of the Greek national question. It was only during the Crimean Expedition (1919) that the Greeks of Odessa broke their public 'indifference' and adopted an antirevolutionary stance, a position that led to their eventual exodus.

The colonial perspective: nationalism, class and religion in the Levant

The dramatic interplay between ethnic/national affiliation and social class expressed in most of the mass mobilisations discussed above acquired different characteristics and followed varying paths in the parts of the Eastern Mediterranean which experienced direct imperialist intervention and colonial rule. The combined and comparative study of the Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean societies, which characterises the volume's approach, can therefore offer useful insights for the exploration of this interplay. Some of the cases explored below show how the geopolitical arrangements and the political and institutional frameworks imposed by the colonialists remoulded in a modern disguise, reinforced and eventually radicalised preexisting ethnic divisions, while others show that the experience – and the failure – of colonial rule favoured the development of crossnational rapprochements and class-based solidarity.

British Egypt furnishes an outstanding example of this failure, expressed resoundingly in the 1919 Egyptian Revolution. The extent of the delegitimisation

of colonial rule is revealed in **Alexander Kitroeff's** analysis of the attitudes of Egypt's foreign communities' vis-à-vis the revolution. The Greeks, the largest diaspora community of Egypt, opted for coming to terms with the advancing Egyptian nationalist movement, which, contrary to the other cases discussed above (Romania, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire), directed its attacks not against the diaspora communities but against the British colonial administration. Instead of relying on British protection, the Greeks gradually proceeded in redefining their own identity, stressing their 'locality' and their role for the well being of Egypt, a process epitomised by the coinage of the new term Egyptiot Greeks (*Αιγυπτιώτες*). Less decided, but also less expected and more revealing, was the attitude of the British business community in Egypt, which kept its distance from the official British administration and addressed a sweeping criticism for the practices of British colonial rule. **Mario Ruiz's** article focuses on these colonial practices during the First World War and the mutation of the colonial regime, expressed in the imposition of martial law and the subordination of the country's economy and society to the war effort. The forced mass recruitments for the Egyptian Labour Corps, in which thousands of Egyptians perished under harsh conditions, were the culmination of a series of other wartime measures which affected the livelihood of Egyptians, both in the cities and the countryside. Ruiz shows how the disruptions and dislocations of the war economy, exacerbated by the incompetence of newly arrived British military officials and their disrespect towards the colonised society, utterly delegitimised British rule, brought together broad sections of Egyptian society (the working class, peasantry and native bureaucracy) under nationalist hegemony and contributed crucially to the outbreak of the 1919 revolution.

Nationalist hegemony over Egypt's working class was, however, only a late development, preceded by a long period of strong anarchist and socialist mobilisation along internationalist principles. **Anthony Gorman** explores the emergence of Egypt as an important node in a radical network that had a pronounced regional character and which included, in the second half of the nineteenth century, activists from Italy, Greece and the Ottoman Empire, political exiles and militant skilled workers and professionals working on large public construction projects. The internationalisation of the labour market during the imperialist expansion of European capitalism in the Levant, as well as the experience of direct colonial rule and exploitation, formed the conditions for the initial dominant influence of internationalist ideas, a trend aided also by the colonial state's crushing of the Egyptian nationalist movement in 1882 and the latter's subsequent retarded development. The gradual emergence of an industrial proletariat and the enhancement of the indigenous nationalist movement exacerbated, after the turn of the century, the struggle between the internationalist and nationalist/communalist consciousness and allegiance of the country's multiethnic working class. These

competing influences and frameworks of identification of the working class are the object of **Angelos Dalachanis'** analysis of the 1919 Suez Canal Company strike and the overall mobilisation of the workers in this peculiar zone, which was a creation of the expansion of world capitalism and presented in miniature – and in a clear way – the structural characteristics of the colonial social formation in Egypt. Dalachanis argues that monolithic answers and categories conceal a reality in flux, characterised by the interplay and oscillation between class/internationalist and national or local identifications. On the one hand, social conditions and the peculiarities of class opposition in the three multiethnic urban centres of the canal zone favoured the development of a successful, crossnational worker mobilisation, which eventually found its institutional crystallisation in the International Worker's Union of the Isthmus of Suez, founded in 1919. On the other hand, ethnic or localist particularism never subsided to an extent that would allow the emergence of a long-lasting and unambiguous internationalist consciousness.

Cyprus offers a contrapuntal example to that of Egypt, in that colonial rule in the island resulted in reinforcing the dividing ethnic/religious lines inherited from Ottoman times. **Sia Anagnostopoulou** offers an overview of the passage of Cyprus from Ottoman to British rule, starting with the 'previously unknown' mass mobilisations from 1887 to 1889, which involved both major communities of the island (Greek and Turkish), as well as the peasantry and urban dwellers, which initially gave the impression that this wave of political radicalisation could evolve into a successful pan-Cypriot modernisation project which would restructure Cypriot society. Anagnostopoulou analyses the various factors which impeded this development, stressing the contradictory impact of British colonial rule, which was, on the one hand, based on the principles of secular and representative government and the rights of the majority while, on the other, retaining and instituting communalist divisions inherited from the Ottoman millet system. This differentiated colonial modernity undermined the traditional cross-millet forms of solidarity and conditioned the terms of the struggle between the progressive 'pro-bourgeois' and conservative political factions within both major communities of the island. Thus, as far as the Greek Cypriot community is concerned, the mass mobilisations of the 1887–1889 period constituted a stillborn attempt in forging a bourgeois hegemony over the peasantry; increasingly, the latter soon returned to the influence of the conservative group and the archbishop, whose authority was eventually reinforced in the new system.

The adaptability of the Cypriot Church hierarchy to the new rules of the power game set by the British is one of the most remarkable features of the modern political history of Cyprus. **Michalis Michael** analyses the Archiepiscopal Question, a conflict which divided and mobilised Greek Cypriots on a massive scale throughout the first decade of the twentieth century and was of pivotal significance for the formation of the religious makeup of Greek Cypriot politics.

Michael examines in detail the ideological and geopolitical orientations and the social and geographic dividing lines of the rival camps supporting the two prelate candidates for the Archiepiscopal See of the Church of Cyprus. Moreover, he inquires into the means of the struggle: both prelate candidates unreservedly used – alongside the traditional means of circulars and sermons – all the means of propaganda and agitation characteristic of a modern party-political struggle (mass rallies, open-air speeches, newspaper propaganda, etc). The convergence of factors pertaining to the local (most notably electoral) traditions of the Church of Cyprus and the new secular, communalist political system introduced by the British provides the basis for an understanding of this peculiar inoculation of the transferred political culture into colonised society.

The last, but not least, contribution to the volume, and this section in particular, brings us to an important port-city of the Eastern Mediterranean and explores the history prior to direct colonial intervention, touching on several of the issues raised by other papers in the volume. **Eyüp Özveren** illustrates the historical trajectory of Beirut, a port-city which, in contrast to the fates of Izmir, Thessaloniki and Alexandria, which succumbed to the power of the capital cities of the new national states, emerged itself as a capital city through a very interesting process. This peculiar fortune, which guaranteed also the preservation of Beirut's multiconfessional character, can be attributed to the politics of British and French colonial antagonism in the region. The city's initial rise 'by default' as a major port in the Levant by the mid-nineteenth century, through the combination of the import trade with the export of silk from neighbouring Mount Lebanon, was disrupted and replaced after 1861 by isolation from Lebanon 'by (Ottoman and British) design'. Özveren shows how this isolation and the restructuring of Beirut's economy during the last quarter of the nineteenth century (with the shifting of emphasis to construction, urban infrastructure and food supply) brought to the fore a bourgeois 'Beiruti' identity which crossed communal boundaries. The hegemony of this 'Beiruti' bourgeoisie, which used the 'communities' as its principal instrument, came under significant strain from the emergent labour movement in the first decades of the twentieth century. Faced with this challenge, the Beiruti bourgeoisie tended to stress their 'Ottomanism' and look to the Ottoman state as the 'master' and guarantor of their social position. With the establishment of Franco–Maronite supremacy after the First World War, the multiethnic character of the city was once more reinforced, under a new master this time.

Andreas Lyberatos
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