For Carla

Contents

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank my friend and colleague Dr. Ayhan Aktar, who gave me the idea of writing a book consisting of extended annotated translations of memoirs of late Ottoman individuals in the Arab lands in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. As we were approaching the centenary year of the final Ottoman withdrawal from these lands, it seemed to be an appropriate project. I would also like to thank Dr. Tariq Tell for his tremendously knowledgeable suggestions during our many conversations and for reading and commenting on the Introduction. Sinan Kuneralp was, as always, extremely generous in providing suggestions for source materials and, indeed, the source materials themselves. Dr. Talha Çiçek, whose pioneering work on the governorship of Cemal Pasha in Syria was an essential reference, was also kind enough to read previous versions of my text and make valuable suggestions. My long-suffering friend Dr. Edhem Eldem was also very helpful in responding to my queries about decorations and other matters. My thanks also to Dr. Salim Tamari, whose work on war diaries served in many ways as a template for the present work. Thanks are also due to İclal and Tunca Örses for allowing me to use photographs from their valuable collection. Mr. Ergun Kocabıyık of the Boğaziçi University Press was extremely kind in providing much-needed technical support with some of the visual materials used in the book. My thanks also to Dr. Issam Nassar for kindly sharing the photograph of the surrender of Jerusalem with itemized personae. Thanks are also due to Dr. John Winterburne for allowing me to use some of the photographs from the GARP project. I would also like to thank Dr. Kaukab Chebaro and Samar Mikati Kaissi of the AUB Archives for their kind support during my research. Dr. Cengiz Kırlı and Dr. Nadir Özbek also provided important insights during our numerous conversations. I would also like to thank my copyeditor Louis Parks for his dedication and professionalism. Thanks are also due to the anonymous

reviewers who provided very useful feedback. Above all, I would like to thank my wife and colleague, Dr. Carla Eddé, for her patience and support and for listening to what were no doubt, at times, less than consistent tirades about my work in progress.

Needless to say, all mistakes, overstatements, omissions, and oversights are entirely my own.

Selim Deringil, Ras Beirut, March 15, 2018.

Introduction

Aspects of the Ottoman Twilight

> *In Turkey's collective memory today, the Ottomans lost the First World War; the Turks won it.*
>
> Mustafa Aksakal, "The Ottoman Empire"[1]

Remembering is a very private act. Yet there are certain watersheds in history when private remembrance and collective memory overlap. In my generation everybody remembers exactly where they were and what they were doing when they heard the news of the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. For later generations it will be 9/11. For Eric Hobsbawm, it was when he and his sister were returning home from school in Berlin and they saw newspapers with banner headlines declaring that Adolf Hitler had become the Chancellor of Germany, "I can see it still as in a dream," Hobsbawm said.[2] For most Arabs in the late Ottoman Empire the watershed moment was the hanging of Arab patriots by Cemal Pasha in 1915 and 1916. The collective "shudder that shook the country," as memorably put by George Antonius, was transmitted across generations and has become the definitive moment in Arab-Turkish relations that shaped the collective memory of Arabs who saw the "days of the Turks" as a period of unmitigated catastrophe and destitution.[3] As admirably expressed by Salim Tamari:

---

1 Mustafa Aksakal, "The Ottoman Empire," in *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), vol. 1, 464.

2 Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times*: *A Twentieth-Century Life* (London: Allen and Unwin, 2002), 74.

3 George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the National Arab Movement* (London and New York: Kegan Paul, 2000), 190.

> The Great War brought about a radical break with the Ottoman past in the whole Arab East, not only in the established constitutional regime but also in the system of governance, local administration, and identity politics. In popular memory of peasants and city folk alike, 1915 was the Year of the Locust (*'am al Jarad*). Even four generations later, the locust invasion continues to evoke the combined memory of natural disasters and the manmade devastation of war. These events erased four centuries of rich and complex Ottoman patrimony in which popular narratives of war and nationalist ideology colluded. An anti-Ottoman rewriting of history took place simultaneously, and in the same abrupt manner, both on the Turkish side (in the guise of the modernizing state and making it geographically manageable) and on the Arab side (in the sustained annals of nationalist historiography). The erasure replaced four centuries of relative peace and dynamic activity, the Ottoman era, with what was known in Arabic discourse as "the days of the Turks": four miserable years of tyranny symbolized by the military dictatorship of Ahmad Cemal Pasha in Syria, *seferberlik* (forced conscription and exile), and the collective hanging of Arab patriots in Beirut's Burj Square on August 15, 1916.[4]

The last few years of Ottoman rule in Lebanon and Syria are known as the "eyyam-atrak" the "days of the Turks." This term usually carries dark connotations, being associated with famine, the hanging of the martyrs in Burj Square, and Cemal Pasha's reign of terror. All these events are usually described from the perspective of the local population; as such they have a very important place in the formation of what has come to be recognized as the "collective memory" of a people. Leila Fawaz astutely points out that many Arab autobiographers who mostly wrote for their family circles, nonetheless "refer to shared experiences, myths, and recollections of the past" that were handed down over generations.[5] But how did the "atrak" themselves see their position in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and the Hijaz in the final years of the Great War?

This book will attempt to address this question based on Ottoman memoirs written by eyewitnesses to the last years of Ottoman rule. It aims to be a critical annotated edition of the memoirs contained within

4 Salim Tamari, *The Year of the Locust. A Soldier's Diary and the Erasure of the Ottoman Past* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2011), 5.

5 Leila Fawaz, *The Land of Aching Hearts: The Middle East in the Great War* (Cambridge Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2014), 235.

it, cross-referencing them and putting them in a historical context. The memoirs will be cited *in extenso*, given that the aim is to provide a reference work for readers who do not read Turkish, and given that most of these texts are only available in Turkish.

In all five of the memoirs cited in this work, at the time of writing the authors had shared a similar recent past. In the late 1890s a secret society had formed among young Ottoman officers, doctors, lawyers, and intellectuals whose aim was to bring an end to the despotism of Sultan Abdulhamid II (r. 1876–1909) and restore the constitution of 1878. This secret society would ultimately be named The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and would eventually come to be dubbed the Young Turks.[6] The CUP eventually spread to include a very broad spectrum of the late Ottoman elite and would lead the Revolution of 1908 which restored the constitution. A counter coup in April 1909 led to the deposition of Sultan Abdulhamid. The last free elections of 1912 were followed by a military coup in 1913, after which the empire was effectively ruled by the CUP. The leadership of 1913 would ultimately be winnowed down to the infamous ruling Triumvirate of Enver Pasha, Talat Pasha, and Cemal Pasha. When the clouds of war started to gather in Europe, the leadership of the Young Turks saw the war as an opportunity to recover lost territory and build a strong state. As elegantly put by Mustafa Aksakal: "The new Ottoman leadership of the twentieth century viewed Great Power diplomacy as a fixed game: the Great Powers were the House, and you could not beat it by playing by the rules."[7] Diplomacy had had its day, the only solution was military. After shopping around for allies among the European powers, the Young Turks signed an alliance with Germany on October 29, 1914. The Ottoman Empire entered the war on November 2.

The commonly accepted, official narrative in the early years of the Republic of Turkey was that the Young Turks dragged the Ottoman Empire into the war and thus to its destruction, or that they had been tricked by

6 There is an extensive literature on the Young Turks and the CUP. A few of the better known works are the following: Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics 1908–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902–1908* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Şükrü Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

7 Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914: The Ottoman Empire and the First World War* (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 9. The CUP would also be referred to as the "Ittihadists" (*Ittihatçılar*).

the Germans. A new generation of historians has now completely revised this position. Notably, Mustafa Aksakal and others have shown that the Ottoman Empire's entry into the war was the result of a conscious decision which was backed by almost all of the Ottoman elite rather than a small coterie of Young Turks.[8]

Many people within the Ottoman Empire in the years leading up to the war were obsessed with the loss of the Balkan Provinces (Rumeli) and the belief that they were besieged by enemies. The Balkan Wars (1911–1913) were a particularly traumatic memory as many of the Young Turk cadres were from the Balkans. They particularly resented the fact that the European powers were not at all concerned over the aggression meted out by the Balkan states toward Muslim populations. This feeling hovers like a shadow in all the memoirs cited in this book. Hüseyin Kazım, whom we will meet below, was one of the core group that founded the CUP. In a small pamphlet written in 1914 he condemned the Albanians for being responsible for the "Balkan Alliance" (Balkan İttifakı).[9] Falih Rıfkı was a fiery young writer for the official CUP newspaper *Tanin*. Rıfkı would bemoan the loss of Rumeli, which he felt was the true home of the Turks, and lament over his belief that they would always be strangers in the Arab lands: "The air of Lebanon is a hundred times more foreign for us than the air of Dobruca." Münevver Ayaşlı, who was from Salonica, would grieve over the loss of her beloved home town. Naci Kıcıman would agonize over the "Anatolian lads" who were being sacrificed to defend the Arabian desert.

The official publication of the Turkish General Staff castigated the Arabs as cowardly and disloyal. All of our authors were writing and publishing in the intellectual *milieu* of the Kemalist republic, whose attitude to the loss of the Arab lands I will define below as the "good riddance syndrome."

The most important central actor in the creation of this negative image of the "atrak" was undoubtedly Cemal Pasha. One of the Young Turk triumvirate, together with Enver and Talat, Cemal Pasha had been appointed the Commander of the Fourth Army District (essentially Syria, Palestine and Lebanon) where he enjoyed almost dictatorial powers.[10] One of his

8 Ibid., 57–92.

9 Ebru Boyar, *Ottomans, Turks and the Balkans. Empire Lost, Relations Altered* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), 40, 91.

10 The exact date of his appointment is unclear. On November 18, 1914 he sent Enver a telegram where he signs himself as "Commander of the Fourth Army." On December 13, 1917 he left Damascus for good. My thanks to Talha Çiçek for this information.

close aids would ironically refer to him as "Viceroy of Syria" although the Ottoman high command had no such official rank.[11] During the three years (1914–1917) in which he ruled Syria with an iron fist, Cemal set up a reign of terror and became infamous for the trial and execution of some forty Arab nationalists whom he accused of sedition. Recent scholarship has somewhat revised this negative image of Cemal but the image of the "iron fist" and the "reign of terror" still prevails. Thus Cemal Pasha came to symbolize much more than the executioner of the Arab patriots, he became a figure symbolizing the "four hundred years of decadence" of Turkish rule, "which was judged before the tribunal of nascent Arab nationalism."[12]

Although there is a renewed interest in the Ottoman history of the Great War and much of the new historiography uses memoirs, there is hardly any writing on the memoir literature that can be called content analysis.[13] On the Turkish side, until recently the prevalent discourse has been what I will refer to as the "stab in the back syndrome" whereby the Arabs are seen as seditious traitors who collaborated with the enemy to bring down the Empire. This resulted in an entire generation of political actors in the young Turkish Republic whose attitude to the loss of the Arab provinces can be summed up as "good riddance." Particularly in the years after the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 the theme of "Arab treason" became the dominant narrative and was featured as such in school textbooks:

> . . . The descendant of the Prophet Sharif Husain . . . chose to accept the gold of the enemy. . . . and exchanged the honor of Islam for a Kingdom under the protection of the English. He actually entered into competition with the

11 Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Zeytindağı* (Istanbul: Pozitif Press, 1932), 91–92. The word he uses is "Visrua" which is actually not a Turkish word. A German officer was to refer to him as "Vizekönig," see Talha Çiçek, *War and State Formation in Syria: Cemal Pasha's Governorate During World War I 1914–1917* (London: Routledge, 2014), 3. This an excellent book that combines European and Ottoman sources and should be considered the most current work on this topic. As such it has been used extensively in this study. See also Ali Fuad Erden, *Birinci Dünya Savaşında Suriye Hatıraları* [Syrian Memoirs during the First World War] (Istanbul: Iş Bankası, 2003), 95: "Everyone feared Cemal Pasha. . . ."

12 Youssef Mouwad, "Jamal Pacha, en Une Version Libanaise: l'Usage Positif d'une Legende Noire." In *The First World War as Remembered in the Countries of the Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Olaf Farschid, Manfed Kropp, Stephan Dahne (Beirut: Orient Institut, 2006), 425–446.

13 For a recent useful overview of the historiography see, Ömer Turan, "Turkish Historiography of the First World War," *Middle East Critique* 23, no. 2 (2014): 241–257.

> enemies of Islam for the shedding of the pure Turkish blood, with the desert and town Arabs in his train. . . .[14]

The early republican press frequently referred to Islam as "an Arab religion." Mustafa Kemal endorsed the publication of a treatise entitled, *There is no Religion, Just Nationality: My Turkishness is my Religion*.[15] Thus Arabs became in a very real sense the "essential other" for the nascent Turkish Republic:

> In order to fortify Turkishness as the basic historical consciousness of the new citizen, the "traitorous Arabs" who had "stabbed the Turks in the back" became the ideological cement for the new radical westernizing ideology.[16]

This mindset is reflected in four of the five memoirs used in this volume. Falih Rıfkı with his scathing irony about how "foreign" the Arab lands were for Turks, Ali Fuad with his firm conviction that the "Arab officers were planning to poison the Turks in their sleep," Naci Kıcıman with his frequent references to "barelegged Arabs who were spilling the blood of Anatolian lads," and finally Münevver Ayaşlı, who treats the population of Beirut very like a British *memsahib* would have treated Indian subjects of the British *raj*, are all imbued with some aspect or other of the mentality described above. The one exception is Hüseyin Kazım, who places the blame for the loss of Arab lands squarely on the shoulders of corrupt and incompetent Ottoman officials.

The five memoirs used in this book were each chosen for a specific purpose. Falih Rıfkı was Cemal Pasha's close aid and an eyewitness to his policies in the region. Moreover, he also represents a typical example of the post-imperial Turkish mindset regarding the Ottoman past. From his texts, I chose *Zeytindağı* in particular because it is beautifully written, and is therefore a pleasure to translate.

Ali Fuad was Cemal's "nuts and bolts man" who actually administered the Fourth Army zone. His memoir was chosen because Ali Fuad was an

14 Talha Çiçek, "Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Ders Kitapları Çerçevesinde Türk Ulus Kimliği Inşası ve 'Arap Ihaneti'" [The Construction of Turkish National Identity in the Light of Early Republican School Textbooks and "Arab treason"], *Divan* 17 (2012): 169–188. Çiçek is quoting a school history textbook from 1931.

15 Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Ataturk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 63. The work in question is Ruşeni Barkın, *Din Yok Milliyet Var: Benim Dinim, Benim Türklüğümdür.*

16 Çiçek, "Erken Cumhuriyet," 181

atypical example of a Turkish officer of the time: he was a hard-headed realist and a dreamer who likened himself to the legendary figure of the French Revolution, Saint-Just.

Hüseyin Kazım appears in these pages because he was an exceptional character. A member of the Ottoman elite, the son of a legendary long-term governor of Trabzon, and a founder member of the CUP who fell out with his erstwhile comrades. He was also exceptional in that he was the only one of the five who abstained from taking an active part in the politics of the republican era.

Naci Kıcıman's memoir was chosen because it is both a memoir and a biography. The memoir is as much about Naci Kıcıman himself as it is about his legendary commander, Fahreddin Pasha, the defender of Medina. It is also a typical example of the "stab in the back syndrome," which will be explained below.

I chose Münevver Ayaşlı because of the fact that her memoir is one of the very few eyewitness accounts of the last days of the Turks in Syria written by a woman. Furthermore, her memoirs were written decades after the events and yet represent a remarkable feat of memory judging by their impressive accuracy.

The memoirs that I have used fall into the category of what Philipp Wirtz refers to in his insightful book as "post-Ottoman memoirs," given the fact that they were all written and published in the context of Kemalist Turkey. As he points out, memoir writers often wrote as a result of the urge to "bear witness," or "to set the record straight."[17]

Some comments on the use of memoirs and the concept of "collective memory"

There is an extensive literature on autobiography, describing its impact on the structure of collective memory and its contribution to the formation of collective identity.[18] It would be beyond the scope of this study to attempt

17 Philipp Wirtz, *Depicting the Ottoman Empire in Turkish Autobiographies. Images of Past World* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 23, 33.

18 David Middleton and Derek Edwards, eds., *Collective Remembering: Inquiries in Social Construction* (London: Sage Publications, 1990); Dorthe Bernsten and David C. Rubin, eds., *Understanding Autobiographical Memory. Theories and Approaches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); James W. Pennebaker, Dario Paez, Bernard Rime, eds., *Collective Memory of Political Events* (New Jersey: Mahwah, 1997); Paul Connerton, "Seven Types of Forgetting," *Memory Studies* 1, no. 1 (2008): 59–71; Robin Ostle,

an exhaustive theoretical treatment of the subject. I will limit myself to a few very brief observations that will have a direct bearing on the memoirs discussed here. In the words of the pioneering *doyen* of collective memory studies Maurice Halbwachs:

> Collective memory differs from history in at least two respects. It is a current of continuous thought whose continuity is not at all artificial for it retains from the past only what still lives or is capable of living in the consciousness of the groups keeping the memory alive. . . . It provides the group a self-portrait that unfolds through time, since it is an image of the past, and allows the group to recognize itself through the total succession of images.[19]

The memoirs studied here are indeed a very good reflection of the "self-portrait" of the late Ottoman personages and their "images of the past."

Memoirs as a historical source for the last years of the "atrak" in the Arab lands are indeed indispensable, with the proviso that they be used without any illusions as to their "objectivity." Memoirs are by their very nature subjective, and demand, in the words of one of major thinkers of the subject, some form of "autobiographical pact" between the author and the reader whereby the reader will be free to "look for differences (errors, deformations etc.)" with the historical record.[20]

Everyone thought they were making history or at the very least providing testimony for future generations. In a recent study on genocide denial in Turkey, Müge Göçek notes: "The main limitation of memoirs as a historical source is that it is hard to move beyond the personal idiosyncrasies of individuals in general and their political orientation in particular."[21] Yet it is precisely those "idiosyncrasies" and "political orientations" that are my concern here.

As Philip Dwyer has pointed out, the actual act of writing down what is remembered can transform what was in fact a subjective impression into a "historical reality." "In this manner, memoirists become mythmakers,

---

Ed de Moor, and Stefan Wild, eds., *Writing the Self: Autobiographical Writing in Modern Arabic Literature* (London: Saqi Books, 1998).

19 Maurice Halbwachs, excerpt from "The Collective Memory," in *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 139–155.

20 Philippe Lejeune, *Le Pacte Autobiographique*, accessed January 12, 2017, www.edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/1896026/mod_resource/content/1/lejeune_pacte autobiographique-pacte_1.pdf.

21 Müge Göçek, *Denial of Violence: Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence Against the Armenians 1789–2009* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 54.

creating records that not only influence the manner in which readers see the past, but also how historians interpret the past." All five of the memoirists in this volume were very self-consciously writing for posterity. All five texts to be cited here were, again to echo Dwyer, "remembered, restructured, and filtered by time." As he points out, what the writers of the memoirs think is worth remembering shapes the "cultural memory" of the future. The writers of the memoirs used in the present volume are very much a product of the "cultural memory" of the Kemalist state.[22]

All five memoirs analyzed in this book have a political agenda. Some memoirs are indeed in self-conscious dialogue with one another. Hüseyin Kazım specifically states that he wrote in order to "expose the lies of Cemal Pasha." It is important to know when the memoirs were written, and the historical context in which they were published. All memoirs also have a projected public, an audience for whom they are intended.

Falih Rıfkı's *Zeytindağı* was first published in 1932. Meanwhile, Falih Rıfkı had taken the surname Atay and gone on to write books and articles of a panegyric nature lauding Atatürk as a godlike leader. *Zeytindağı*, therefore, is very much a product of an early republican mindset which saw separation from the Arab lands as a blessing. Falih Rıfkı was very close to the Cemal Pasha and was an eyewitness to some of the period's key events. Yet, Rıfkı is extremely cynical regarding what he calls "Ottoman Imperialism." Rıfkı refers to Enver in extremely negative terms as an "empty head covered in pomaded skin" yet always refers to Cemal with the utmost (if sometimes somewhat grudging) respect, reflecting the various cliques and clientele networks that had evolved around the Enver–Talat–Cemal triumvirate. The Palestine front was the last stand of the Ottomans in the Arab lands. The critical battles waged between the Ottomans and the British in this area were to mark the collective memories of the last generation of Ottomans.

The political climate at the time of the memoirs' publication is also significant. For example, although Falih Rıfkı fitted in fine with the *air de temps* in the heyday or Kemalism, it is no wonder that Hüseyin Kazım's memoirs were published only after his death in 1934, given the unabashed anti-Kemalism of the writer. Hüseyin Kazım is an exceptional figure in many ways. Firstly, unlike almost all the civilian and military officials on the Palestine–Syria front, he did not join the nationalists in Ankara, nor did he go on to hold prominent

22 Philip Dwyer, "Making Sense of the Muddle: War Memoirs and the Culture of Remembering," in *War Stories. The War Memoir in History and Literature*, ed. Philip Dwyer (New York: Bergahn, 2017), 1–27.

positions in the new Turkish state. After returning from Beirut, he became a member of the penultimate Ottoman parliament when he was an MP for the province of Aydın. In 1920, he was elected to the post of Deputy Speaker. In 1921 he was part of the Istanbul government's official delegation in the Bilecik negotiations that attempted to find some middle ground between Istanbul and the nationalists in Ankara. The negotiations failed and the Istanbul delegation was "invited" to come to Ankara. Hüseyin Kazım recounts feeling that he was treated as a hostage. In fact, he was very critical of Mustafa Kemal and the new regime, going so far as to state in his memoirs that Kemal created "a new form of oppression and despotism called the republic."[23] He wrote two versions of his memoirs, one that ends in 1929 and another, ending in 1930. The second text was written specifically to answer accusations against its author. He openly refers to Mustafa Kemal's epic speech, the *Nutuk*, where Kazım was, as he states, falsely accused of being a defender of the sultanate. His self-defense is scathing, going so far as to refer to the iconic text as "a masterpiece of lies and distortion" (şah-eser-i kezb-u tahrif). It is therefore no wonder that his memoirs were only published after his death in 1934.[24]

Ali Fuad [Erden] states in the introduction to his memoirs that he "waited forty years which is two generations" before publishing his writing. He was clearly concerned about protecting the name of Cemal and others who were involved in the last days of Ottoman rule in Syria. He clearly states that "Cemal Pasha was my Commander and will always be my Commander."[25] Münevver Ayaşlı was writing some forty years after

23 Hüseyin Kazım Kadri, *Meşrutiyettden Cumhuriyete Hatıralarım* [My Memoirs from the Constitutional Period to the Republic], ed. Ismail Kara. (Istanbul: Dergah, 2000), 123.

24 Ibid., 190, 223. In 1927, Mustafa Kemal delivered a mammoth five-day parliament speech, the *Nutuk* (October 15–20), which amounted to an apologia of everything dealing with the founding of the republic. In this speech there are three negative references to Hüseyin Kazım. See footnote 35 by the editor, Ismail Kara. For one of the rare critical evaluations of *Nutuk* see Hülya Adak, "National Myths and Self Narrations: Mustafa Kemal's *Nutuk* and Halide Edib's memories and the *Turkish Ordeal*," *South Atlantic Monthly* 102, nos. 2/3 (2003): 509–528.
The memoirs of Kazim Karabekir, one the leading commanders of the Anatolian resistance and an opponent of what he saw as Kemal's dictatorial inclinations, were in large part a rebuttal of the *Nutuk*, to the point where one prominent late-Ottomanist called it the "anti-Nutuk." See Erik Jan Zürcher, "Young Turk Memoirs as a Historical Source: Kazim Karabekir's 'Istiklal Harbimiz,'" *Middle Eastern Studies* 22, no. 4 (1986): 562–570.

25 Philipp Wirtz, *Depicting the Late Ottoman Empire in Turkish Autobiographies*, 22–34. Wirtz rightly points out the importance of "forewords" or "introductions" as key to understanding the context of a late Ottoman memoirs.

the events she described and thus her text is very much imbued with the conservative world view of a first-generation republican woman. Her somewhat facile snobbery is interesting as she makes her judgments less along ethnic lines but focuses more on class. Thus, the Lebanese merchants are "unctuous and toadying" while the Sursocks are very "convenable" (*kibar*) and it is a sign of her family's social standing that Linda Sursock "would come for coffee" at Ayaşlı's home.

I have used the memoirs as sources for a study of intellectual, not military, history. In this regard (particularly in relation to the memoirs of Kıcıman and Erden), I have not translated large tracts of detailed military operations. I am more interested in passages that illustrate the mindset of the actors involved. Also, there is much repetition which I have chosen to omit.

Another point that needs clarification is the manner in which I have handled the actual process of translation itself. Jay Winter refers to the ways in which Henri Barbusse's novel *Le Feu* (1916) was "sanitized" in its English translation in 1917, where references to soldiers as "victims and executioners" was softened because "language codes precluded direct translation and silenced the difficult moral judgement. . . ."[26] I have tried to avoid euphemistic censorship and sensationalism while striving to give the actual "flavor" of the Turkish original.

Turks and Arabs: an uncomfortable symbiosis

In the memoirs covered for this book, I came across a contradictory worldview regarding the Arabs and Arab lands in the memoirs of Ottoman individuals who were in the Arab region during the last years of the Empire. The contradiction lies in the constant reference to the "loss" of the Arab lands, yet they all express a deep sense of alienation and an ever present feeling of "them" and "us." Yet the "us," although essentially meaning Turks, remains ambivalent, sometimes including the Muslim Arabs and even the Christians.

Halil Halid Bey was one of the staunchest defenders of Turkish-Arab brotherhood, waxing lyrical about the special relationship between the two races and declaring that

26 Jay Winter, "War Memoirs, Witnessing and Silence," in Dwyer, *War Stories*, 27–47.

> . . . the Arab and the Turk cannot live without each other. . . . The Arab race was a like a diamond that had been broken and scattered into a thousand pieces. It was the Turks who first realized how valuable they would be if united. After they became united as brothers in religion they came to the Arab lands and helped unite all the pieces. Verily, the crown of the Turkish sultanate was emblazoned and glowed with the brilliance of all these pieces of the diamond that was united.[27]

There is a very clear idea of the "otherness" of the Arabs, which is sometimes expressed in downright racist stereotyping. For example, Falih Rıfkı uses the phrase "hair of the Arab" (*Arap saçı*) meaning "to make something tangled and confused."[28] Rıfkı's disparaging references to the Arabs of Medina who had made a vocation out of exploiting pilgrims, and his conviction that Istanbul was the true Muslim city that had made worship into an art form, are very similar to the language one hears today from Turkish *hajis* returning from pilgrimage. When *Zeytindağı* was written, Turkey was firmly looking west and the "Orient" was a thing of the past. In subsequent editions of *Zeytindağı*, Rıfkı's attitude would become even more severe: "Ottoman history has been a world of lies. Lying is not shameful in the Orient."[29] Evidently, by the time he wrote and published *Zeytindağı*, Falih Rıfkı had moved much closer to the official line of Turkish Kemalist nationalism.

Yet, some Ottoman officials had a very self-critical view of the Turkish presence in Arab lands. Hüseyin Kazım was a very distinguished example. While he served as the Vali (Governor) of Aleppo, Kazım observed that the Ottoman officials collaborated with the local notables to create an alliance of "mutual interest" in order to exploit the local population. In Aleppo Kazım became something of a local celebrity. Appointed as Vali in 1910, he became the nexus of what can be called the "Hüseyin Kazım Affair." Seen by the emerging liberal middle class of Aleppo as the new reformist Vali

27 Çerkesşeyhi Zade Halil Halid, *Türk ve Arap* [The Turk and the Arab] (Cairo: n.p., 1912, reprinted edition, Istanbul: Melissa Press, 2016), 61–62. Halil Halid was an interesting figure. After teaching Turkish to British diplomats at Cambridge for over ten years, he became a devoted propagandist for the Young Turk regime. He later served as the Ottoman Consul in Bombay.

28 See below, p. 12.

29 Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Zeytindağı*, online edition, accessed March 11, 2017, www.kitapsevenler.com, 7–8.

replacing Fahreddin Pasha, an Ottoman military man of the old school, Kazım came to be known as "our Vali / *Walina*."

Unusually for an Ottoman official, he spoke fluent Arabic. On the occasion of his triumphant return from Istanbul, where he had gone to defend his reformist policies,

> A large crowd greeted him at the train station. Troops in formation and a band made up of the students from the College de La Terre Sainte serenaded his arrival. Refusing to board a carriage, Hüseyin Kazım walked to the governorate building with the procession stopping to deliver two speeches on the way.[30]

There followed a flurry of telegrams to and fro between Aleppo and Istanbul, with which the traditional notables of the city did their best to assure his downfall. They ultimately succeeded and he has recalled in 1911. In a letter to a friend shortly before his recall Kazım stated the following:

> . . . As far as I can see the government made two big mistakes here. Firstly it did nothing to confirm its existence, and secondly it did not even think about pleasing the people. . . . Since I have been here I have tried to win over the people. . . . I think that to a certain extent I have succeeded in making them more hopeful towards the state. Now everyone has understood that there is a government that defends the weak, is in favor of justice, and is trying to heal old wounds.[31]

Yet, even with Hüseyin Kazım there is an undertone of a belief in his entitlement to rule. With reference to Cemal Pasha's oppressive rule in Syria, Kazım states on at least two occasions in his memoirs that it was because of Cemal Pasha's cruelty that Syria was "lost."[32]

It is difficult to know what to make of the episode in his memoirs where he recounts how he was approached by some Beirutis who declared that they were prepared to go to Jerusalem to tell General Allenby that "they wanted to remain under Ottoman rule." There is no mention in any literary source

30 Keith David Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 110. We will meet Fahreddin Pasha below in the section on the siege of Medina.

31 Ismail Kara, "Halep'den Mektup Var" [There is a letter from Aleppo], *Derin Tarih* (January 2017): 3–6.

32 Hüseyin Kazım Kadri, *Meşrutiyettden Cumhuriyete Hatıralarım*, 139, 143.