

Sparks of Happenstance: Photographs, public celebrations, and the Ottoman military band of Jerusalem*

Abstract: This paper explores the depiction of public celebration in the late Hamidian period in Ottoman Jerusalem through the relationship between textual and photographic sources, and between state performers and the viewing public. The joy of public celebrations on the sultan's birthday and accession day conveyed in the Ottoman Turkish and Hebrew press was at odds with formal, flat photographs of the occasion, but in fact shared that aesthetic through its formulaic tropes and language. A key part of the narratives of these occasions in Jerusalem was the performance of music by the military band of the garrison. Through a close reading of these and other images, the uniform images and narratives of these public events of the state can be penetrated, and snapshots of discord, emotion, and reaction emerge that show performances to be perhaps cacophonous affairs, and the attending crowds a part of the scenery rather than active participants. As such, this paper will consider the role of these photographs in reconstructing both the experiential and political atmospheres of these formal state occasions. In particular, a stereographic image of a concert of the Jerusalem band in 1903 permits an alternative reading of these occasions. Using the chance details captured in the shot, the value of close readings of photographs as microhistories can be found in exposing narratives beyond those peddled by the state, and the flaws and tensions of the relationship between ruler and ruled thus becomes more readily apparent.

* I am grateful to Lauren Banko, Zeinab Azarbadegan, Victoria Carolan, and Hifzah Tariq for their critical read-throughs of earlier drafts of this paper, and would like to thank the organizers of the 'Visual Sources for Ottoman History' workshop for their generous support and encouragement that enabled this research to go forward, and the participants at that workshop for providing such an exciting exchange of ideas. I would also like to express my gratitude to the anonymous reviewers for their extremely helpful comments, critiques, and recommendations. Finally, hat tip to Dikla Braier for spending so many hours sitting and staring at these photographs with me.

Introduction

Photography opens up [...] the physiognomic aspects of image-worlds that dwell in the smallest spaces, and are sufficiently hidden that they find refuge in daydreams.

Walter Benjamin, 'Short History of Photography', 1931¹

The aim of this paper is to open up several photographs of the Ottoman past to for a deep and critical reading that will demonstrate the value of these images in exploring Ottoman history away from the narratives of the state. I will examine some of the tropes in photography, poetry, and newspaper reporting surrounding displays of loyalty on celebrations of the birthday and accession day of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r.1876-1909) in Jerusalem, a key part of which was the performance of music. A more 'physiognomic' analysis of these images reveals clear dissonances, both in terms of sound and tensions between the narratives of written and visual sources. Considering the case of the band of the military garrison of Jerusalem, this paper will analyze their role in public ceremonial through readings of both written and visual sources, focusing particularly on the nature and perhaps quality of the band's performances; whereas the written sources proclaimed the band's music as joyful, the visual record perhaps attests to the contrary. Finally, and linked to this last point, it will provide a close reading of a stereograph image of a crowd watching the Jerusalem military band performing in 1903, paying close attention to visual details that might say something about the relationship of the musicians to the crowd gathered to hear them perform.

One of the thing that draws me to photographs as historical sources is what Walter Benjamin described as the irresistible temptation to seek out "the tiny spark of happenstance [*das winzige*

¹ Walter Benjamin, 'Kleine Geschichte der Photographie' in *Walter Benjamin Gesammelte Schriften*, eds. Rolf Tiedemann & Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), 2:1, 368-385 at 371.

Fünkchen Zufall]", something in the moment of the capture of the image that tells us something interesting, subversive, or profound.² Yet those insights within a photograph can be easily missed if the purpose of that image is merely illustrative, simple ornamentation to a more (supposedly) complex and analytical text. The photograph as a historical source is so much more than that. The Ottoman writer Ahmed Resim, who was a major contributor to the cultural and literary journal *Servet-i Fünun* (Treasure of Knowledge), wrote a reflection on photography in that journal in a piece called 'Fotoğrafım' (My Photograph), published in 1891. His reflection on the experience of being photographed is fascinating: "My physical being, in a split-second, left a thick shadow on the negative plate. Fifteen days later, there was a visible image of a complete likeness of my facial form."³ The phantasmagoric effect of the photographic process saw his physical form (*hayat-ı suveriyye*) become a shadow (*saye*), which in turn transformed into a likeness (*müşabih*). That one instant in time had been captured, solidified, reified; it became, in a sense, a fossilized moment.⁴ But, of course, fossils are not just the physical impressions of a long dead plant or creature. Yes, on one level, each is an example of a particular species. Yet beyond that, fossils come with their own ecological and geological contexts, exposures to the weathering of the elements, and, crucially, have at some point been spotted, selected, and removed. Each fossil has deeper levels of meaning beyond its physical appearance.

² Ibid.

³ Cited in Ahmet Ersoy, 'Camdaki hafıza: Ahmed Rasim, fotoğraf ve zaman', *E-Skop: Sanat Tarihi Eleştiri* (2015), <http://www.e-skop.com/skopbulten/camdaki-hafiza-ahmed-rasim-fotograf-ve-zaman/2457>, accessed 30 May 2018. See also: Ahmet Ersoy, 'Ottomans and the Kodak galaxy: Archiving everyday life and historical space in Ottoman illustrated journals', *History of Photography* 40:3 (2016), 330-357 at 346.

⁴ Elizabeth Edwards, 'Photography and the material performance of the past', *History and Theory* 48 (2009), 130-150 at 137-139; Jennifer Green-Lewis, *Victorian Photography, Literature and the Invention of Modern Memory: Already the Past* (London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 81.



Image 1: 'The Sailor Bugler Sergeant / A Naval Bulgar', photographic print, albumen, by Abdullah Frères, Constantinople, between 1880 and 1893. Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Abdülhamid II Photograph Collection, reproduction no. LC-USZ62-81821

This divide in perspective has been explored in a wonderful paper by Julia Adeney Thomas, who defines the two positions as one of 'recognition' and the other of 'excavation'.⁵ As this paper will investigate photographs of musicians, the best way to develop this point is with a photograph of one, specifically a bugler from the Ottoman navy (image 1). Looking at this photograph we can immediately identify this young man as a musician, and perhaps discern from his clothes that he is employed in the military. We might

compare his uniform, his instrument, with other photographs of military buglers. He is an example of a particular kind of person. This method is often how historians have employed photographs. If I were writing an article about the Ottoman navy or Ottoman military music in the late 19th century, this bugler would serve as a nice illustration of the subject material to help the reader to give some flesh to the bones of their imagination – here, look, this is what an Ottoman military musician *really* looked like. That is the 'recognition' of the photograph, thinking about the likeness (or unlikeness) of the image.

⁵ Julia Adeney Thomas, 'The evidence of sight', *History and Theory* 48 (2009), 151-168 at 152-155.

‘Excavation’, however, seeks to examine the image as part of a wider context. This is not just some random photograph of a navy bugler, but part of the Abdülhamid II photograph collection, designed to showcase the might and modernity of the Sublime State, with albums depicting new military and civil facilities, soldiers, sailors, and schoolchildren, palaces, and significant historic buildings and monuments presented to the Library of the British Museum in London and the Library of Congress in Washington D.C.⁶ His likeness, therefore, is part of a wider statement about imperial power. More specifically, he is featured in an album of forty-five images focusing on the Ottoman navy, with photographs of ironclad ships sitting alongside scenes of sailors engaged in different drills, group pictures of naval forces, and interior shots of rooms on board various vessels. He is also one of a number of buglers within the wider collection of 51 albums. A search within the Library of Congress catalog with the tag ‘Bugles--Turkey--Istanbul--1880-1900’ brings up seventeen other buglers from Abdülhamid II’s albums, although there are buglers in other group portraits of military bands and regiments; not all are tagged with that subject descriptor, immediately showing one of the issues with such searchable online depositories.⁷ Although some feature buglers at the front of large regiments, or as portraits stood to attention with their bugles by their sides, the majority show buglers posed with their instruments held to their lips, some of them with cheeks puffed with air simulating the act of playing, others staring straight ahead with no pretense of making a sound.

⁶ Muhammad Isa Waley, ‘Images of the Ottoman Empire: The photograph albums presented by Sultan Abdülhamid II’, *The British Library Journal* 17:2 (1991), 111-127; William Allen, ‘The Abdul Hamid II Collection’, *History of Photography* 8:2 (1984), 119-145; Carney E.S. Gavin & The Harvard Semitic Museum (eds.), ‘Imperial self-portrait: The Ottoman Empire as revealed in the Sultan Abdul Hamid II’s photographic albums’, = *Journal of Turkish Studies / Türklük Bilgisi Araştırmaları* 12 (1988).

⁷ For an interesting discussion on labels, labelling, and archives, see: Edwards, ‘Photography’, 141-149.

Zooming in on these images, studying the facial expressions of each individual, separately and as a group, begins to reveal new potential areas of enquiry, thinking about the photographs as more than likenesses of historical individuals. Looking at a close up of the bugler's face, we can begin to sense the power relations at the heart of these and so many other photographs.⁸ His furrowed brow, intense stare, air-filled cheeks, tell quite a different story. How long has he been posing for this photograph?



Image 2: Detail from “The Sailor Bugler Sergeant / A Naval Bulgar” (image 1)

Was he moved about to try different settings and scenes? Did they try him with his instrument at his side, and then decide to get him to pretend to play? Is the photographer, or his commander, barking instructions at him to ensure they get the perfect shot of a heroic Ottoman sailor? There is something in looking at his face that changes the way we read this photograph. If, on a first,

distant viewing, the tootle of the bugle might make its way into our head, our attention drawn to his uniform and military bearing, then this closer micro reading begins to show the small hints of that singular captured moment that allow us to scratch away the surface likeness to reveal and imagine deeper meanings and processes, to understand the experiences embedded in this photograph.

This is one of the exciting things about photographs as sources for historical research, taking them from being mere illustrations of a fixed and uncritical historical ‘reality’ to a deep, critical reading that raise new historical and historiographical perspectives.⁹ So much of history, of historical

⁸ John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minneapolis Press, 1993), 3-4.

⁹ Roland Barthes, ‘Rhétorique de l’image’, *Communications* 4:1 (1964), 40-51 at 46-47; Nancy Micklewright, ‘Personal, public, and political (re)constructions: Photographs and consumption’ in *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922: An Introduction*, ed. Donald Quataert (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), 261-288 at 263; Jennifer Tucker & Tina Campt, ‘Entwined practices: Engagements with photography in historical enquiry’, *History and Theory* 48 (2008), 1-8 at 4-5.

experience, is fleeting and perishable. The almost arbitrary nature of the moment captured by any given photograph means that even seemingly obvious, transparent images can contain complexities that completely change their meaning and significance, and which reveal the tensions and processes that created them.¹⁰ Taking the idea of excavation to ask questions of a series of photographic sources, I hope to show the value of a microhistorical approach to exploring photographs of the Ottoman past. Giovanni Levi positioned microhistories as a counterbalance to narratives of social coherency by exposing their fragmentary, contradictory, and permeable nature.¹¹ This reverses our perspective, and takes the focus away from official narratives towards different questions about agency, emotion, and experience. So many photographs from the late Ottoman period participate, in one way or another, in the storytelling of the state, but close and microhistorical readings of these images allow us to develop alternative understandings.¹² Here, I will focus on events whose official narratives, written and visual, were often so formal and formulaic, such blatant and transparent in their celebration of the regime that, like photograph of the bugler, it almost seems too obvious to even bother stating. But shifting our view to the eye-level of the photographed, rather than always looking from the perspective of the photographer or their patrons, allows those little sparks of happenstance at the micro, physiognomic level to reveal the inconsistencies within those official narratives and structures and to understand the experience of *being* part of those systems.¹³ The photographic record related to the band of the Ottoman military garrison of Jerusalem at the turn of the 20th century provides a case-study for these kinds of readings, showing what visual sources can add to our understandings of the performance and experience of being Ottoman at the end of empire.

¹⁰ Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 85.

¹¹ Giovanni Levi, 'On microhistory' in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke (Cambridge; Polity Press, 1991), 97-120 at 106-107.

¹² Nancy Micklewright, 'Alternative histories of photography in the Ottoman Middle East' in *Photography's Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation*, eds. Ali Behdad & Luke Gartlan (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013), 75-92 at 88-89.

¹³ Thomas, 'Evidence of sight', 160, 165, 167.

Celebrating the sultan

The public celebrations of loyalty towards Abdülhamid II on two events, his accession day and his birthday, were key elements of performative Ottomanism through displays of devotion to the monarch. As such, they made prominent appearances in certain areas of the Ottoman press. When the sultan celebrated his Silver Jubilee in 1900, clock towers were erected and grand ceremonies held in his honor throughout the Sublime State. In that landmark year, the Ottoman Turkish newspaper *İkdam* (Effort) published a “Grateful Editorial” (*fikra-yı şükraniye*), accompanied by a sixty-nine-verse poem entitled “Congratulatory Panegyric” (*kaside-i tebrikiye*), a standard method of marking both the sultan’s birthday and accession day in the Ottoman Turkish press.¹⁴ Ordinarily the poetry would be briefer, but always with the same ideas expressed, as in the “*makale-i tebrikiye*” (congratulatory article) on the accession day in 1902, which featured a twenty-line poem published on the front-page, beginning with the verse “O blessed is he who is a light upon all places”.¹⁵ Such poetry can be found in other publications, notably *Servet-i Fünun*. In 1903, it dedicated its front page to celebrating the sultan’s birthday, with two declarations of “*padişahım çok yaşa*”, “long live my sultan”, flanking the headline, “The accession day of the esteemed praiseworthy majesty of the Caliph and the auspicious, joyful holiday of the most distinguished of the Ottomans.”¹⁶ This flowery title, which has a rhyming pattern in Ottoman Turkish, heralds a short poem in praise of the day:

My sultan: to the world, the joyful day of your succession

Is a sacred celebration; the four corners are all joyous this day.

Your grace is boundless, you are a gift of God to us;

¹⁴ *İkdam*, 19 Ağustos 1316 (1 September 1900).

¹⁵ *İkdam*, 19 Ağustos 1318 (1 September 1902).

¹⁶ *Servet-i Fünun*, 19 Ağustos 1319 (1 September 1903). “*Ruz-u cülus-u mahasin-i me’nus-u hazret-i hilafetpenahi ve id-i sa’id-i mesadet-i bedid-i Osmani.*”

Every inch of your kingdom is filled with enthusiasm and rejoicing this day.

The distinguished works of your pure personage are for religion and the sultanate;

Everywhere is bathed in the lights of your works this day.

The object of your lofty renown will not be fettered;

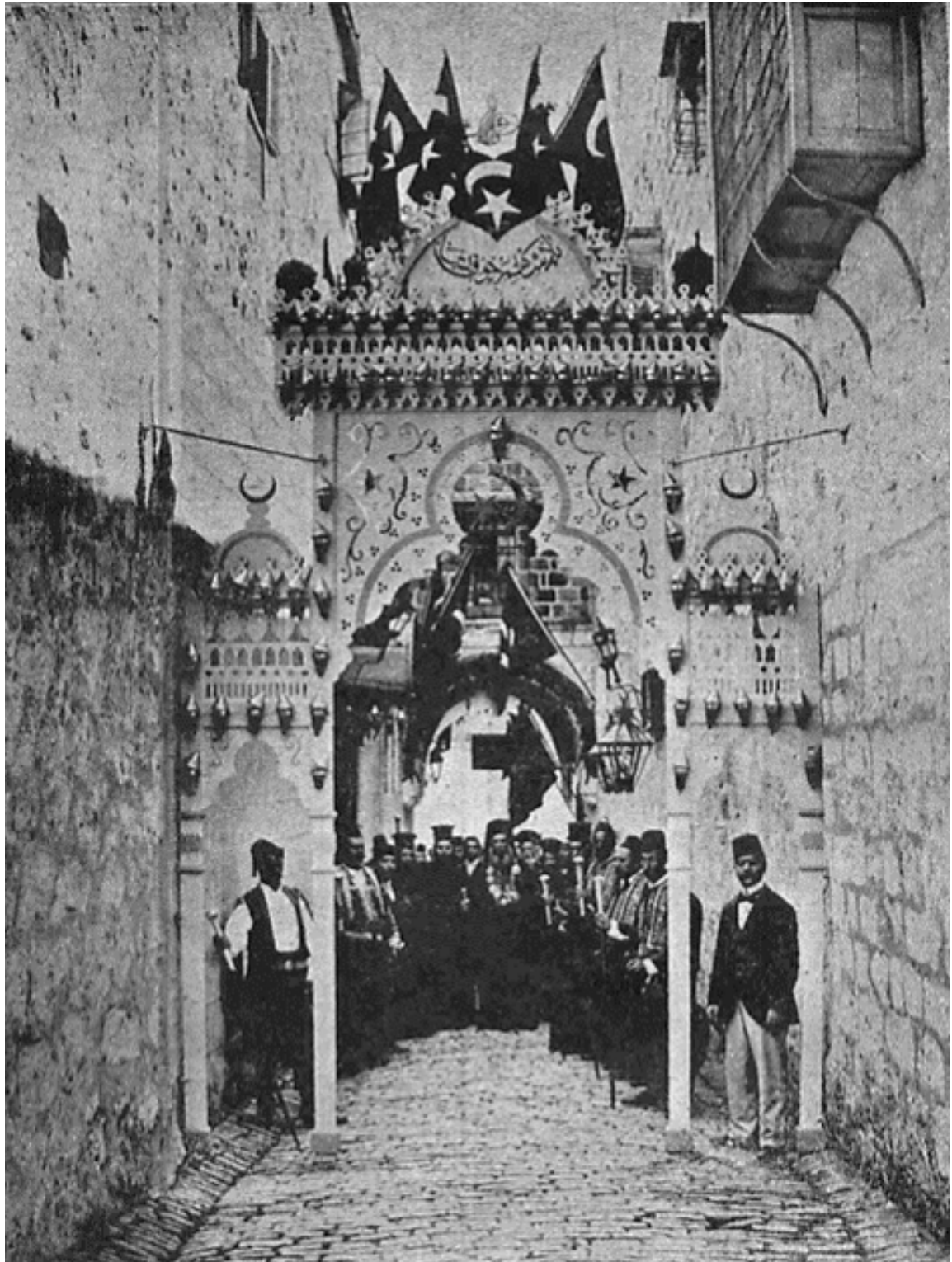
It is the shining light of the Islamic and Ottoman world this day.

May the Lord our Helper strengthen your greatness and might;

This is the enthusiastic and laudatory prayer of all this day.

The use of the familiar second person (*sen* rather than the formal *siz*) emphasizes the personal relationship between the sultan and his gushing subjects, and the joyful piece includes standard praises of his shining light, his public works, and his role as caliph. One could compile an entire anthology of praise poetry to Abdülhamid II in the Ottoman press on these central days in the civic calendar. Joy and happiness is present throughout this corpus; something, as I shall examine in this article, not necessarily borne out in the visual records of these occasions.

The sultan's birthday and accession day were also marked by numerous public celebrations held throughout the Sublime State. As an illustrated publication, *Servet-i Fünun* includes numerous visual records of these demonstrations of loyalty from across the empire, with seemingly endless images showing posed groups of notables and ordinary subjects, either in front of public buildings built under the sultan's modernization program, or under temporary celebratory arches decorated with flags, fronds, the *tuğra*, the Ottoman coat-of-arms, and placards declaring "long live my sultan". These form a standard trope in official photography, and some fine examples can be found in *Servet-i Fünun*'s coverage of the Silver Jubilee. The edition of 27 September 1900 presented three scenes from the public celebrations in Jerusalem: first, the inauguration of a grand new *sebil* (a public water fountain), just outside the Jaffa Gate (later demolished by the British in the early years of their Mandate); second, the opening of a *şadırvan* (a public fountain often associated with ablutions) near to the Mosque of 'Umar;



and third, a ceremonial arch erected near to the Greek Orthodox patriarchate. The crowds at the dedications of the *sebil* and the *şadırvan* (image 4) were mainly composed of military, civil, and

religious dignitaries, and are almost entirely comprised of men of various ages. The last of these (image 3) is in the typical formal style of a group portrait posed alongside the symbols of the sultan, with Ottoman flags adorning the temporary arch that bears the inscription “long live my sultan”, and a number of lanterns set up for night-time illuminations. Whilst *Servet-i Fünun* provides us with a photo-essay on this occasion, for a written account we must turn to the Hebrew-language press in Palestine. One of the most prominent of these publications, *Havatzelet* (Lily), provided the following narrative:

The esteemed governor and all the great government officials and the representatives of the various religions came in the morning to the new and wonderful *sebil* that was built at the expense of the city at the entrance of the Jaffa Gate in commemoration of the festival of the half jubilee, and it was dedicated. Pleasant words were said at that time in that place through various speeches given in honor of the day, and the religious officials prayed for the health of His Majesty our Lord. After this, the wonderful *sebil* that had been built in honor of the day by a committee of the Greeks of our city was dedicated with glory and splendor and in the presence of great crowds, in the new street that will be opened in the center of the city as a memorial to the festival of the half jubilee. The craftsmanship of this *sebil* and everything around it was beautifully done, made by the hands of the builders of our city and its environs, and the street spoke entirely of glory and respect [...] At noon, the cannons at the fortress of our city saluted, each one sounding in honor of the day. At the end of the day, great feasts were prepared for the poor by the sons of the different communities at the house of the governor, in the courtyard of the government palace, and in various other places. That night, the night of the holy Sabbath, further activities took place to honor the day, with thousands of lights gleaming and glowing in its honor, united with the many individuals and groups who came to display their affection for His Majesty, and they rejoiced in his joy, and all the land that has been granted this magnificent holiday, and Jerusalem was filled with radiance, joy, merriment, and respect.¹⁷ The courtyard of the private residence of the esteemed governor of our city, the great lord His Excellency Tevfik Pasha, and the garden in

¹⁷ This is a quotation from the Book of Esther 8:16 – my thanks go to Dikla Braier for spotting this connection.

front of it, was wonderful in their appearance, with flags and decorations, and beautiful and



wonderful lanterns were strung out in a line, spreading their light on the open space of the great royal road in front of it. The army musicians were situated in the park for a great portion of the night, and with their music gladdened the many people who had gathered and assembled at the garden and the courtyard.¹⁸

The narrative from *Havatzelet* makes a clear division between the ceremonial of the daytime dedications, and the evening festivities. As we do not, due to technological limitations of the time, have evening

¹⁸ *Havatzelet*, 13 Elul / 7 September 5660 (1900).

photographs, we can only compare the narrative and images of the daytime events. There is a clear coalescence between the two, with static crowds, mostly of men, watching soldiers, civil, military and religious officials, and city dignitaries performing prayers and giving speeches. A hint at the magnificent illuminations can be gained from the arch of the Greek Patriarchate in image 3, but imaginations must be employed to envisage the sight, described by *Havatzelet* on the accession day in 1903 of “the city and all its suburbs from a distance shining like one giant torch.”¹⁹ If lanterns offered a visual feast, then the music of the army band provided the soundtrack that was recorded in most accounts of these events, described in another major newspaper, *Ha-Shkafah* (The Viewpoint), in 1902: “And how very beautiful it was that night in the city gardens. Men, women, and children of all religions gathered there, and the army musicians played their music into the middle of the night, and many lights illuminated the gardens and the area around the gardens.”²⁰ Very often in these accounts, the band did not simply “play” or “sound” (*hishmi ‘u*) their music, but “gladdened” or “spread joy” (*simhu*) through their playing.

The link between the music of the military band and the expressions of joy and loyalty of the Jerusalemites was therefore a common trope in the reports of the Hebrew press. Yet this is, of course, a sanitized and idealized portrayal of the experience, as rigid and formulaic as the photographs – or indeed the poetry – of *Servet-i Fünun*. Who comprised the crowds who came to listen to the band? How did they listen? What did they hear? And can we ever discern the extent to which the sound of the music inspired patriotism and loyalty, or judge listeners’ reactions to this music? One image, a stereographic photograph taken by the American photographer William Rau taken in 1903, gives us a fascinating glimpse into the performance of this civic Ottoman patriotism, revealing a number of layers of analysis available through visual sources that are otherwise absent in the printed narratives. However, before considering this performance and its crowd, it is important to think about the role of military music in public life in late Ottoman Jerusalem. Just as the panegyrics and laudatory narratives in the Ottoman press and photographs of official events and portraits provided an image of a modern, loyal, unified

¹⁹ *Havatzelet*, 4 September / 12 Elul 5663 (1903).

²⁰ *Ha-Shkafah*, 3 Elul 5662 (5 September 1902).

state and society, the military provided a visual embodiment of those qualities, together with their modern military bands whose marches, dedicated to state and sultan, led the nation on its path of progress. But a close reading of photographs of the Ottoman garrison band in Jerusalem allows us to see through these visual – and auditory – constructions of the state.

Meeting the band

The development of Ottoman military bands in the style of the European armies of the 19th century marked a crucial break with the past. When Mahmud II (r.1808-1839) liquidated the janissary corps in the ‘Auspicious Event’ of 1826, he also disbanded its famous band, the *mehterhane*. It was replaced in 1828 by the *Mızıka-yı Hümayun*, an institution developed in part by the sultan’s musical advisor, the Italian composer Giuseppe Donizetti.²¹ This led to the establishment of similar military bands in the various regiments and provincial garrisons of the expanding and modernizing Ottoman armed forces.²² One would often find these bands parading with their regiment and accompanying formal ceremonies with martial music. A description of such an event was recorded in *Ha-Shkafah* in 1905:

[At the military barracks] one of the Ishmaelite notables said a special prayer for the health of the respected majesty of His Majesty the Sultan, and all the assembled responded ‘Amen’, and the army musicians played their music and the soldiers presented their arms, all crying ‘Amen! Amen!’ After this, all the consuls, heads of the religions, and the scholars and dignitaries of our city came to the *saraya*, and the army musicians played their music and the soldiers presented their arms in honor of the esteemed guests who had come.²³

²¹ For some examples of this new kind of music, see: Emre Aracı, *Osmanlı Sarayı’ndan Avrupa Müziği / European Music at the Ottoman Court* (Kalan Ses Görüntü, 2000).

²² For a general account of this transition, see: Pars Tuğlacı, *Mehterhane’den Bando’ya / Turkish Bands of Past and Present* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1986); Evren Kutlay Baydar, *Osmanlı’nın “Avrupalı” Müzisyenleri* (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2010), especially the introduction.

²³ *Ha-Shkafah*, 25 Tishrei 5666 (24 October 1905).



Image 5: 'Turk [i.e. Turkish] troops & band on parade ground', 5x7 in. photograph by American Colony (Jerusalem) Photo Department, between 1898 and 1917. Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Matson Photograph Collection, reproduction no. LC-DIG-matpc-04782.

One photograph in the Library of Congress collection allows us a view of just such an occasion (image 3). Part of a group of images by the photography department of the American Colony in Jerusalem, it is not clear who the photographer was for this particular photograph. The American Colony produced many photographs, prints, albums, and other visual materials to sell in their shop just next to the Jaffa Gate, and a number of Ottoman subjects, including Palestinians, Lebanese, and immigrant Jews, as well as foreigners, notably the Swede Lewis Larson.²⁴ A unit of Ottoman soldiers can be seen greeting military and civil dignitaries in the *kışla*, the barracks situated near to the Jaffa Gate. Although a crowd is gathered inside the barracks, it is formed exclusively of men, most of whom have their backs to the camera, although there is a small group of women and children watching from the rooftops. As the soldiers present arms in the European manner whilst making their reverences by touching their right

²⁴ Barbara Bair, 'The American Colony Photography Department: Western consumption and "insider" commercial photography', *Jerusalem Quarterly* 44 (2010), 28-38.



Image 6: Detail from 'Turk [i.e. Turkish] troops & band on parade ground' (image 5)

hand to their foreheads in the Ottoman style (quite a feat!), they are accompanied by the music of the band, formed of twenty-three musicians and their conductor. They provide a sharp contrast with the soldiers to their left and the buglers to their right. The conductor is looking at the dignitaries walking past, and few of the musicians are watching his conducting. The clarinetist in the front rank has turned to look at something going on behind him, attracting a comment from the musician next to him playing the *çevgen* (known in the West as a Turkish Crescent, or Jangling Johnny). Whatever was happening towards the back has also caught the attention of two of the other musicians, as another clarinetist in the third rank on the right and the heliconist in the front rank on the left have turned to look. Following the gaze of those musicians, as well as the serious stares of the two cymbalists at the back, the blame seems to fall quite squarely on one of the other clarinetists in the third rank. Whether he was playing out of tune, out of time, too loud, or a bit of all three, we can never know, but something was clearly going on with his playing that was disrupting the performance. As further evidence of this, in the

doorway of the barracks just behind the band, a group of soldiers look out, one starting at the musicians decidedly unimpressed, some others having a chuckle, seemingly at their expense.



Image 7: Detail from 'Turk [i.e. Turkish] troops & band on parade ground' (image 5)



Image 8: Detail from 'Turk [i.e. Turkish] troops & band on parade ground' (image 5)

This then raises certain questions about the standards of these military bands, and what it might have been like to listen to them perform. The mind's-ear might imagine their music to be crisp, tuneful, and professional. Yet the disarray of the Jerusalem military band, and the reaction of those around them, suggests that the performance was rather unpolished. The capturing of this discordant moment allows us to gain a different perspective on the auditory experience of an Ottoman public performance, and shatters the image intended of harmony, in both the experiential and political senses. The phonograph disks and '78 records that have survived of Ottoman military music promote the image of unity, discipline, and power through accomplished performance by military-style bands, crucially including the *Mızıka-yı Hümayun*, the senior military band.²⁵ Listening to these remarkable recordings from the Ottoman past, one might be lulled into a false sense of auditory security. The *Mızıka-yı Hümayun* was the musical showpiece of the Ottoman army, and their record-quality performances attest their elite training and status and, by association, the order and harmony of the state they represented. It is perhaps unreasonable to expect the musicians of the Jerusalem garrison to be of the same standard, but it is then not a great leap to suppose that the quality of their performances was not the highest. Although the Jerusalemite musician Wasif Jawhariyyeh spoke about the band playing weekly to entertain the people, he does not mention how successful they were in that endeavor.²⁶ Indeed, some of the accounts of foreigners visiting the city in the later 19th century were not particularly kind about what they heard. The 1876 Baedeker guide to Palestine described the sound they made as 'execrable', whilst the Australian Margaret Thomas gave a more extended critique in 1900 of their performances: "On Friday and Saturdays a military band plays in a small garden lately planted outside the Jaffa gate. Here may be heard those extraordinarily florid shrieks, trills, and squeaks, accompanied by the incessant and irrelevant beating of drums and cymbals, which constitute Turkish music [...] It would seem as if each man played at his own sweet will had they not written music."²⁷ Of course, what Thomas heard as

²⁵ Odeon Orkestrası, Mızıka-yı Hümayun Orkestrası, Hafız Yaşar et al., *Osmanlı Marşları* (Kalan Ses Görüntü, 1999), 21 tracks.

²⁶ Salim Tamari & Issam Nassar (eds.), *The Storyteller of Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1904-1948*, trans. Nada Elzeer (Northampton MA: Olive Branch Press, 2014), in the section 'My father's friendship with the venerable Husseni family'.

²⁷ Karl Baedeker (ed.), *Palestine and Syria: Handbook for Travellers* (Leipsic & London: Karl Baedeker & Dulau & Co., 1876) 183 (this comment was removed from later editions); Margaret Thomas, *Two Years in Palestine & Syria* (London: John C. Nimmo, 1900), 58.

'Turkish' music was most likely a performance of European-style brass-band music, but to her ears this was the jarring cacophony she associated with the old-style *mehterhane*. Some of the marches found on '78 records, whilst clearly modern European military music in form, have a distinctly 'Eastern' flavour, perhaps helping to explain this elision of the old music with the new.²⁸ How far we take Thomas's account is one matter, but a careful reading of the photograph by, as Levi suggests, "reducing the scale of observation", gives some indication of discord in the ordered façade of the state's performances.²⁹

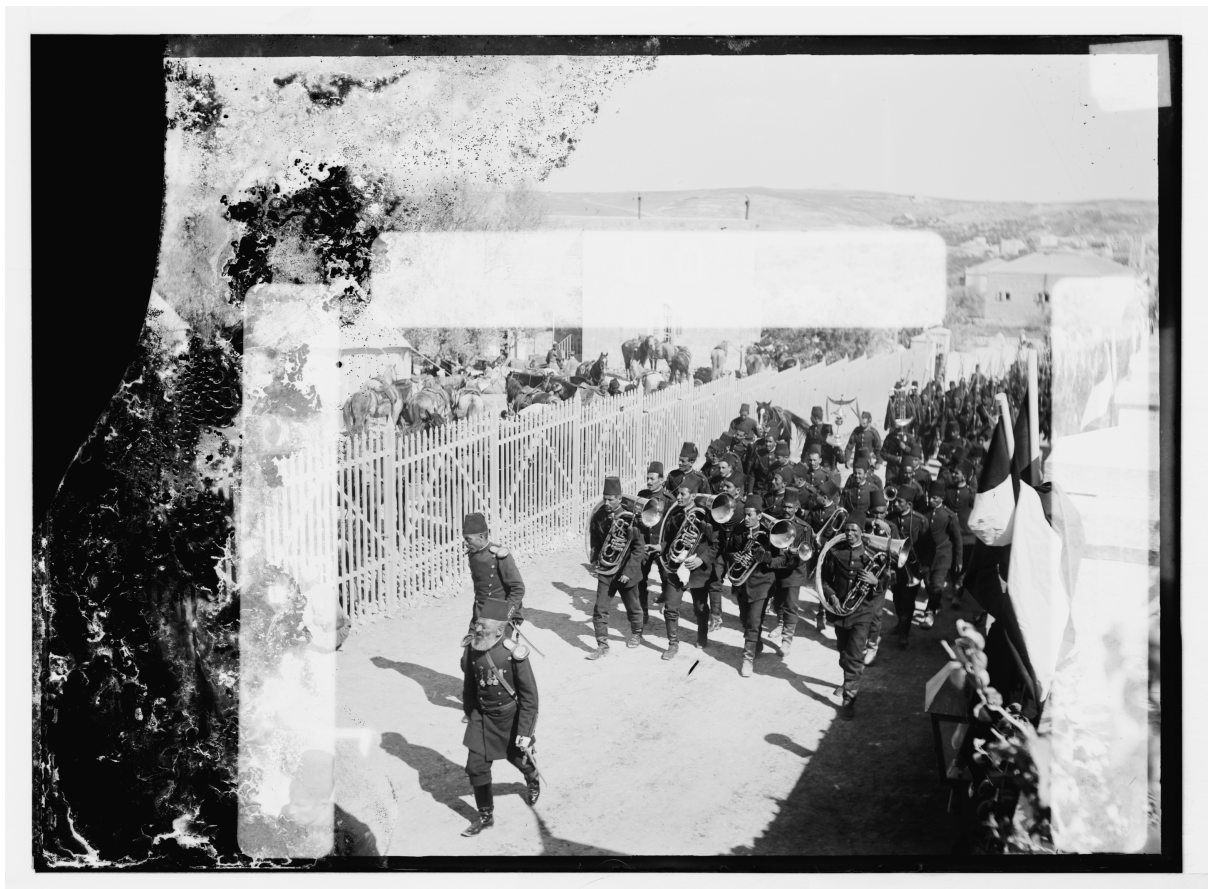


Image 9: 'State visit to Jerusalem of Wilhelm II of Germany in 1898. Turkish military brass band in procession to German camp', 5x7 in. photograph by American Colony (Jerusalem) Photo Department, between 26 October and 4 November 1898. Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Matson Photograph Collection, reproduction no. LC-DIG-matpc-04607.

One clue as to the reputation of the garrison band can be found in a major event in late-Ottoman Jerusalem, the visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1898. The central authorities were keen that the band should

²⁸ A perfect example, complete with trills and other embellishments, is track 5, 'İzmir Marşı', in *Osmanlı Marşları*.

²⁹ Levi, 'On microhistory', 95.

put on a good show, and even paid for new uniforms to be sent to Jerusalem.³⁰ The main day of public performances was at the inauguration of the Erlöserkirche (Church of the Redeemer), and *Servet-i Fünun* provided special photographic coverage over several editions, with photographs taken by their special correspondent in the region, Tevfik Bey.³¹ The garrison band in their handsome new uniforms were on hand to provide some musicality to the proceedings. Yet in the fairly extensive photographic record of the ceremonial, as far as I have seen, they only appear in one image in the American Colony of Jerusalem photograph collection (image 9). Outside of the city walls a camp was set up for the visitors, where they were greeted on their arrival by a formal welcome from local dignitaries and a military guard of honor, including the band. This photograph shows the musicians not in the midst of their performance but en route, marching next to the kaiser's camp at the head of their unit. A number of the bandsmen look curiously or expectantly over the fence into the German encampment, and the heliconist in the front rank, second from the left, gives his instrument a final polish with a cloth in his right hand, whilst using his left to grab the arm of his neighbor mid-conversation. This rather touching



³⁰ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archive, BOA) BEO/1267/95004, 7 Şevval 1316 (18 February 1899).

³¹ *Servet-i Fünun*, 12 Teşrin-i Sani 1314 (24 November 1898); 19 Teşrin-i Sani 1314 (1 December 1898); 3 Kanun-u Evvel 1314 (15 December 1898).

image of the military band before their big event provides a sense of the anticipation, and perhaps nerves, that one will never find in written accounts.

The American Colony's photographic record of this major state occasion was led by Elijah Meyers, an immigrant Jew from India who later converted to Christianity, and who gained the right to cover the imperial visit and produce photographs for sale in Europe.³² The kaiser's visit generated great interest among the international and Ottoman press. *İkdam* printed regular updates via telegrams wired from Palestine, and had a reporter on the ground, İsmail Zühdi, sending reports as part of a regular feature, '*Muhbir-i mahsusumuzun mektubları*' (Letters from our special correspondent), with six updates from the kaiser's time in Palestine printed in November.³³ His report on the arrival of the imperial party in Jerusalem, letter no.4, makes no mention of the ceremonial involved, although his earlier telegraphed message simply noted that "Their Majesties were greeted with a formal ceremony by the civil and military officials."³⁴ We know from a photograph of the American Colony that on their arrival in Palestine at the port of Haifa, the imperial party were met by an Ottoman military band, a different group to that featured in image 9.³⁵ The Jerusalem musicians get some coverage in reports of the kaiser's visit in the Hebrew press. An article in *Havatzelet* might be describing the very scene depicted in the photograph above: "An hour before noon, Their Majesties appeared before the city, and on the paved roads [went] south to the tents that had been erected as the residence for Their Majesties during their stay in our city, preceded by the army units garrisoned in our town with their commander at their head, and the military musicians played the national song of the German government, and after this the cannons in the city fortress gave a twenty-one gun salute in honor of the esteemed guests."³⁶

³² Bair, 'The American Colony Photography Department', 33-34.

³³ *İkdam*, 23 Teşrin-i Evvel 1314 (4 November 1898); 24 Teşrin-i Evvel 1314 (5 November 1898); 25 Teşrin-i Evvel 1314 (6 November 1898); 18 Teşrin-i Evvel 1314 (9 November 1898); 3 Teşrin-i Sani 1314 (15 November 1898); 5 Teşrin-i Sani 1314 (17 November 1898); 6 Teşrin-i Sani 1314 (18 November 1898).

³⁴ *İkdam*, 17 Teşrin-i Evvel 1314 (30 October 1898).

³⁵ LOC:PP, LC-DIG-matpc-04576, 'State visit to Jerusalem of Wilhelm II of Germany in 1898. Turkish band on Haifa quay', 5x7 inch photograph by the American Colony Photo Department between 26 October and 4 November 1898.

³⁶ *Havatzelet*, 14 Marḥeshyan / 30 October 5659 (1898).

However, the Ottoman band was overshadowed by that of the visitors. İsmail Zühdi described in detail the arches and flags erected along the parade route from the Jaffa Gate to the Erlöserkirche: “After the conclusion of the various speeches, His Majesty the said Emperor, with a special salute by



Image 11: ‘Mili [i.e., military] band in street parade beside Ger. [i.e, German] Church of Redeemer, 1898 Emp[eror] visit’, 10x12 inch photograph by the American Colony (Jerusalem) Photo Department, 1898. Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Matson Photograph Collection, reproduction no. LC-DIG-matpc-07168.

his naval contingent, passed through the said arch atop which was the special flag of the German monarchy. The said emperor was also greeted by the playing of the music of the *Marş-ı Ali-i Hamidi* and the German March.”³⁷

Medals were distributed commemorating the occasion, presented by the kaiser himself “to each of the individuals of the German band.”³⁸ The

band of the German navy, not that of the Jerusalem garrison,

therefore took center stage, something also reflected in the photographic record. In image 11, the German naval band marches at the head of a larger military contingent, with Ottoman soldiers presenting their arms on the right-hand side as spectators look down from the rooftops. The contrast

³⁷ *İkdam*, 5 Teşrin-i Sani 1314 (17 November 1898). A recording of this *Hamidi* march as performed by the *Mızıka-yı Hümayun* can be found in the *Osmanlı Marşları*, collection, track no.10.

³⁸ *İkdam*, 5 Teşrin-i Sani 1314 (17 November 1898).



Image 12: Detail from ‘Mili [i.e., military] band in street parade beside Ger. [i.e, German] Church of Redeemer, 1898 Emp[eror] visit’ (image 11)



Image 13: Detail from ‘Mili [i.e., military] band in street parade beside Ger. [i.e, German] Church of Redeemer, 1898 Emp[eror] visit’ (image 11)

between the depiction of the German band with that of the Ottomans is quite striking, whether it was intentional or not to stimulate such a comparison. Here, the Ottomans were literally pushed into the sidelines, barely visible in the zoomed out view of the photograph, a mere ornament to the triumphal parade of the Germans and their kaiser, overshadowed by the dedication of a new gleaming Lutheran church to dominate Jerusalem’s skyline, and the professionalism of the senior partner in an evolving military alliance, represented by its military band. Meanwhile, on top of a building site next to the new church, an Ottoman worker

leans on some rubble to ponder the spectacle before him; one can only imagine what was going through his mind seeing a foreign army marching through the city. One of the great

things about these close readings is, if you now return to the zoomed-out view of image 11 and locate this man on the right-hand side of the picture, he starts to stand out, to become the focal point of the

photograph, gazing down in judgement on the scene below him. Here, we begin to get a sense of the perspective of the contemporary viewer.

For a view of the Jerusalem band in action as the Ottoman state wished them to be seen, we must turn again to the illustrated pages of *Servet-i Fünun*. As part of its extensive program of public works, in 1901 the Hamidian government paid for the renovation of a fountain first constructed by Süleyman I (r.1520-66) next to a major water source called *Birkat al-Sultan*, which was re-opened on Abdülhamid II's birthday celebrations. *Havatzet* described the ceremonial for this occasion:



Image 14: 'The official inauguration of the water supply developed under the patronage of His Majesty the Caliph at the waters of the Süleymaniye springs within the Noble Sanctuary in Noble Jerusalem held on the auspicious day of the imperial birthday of His Majesty the Padishah . Source: *Servet-i Fünun*, 13 Kanun-u Evvel 1317 (26 December 1901).

In the morning, a great crowd gathered in the area of the Temple [i.e. the Haram al-Sharif], and after them came an army battalion stationed in our city and the chorus platoon,³⁹ and the esteemed governor of our city, Cavid Bey, appeared in front of them, together with the great military and

³⁹ The Hebrew term used here - *maḥlaḳat ha-mizmurim*, literally the chorus or choir platoon – to describe the military band adds a different level to the usual description of the *menagnei ha-tzava*, perhaps a nod to the holy location of this particular concert.

government officials of our city, and the stops of the pipes were opened and a great quantity of water flowed out, and the religious clerics prayed for the health of His Majesty the Sultan and all the assembled cried after them, ‘May His Majesty the Sultan live forever!’ After that, in the afternoon, the cannons on our city fortress each sounded in honor of the day, and, in a reception room of the government palace, His Excellency the esteemed governor of our city received the great officers of the government, the heads of the various religions, and the representatives of the European, Iranian, and American governments, who came to bless him in honor of the day.⁴⁰

The picture painted here is the standard picture of Hamidian ceremonial, in which the military and its band played a central role. This is something emphasized in the official photographs of the occasion, printed in *Servet-i Fünun*, which depicts two scenes. The first shows the actual ceremony of the dedication of the fountain, with religious officials, civil and military officers, soldiers, and a smattering of the general populace. Several individuals raise their hands in prayer, and many look towards the camera in this posed scene, and some members of the band are visible to the left of the photograph. The second scene (image 14) is a formal portrait of some of the religious, civic, and military dignitaries outside the Haram al-Sharif, and also includes the military band on the right. Many of the visible band



Image 15: Detail from ‘The official inauguration of the water supply [...]’ (image 14)

⁴⁰ *Havatzet*. 18 Kisley / 29 November 5662 (1901).

members hold their instruments to their lips and seem to be in the midst of playing, not unlike the naval bugler we met earlier in this paper. This is not a subversion of the usual depiction of this sort of scene where everyone simply stands silently in solemn commemoration of the occasion; despite the pursed lips, the event remains soundless. The all-pervading silence of the scene is an awkward one, the musicians just another part of the scenery. This is an excellent example of the “flat” photography of the Hamidian period, to use Wendy Shaw’s term, in which, she argues, “people are types”.⁴¹ As shall be seen from an actual performance by this band, the overwhelming insipidity of the ceremonial freezes and ossifies the very crowds who come to view them, creating live mirrors of these staged scenes.

Spreading the joy?

Many of the records concerning the band’s activities, especially in the Hebrew press, describe the concerts given in honor of public celebrations. These accounts follow the same sort of formulaic language we have already seen, but there is one phrase in particular that recurs in the following (or a very similar) form in a number of the narratives in *Havatzelet* that I find particularly interesting: “*ye-menagnei ha-tzava simḥu et lev ha-‘am be-manginoteihem*”, “and the military musicians gladdened the hearts of the people through their music.”⁴² It usually referred to the playing of the military band in the night-time festivities of the sultan’s birthday or accession day, when there were also illuminations and other activities like free theatre shows. The band, playing in front of their barracks, the governor’s residence, or in the city park, provided a focal point through which Ottoman unity before the sultan and the state, together with its symbols like the flags and the army itself, could be put on full public display in the warmth of sun or the glow of the festive illuminations.⁴³

⁴¹ Wendy Shaw, 'Ottoman photography of the late nineteenth century: An 'innocent' modernism?' *History of Photography* 33:1 (2009), 80-93 at 85.

⁴² See, for example: *Havatzelet*, 25 Nisan / 26 April 5659 (1889); 19 Adar / 18 March 5652 (1892); 17 Adar Rishon / 23 February 5654 (1894); 2 Tevet / 22 December 5660 (1899).

⁴³ Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem between Ottoman and British Rule* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 56-7; Johann Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine: Politics and Society in the District of Jerusalem 1872-1908* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 187.



One of the few images we have of such a performance, albeit a daytime one, comes from a set of stereographic images taken by the American photographer William H. Rau (image 16). Although there is a particular beauty to Rau's photographs, many of them center on certain tropes, with grand architecture, scenes of rural idylls, and group and crowd portraits being the strongpoints in his views of the Middle East. In his depiction of the concert, the focus is not just on the band, but on the crowd watching them. In this one frame of time captured by Rau, and digitized to a superb resolution by the Library of Congress, we have a valuable source on a public musical performance in Hamidian Jerusalem. As a stereoscopic image, there are two pictures of the same scene captured in such a way as to mimic the reception of images by the eye. Therefore, the picture on the right has slightly more detail on its left, and the picture on the left has slightly more detail on its right. The effect of the offset images is to present the viewer, through the use of a stereoscope, with a sense of depth not possible in ordinary photographs, and also a sense of movement. Viewing the image through a stereoscopic process – which can easily be recreated using a smartphone and a simple cardboard viewer, or, with a rather different effect, by creating a GIF image using the two halves – takes us to Rau's vantage point, with the layers within the image providing a real experience of presence. The crowd look three dimensional, with the elevated cluster of children on the right and gathering of men at the back also clearly distinct from the

walls of the barracks. Yet the image makes our eyes focus on the people and objects nearest to us, and the composition of this image draws the eye to the band conductor in the centre.⁴⁴



Image 17: Detail of the right photograph of ‘Moslem band’ (image 16).

The scene takes place in front of the entrance to the *kışla*, the Ottoman barracks in Jerusalem, the same building whose interior we saw in the cacophonous parade in image 5. In front of the barracks,

⁴⁴ Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge MA & London: MIT Press, 1992), 127.

a crowd has gathered to listen to the military band play. Unlike in the other images, they are not marching or parading, but sat in front of sheet music in a semicircle. The crowd surrounds them on all sides, a diverse group of over a hundred individuals who represent a range of Ottoman Jerusalem's communities. The majority are men, but there is a fair smattering of children, boys and girls, throughout the crowd, and in the foreground there are a number of women. Because of the quality of the image, this interactive record can really provide an insight into how a Jerusalem crowd at the turn of the 20th century received and perhaps experienced these official musical performances.

The crowd can be broadly divided into four key elements, in addition to the band itself. First is a gathering of Westerners in the foreground. As well as a man wearing a trilby-style hat, there are at least four women wearing wide-brimmed hats covered with light-colored fabric to help keep off the sun, a style seen among the women in a number of the photographs of the American Colony in Jerusalem from the early twentieth century, covering the sides of the head or even wrapped around the face like a kind of veil.⁴⁵ It is impossible to say how far back the crowds go behind Rau's vantage point, but no other people of this appearance appear in the rest of the visible crowd, showing that perhaps the Westerners, despite some fez- and turban-wearing Ottomans mingling with them, grouped together in their own distinct section. Second is a concentration of at least six Bedouin on the left-hand side of the picture, distinctive in their *kuffiyahs* topped with thick black *'iqals*. They do not seem to be concentrating too hard on the performance, with some listening to a friend to the left of the picture just out of shot, and another captured for posterity holding his protruding tongue. Their presence in the picture is interesting given the tense relationship between the late Ottoman state and its pastoral populations, particularly in Palestine where the administrative center of Birüssebi (Beersheba) in the Negev Desert had been developed just a couple of years before this photograph was taken as a means to control them through land registration and enforcement of taxation regulations.⁴⁶ Despite resistance

⁴⁵ See, for example: LOC:PP, LC-DIG-matpc-11656, 'Am. [i.e., American] Colony women on donkeys during Askalon camping trip', 4x5 inch photograph by the American Colony Photo Department between 1898 and 1946.

⁴⁶ On relations between the Negev Bedouin and the Ottoman state in this later period, see: Clinton Beiley, 'The Ottomans and the bedouin tribes of the Negev' in *Ottoman Palestine, 1800-1914: Studies in Social and Economic History*, ed. Gad. G. Gilbar (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 321-332; Mansour Nasassra, 'Ruling the desert: Ottoman and British policies towards the Bedouin of the Naqab and

to these centralizing policies, the presence of Bedouin would not have been unusual in Jerusalem as a major regional marketplace, and this photograph provides evidence of their participation in the city's civic events. Third, and scattered throughout the crowd, is evidence of further diversity of Jerusalem's population. The crowd is formed primarily of fez-wearers, but others sport various forms of turbans, some don flat caps, and a variety of clothing styles are on display. Visible among the group are a number of Orthodox Jews, one or two men in what might be considered Russian or Circassian clothing and headgear, and a man of Sub-Saharan African appearance, perhaps part of the resident community of Africans who lived (and indeed continue to reside) in a neighborhood just outside Al-Aqsa Mosque. In the background, the individuals passing or separate from the main group are similarly mixed. On the left, two young girls in matching white dresses and straw boaters watch the scene in front of the barracks, as a group of men in European-style hats converse. On the right of the picture, several men emerge from the direction of the barracks entrance, exchanging greetings and salutes.

The fourth and final element of this crowd is a large group of young people (image 8, top). There are two fathers holding their young children – and some young faces peering through the gaps in the crowd – on the left side of the photograph, and a clump of boys and girls perching on a vantage point. The majority, however, are situated in the right of the photograph, standing just in front of the conductor on the open side of the band's semi-circle. Like the adults, the children and young people are dressed in a range of clothing styles, some with fezzes, some with flat caps, some with *taqiyahs* (a kind of skull cap), some wearing jackets and trousers, others with the *thawb* (a light robe) and the *qumbaz* (an ankle-length overcoat), striped in the typical Jerusalemite and Syrian fashion, some with more European-style overcoats. The girls are similarly varied, with one looking rather European with a center-parting in her hair and a babushka tied under her chin. They have positioned themselves front-and-center, and aside from one or two glancing over at Rau's camera, many of them look straight at the conductor as he directs the performance. On their faces, we can see something of a live response to the Jerusalem garrison band's performance. On the left of the clump of children, one girl stands with her

Transjordan region, 1900-1948', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42:3 (2015), 261-283; Ruth Kark & Seth J. Franzman, 'The Negev: Land, settlement, the Bedouin and Ottoman and British policy, 1871-1948', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 39:1 (2012), 53-77.

right hand on her hip, and her left hand, elbow balanced on her babushka-wearing neighbor's shoulder, supporting her head. A young man wearing a fez and a striped *thawb* stands with his arms firmly folded and a furrowed brow directed towards the conductor. Next to him, stands a little girl wearing a European-style dress, looking towards a boy in a flat cap, covering her ears to shield herself from the music, which may have been at an extra elevated level because of the din of the crowd itself and the noise of the city around it. There is not, in this whole image, one example of joy, happiness, or entertainment; we are instead presented with a sea of serious, thoughtful, bored, or distracted faces. Going through many of the photographs of celebrations in late Ottoman Jerusalem, it is difficult to find scenes that reflect the ebullient, even ecstatic language of the Ottoman Turkish and Hebrew press descriptions of civic events.

Those examples that I *have* found tend to be in circumstances that are more *carnavalesque*, to use Mikhail Bakhtin's term, more participatory in their nature. "Carnival does not know footlights," he contends, "in the sense that it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators. Footlights would destroy a carnival, as the absence of footlights would destroy a theatrical performance. Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people."⁴⁷ In this sense, then, the concert scene has far more in common with the official photographs than might be immediately apparent from a cursory reading. To find some examples of joyful participation in public celebrations, religious festivals provide the best evidence, particularly the Nebi Musa festival that was a highlight of the Jerusalemite calendar.⁴⁸ Image 18 provides one of the few visions of engaged, even happy participants. A group of men and boys parading from the city walls stop to watch and participate in some singing led by a man in a striped jacket and

⁴⁷ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 7.

⁴⁸ For a discussion of and sources on Nebi Musa and its intercommunal nature, as well as the joys, stresses, and tensions of the festival, see: Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine*, 175-183. Image 9 from this article is also featured, mostly illustratively, in Figure 3.12 of that book.



Image 18: Detail from ‘Costumes, characters, etc. Dancing dervishes in procession [Nebi Musa procession]’, 5x7 inch stereograph by the American Colony (Jerusalem) Photo Department, between 1900 and 1920. Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Matson Photograph Collection, reproduction no. LC-DIG-matpc-01219.

fez brandishing a sword. In a crowd reflecting a similar class, age, and ethnic diversity to Rau’s stereograph, some clap, some sing, and many of those watching do so with grins on their faces. Here, it is the military who are the observers, and even though some of them watch on with approving smiles many of their faces are intently fixed upon the crowd. Just like in the photograph of the procession of the German naval band, here the Ottoman state is sidelined. This is the state looking in upon the festivities of the people, rather than the people co-opted into the celebrations of the state.

That cooption is evident in the different ethnicities, classes, ages, and faiths displayed in Rau’s photograph. This is a visual source that complements the accounts in the Hebrew press that “all the populations of our city celebrated” (*haganu kol toshvei irenu*) official occasions in honor of the sultan and the state. However, as Johann Büssow has argued using Bakhtin’s framework, the civic and religious celebrations in Jerusalem marked a brief and ritual subversion of the usual boundaries between confessional communities and classes in the city.⁴⁹ That is, the gathering of such diversity was itself a spectacle of the state, with the only participation of the populace being their mere presence. In that sense, aside from some clues that this was not necessarily an enjoyable performance, the crowd watching the Jerusalem band shares the same aesthetic as the group of children and other individuals gathered in the official photograph of the dedication of the fountain in 1901 (image 19). They transform

⁴⁹ Ibid., 178.

into the human “types” that Shaw described, a component of the scenery on the canvas of loyal Ottomanism.



Image 19: Top: Detail from Rau, ‘Moslem band’ (image 16); Bottom: Detail from *Servet-i Fünun*, ‘Official inauguration’ (image 14).

That a crowd, presumably un-staged for the camera, mirrors the set-up of an official portrait says something quite important about the power dynamics at play in the Jerusalem band's performance. It also says something about the nature of the stereoscope, that in attempting to capture a 'reality' actually recreated the sterile and synthetic aesthetic of official journalism, poetry, and photography.⁵⁰ This is unity, but it seems enforced; there is entertainment, but there is no sense of enjoyment. This could perhaps be because the Jerusalem garrison band simply was not very good; that, we will never know for sure. But the reflection is telling. Rau, as a collector of Ottoman scenes and crowds captures a moment where the Ottoman state has collected its Jerusalem "types" for public display, and this obsession with types, as Michelle Woodward argues, fulfils an important role in surveying and claiming populations.⁵¹ The response of the crowd to this public performance, therefore, reflects their exclusion from it, their passivity when faced by agents of the state, sitting outside the base of state power, playing a corpus of (potentially quite cacophonous) music imposed by the central authorities to dominate the soundscape of the city center. The image of the little girl covering her ears and turning away is not simply a reaction to standing too close the business end of a clarinet, but is representative of a more manifest rejection of the scene that can be discerned in the faces of other members of the crowd. It is, in that sense, an anti-carnival, where a close reading of the crowd demonstrates the clear difference between the state's narrative of events and the experiences of attending them, where the divide between actors and spectators was such that the trope of the band's music gladdenning the hearts of the people played firmly in the realm of rhetoric.

Conclusions

None of this is to say that Ottoman subjects did not feel joy in celebrating the sultan's birthday and accession day, or that joy must be expressed through smiles and dancing. But there is a disconnect between the faces of the Jerusalemite crowd outside the barracks and the narratives of joy in the Hebrew

⁵⁰ Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 133.

⁵¹ Michelle L. Woodward, 'Between Orientalist clichés and images of modernization: Photographic practice in the late Ottoman period', *History of Photography* 27:4 (2003), 363-374 at 364-368.

and Ottoman Turkish press; a physiognomic reading of that crowd shows anything but unrestrained celebration. Yet, at the same time, that scene and those written narratives are closely related. The formal, static, wooden stances and carefully-composed diversity of the Jerusalemite crowd mirror those of the official photographs and the newspapers' panegyrics and laudatory narratives. Just as the joy spread by the band in the accounts of *Havatzet* was formulaic and repetitive, so too are the images of a populace awkwardly represented by endless posed images of silent, straight-faced gatherings under arches and outside public buildings, what Ethem Eldem categorizes as the “desperate” attempt of the Hamidian regime to impress its subjects and Western audiences, filtered, as Zeynep Çelik argues, through the state’s own prisms and self-visions.⁵²

If we take Benjamin's physiognomy of image-worlds seriously, then the aberrations within these images shatter the illusion and provide that microhistorical evidence to see beyond the state’s presentations. Wendy Shaw contended that the formal, static, staged images so commonly employed by the Ottoman state, like those we have seen in *Servet-i Fünun*, failed in their aims of projecting an Ottoman modernity due to their “mechanistic approach”, especially when compared with the immediacy of the images captured by Western photographers, like those of the American Colony photographers or William Rau.⁵³ Yet Rau, too, in selecting the image of the Jerusalemite crowd for his photograph, attempted to collect the diverse, and perhaps exotic, “types” of that city. However, in most of the photographs examined here, if one looks closely enough, there is some small glitch or hint that says something beyond what the photographer or their patrons wished to communicate. The photograph of the performance of the military band in Jerusalem therefore tells us something important about the relationship between state and subject in that one moment, from which broader ideas can be explored. Although the scene has not been staged for the camera, it shares an aesthetic with the wider corpus of posed Hamidian images. The band conveys an image of professionalism, but the reaction of the crowd

⁵² Ethem Eldem, 'Powerful images: The dissemination and impact of photography in the Ottoman Empire, 1870-1914' in *Camera Ottomana: Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire, 1840-1914*, eds. Zeynep Çelik & Ethem Eldem (İstanbul: Koç University Press, 2015), 106-153 at 137; Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at 19th Century World's Fairs* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1992), 10-11.

⁵³ Shaw, 'Ottoman photography', 92-93.

gives a hint at the quality of their performance. The diversity of the crowd is itself illusory, a temporary gathering that would soon dissolve back into its constituent parts.

In reading this image closely, in conjunction with other written and visual accounts, the *experience* of being Ottoman can be discerned in that moment. The important thing is to try and figure out what those photographed saw and experiences, rather than privileging the line-of-sight and assumptions of the photographer or, indeed, the historian.⁵⁴ This is the value of microhistory, as Levi described it, in which *events* and not just texts might be interpreted.⁵⁵ It may not reflect other neighboring moments, but in that snapshot of time – the off-key playing of the clarinetist on the parade ground, the heliconist polishing his instrument en route to his performance, the little girl covering her ears from the noise of the concert – the written and visual rhetoric and bravado of the state melts before the humanity, emotions, and sensual experiences of the photographed subjects. “Despite all the artistic skill of the photographer and all the planning in posing his model,” to return to Benjamin's assertion, “the viewer feels the irresistible compulsion to seek the tiny spark of happenstance, the here and now.”⁵⁶ Following that compulsion, close readings of these photographs might give voice to, and facilitate our understandings of, the experiences of individuals reacting to the gaze of both the photographer and the state.

⁵⁴ Thomas, ‘The evidence of sight’, 165.

⁵⁵ Levi, ‘On microhistory’, 95.

⁵⁶ Benjamin, ‘Kleine Geschichte der Photographie’, 371.

Bibliography

Archival documents

Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archive).

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

Newspapers

Ha-Shkafah

Havatzelet

İkdam

Servet-i Fünun

Audio sources

Aracı, Emre, *Osmanlı Sarayı 'nda Avrupa Müziği*. Kalan Ses Görüntü, 2000, 18 tracks.

Odeon Orkestrası, Mızıka-yı Hümayun Orkestrası, Hafız Yaşar et al., *Osmanlı Marşları*. Kalan Ses Görüntü, 1999, 21 tracks.

Published sources

Baedeker, Karl (ed.), *Palestine and Syria: Handbook for Travellers*. Leipsic & London: Karl Baedeker & Dulau & Co., 1906.

Baedeker, Karl (ed.), *Palestine and Syria: Handbook for Travellers*. Leipsic & London: Karl Baedeker & Dulau & Co., 1898.

Baedeker, Karl (ed.), *Palestine and Syria: Handbook for Travellers*. Leipsic & London: Karl Baedeker & Dulau & Co., 1894.

Baedeker, Karl (ed.), *Palestine and Syria: Handbook for Travellers*. Leipsic & London: Karl Baedeker & Dulau & Co., 1876.

Tamari Salim & Nassar, Issam (eds.), *The Storyteller of Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1904-1948*, trans. Nada Elzeer. Northampton MA: Olive Branch Press, 2014.

Thomas, Margret, *Two Years in Palestine & Syria*. London: John C. Nimmo, 1900

Secondary sources

Allen, William, 'The Abdul Hamid II Collection', *History of Photography* 8:2 (1984), 119-145.

Bair, Barbara, 'The American Colony Photography Department: Western consumption and "insider" commercial photography', *Jerusalem Quarterly* 44 (2010), 28-38.

Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1984.

Barthes, Roland, 'Rhétorique de l'image', *Communications* 4:1 (1964), 40-51.

Baydar, Evren Kutlay, *Osmanlı'nın "Avrupalı" Müzisyenleri*. İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2010.

Behdad, Ali, *Camera Orientalis : Reflections on Photography of the Middle East*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Ben-Bassat, Yuval & Ginio, Eyal (eds.), *Late Ottoman Palestine: The Period of Young Turk Rule*. London: IB Tauris, 2011.

Benjamin, Walter, 'Kleine Geschichte der Photographie' in *Walter Benjamin Gesammelte Schriften*, eds. Rolf Tiedemann & Hermann Schweppenhäuser. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991, 2:1, 368-385.

Benjamin, Walter 'Über den Begriff der Geschichte' in *Walter Benjamin Gesammelte Schriften*, eds. Rolf Tiedemann & Hermann Schweppenhäuser. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991, 1:1, 691-704.

Büssow, Johann, *Hamidian Palestine: Politics and Society in the District of Jerusalem 1872-1908*, Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Cadava, Eduardo, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History*. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Campos, Michelle, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth Century Palestine*. Stanford. Stanford University Press, 2011.

Campos, Michelle, 'Between "beloved Ottomania" and "the Land of Israel": The struggle over Ottomanism and Zionism among Palestine's Sephardi Jews, 1903-13', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37:4 (2005), 461-483.

Çelik, Zeynep & Eldem, Edhem (eds), *Camera Ottomana: Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire, 1840-1914*. İstanbul: Koç University Press, 2015.

Çelik, Zeynep, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at 19th Century World's Fairs*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1992.

Crary, Jonathan, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge MA & London: MIT Press, 1992),

Deringil, Selim, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*. London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998.

Edwards, Elizabeth, 'Photography and the material performance of the past', *History and Theory* 48 (2009), 130-150.

Ersoy, Ahmed, 'Ottomans and the Kodak galaxy: Archiving everyday life and historical space in Ottoman illustrated journals', *History of Photography* 40:3 (2016), 330-357.

Ersoy, Ahmet, 'Camdaki hafıza: Ahmed Rasim, fotoğraf ve zaman', *E-Skop: Sanat Tarihi Eleştirisi* (2015), <http://www.e-skop.com/skopbulten/camdaki-hafiza-ahmed-rasim-fotograf-ve-zaman/2457>, accessed 30 May 2018.

Gavin, Carney E.S. & The Harvard Semitic Museum (eds.), 'Imperial self-portrait: The Ottoman Empire as revealed in the Sultan Abdul Hamid II's photographic albums', *Journal of Turkish Studies / Türklük Bilgisi Araştırmaları* 12 (1988).

Gilbar, Gad. G. (ed.), *Ottoman Palestine, 1800-1914: Studies in Social and Economic History*. Leiden: Brill, 1990.

Giovanni Levi, 'On microhistory' in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke. Cambridge; Polity Press, 1991, 97-120.

Green-Lewis, Jennifer, *Victorian Photography, Literature and the Invention of Modern Memory: Already the Past*. London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.

Henisch, Heinz K. & Henisch, Bridget A., *The Photographic Experience, 1839-1914: Images and Attitudes*. University Park PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994.

Hight, Eleanor M. & Sampson, Gary D. (eds.), *Colonialist Photograph: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*. London & New York: Routledge, 2002.

Hoexter, M., Eisenstadt, S.N. & Levtzion, N. (eds.), *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2002.

Kark, Ruth & Franzman, Seth J., 'The Negev: Land, settlement, the Bedouin and Ottoman and British policy, 1871-1948', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 39:1 (2012), 53-77.

Kayalı, Hasan, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997.

Kushner, David (ed.), *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period; Political, Social, and Economic Transformation*. Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Press, 1986.

Jacobson, Abigail, *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem between Ottoman and British Rule*. Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011.

Landau, Jacob M., *Exploring Ottoman and Turkish History*. London: Hurst & Co., 2004.

Lemire, Vincent, *Le soif de Jérusalem : Essai sur hydrohistoire, 1840-1948*. Paris : Publications de la Sorbonne, 2011.

Micklewright, Nancy, 'Alternative histories of photography in the Ottoman Middle East' in *Photography's Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation*, eds. Ali Behdad & Luke Gartlan. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013, 75-92

Micklewright, Nancy, 'Oriental and photography', in *The Poetics of Place: Ottoman Istanbul and British Orientalism*, eds. Zeunep Inankur, Reina Lewis & Mary Roberts. Istanbul: Pera Museum Publications, 2011, 98-110.

Micklewright, Nancy, 'Personal, public, and political (re)constructions: Photographs and consumption' in *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922: An Introduction*, ed. Donald Quataert. New York: State University of New York Press, 2000, 261-288.

Nassar, Issam, *Photographing Jerusalem: The Image of the City in Nineteenth Century Photography*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Nasassra, Mansour, 'Ruling the desert: Ottoman and British policies towards the Bedouin of the Naqab and Transjordan region, 1900-1948', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42:3 (2015), 261-283.

Norris, Jacob, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Peters, Rudolph, 'Attitudes towards modernisation in the Ottoman Empire: A nineteenth-century pious text on steamships, factories, and the telegraph', *Die Welt des Islams* 26 (1986), 76-105.

Shaw, Wendy, 'Ottoman photography of the late nineteenth century: An 'innocent' modernism?' *History of Photography* 33:1 (2009), 80-93.

Philips Cohen, Julia, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Shaw, Wendy, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003.

Sheehan, Tanya (ed.), *Photography, History, Difference*. Hanover NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2015.

Tagg, John, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*. Minneapolis MN: University of Minneapolis Press, 1993.

Taglia, Stefano, 'Ottomanism then and now: Historical and contemporary meanings', *Die Welt des Islams* 56 (2016), 279-289.

Talbot, Michael, "'Jews, be Ottomans!'" Zionism, Ottomanism, and Ottomanisation in the Hebrew-language press, 1890-1914', *Die Welt des Islams* 56 (2016), 358-386.

Talbot, Michael, 'The Exalted Column, the Hejaz Railway, and imperial legitimation in late Ottoman Haifa', *Urban History* 42:2 (2015), 246-272.

Thomas, Julia Adeney, 'The evidence of sight', *History and Theory* 48 (2008), 151-168.

Tucker, Jennifer & Camp, Tina, 'Entwined practices: Engagements with photography in historical enquiry', *History and Theory* 48 (2008), 1-8.

Tuğlacı, Pars, *Mehterhane'den Bando'ya / Turkish Bands of Past and Present*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1986.

Waley, Muhammad Isa, 'Images of the Ottoman Empire: The photograph albums presented by Sultan Abdülhamid II', *The British Library Journal* 17:2 (1991), 111-127.

Woodward, Michelle L., 'Between Orientalist clichés and images of modernization: Photographic practice in the late Ottoman period', *History of Photography* 27:4 (2003), 363-374.