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An Ottoman in Paris

A Tale of Mediterranean Coinage

Marc Aymes

Introduction: Embodiments of Knowledge

This essay is a tentative exploration of the concept that the phrase "French Mediterranean" epitomizes. By tracing the progress of a forger's scheme of things, it works to identify some of the unstable foundations on which the field of Mediterranean studies has been resting so far.

As evidenced by the present volume's road map, commitments to the history of the Mediterranean(s) share in ongoing reflections on the geopolitical constructs that are part of what constitutes knowledge. These do not only amount to taking issue with the institution of knowledge through academic "disciplines" or "fields": they also help reframe our "moral economies of inclusion and exclusion."[1] Epistemic and political issues run side by side.

In view of the volume's commitment to Mediterranean interactions, several of the contributors have aimed to compound the "French element" with an Ottoman one. Down to the demise of the sultan's "Sublime State" in 1922–23, much of the Eastern Mediterranean world remained under Ottoman aegis. Nonetheless, multiple polities and states interacted in [p. 169] this region and took part in transformations that have most often been understood as "reform," in part because they were accompanied by an apposite discourse. Ottoman rulers themselves, while they embarked on a series of administrative overhauls from the late 1830s onward, found it judicious to substitute the keyword of *ıṣlâḥât* (reforms) for that of mere *tanẓîmât* (reorderings).

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Ever since, the term *reform* has functioned like a time capsule for Ottomanists dealing with the history of this period, as it seems to encompass the whole set of its key ingredients: “administrative rationalization, scientific and technological progress, market economy and monetarization, bureaucratization, centralization and individualization.” What is more (and of particular importance here), the term presents yet another advantage to its users, that of “not predetermining the question of agency. Reforms may be launched by a government or by foreign powers, and different social groups may also instigate them.”[2] In other words, “reform” may be embodied in many simultaneous ways.

Profiling key protagonists often helped historians to better understand how Ottoman reform looked like. Group portraits aimed at a sociology of the “Men of the *Tanzimat*,” as Stanford Shaw once called them.[3] Biographies of leading statesmen or high-profile intellectuals imparted a more personalized hue to the topic. In what follows I will be focusing on a much dimmer protagonist of reform: a man named Vaḥdetî Efendi, who served as a designer of stamps, bonds, and deeds issued at the Sublime Porte in Istanbul in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1864 he was dispatched to Paris (then to London) for a few months, with a commission to help prepare the issuance of certification stamps and bonds for the Ottoman Treasury. Three years later he stood trial in Istanbul, charged with having fraudulently kept and circulated some of the paper money he had been testing out. For this, he was sentenced to one year in prison. What is important about Vaḥdetî Efendi’s coinage story is that it helps shift the emphasis from the roaring voices of key protagonists to the nondescript “little tools of knowledge” that shaped the practice of everyday reform.[4] In so doing it provides us with a blueprint for thinking of Mediterranean history as a synchronic set of technical and symbolic currencies.

[p. 170]

The Mediterranean Enfrenchised: Set Theory

All things Mediterranean did not turn French—of this there is no denying. Yet Mediterranean history is never quite far from turning, to coin a word, into a *Frenchise*. Let us begin by pondering this rather incongruous dictum.

The phrase "French Mediterraneans" calls to mind a complex set of *mare nostrum* reminiscences, making it sound eerily familiar. It was not that long ago (indeed, still today, in too many cases) that students would have been taught, in Julia Clancy-Smith's terms, "that older historical narrative still structured around binaries, 'the French' or 'Muslims' and so forth," anchored in "the nation-state framework and nationalist narrative undergirding research on the modern Maghrib."[5] "Heading eastwards"[6]—toward countries that were once part of the Ottoman realms—does little to change this general framework, as similar binary chains of thought also applied there. In André Raymond's words, "the long French presence on the southern and eastern Mediterranean shores" helped produce a "classic concept of the Muslim city" that lumped together Aleppo, Algiers, Damascus and Fes, all subsumed into a category defined by "a morose enumeration of all those elements [they] obviously lacked."[7] Approaches that rest on a distinction between a "center" and one or more "peripheries" have been imbued with a similar sense of dichotomy. Inasmuch as "Eurocentrism is constitutive of the geoculture of the modern world,"[8] the Ottoman realms have been enshrouded in a dialectic that relies on "peripheralization."[9] This helps explain why textbook histories of the modern Mediterranean have given center stage to "the piecemeal incorporation or integration of the Ottoman Empire into the European economic and political orbits."[10] In the longer time frame of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this geometry also played out in scholarly accounts of "Middle Eastern

ideas”: “here were nationalisms modularly imagined; the common good, a shaky transcript of some Lockean commonweal or Benthamite utility; Pan-movements, belated emulations of the Continental counterparts.”[11] Key to such “modular” thinking is the metaphor of “technology transfer,” meaning “an ‘interaction’ between cultures,” with the Ottoman Middle [p. 171] East standing at the receiving end of this unequal trade.[12] Even today, critical reappraisals of the issue of modernity in the region often need sheathing in painstaking examinations of how not to consider (post-)Ottoman “modernization” either “incomplete” or “failed.”[13] It can seem as if anyone seeking to understand the Mediterranean as a whole must rehearse a preliminary set theory that distinguishes between haves and have-nots.

One may certainly object that no contemporary scholar in the field would argue for the analytical purchase of such a polarized rendering, which has been thoroughly unraveled by advocates of “multiple modernities,” “global” or “connected” history, and “postcolonial studies” over the past few decades. No one would argue for it, yet does this imply that none of such thinking remains at work? To quote but one example: a recent study of radical ideas and networks in the Middle East aims at “deprovincializing the Eastern Mediterranean” by “using a synchronic lens . . . to conjure up a polyvalent, polyglot, and global leftist radical movement,” thus “circumventing the whole project of genealogy and decentering it from northwestern Europe.” In view of its promising argument, this undertaking would appear to yield perplexing results, as the author concludes: “The appropriation of socialism and anarchism by networks of intellectuals, dramatists, and workers and their recasting, reinvention, and ultimate subversion of these two European ideologies in ways that made them appealing to local audiences sheds light on the very active participation of peripheral locals in the making of a global world.” From this statement one understands that “radical” ideas were first and foremost “European,” while their

Cairene or Beiruti protagonists remained "peripheral" once and for all. Rather than "deprovincializing" the Eastern Mediterranean, the set theory implicitly endorsed here only helps to reprovincialize it. Furthermore, the author concedes in the following sentence that "appropriation is perhaps not the only way to think of these processes by which socialism and anarchism were indigenized."[14] One is left wondering which other ways could be envisioned. In a similar fashion, the expectations raised by Juan Cole's criticism of the "binary opposition of Western hegemony and Middle Eastern resistance" may seem only partially fulfilled by the [p. 172] suggestion that "in order to understand colonialism we must appreciate the mutual appropriation of cultural forms by colonized and colonizer."[15] Even though one conceives of "appropriation" as "mutual," this notion leaves the aforementioned binary set theory undisturbed. As it turns out, then, terminological moves do by no means entail logical shifts. Nomenclatures are easier to replace than heuristic rules.[16]

Such an observation cuts across issues of periodization. Formerly, when historians narrated the "impact of the West" on the Middle East, Bonaparte's campaign to Egypt in 1798–1801 marked the symbolic terminus a quo of the story. Significantly enough, later critiques of "Eurocentric" approaches did little to alter this chronology. Consequently, Edward Said's critical theory of "Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" maintained the date of 1798 as a defining moment for the nineteenth-century Mediterranean.[17] However pervasive the shift in nomenclature that the Saidian critique introduced, it reasserted the watershed value of a supposedly initial French impetus. *Bleu blanc rouge* remained the primary colors of its historiographical heuristics.[18]

Similar patterns of long-lasting (if intermittent) recurrence apply to the idea that the nineteenth-century Ottoman experience patterned itself on "the French model."[19] To be sure, the

protagonists of such a conception warn that this "model" was never without competitors, starting with its German archrival,[20] and hence that it often involved an eclectic mode of "appropriation." But these caveats ultimately serve to highlight how very Frenchified the Ottomans became over the course of the nineteenth century. Recent pieces of scholarship still consider French to have been the only non-native language that, in the Ottoman Empire (and later post-Ottoman countries like the Turkish Republic), provided the means to self-representation, cultural extroversion, and social distinction.[21] Pushed to the extreme, this line of reasoning is self-vindicated by arguing that the French (language and people) played a determining role in "inventing" the Mediterranean.[22]

All in all, modern Mediterranean history comes down to a process of ineluctable *enfranchisement*, in both senses of the term. On the one hand it means that civil rights could be secured and came hand in hand (or so [p. 173] it is often assumed) with cultural extroversion; on the other it denotes a license to trade in privilege, obtained via social distinction. Since this enfranchisement of the Mediterranean has been systematically equated to a Frenchification, it ought really to be termed an *enfrenchisement*. In this way we get back to the idea of a "Frenchise" first suggested above.

Schematic though it is, this outline points to the long-established mappings that replicate the scholarly geopolitics of "area studies" and split up the Mediterranean according to their topoi.[23] Recent developments in the history of circulations, transfers, or diasporas may certainly be credited with unsettling area-coded notions of agency.[24] Yet such approaches evince a translational metaphor that tends to reintroduce the idea of incommensurable regions under a different guise: more often than not, "connection" and "encounter" are viewed as a stage

subsequent to localized production.[25] In the last resort compartmentalization prevails, and with it a certain idea of the enfrenchised Mediterranean endures.

Little Currencies of Reform: The Miniaturization of Authentication

By contrast, what follows aims to put forward an approach to *currencies*, that is, devices produced and reproduced *by* the experience of circulation itself. Here, then, the Mediterranean is being approached with a focus on the “little tools” of knowledge and authority that circulate throughout. What the notion of currency aims to stress is that we are dealing with concrete abstractions endowed with a technical efficacy, a semiotic relevance, and a symbolic energy.[26] Convertible paper money is a case in point,[27] yet other kinds of officially sanctioned made-for-circulation documents may be considered as well.

“Reform” indeed affected both the technical and symbolic features of administration, as its implementation often went hand in hand with a change in their material form—to begin with, on paper. Starting in the second half of the nineteenth century, administrative proceedings developed into an ever-growing paper economy of their own, where large-scale fabrication and circulation of pre-printed documents of many kinds became common.[28] Among these were the *evrâḳ-ı ṣaḥîḥe* [p. 174] (authenticated documents, lit., valid documents), a kind of stamped paper that the Istanbul authorities started implementing from the mid-1840s onward as a technique of certification and revenue raising. Except for matters involving canon law, any legal proceeding or commercial transaction was to be sanctioned (upon payment of a fixed or proportional issuance fee) by an official certificate, the “validity” of which manifested itself by the use of a specific pre-printed and embossed paper.[29]

This mechanical reproducibility of the government’s paper currencies, which was supplementary to the mostly calligraphic mode of sultanic rule to date, allowed bureaucrats keen

on a renewed notion of state control to multiply and disembody the signs testifying to their authority. But while the authentication tool kit of government multiplied, its circulation put public finances under strain:

> Authenticated paper that is currently in use has been causing much complication and waste when dispatched to the provinces, which makes it impossible to keep these kinds of pieces available in all places; besides, it has been found that most of the revenues [derived from issuance fees] are being absorbed by shipping expenses, and that even when available authenticated paper is not being used when putting together bills of exchange and contracts with foreign subjects.[30]

“Authenticated documents,” as a means to reforming the Ottoman paper economy, thus turned out to be a costly and cumbersome tool of administration. Such difficulties forced new symbolization techniques for government’s hallmarks. Rather than entrusting authentication to the document’s sheet of paper itself, the Ottomans made it incumbent on stamps to perform this task:

> Arrangements are being made to produce printed stamps that it would be quite feasible to deliver to all places at low cost, so that public interest ensues, and whose conception would allow to substitute them for the current documents, in accordance with the rule drafted as per the Council of Ministers’ decision.

[p. 175] As with embossed and pre-printed headings, stamps could certify that the document came from a trusted official source and that issuance fees had been properly paid. They also testified to the authenticity of the document’s production and to that of its “consumption.” What made them more handy than previous headings is that they remained distinct from the document’s sheet of paper until the final stage of issuance. Any paper near at hand could be used and become, once stamped, an authenticated document in its own right. What is more, small stamps could be circulated throughout the empire much more easily than whole paper wads.

Fig. 6.1. Three drafts of stamps to be used for “authenticated documents.” Each drawing measures about one inch in height. Courtesy of Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [Prime Ministership Ottoman Archives], Istanbul, İ.MMS. 27/1193, #2 (reverse), late B. 1280 [January 1–8, 1864].

Fig. 6.2. Detail of stamp used for “authenticated documents.” Courtesy of Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul, İ.MMS. 27/1193, #2 (reverse), late B. 1280 [January 1–8, 1864].

The reverse of the previously quoted document (see figs. 6.1 and 6.2) provides us with one instance of such stamps, as they were first drafted in the 1860s. What emerges here as a first draft became a widely adopted standard in the following decades. Notwithstanding variations and diversifications in pattern, it inspired the design of other stamps also in use for Ottoman legal proceedings (figs. 6.3 and 6.4):

Le très humble et très obéissant
Serviteur
Constantinople le 16/28 Avril 1884
N° 308

Fig. 6.3. Letter of J. Anastassiades to the consul general of Russia in Istanbul. Courtesy of Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul, ŞD. 2584/12, April 16/28, 1884.

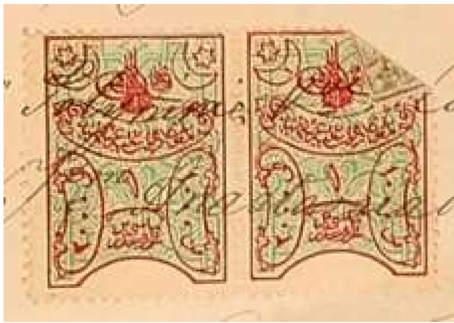

Fig. 6.4. Detail of Anastassiades’s letter to the consul general of Russia in Istanbul. Courtesy of Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul, ŞD. 2584/12, April 16/28, 1884.

These glimpses of the micro-diplomatics of Ottoman governmental practice help make visible the kinds of “currencies” that are the focus of the present study. There is, however, more to it than can meet the eye. As it turns out, this miniaturization story closely dovetails with the set theory of the enfrenchised Mediterranean outlined earlier. To determine how this occurred, let us examine the people who originally designed these little currencies of reform.

Men of Movable Types

Starting in the 1860s, the Ottoman government commissioned draftsmen to design miniaturized means of authentication. Records indicate that among those who took charge of producing the examples above, an odd couple of travelers stands out:

> Arrangements are being made to produce printed stamps that it would be quite feasible to deliver to all places at a low cost. . . . To that end it has been resolved that Mösyö Çörçîl would set off for

> Paris, and that Vaḥdetî Efendi, who counts among the attendants to the Office of Imperial Protocol, would accompany the [p. 176] aforementioned and provide him with assistance in the duty of engraving the molds as required, for which he would be paid twenty thousand piastres to cover his travel expenditures. The Ministry of Finance memorandum pertaining thereto has been read during a special conference meeting [of the Council of Ministers], and when inspecting and examining the drafts of the aforesaid stamps [see fig. 6.2] it appeared that nice arrangements for their use in lieu of authenticated documents would result in admirable features; meanwhile the engraving of the molds in the desired way was deemed contingent on the aforementioned *efendi*’s travel. Assignment has therefore been sent to the aforesaid Ministry so that the aforementioned be sent to the place in question in Mösyö Çörçîl’s company, and receive the above-said amount to cover for his travel expenditures.[31]

The currency of reform here materializes in a sequence that is familiar to scholars studying modern Mediterranean history—one [p. 177] that may be dubbed “An Ottoman in Paris.” It foregrounds men of many skills, many of them still “students,” whom the Sublime Porte commissioned to travel abroad (most notably to France, but also to Great Britain and Austria) to bring back technical devices that might foster the Ottoman government’s “modernizing” project.[32] At the core of this story lies a craftsmen’s tradition akin to “the practice of a *grand tour*—travels aimed at acquiring knowledge and experience through observation, formal studies and contact with other men of science.” The question then arises as to whether “the interpretation of such practice in terms of technical and scientific dependence becomes highly relevant” with regard to the nineteenth-century Mediterranean.[33] Insofar as enfrenchisement remains the rule, it is quite difficult to even think about any answer that looks elsewhere. Clearly then, the “Ottoman in Paris” story line ties in with the reform-cum-enfrenchisement overall set theory.[34]

[p. 178] Let us now take a closer look at the present episode’s two protagonists. Not much is known about either of them, but a few supplementary documents may allow for some basic information about who they were, what they did, and even what they experienced. Vaḥdetî Efendi, we learn, was a *ḫaṭṭâṭ* (calligrapher).[35] In 1856, while serving as a “secretary to the Office of Imperial Insignia,” he (along with two others) received praise and promotions for

"having deployed lustiness in the service of drafting and designing the sublime badges and imperial peace certificates to be delivered and granted to classes of officialdom, servants of the exalted sultanate and more especially officials, officers and private soldiers from the helper states."[36] Vaḥdetî Efendi therefore reached the *rütbe-i s̱âlis̱e* (third rank) in the hierarchy of principal Ottoman civil servants—which, as per its reorganization in 1832–33, included five different levels. Eight years on, he now "count[ed] among the attendants to the Office of Imperial Protocol," which situated him at the core of the Ottoman Palace.[37] This testifies to his ascending career as a court official. Meanwhile, his *cursus honorum* highlights that he was trained in the use of various writing techniques, ranging from calligraphed to printed and engraved letters—a training very similar to the one that some "intellectuals," publishers, and newspapermen could receive at about the same time, though at varying levels and in more strictly bureaucratic services.[38]

This is how Vaḥdetî Efendi came to meet Mösyö Çörçîl, also known as Alfred Churchill.[39] The latter's father, William Churchill, was an English merchant long established in the Ottoman Empire. He first settled in Smyrna in 1815, before he moved to Istanbul in 1831 for a two-year stint as a secretary to the United States embassy.[40] In 1836 he was briefly involved in what became known as the "Churchill affair," when after a few days in prison for hurting a child in a hunting accident he was released under British diplomatic pressure.[41] In compensation for such *avanies* (humiliations) he obtained, along with a decoration set with diamonds and a sultanic *ferman* (decree) granting him the right to export olive oil from the Ottoman realms,[42] [p. 179] the right to publish a newspaper: this became the *Cerîde-i Ḥavâdis̱* (Minute book of news)—which his son took over upon his death in 1846.[43]

The reason for Alfred Churchill’s Paris assignment was undoubtedly his expertise in letterpress printing and movable types and his prolonged experience of collaboration with the Ottoman authorities. His father had founded the *Cerîde-i Ḥavâdis̱* at a time when the Ottoman government was busy ensuring the regular publication of the official gazette *Taḳvîm-i Veḳâyi‘* (Almanac of events). Though privately owned, his paper enjoyed the Sublime Porte’s financial and technical support: types and proofreaders were employed for the design of both publications.[44] It therefore is hardly surprising that the younger Churchill would contribute his expertise to the design of other printed currencies, by appointment to His Majesty the Sultan.

In many respects Alfred Churchill’s features may seem to match the generic profile of the “foreign experts [who] were invited to carry out particular projects” on an occasional basis, namely, “to supply ideas on the innovation and reorganization of existing institutions, to design new ones and even to carry out the reforms.”[45] In all likelihood Churchill remained categorized an *ecnebî* (foreigner) in the Ottoman administrators’ parlance, not least because he enjoyed legal protection from British consular authorities.[46] Still, the enduring character of his “minute-keeping” for the Ottoman state sets his business apart from occasional, freelance consultancy. As a matter of fact, this collaboration ran so deep as to be called a *ḫiẕmet* (service). Moreover, not only did Churchill serve the Ottoman state, but he must also have been versed in Ottoman Turkish, which gave him an insider’s acquaintance of the “Ottoman way.” Under such circumstances his profile could be likened to that of a generic “Ottoman,” as per the tentative definition once provided by Norman Itzkowitz and Max Mote:

> The term Ottoman here is used to signify those who qualified for first-class status in that society by serving the religion (being Muslim), serving the state (holding the position that gave them a state income [p. 180] and a privileged tax status), and knowing the Ottoman Way (using the Ottoman Turkish language and conforming to the manners and customs of the society that used Ottoman Turkish).[47]

Clearly there is much to distinguish this ideal type from what we know of Alfred Churchill's standing. In contrast to Vaḥdetî Efendi, he was no official member of the Ottoman chancery, and to the best of our knowledge, he never "turned Turk," that is, became a Muslim. And yet, to judge by the above-quoted definition, there remains something Ottoman about him. To this extent one may conclude that the two Paris companions had several traits of "Ottomanness" in common.[48]

A Portrait of the "Attendant" as a "Unique Master"

What is gained by reflecting at length on Alfred Churchill's and Vaḥdetî Efendi's profiles and roles? The payoff is the possibility of significantly altering our understanding of the "Ottoman in Paris" story line. Portraying Churchill as a "foreign expert" would almost automatically define Vaḥdetî Efendi as a typical enfrenchised Ottoman—an eternal "student" sent to Paris in the hope of coming back learned and "modern" at last. Conversely, the Ottomanization of Churchill's foreignness makes it problematic to abide by the set theory of Mediterranean enfrenchisement.

To be sure, at the time Vaḥdetî Efendi traveled to Paris he was still called a *ḫalîfe* (attendant)—a word that testifies to his junior status within the patronage-cum-bureaucracy Ottoman chancery system.[49] Should we then conclude that he was sent abroad to complete his education under the tutelage of "Professor" Churchill? This does not stand up to a close reading of the document excerpted above. Vaḥdetî Efendi was mandated not to learn from Churchill's towering experience but to "accompany the aforementioned and provide him with assistance" (*mûmaileyhe terfiḳen*).[50] Since the adverb *terfiḳen* refers to somebody being sent "as companion, attendant, guide," the Ottoman wording makes it difficult here to decide whether Vaḥdetî Efendi joined Churchill as a mere auxiliary or actually as a guide—or maybe both, depending on how their mission was to unfold.[51] This is why my rendering of the previous Ottoman quotation into

English had to remain deliberately [p. 181] ambiguous. Hence "we shall be careful not to interpret the presence of foreign experts, significant as it might be, automatically in terms of backwardness or dependence."[52] Similarly, there is no necessity to conclude that Churchill and Vaḥdetî Efendi simply lived out behaviors presumed by the enfrenchisement set theory. Rather, the two travelers may well have teamed up as equals.

Existing listings and biographies make clear that Vaḥdetî Efendi was no ordinary "attendant"; he was one of the finest calligraphers active at the Ottoman court in this period, better known under his full name, Meḥmed Şevḳet Vaḥdetî Efendi. Born in 1833, "he became a unique master in all eighteen handwriting patterns used by Muslims," according to the early-twentieth-century compiler Clément Huart, whose biographical sketch provides us with the most complete information to date. "The task of drawing imperial diplomas, Huart continues, was granted exclusively to him." He also penned "gilded calligraphic panels in *celi* style that are to be found in most mosques throughout Constantinople," including Hagia Sophia. Upon Sultan ʻAbdülʻazîz's accession to the throne in 1861 it was Vaḥdetî Efendi who designed his *ṭuġrâ* (sultanic monogram). In accordance with an imperial decree, this henceforth set the standard for the design of *ṭuġrâ*s. Huart also mentions Vaḥdetî Efendi's travels to London and Paris. While in France, he relates, the calligrapher took due care to earn the sovereign's favor: he designed cufflinks for Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie, with their names enciphered on them, of which both were very fond. Yet his mission's key purpose, Huart stresses, was "to direct the etching and printing of postal stamps, Ottoman Bank notes and debenture bonds."[53] Judging the banknotes to be "particularly remarkable," the biographer then attempts to describe them in minute detail:

> At the top, under the European numbering placed on both sides, are the words "five Turkish pounds" repeated twenty times, in so fine a writing that it takes a magnifying glass to read them;

> on the right side these same words are written twice in oval *divânî celi* style, and repeated twenty times on a blue background. No calligrapher in our time has been capable of such a tour de force.[54]

[p. 182] Judging from this ex post facto record of Vaḥdetî Efendi’s achievements, it is clear that he by no means played second fiddle. In particular, Huart’s account shows (and other documents concur) that Paris was the prime destination of his travels, and that this “Ottoman in Paris” mission was much wider-ranging than mere stamp design.[55]

Still, this panegyric needs to be read with precaution for several reasons. What it provides is nothing but a inverted mirror image of the enfrenchisement set theory: whereas mastery was previously identified with the Westerner’s expertise, and therefore presumed to rest in Alfred Churchill’s hands, it now becomes the exclusive privilege of Vaḥdetî Efendi, the gifted Ottoman. If one is to eschew the old dichotomous pattern of analysis, a different scheme of things is in order.

Now on Trial, the Enfrenchised Speaks

While meticulously compiling the list of Vaḥdetî Efendi’s illustrious achievements Huart said nothing of the shameful affair the master calligrapher found himself embroiled in following his European travels. Unbeknownst to readers of eulogistic biographies, the draftsman’s mission to Paris brought about a serious setback in his prestigious career. Only a couple of years after he came back to Istanbul, he was accused of misusing some documents he had designed and printed during his mission to Paris. Early in 1868 he was indicted for “daring to sell coupons of public bonds that were out of order” and was given a one-year jail sentence.[56] We learn this thanks to a few reports from within the Ottoman bureaucracy, which interestingly enough include minutes of Vaḥdetî Efendi’s interrogation at the Sublime Porte. These reports provide us with precious (though ex post facto) insights into what the draftsman did, thought he did, or said he thought he

did while in Paris. The enfranchised speaks. However cautious and at times indecisive our reading remains, Vaḥdetî Efendi’s trial file helps to put the enfrenchisement set theory to the test.

Let us start by quoting a few lengthy excerpts of the report summing up Vaḥdetî Efendi’s case:

> Certain coupons of public bonds turned out to be redundant and erroneous in numbering, so that investigations had to be carried out [p. 183] as a result. It was thus ascertained that these pieces had been circulated by Vaḥdetî Efendi, himself a mold engraver for public bonds. Once placed under arrest and trialed . . . the above-mentioned *efendi* admitted that being in Paris at the time when the molds were completed he took with him as a souvenir thirteen 100-pound bonds and some bits of damaged coupons among those which had been printed first for the sake of experiment, since he considered them a work of art, and that subsequent needs forced him to sell them. He pointed out that all in all fifty-four coupons were in his possession, out of which twenty-six had been detached from the thirteen mentioned bonds, whereas the other twenty-eight consisted of fragments and blank coupons.
>
> . . . According to the summary proceedings [of the case] the above-mentioned *efendi* took great care over the printing of the public bonds, which he drew and had printed by official appointment to the state: each was processed five or six times through the machine tool, some two or three thousand ended up torn or mashed to pieces, others that lacked inking were torn and thrown away, so the mentioned thirteen documents and twenty-eight coupons were the most valid, and since the coupons were split into three parts he cut the surplus to a four-part format. This being done he withheld them for more than a year, as he would keep a talisman, until he changed them for money after his salary shrank. He declared that all of them remained as they came out of the machine, except for two which had Frankish and Turkish numbering that conflicted, so he rectified the French figure on the first piece and the Turkish figure on the second to make them tally.[57]

The meaning and implications of this quote are analyzed in the following sections.

What Small Print, Numbers, and Slips Have to Tell

Understanding what “went wrong” with Vaḥdetî Efendi requires us to pursue a bit further the micro-diplomatics of Ottoman governmental practice initiated above. We need a better sense of what the “public [p. 184] bonds” the draftsman drafted and printed looked like in order to understand what prompted his indictment. While the files kept at the Ottoman archives do not provide us with a sample, other such bonds (*eshâm-ı ‘umûmiyye-i devlet-i ‘aliyye*) issued in the Ottoman realms at that time help illustrate what Vaḥdetî Efendi’s work looked like. Molds mentioned in the report could have looked like the one in figure 6.5.

[p. 185]

Fig. 6.5. Mold for an Ottoman debenture bond, undated. Courtesy of Ali Akyıldız, *Osmanlı Finans Sisteminde Dönüm Noktası: Kağıt Para ve Sosyo-ekonomik Etkileri* (Istanbul: Eren, 1996), xlviii.

All the same, the reference to “coupons” leads us to presume that what Vaĥdetî Efendi produced looked more like the one in figure 6.6. At the bond’s bottom right corner, one may notice a tiny mention which allows us to ascertain that it was issued in “Paris—Imprimerie Poitevin, Rue Damiette 2 et 4.” A letter from the Ottoman embassy in Paris pertaining to Vaĥdetî Efendi’s work on “mobile stamps” identifies “Monsieur Poitevin” as “the provider of the aforesaid stamps.”[58] It therefore stands to reason, given the match of date and place, that Vaĥdetî Efendi himself contributed to designing the document above.

Fig. 6.6. Ottoman debenture bond, March 18–30, 1865. Courtesy of Ali Akyıldız, *Osmanlı Dönemi Tahvil ve Hisse Senetleri, “Ottoman Securities”* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt yayınları, 2001), 309.

Moreover, the facsimile is particularly helpful in making sense of the difference between “bonds” and “coupons” affirmed in the above-quoted report. The bond proper consists of the sheet’s largest section, laid out in a triptych composed (from left to right) in English, Ottoman, and French. Below are the coupons themselves—the coupons of interest, that is, which could be detached one by one from the document’s main body whenever the bondholder claimed repayment for his initial loan (in the present case this was to happen in biannual installments, at a 5 percent annual rate).

Printed on the same sheet of paper, bond and coupons are further bound together by a common numbering system. The same number appears in both Arabic and Indic numerals (for the English/French and Ottoman Turkish sections of the document, respectively). It shows up again at the bottom left corner of each and every coupon. Finally, the use of gray-tinted boxes makes clear that these numbered zones were deemed crucial to the document’s validity, while signaling a concern for possible tampering. In short, this sprouting of numbers throughout each and every segment of the document testifies to the same miniaturization of authentication that was studied above.

These numbers were responsible for Vaḥdetî Efendi’s misfortune. It [p. 186] was because “certain coupons of public bonds turned out to be redundant and erroneous in numbering” that the draftsman ended up being indicted and put on trial. Later on, in the confession quoted above, Vaḥdetî Efendi admits that among the bonds he produced there were “two which had Frankish and Turkish numbering that conflicted, so he rectified the French figure on the first piece and the Turkish figure on the second to make them tally.”[59] This slight “rectification” is what allowed the Ottoman authorities to sniff out the draftsman’s inside job and catch him red-handed.

Vaḥdetî Efendi could thus be declared guilty of "altering numbers" on official documents that were considered "the Sublime State's exclusive insignia." By tampering with paper money in such a way he clearly [p. 187] usurped the sovereign's fiduciary privileges. Judging from the correspondence, the Ottoman authorities did not feel the need to label this misdeed a "forgery." Still, one may argue that, while in Paris, Vaḥdetî Efendi did indeed forge a bond of a different kind, and a quite distinctive one at that.

Public Bonds, Intimate Ties

There is more to Vaḥdetî Efendi's confession than a tarnished reputation. His story has a considerable bearing on our understanding of the "Ottoman in Paris" experience—hence, of the patterns of transaction that are involved in Mediterranean history.

On the face of it, the draftsman's story dovetails nicely with the concept of enfrenchisement, that is, the idea that through servile reproduction of a presumed "French model" a framework of cultural extroversion and social distinction arose that brought about the "invention" of the modern Mediterranean. To proponents of the set theory that such a concept entails, Vaḥdetî Efendi's misfortune appears to be a case in point. It appears to show how an Ottoman strove to learn from abroad yet failed to articulate imported expertise into a full-fledged technical adoption, that is, a technology.[60]

Indeed, the draftsman fully embraced the commitment to mechanical reproduction that was involved in his Paris mission. Feverishly he attempted to reproduce the printing process until satisfied with the outcome. His exertions may thus appear symbolically to materialize the Ottomans' attempt to align their history with that of other Mediterranean empires, under the spell of belated transfer and appropriation.

Emerging from such views is the idea that all such attempts ended up failing, due to an irreducible incongruence of “cultures” between European technologies of power and their “Ottoman-in-Paris” counterparts. Vaḥdetî Efendi’s treatment of debenture bonds “as [one] would keep a talisman” could well lend itself to such an interpretation, since it seems to signal a confusion of values and an unbridgeable cultural chasm.[61] By the same token, it is revelatory that a few torn slips of paper money could become “a work of art” in the draftsman’s eyes. For all his mastery of the fine arts of calligraphy, and perhaps precisely because [p. 188] he was such a master, Vaḥdetî Efendi seems to have misconstrued his mission as having to do with “art,” whereas its primary purpose was to provide the Ottoman administration with reliable tools of miniaturized authentication. To be sure, the draftsman also fully grasped the importance of bureaucratic technicalities, such as keeping an eye on numbers: hence his readiness to “rectify” them whenever inconsistency arose. To name this “rectification” Vaḥdetî Efendi used the word *taṣḥîḥ*—literally, restoring to health or authenticating—by which he meant to convey that he acted in good faith.[62] But the Sublime Porte bureaucrats understood this move quite differently. To them it amounted to a *taġyîr* (alteration) that would inevitably deprive the document of its preordained registration value, and thus showed Vaḥdetî Efendi’s lack of reverence for authentication procedures.

As a matter of fact, the draftsman was less concerned about the correction of small numbers than about their consistency: in an era of technical reproducibility he looked for authenticity not in bureaucratic cross-checkability but in the aesthetic coherence of a “work of art.” Trust in numbers was trivial to him; what really mattered was whether the design of the larger picture turned out successfully, the same thing that mattered most when drafting

calligraphic panels for the Hagia Sophia mosque, or etching the Sultan's name on an emerald jewel. This is what one may call putting two and two together to make five.

Vaḥdetî Efendi's understanding of his mission to Paris was thus more that of an artist-in-residence than of a "foreign expert." Does this mean he missed the point? And should we conclude that he remained the enfrenchised Ottoman whom many would claim he was? The ambiguities that linger on in the draftsman's account suggest something else. Vaḥdetî Efendi did choose to turn the technical specimen he had been designing into a non-reproducible *unicum*—by calling it a "work of art," considering it a "talisman" and bringing it back to Istanbul as a "souvenir." But while withholding his precious and secret talisman, he never lost sight of its fiduciary value. If the bond could be converted into such an object of affection, so could the talisman be converted back again into the impersonal technology of paper money—which it eventually was, when "he changed [it] for money after his salary shrank." Rather [p. 189] than a sign of cultural incongruence, Vaḥdetî Efendi's play on values testifies to his sense of ambiguity and convertibility.

Last but not least, the bond the draftsman forged while in Paris differed from one of enfrenchisement inasmuch as it pledged no aping allegiance to its presumed "model." Vaḥdetî Efendi's attitude was not one of sheer technical reproduction: his confession offhandedly insists that he relished the "experimental" thrill of the production process.[63] This comes as a clear reminder that there is simply no such thing as ingenuous mimicry. Vaḥdetî Efendi's [p. 190] performance encapsulates both the quest for a technology of reproduction and a personal eagerness to experiment driven by singular fantasies. The "public bonds" he drafted were intimate ones indeed: made both out of duty and out of curiosity.

Conclusion: A Forger’s Scheme of Things

To think about Mediterranean history, the present study weaves together two different lines of reasoning: an Ottoman paper money story on the one hand, and the historian’s involvement in the Mediterranean “Frenchise” on the other. This approach highlights how the Ottoman draftsman’s experiment with paper money may help unsettle the tenets of the enfrenchisement set theory.

There have been, of course, many similar or equivalent undertakings at work of late in studies of Mediterranean worlds. With the specter of “globalization” starting to haunt studies premised on regionalized topoi, the use-value of “areas” has been shaken to its foundations. As opposed to the topical and chronic regularity that an area is supposed to symbolize, accounting for the global has meant working to transcend the fixity of time and place framings. Works that question how to “mov[e] away not only from theories of territorial sovereignty but also from theories of spatialized sovereignty” have flourished.[64] One means to that end, in studies dealing with the Mediterranean world at large, has been an increased focus on “troublemakers”—whether named translators, converts, or more generically, even, brokers—whose “intercultural prowess” overrode the area’s “culture.”[65] While in many regards Vaḥdetî Efendi the draftsman may be counted among this motley crew, there also is specific historiographical relevance in further characterizing his performance. And although his misdeed never was labeled a “forgery” by the Ottoman authorities, to us this wording may become critically helpful when trying to think of the kind of disenfrenchised Mediterranean that his coinage story brings to light.

The idea of forgery conveys a sense of Janus-faced agency that brings it close to, yet sets it apart from, frameworks of “brokerage.” Those historians who propose the latter approaches, mindful though they may be of the possibility of crossing or straddling boundaries, actually presuppose and perpetuate the overarching category of “boundary.”[66] Declaring borders now

open to circulation by no means implies that guards and patrols went off-duty. In such accounts, any understanding of historical trajectories requires that they be premised on preordained compartmentalizations, whether cultural, religious, jurisdictional, or otherwise. Thus, emphasis is laid "on connections between 'cultures' rather than the cultural conditions of connection."[67] One is therefore led to endorse the same old "production-then-circulation" sequential pattern, whereby all that circulates throughout the Mediterranean is primarily defined by its origins in one "area" or another. In sum, brokerage analysis is still invested in the kind of set theory that has been buttressing the historiography of Mediterranean enfrenchisement all along.

Forgers may be considered to resemble "brokers" at first sight, yet they critically differ. While the latter always appear to live "in between" multiple orders or modernities without being indentured to any, the former faithfully abide by all that is legal tender. The forger's tale is one of perpetually *reforming*—that is, simultaneously reproducing and renewing—the authority of reigning legitimate currencies. So Vaḥdetî Efendi strove to work out a reliable system of made-for-circulation fiduciary tools. He was no loose cannon sprung from some unspecified in-between, but a craftsman dedicated to exploring new means of aesthetic achievement while pursuing his commitment to calligraphy, and also a chancery man keen to keep pace with changing tools of certification while upholding the authenticity of his master's rule. On these two accounts he had a say in the technology of authority and could testify to the intricacy of its currencies. What he did was experiment with this intricacy: surely this implied allowing for possible conflicts between [p. 191] aesthetic and bureaucratic requirements to emerge in the process. More importantly still, given the fact that these currencies were designed to circulate as both symbols and techniques, their making could by no means be premised on an idea of compartmentalized, bounded worlds: it required devising specific cultural conditions of

connection to start with, irrespective of whether this would imply connecting “cultures” in any way. That meant approaching culture as a matter of *coinage*, that is, of production that could only take place at the same time that circulation itself occurred.

Maybe, then, one should adopt, when thinking of Mediterranean history, a forger’s scheme of things.[68] In it, concomitances and interdependencies take center stage, unlike enfrenchised studies, which narrate Mediterranean history in terms of belated appropriation and mimetic transfer. In so doing one may also hope to draw up a revised chronology of the modalities of governance and change throughout the Mediterranean world, detached from the great rifts that have marked narratives of its history. Rather than in the mediating, let us approach the Mediterranean in the forging.

Notes

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With regard to Ottoman Turkish language, I have here adhered to the transliteration system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Translations from all non-English sources are mine unless otherwise noted.

1. Ariel Salzmann, “The Moral Economies of the Pre-Modern Mediterranean: Preliminaries to the Study of Cross-Cultural Migration during the Long Sixteenth Century,” in *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community: Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faroqhi,* ed. Vera Costantini and Markus Koller (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 463.
2. Christoph K. Neumann, “Ottoman Provincial Towns from the Eighteenth to the Nineteenth Century: A Re-Assessement of Their Place in the Transformation of the Empire,” in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber (Beyrouth: Ergon Verlag Würzburg in Kommission, 2002), 131–32.
3. Stanford J. Shaw, “Some Aspects of the Aims and Achievements of the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Reformers,” in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968): 29–39.
4. For instance, Engin D. Akarlı, *Belgelerle Tanzimat: Osmanlı Sadrıazamlarından Âli ve Fuad Paşalarının Siyasî Vasiyyetnâmeleri* [The Tanzimat in documents: Political testaments of the

Grand Viziers Âli and Fuad Pashas] (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, 1978); *Mithat Paşa'nın Hatıraları* [The memoirs of Midhat Pasha], ed. Osman Selim Kocahanoğlu (Istanbul: Temel Yayınları, 1997); *Les Musurus: Une famille de diplomates ottomans. Lettres et documents (1852–1910)*, ed. Olivier Bouquet and Sinan Kuneralp (Istanbul: Isis, 2015).

5. William Clark and Peter Becker, ed., *Little Tools of Knowledge: Historical Essays on Academic and Bureaucratic Practices* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).
6. Julia A. Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans: North Africa and Europe in an Age of Migration, ca. 1800–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), xii.
7. Hamit Bozarslan, "Pourquoi Daniel Rivet est-il parti à l'Est?," in *De* l'*Atlas à l'Orient musulman: Contributions en hommage à Daniel Rivet*, ed. Alain Messaoudi and Dominique Avon (Paris: Karthala, 2011), 33–42.
8. André Raymond, "Islamic City, Arab City: Orientalist Myths and Recent Views," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 21, no. 1 (1994): 3–4.
9. Immanuel Wallerstein, "Eurocentrism and Its Avatars: The Dilemmas of Social Science," *New Left Review*, no. 226 (1997): 93.
10. See Immanuel Wallerstein, Hale Decdeli, and Reşat Kasaba, "The Incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the World-Economy," in *The Ottoman Empire and the World-Economy*, ed. Huri İslamoğlu-İnan (Cambridge and Paris: Cambridge University Press and Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1987), 88–97; Resat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World-Economy: The Nineteenth Century* (New York: SUNY Press, 1988).
11. Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 3. Doumani counts among those who made the case for re-"localizing" such world-economic processes.

12. Dyala Hamzah, “The Making of the Arab Intellectual (1880–1960): Empire, Public Sphere, and the Colonial Coordinates of Selfhood,” in *The Making of the Arab Intellectual: Empire, Public Sphere, and the Colonial Coordinates of Selfhood*, ed. Dyala Hamzah (London: Routledge, 2013), 3.
13. Virginia H. Aksan, “Breaking the Spell of the Baron de Tott: Reframing the Question of Military Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1760–1830,” *International History Review* 24, no. 2 (2002): 264.
14. Constantin Iordachi, “The Making of Citizenship in the Post-Ottoman Balkans: State Building, Foreign Models, and Legal-Political Transfers,” in *Ottomans into Europeans: State and Institution Building in South-East Europe*, ed. Wim van Meurs and Alina Mungiu-Pippidi (London: Hurst, 2010), 179–220; Tassos Anastassiadis and Nathalie Clayer, “Introduction: Beyond the Incomplete or Failed Modernization Paradigm,” in *Society, Politics, and State Formation in Southeastern Europe during the 19th Century*, ed. Tassos Anastassiadis and Nathalie Clayer (Athens: Alpha Bank Historical Archives, 2011), 11–32; Olivier Bouquet, “Is It Time to Stop Speaking about Ottoman Modernisation?” in *Order and Compromise: Government Practices in Turkey from the Late Ottoman Empire to the Early 21st Century*, ed. Marc Aymes, Benjamin Gourisse, and Élise Massicard (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 45–67.
15. Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860–1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 16, 168.
16. Juan Cole, *Napoleon’s Egypt: Invading the Middle East* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 247–48.
17. My point here harks back to Marc Bloch’s take on “nomenclature” in *The Historian’s Craft*,

trans. Peter Putnam (New York: Knopf, 1953), 159–60. See also Albert Hourani, “The Changing Face of the Fertile Crescent in the XVIIIth Century,” *Studia Islamica* 8 (1957): 90.

18. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 2–3. Debates on these issues have been going on ever since: “The absence of anything approaching a consensus on the meaning of the French expedition may be a fair reflection of the state of the field,” as Kenneth M. Cuno noted in “The Napoleonic Moment in Egyptian History: Not Such a Watershed?” [review of Irene Bierman, ed., *Napoleon in Egypt* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 2003)], *Journal of African History* 45, no. 3 [2004]: 505. See also Dror Ze’evi’s insightful discussion in “Back to Napoleon? Thoughts on the Beginning of the Modern Era in the Middle East,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19, no. 1 (2004): 73–94.

19. See Edhem Eldem, *Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals, and Decorations* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2004), 16: “Our story begins towards the end of the summer of 1798, in the wake of Napoleon Bonaparte’s daring invasion of Ottoman Egypt.” Rather than one of “appropriation,” Eldem’s story is one of “the familiarization of Ottomans with medals” over the course of the nineteenth century (144).

20. Thus in İlber Ortaylı and Tekin Akıllıoğlu, “Le Tanzimat et le modèle français: Mimétisme ou adaptation?” in *L’Empire ottoman, la République de Turquie et la France*, ed. Hâmit Batu and Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont (Istanbul: Isis, 1986), 197–208. A recent attempt at rekindling the interest for such a framework is found in Emmanuel Szurek, “Extraversion et dépendances: Les termes de l’échange culturel franco-turc de la guerre de Crimée à la guerre froide,” in *Turcs et Français: Une histoire culturelle, 1860–1960*, ed. Güneş Işıksel and Emmanuel Szurek (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2014), 27–69, more explicitly on 58–59.

21. İlber Ortaylı, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Alman Nüfuzu* [German leverage in the Ottoman Empire] (Istanbul: Kaynak, 1983); Hamit Bozarslan, "Modèles français et allemand au miroir ottoman," in *Plurales Deutschland–Allemagne plurielle: Festschrift für Étienne François–Mélanges Étienne François*, ed. Peter Schöttler, Patrice Veit, and Michael Werner (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 1999), 58–65.

22. Most notably in Heidemarie Doganalp-Votzi and Claudia Römer, *Herrschaft und Staat: Politische Terminologie des Osmanischen Reiches der Tanzimatzeit* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008), 42, 45, 74, 99, 106, 122, 224. See also Aylin Koçunyan, "Negotiating the Ottoman Constitution, 1856–1876" (PhD thesis, European University Institute, Florence, 2013), 78–80; Einar Wigen, "Ottoman Concepts of Empire," *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 8, no. 1 (2013): 44–66; and Szurek, "Extraversion et dépendances," 42, 60–62. Cf. Roderic H. Davison, "The French Language as a Vehicle for Ottoman Reform in the Nineteenth Century," in *De la Révolution française à la Turquie d'Atatürk: La modernisation politique et sociale. Les lettres, les sciences et les arts. Actes des colloques d'Istanbul (10–12 mai 1989)*, ed. Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont and Edhem Eldem (Istanbul: Isis, 1990), 125–40.

23. Marie-Noëlle Bourguet et al., eds., *L'invention scientifique de la Méditerranée: Égypte, Morée, Algérie* (Paris: Éditions de l'EHESS, 1998); Marie-Noëlle Bourguet et al., eds., *Enquêtes en Méditerranée: Les expéditions françaises d'Égypte, de Morée, et d'Algérie* (Athens: Institut de recherches néohelléniques/FNRS, 1999); Anne Ruel, "L'invention de la Méditerranée," *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'Histoire* 32 (1991): 7–14; Florence Deprest, "L'invention géographique de la Méditerranée: Éléments de réflexion," *L'Espace Géographique* 31, no. 1 (2002): 73–92.

24. Patrick Cabanel offers a more “archipelagic” approach to “the immaterial empire of French language” in the Mediterranean: see his “Introduction—Trois France en Méditerranée orientale: L’empire immatériel de la langue,” in *Une France en Méditerranée: Écoles, langue, et culture françaises, XIXe–XXe siècles*, ed. Patrick Cabanel (Grâne: Creaphis, 2006), 9–29.

25. For an elaborate critique see Jocelyne Dakhlia and Wolfgang Kaiser, eds., *Les musulmans dans l’histoire de l’Europe*, vol. 2, *Passages et contacts en Méditerranée* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2013).

26. E.g., Stephen Ortega, *Negotiating Transcultural Relations in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Ottoman-Venitian Encounters* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

27. Christian Bromberger, “Technologie et analyse sémantique des objets: Pour une sémio-technologie,” *L’Homme* 19, no. 1 (1979): 105–40.

28. Roderic H. Davison, “The First Ottoman Experiment with Paper Money,” in *Türkiyenin sosyal ve ekonomik tarihi (1071–1920). Social and economic history of Turkey (1071–1920). Papers Presented to the first International Congress on the Social and Economic History of Turkey, Hacettepe University, Ankara, July 11–13, 1977*, ed. Osman Okyar and Halil İnalcık (Ankara: Meteksan, 1980), 243–51; Ali Akyıldız, *Osmanlı Finans Sisteminde Dönüm Noktası: Kağıt Para ve Sosyo-ekonomik Etkileri* [The Ottoman financial system at a turning point: Paper money and its socioeconomic effects] (Istanbul: Eren, 1996); Edhem Eldem, *Osmanlı Bankası Arşivi ve Tahsin İsbiroğlu Koleksiyonundan Osmanlı Bankası Banknotları (1863–1914)* [Banknotes issued by the Ottoman Bank found in the Ottoman Bank Archives and in Tahsin İsbiroğlu’s collection] (Istanbul: Osmanlı Bankası, 1998); Ali Akyıldız, *Osmanlı Dönemi Tahvil ve Hisse Senetleri, “Ottoman Securities”* [Debenture bonds and

shareholding deeds from the Ottoman period] (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt yayınları, 2001). See also *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, s.v. “Ashām” [Shares], by B. Lewis, and vol. 4, s.v. “Ḳā’ime” [Banknote], by R. Davison; *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 11, s.v. “Eshâm” [Shares], by M. Genç, and vol. 24, s.v. “Kâime” [Banknote], by A. Akyıldız.

29. Marc Aymes, *“Un grand progrès—sur le papier”: Histoire provinciale des réformes ottomanes à Chypre au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Peeters, 2010).

30. Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Tanzimat Maliye Nazırları* [Finance ministers of the Tanzimat] (Istanbul: Kanaat Kitabevi, n.d. [1939]), vol. 1, 67–72; Abdüllatif Şener, “Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Vergi Reformları” [Ottoman tax reforms during the Tanzimat period], in *150. Yılında Tanzimat* [The 150th anniversary of Tanzimat], ed. Hakkı Dursun Yıldız (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992), 265–66; Stanford J. Shaw, “The Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Tax Reforms and Revenue System,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 6, no. 4 (1975): 434–38.

31. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [Prime Ministership Ottoman Archives], Istanbul [hereafter BOA], İ.MMS. 27/1193, memorandum to the Sultan’s offices, 21–30 receb 1280 [January 1–10, 1864]. Also for the following quotation.

32. BOA, İ.MMS. 27/1193, memorandum to the Sultan’s offices, 21–30 receb 1280 [January 1–10, 1864]

33. Klaus Kreiser, “Étudiants ottomans en France et en Suisse (1909–1912),” in *Histoire économique et sociale de l’Empire ottoman et de la Turquie (1326–1960)*, ed. Daniel Panzac (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 843–54; Hamiyet Sezer, “Tanzimat Dönemi’nde Avrupa Şehirlerine Gönderilen Öğrenciler” [Students sent to European cities during the Ottoman reforms], in

Osmanlı Dünyasında Bilim ve Eğitim Milletlerarası Kongresi. İstanbul 12–15 Nisan 1999. Tebliğler [Proceedings of the international congress on knowledge and education in the Ottoman world: Istanbul, 12–15 April 1999] (Istanbul: İslam Tarih, Sanat ve Kültür Araştırma Merkezi, 2001), 687–711; Adnan Şişman, *Tanzimat Döneminde Fransa'ya Gönderilen Osmanlı Öğrencileri (1839–1876)* [Ottoman students sent to France during the Ottoman reforms] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2004); Mustafa Gençoğlu, "Osmanlı Devleti'nce Batı'ya Eğitim Amacıyla Gönderilenler (1830–1908): Bir Grup Biyografisi Araştırması" [Those the Ottoman state sent to the West for educational purposes (1830–1908): Study of a collective biography] (doctoral diss., Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Ankara, 2008). Cf. Darina Martykánová, *Reconstructing Ottoman Engineers: Archaeology of a Profession (1789–1914)* (Pisa: Edizioni Plus/Pisa University Press, 2010), 18–19.

34. Martykánová, *Reconstructing Ottoman Engineers,* 182.
35. Rifaʿâh Râfiʿ al-Ṭahṭawî's account of his travels to Paris in 1826–31, *Taḫlîṣ-i ibrîz fî talḫîṣ-i Bârîz* [Extracting fine gold in a condensed report of Paris] (Bulaq: Maṭbaʿât Ṣâḥib al-Saʿâdah al-Abadîyah, 1839), has become a source endowed with a landmark value in this regard: cf. *An Imam in Paris: Al-Tahtawi's Visit to France (1826–1831)*, ed. Daniel L. Newman (London: Saqi Books, 2004).
36. BOA, İ.DH. 535/37193, telegram translation, n.d. [~ ẕî'l-ḳâʿde 1281/March–April 1865]. Cf. Meḥmed S̱üreyyâ, *Sicill-i ʿOs̱mânî yâḫûd Teẕkire-i meşâhir-i ʿOs̱mâniyye* [Ottoman register, or memorial of famous Ottomans], ed. Nuri Akbayar (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları 1995–98), vol. 5, 1647.
37. BOA, İ.DH. 359/23762, memorandum to the Sultan's offices, 9 rebîʿü'l-evvel 1273 [November 7, 1856].

38. Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü* [Dictionary of Ottoman historical terms and phrases] (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1946–53), vol. 3, 478; cf. Hakan Karateke, *Padişahım Çok Yaşa! Osmanlı Devletinin Son Yüz Yılında Merasimler* [Long live my Sultan! Ceremonies during the last hundred years of the Ottoman state] (Istanbul: Kitap, 2004).
39. See, e.g., the case of Ebüżżiyâ Meḥmed Tevfîḳ Beg as studied by Özgür Türesay, “Être intellectuel à la fin de l’Empire ottoman: Ebüzziya Tevfik (1849–1913) et son temps” (doctoral diss., Institut des langues et civilisations orientales, Paris, 2008), 61–70. Cf. Orhan Koloğlu, “La formation des intellectuels à la culture journalistique dans l’Empire ottoman et l’influence de la presse étrangère,” in *Presse turque et presse de Turquie: Actes des trois colloques organisés par l’Institut français d’études anatoliennes et l’École supérieure de la presse de l’Université de Marmara*, ed. Nathalie Clayer, Alexandre Popovic and Thierry Zarcone (Istanbul: Isis, 1992), 123–41.
40. BOA, HR.SFR.(3) 85/31, “Lettre d’introduction de Djemil Pacha pour Mr Churchill & Vahdetti Eff.—1864,” February 6, 1864.
41. *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 7, s.v. “Cerîde-i Havâdis,” by Z. Ebüzziya.
42. O. Koloğlu, *Miyop Çörçil Olayı: Ceride-i Havadis’in Öyküsü* [The myopic Churchill affair: The story of the “Minute book of news”] (Ankara: Yorum, 1986).
43. BOA, HAT. 1175/46438, multiple documents, ẕî’l-ḥicce 1252 [March–April 1837].
44. BOA, İ.MVL. 83/1666, recommendation to award the “*cerîdecilik ḫiẕmeti*” (service of keeping the minute book) to Alfred Churchill, 28 şevvâl 1262 [October 19, 1846].
45. *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 7, s.v. “Cerîde-i Havâdis,” by Z. Ebüzziya.
46. Martykánová, *Reconstructing Ottoman Engineers,* 182.

47. One may here refer to architect Fossati, who, in spite of his well-established relationships with the Ottoman authorities, was in 1847 denied the right to buy a house in Beyoğlu on account of not being an Ottoman subject: Göksun Akyürek, *Tanzimat Döneminde Mimarlık, Bilgi ve İktidar* [Architecture, knowledge, and government during the Tanzimat period] (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt yayınları, 2011), 94–95.

48. Norman Itzkowitz and Max Mote, eds., *Mubadele: An Ottoman-Russian Exchange of Ambassadors* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 11.

49. For a further discussion with regard to this notion of “Ottomanness” see Marc Aymes, *A Provincial History of the Ottoman Empire: Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2014), 40–52 and 114–26. With regard to debates about “Ottoman identity” see F. Asli Ergul, “The Ottoman Identity: Turkish, Muslim, or *Rum*?” *Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 4 (2012): 629–45.

50. Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri*, vol. 1, 709; Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Tarih Sözlüğü* [Historical lexikon from the Tanzimat until the Republic] (Istanbul: İletişim, 1985), 54.

51. BOA, İ.MMS. 27/1193, memorandum to the Sultan’s offices, 21–30 receb 1280 [January 1–10, 1864], quoted above.

52. Here quoting the standard definition for *terfīḳ* provided by Sir James W. Redhouse’s *Turkish and English Lexikon* (Istanbul: Boyajian, 1890), 535.

53. Martykánová, *Reconstructing Ottoman Engineers,* 182.

54. Clément Huart, *Les calligraphes et les miniaturistes de l’Orient musulman* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1908), 198–200. Other available biographies, most importantly one by İbnülemin Mahmut Kemal İnal in Turkish, amount to little more than a translation of Huart’s work: İnal, *Son*

Hattatlar [The last calligraphers] (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1955), 434–41. My thanks to Özgür Türesay for kindly providing me with a copy of this latter text.

55. Huart, *Les calligraphes,* 200.

56. BOA, İ.DH. 535/37193, copy of an imperial decree to the Ministry of Finance, 5 ẕî'l-ḳâ'de 1281 [April 1, 1865], states that Vaḥdetî Efendi is being commissionned "to take with him to Paris the public bond sample that has been prepared, so as to trace and draw there what ought to be written on it." For other documents showing that Vaḥdetî Efendi's logistics were primarily organized around Paris see İ.HR. 207/11953, A.MKT.MHM. 333/15 (draft order to the Ministry of Finance, dated overleaf 28 ẕî'l-ḥicce 1281 and 2 muḥarrem 1282 [24 and 28 May 1865]). Documents giving short details on trips to London include A.MKT.MHM. 356/71 (draft order to the Ministry of Finance, dated overleaf 8–11 muḥarrem 1282 [June 3–6, 1865]), where Vaḥdetî Efendi is said to be sent there "for postal stamps."

57. BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 400/25, #4, draft order to the *Żabṭiye müşîrîni* (commanders of Public Order) and to the Ministry of Finance, 19–25 şevvâl 1284 [February 13–19, 1868]. As this document indicates, Vaḥdetî Efendi's jail term began on 24 cemâẕîü'l-âḫır 1284 [October 23, 1867]; his release was ordered three months in advance of the original sentence (İ.ŞD. 6/316, #4, memorandum to the Sultan's palace and appended sultanic order, 13–14 Rebî'ü'l-evvel 1285 [July 4–5, 1868]).

58. BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 400/25, #3, round robin of the *Meclis-i vâlâ-yı aḥkâm-ı 'adliyye* (High Council of Judicial Ordinances), 12 şevvâl 1284/25 kânûn-ı s̱ânî 1283 [February 6, 1868]. Other similar documents include BOA, MVL. 1036/81, *fezleke* (police report), 17 receb 1284 [November 14, 1867].

59. BOA, HR.TO. 75/33, letter (in French) from the Ottoman embassy in Paris to "Son Altesse Aali

Pacha Ministre des Affaires Etrangères de S.M.I. le Sultan," August 25, 1865 (along with draft of Ottoman translation). Using Corinne Bouquin and Élisabeth Parinet's online *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs-lithographes du XIXe siècle* one may ascertain that Étienne Poitevin's printing press was at the time in charge of imperial stamps designed for railways, banks and other manufacturing companies. See http://elec.enc.sorbonne.fr/imprimeurs/node/22959 (accessed on April 29, 2015).

60. BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 400/25, #3, round robin of the High Council of Judicial Ordinances, 12 şevvâl 1284/25 kânûn-ı s̱ânî 1283 [February 6, 1868]. Also for the following quotation.

61. Cf. Tuncay Zorlu, *Innovation and Empire in Turkey: Sultan Selim III and the Modernisation of the Ottoman Navy* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 42–46, 75, 164–66.

62. For background on talismans involving a certain "science of letters" see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, s.v. "Abdjad" [Use of Arabic characters for numeration], by G. Weil and G. S. Colin, vol. 2, s.v. "Djafr" [Divinatory technique], by T. Fahd, vol. 3, s.v. "Hurūf ('ilm al-)" [Science of letters], by T. Fahd, and vol. 12 (supplement), s.v. "Budūh" [Talismanic word], by D. B. Macdonald.

63. All the more so since this "rectification" was, in the words of the Ottoman authorities, a defining notion of Vaḥdetî's assignement: e.g., see BOA, HR.TO. 377/45, letter (in French) from the "Agence financière du gouvernement ottoman" in Paris to "Son Altesse Fuad Pacha, Grand Vizir de l'Empire Ottoman," February 18, 1864: "Mr Churchill se [rend] à Londres avec Vhadity [*sic*] Effendy, pour y procéder à la rectification des poinçons des pièces de 5, 10, et 20 paras." Included is a draft of the letter's Ottoman translation, which uses *taṣḥîḥ* as the equivalent for "rectification."

64. BOA, A.MKT.MHM. 400/25, #3, round robin of the High Council of Judicial Ordinances, 12

şevvâl 1284/25 kânûn-ı s̱ânî 1283 [February 6, 1868]: Vaḥdetî Efendi speaks of “coupons […] which had been printed first for the sake of experiment [*berâ-yı tecrübe*].”

65. Ruth Miller, “Save Our State: A Decade of Writing on Jurisdiction and Sovereignty in East and West Asia,” *International Journal in Middle East Studies* 45 (2013): 159.

66. Jocelyne Dakhlia, “ ‘Trickster Travels’ o la prodezza interculturale,” *Quaderni Storici* 126, no. 3 (2007): 903–15, on Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006); see, among others, Giovanni Levi, *Inheriting Power: The Story of an Exorcist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Christine M. Philliou, “Mischief in the Old Regime: Provincial Dragomans and Social Change at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 25 (2001): 103–21; and E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

67. For example, Linda Darling, “Mediterranean Borderlands: Early English Merchants in the Levant,” in *The Ottoman Empire: Myths, Realities, and “Black Holes.” Contributions in Honour of Colin Imber*, ed. Eugenia Kermeli and Oktay Özel (Istanbul: Isis, 2006), 173–88; Ziad Fahmy, “Jurisdictional Borderlands: Extraterritoriality and ‘Legal Chameleons’ in Precolonial Alexandria,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55, no. 2 (2013): 305–29.

68. Naor Ben-Yehoyada, “Transnational Political Cosmology: A Central Mediterranean Example,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56, no. 4 (2014): 895.

69. See also Marc Aymes, “Changeur d’empire,” in *Penser, agir, et vivre dans l’Empire ottoman et en Turquie: Études réunies pour François Georgeon*, ed. Nathalie Clayer and Erdal Kaynar (Paris: Peeters, 2013), 261–82.