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K. E. Fleming: The Muslim Bonaparte

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ONE

INTRODUCTION

IFIRST LEARNED of Ali Pasha when I was a teenager, while on a now-distant family holiday to Greece. In the course of our mapless meanderings, I went to Ioannina, in Epiros, and saw the remnants of the city as it was in Ali's day, with its defensive walls and semipreserved old quarter. Many sites seemed to be under reconstruction, but they were being worked on at such a desultory pace that it was difficult to determine whether buildings were in the process of being demolished or revived. At a local mosque we found a lone workman sitting amid great heaps of rubble in the unlit gloom, tapping aimlessly with his hammer at what appeared to be a wall. A shovel stood propped against a pile of rubbish. When we expressed our surprise that he had all alone taken on so vast a task—one that clearly called for teams of workmen, engineers, architects, and specialist consultants—he shrugged his shoulders and said by way of explanation, “Tzami einai” (It's a mosque). Nationalist concerns, as often happens in Greece, were an obstacle to the preservation of what, even in its dilapidated state, was clearly an important artefact of the country's history. The fact that this building was associated with Islam and Turkishness condemned it to the status of a trash heap.

I have come to learn that one of the arenas in which this contemporary nationalist antipathy for the Turkish past is most pronounced is that of Ali Pasha of Ioannina. To this day he is viewed in Greece as a paradigm of Turkish cruelty and rapacity, the quintessence of barbarism, an Antichrist. Over the years that I have been at work on this book I have experienced many obstacles, most of which have their roots in such attitudes. Materials written in Ottoman are at best heaped together unread, unclassified, and unmanageable; at worst they are left to rot away. In many quarters my expressed interest in Ali was met with amazement, curiosity, and disgust.

Such attitudes are widespread indeed. In the autumn of 1996, at an academic conference, I presented what I thought was a thoroughly benign, if not boring, paper on the economy of the Aegean islands in the late eighteenth century. It was the paper's unspectacular contention that the economy of the Aegean in this period saw some improvements, which I linked to an array of causes, ranging from the 1774 Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji to the policies of various mainland Ottoman governors, among them Ali Pasha. After the conference I was accosted by an apoplectic man who said

to me sarcastically: “Po, po, ton agapas poli! Ti, na ton agiaseis theleis?” (My, my, you love him a lot! What do you want, to canonize him?). As a historian, one scarcely knows where to begin by way of an answer to such a question. It is in the nature of the nationalist mind-set to be binary; if I was not defending Ali, then surely I was on the Greek side. Otherwise, I was clearly a Turkish apologist. If Ali was not to be made into a saint, then he should be demonized instead. It is not such a stretch of the imagination to see in such attitudes shadows of the tragic circumstances of so-called religious nationalism just beyond Greece’s northern borders.¹

This Manichaean vision finds its academic replication in a similar bifurcation, witnessed in the body of scholarship pertaining to the Balkans under Ottoman rule. In one camp stand those who argue that the nationalist tensions of the Balkans were created by the so-called millet system of the Ottoman state, under which subject populations were bureaucratically subdivided according to religious affiliation. In the other are those who argue in the Ottomans’ favor, claiming that such tensions were preexisting and were kept effectively suppressed by the mechanisms of empire. According to the second viewpoint, the appearance and recurrence of such tensions in contemporary times can be linked directly to the absence of any unifying, all-embracing power.

In his introduction to a recent collection about this debate, L. Carl Brown rightly recognizes its polemical dimensions; he uses a metaphor of litigation in his reference to the two camps: “the prosecution (Ottoman legacy lying somewhere between the negative and the noisome) and the defense (continuing importance of certain Ottoman ideas and institutions).”²

Even the most cursory consideration of the problem thus construed is enough to show that both perspectives are laden with several troubling implications in terms of historiography and nationalism alike. The first implies, among other things, that the Ottomans are somehow to blame for the current crises; in the absence of any modern-day Ottomans wandering around, the Bosnians (among others) have constituted the handiest target for retribution.

The second position, which in contemporary scholarship has tended to enjoy greater popularity than the first, is just as easily given to national-

¹ I say “so-called” because the contemporary trend to attribute current conflict in the Balkans solely to religious causes is a dangerous one. Although religion is certainly mobilized as a useful *symbol* in national conflicts, it is often simply a smoke screen for the totalitarian impulses of specific individuals and groups. The current preoccupation with religious nationalism, moreover, creates the illusion of religious differences as being inevitably, hopelessly long-standing, entrenched, and irrational and helps any would-be interloper more easily shrug off any sense of responsibility for the ensuing horrors (Danforth 1995; van der Veer 1994; Denitch 1992; Denitch 1994; Bringa 1995).

² Brown 1996, 6.

ist abuses. Cemal Kafadar writes: “Most current historiography . . . tends to operate on the basis of a ‘lid model’ whereby at least some empires (the oriental ones?) are conceived as lids closing upon a set of ingredients (peoples) that are kept under but intact until the lid is toppled and those peoples, unchanged (unspoiled, as nationalists would like to see it), simply reenter the grand flow of history as what they once were. They may have experienced changes in terms of numbers and material realities but not in essence.”³

It seems that nationalist rhetoric usually favors some combination of these two views. On one hand, the Ottomans (and, by extension, Islam) are blameworthy for having subjugated Christian and Jewish populations and rigidly hierarchized society according to religion. On the other hand, nationalists favor a model that assumes a fairly high level of societal compartmentalization, as such models allow for the illusion that religious and cultural syncretism is a nonexistent feature of their national histories.

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It is certainly not this book’s aim to serve as an apology for Ali Pasha. It is its aim, however, to focus attention on an individual who played a significant role in Ottoman, Balkan, and modern Greek history and who was a critical point of contact between western Europe and the Ottoman East in the latter half of the eighteenth and the first decades of the nineteenth century.

Greece in particular and the Balkans in general served not just as a geographic bridge but also as an economic and cultural one between western Europe and the Ottoman Empire. When the West spoke of the Orient, in many instances it based its vision not on the Far or Middle East but on the Balkans—a territory that was technically European. Ali’s prominent role in the cultivation of the European romanticist, philhellene, and Orientalist sensibilities of the eighteenth century has long been overlooked.

So too has the part Ali Pasha played in the early stages of the Greek War of Independence, which broke out in Ali’s lands just months before his death. The fact that both this insurrection and the failed uprising of 1770 had their geographic origins in territories under his sway is no coincidence.⁴ Greek nationalists may be made uncomfortable by the notion that the success of the Greek revolutionaries depended in no small part on Ali’s presence, but to fail to recognize this is to miss a significant dimension of the historical and cultural climate that gave birth to the mod-

³ Kafadar 1995, 21.

⁴ For the international and cultural context of the 1770 insurrection, see Constantine (1984, 168–85).

ern Greek nation-state.⁵ There can be no doubt that Ali's declaration of independence from the Porte (the Ottoman government) provided an opportune occasion for the Greeks, too, to try their hand at freedom.⁶ The ensuing Ottoman battle against Ali created an opportunity for Greek revolutionary rhetoric to be put into action. Indeed, one contemporary observer asserted: "It cannot be doubted that the declaration of the Porte against Ali was the immediate cause of the Greek insurrection."⁷

Ali's own conflict with the Porte tied up huge numbers of Ottoman imperial troops even while his infamy in the West encouraged European philhellenes to enlist in the battle against the Ottomans, a battle that, Ali's own attempt at secession notwithstanding, was widely perceived as a battle of Greeks against Ali. Thus both diplomatic and cultural history are necessary routes of inquiry for the study of this period in general and Ali Pasha of Ioannina specifically.

I hope that this book will make some small headway into an often-neglected period of Greek history and an often-ignored geographic terrain. It is a hybrid—part diplomatic history, part cultural history, part theoretical excursus—and I hope that in the attempt to cover such an array of approaches I have not fallen between a number of stools. Ideally, I intend to demonstrate that cultural and diplomatic history are not mutually exclusive; neither are Middle Eastern and European studies. Geographically bound categories of study are particularly frustrating to the Balkanist, and I can think of no focus of inquiry more amply poised to prove the relevance of the Balkans to both the East and the West than Ali Pasha of Ioannina. In any event, the fact that such nationalist discourses find their parallels—unwitting or not—in the pages of scholarship is worth the historian's attention.

Diplomatic and Cultural History

The turn of the eighteenth century marked perhaps the pinnacle of western European fascination with the Islamic East, as well as the birth of a widespread western European philhellene sentiment,⁸ a sentiment that persists to this day⁹ and that had a powerful impact on Greece.¹⁰ These

⁵ For an analysis of the historical and cultural climate of the revolution's early stages in the contexts of Wallachia and Moldavia, see Otetea (1966, 379–94).

⁶ Skiotis 1976.

⁷ Leake 1826, 38.

⁸ Malakis 1925; Eisner 1991; Augustinos 1994; Silvestro 1959; Spencer 1954; Woodhouse 1969; Tsigakou 1981.

⁹ Gourgouris 1996; Woodhouse 1992; Marchand 1996.

¹⁰ Stoneman 1984, 1–15; Campbell and Sherrard 1968, 385; Augustinos 1994, 288.

two features of the early nineteenth century's intellectual-cultural landscape conspired to make Ali Pasha a focus of particular and concentrated interest.

Ali Pasha was the Ottoman-appointed governor of Ioannina, in Greek Epiros, from 1787 until his dismissal by the Ottoman Porte in 1820. From Ioannina, Ali ruled over a territory that when combined with the neighboring *paşaliks* (gubernatorial districts) of his sons covered almost the entirety of what today is mainland Greece. Only Athens and the surrounding portions of Attica were not under his control. Ali was thus the most immediate eastern neighbor of western Europe. This proximity had tremendous implications, both political and cultural, for the relationship between western Europe and the Orient, of which Ali's Greece was, in the eyes of western Europe, decidedly a part.

From a diplomatic standpoint, this proximity brought Ali in direct communication with the governmental representatives of various western European countries. Britain and France in particular established close diplomatic relations with him, and he in turn was eager to forge alliances with them, even when (or perhaps precisely because) those alliances were in direct contravention of the official diplomatic stance of the Ottoman state. Both Britain and France had consuls resident in Ioannina, both were eager to have Ali's approbation, and both clearly understood the pasha to be a major factor in the geopolitics of the day.

France was Epiros's closest neighbor, for the 1779 Treaty of Campo Formio gave to the French control of the Ionian Islands, and Napoleon's 1805 victory over the Austrian forces at the Battle of Austerlitz resulted in the French possession of Dalmatia. Britain, Russia, Venice, and Austria also came into close contact with Ali's territories, and the nature and content of the diplomatic negotiations between these powers and Ali effectively demonstrate that at the turn of the century he was regarded, as he wished to be, as a *de facto* sovereign political entity.¹¹ These negotiations make clear, too, that western Europe was discomfited by Ali's economic and military strength, and recognized him as a potentially formidable foe.

Whereas much of the Ottoman historiography of the last several decades casts the regional Ottoman governors of the Balkans as representatives of Ottoman weakness, "decline," and supposed ignorance of Western statecraft, Western diplomatic materials from the turn of the

¹¹ A Greek revolutionary tract of 1809 cited Ali's virtual independence from the Porte as clear evidence of Ottoman decline: "The Ottoman state finds itself today in its death throes, and can be compared to a human body, gripped by apoplexy. . . . Such is the tyranny of the Ottomans today, that in regions other than the capital it is not recognised to exist. . . . Take as . . . example, the tyrant of Ioannina [Ali], who, although he does not manifest it, all know well enough that he is not afraid, and that he never obeys the command of his Sultan" (Clogg 1976, 115).

eighteenth century suggest a more nuanced perspective. Such regional governors as Ali in Ioannina and Mehmet Ali in Egypt certainly represented a threat to Ottoman absolutism, but they hardly gave Europe an impression of vulnerability or weakness. In the case of Ali, for instance, France and Britain felt, if anything, a sense of threat, and clearly they perceived that he had the upper hand in diplomatic dealings for the better part of a quarter century. The more general backdrop of Ottoman decline should not overshadow the not insubstantial strength of a number of the empire's regional governors. Such governors were not merely symptoms of Ottoman weakness; in and of themselves they represented a new and fearful power in the path of Western designs on Ottoman territory.

Culturally, the implications of Ali's proximity to the West were twofold. First, this proximity meant that Ali became the most accessible and popular figure for fashioning the Orientalist¹² genre of literature then wildly popular in western Europe.¹³ Second, the fact that Ali was in control specifically of Greece, a place to which the West also laid some sort of claim, meant that he played host to a huge number of Western travelers interested not in him but in the supposed vestiges of Greek antiquity contained within his lands.

The French and particularly the British fascination with the ostensible founts of Western civilization had, of course, a long and revered history; so much so, in fact, that travel to Italy was a virtually institutionalized feature of the education of gentlemen of a certain class. This phenomenon has been well documented.¹⁴ In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, scions of the upper classes were expected to travel to France, Switzerland, and, especially, Italy, then considered the apogee of proximate otherness and the site of the roots of European civilization. By the end of the seventeenth century, this circuit had become so standard that it was given its own name; "the Grand Tour" had become a requisite chapter in an Englishman's education.¹⁵ The eighteenth century saw unprecedented numbers of travelers, most with tutors in tow, set off for Italy and the surrounding lands.

By the century's end, however, Greece came to supplant Italy as the most popular destination of the gentleman-traveler. The reasons for this are complex and numerous, but one is obvious: the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792–1815) brought a necessary and abrupt halt

¹² Throughout this book I use the term *Orientalism* in its Saidian sense (Said 1979).

¹³ Hugo 1829; Morier 1951; Davenport 1823; Davenport 1837; Byron 1901; Jókai 1897; Christowe 1941; Farwell 1981; Behdad 1994; Eisner 1991; Sharafuddin 1994.

¹⁴ Augustinos 1994; Constantine 1984; Eisner 1991; Malakis 1925; Tregaskis 1979; Tsigakou 1981.

¹⁵ This expression is found for the first time in R. Lassels's *Voyage of Italy*, published in London in 1670. It was rapidly adopted into common parlance (Tregaskis 1979).

to all travel in France and Italy.¹⁶ English travelers were forced to venture beyond these familiar routes,¹⁷ and Greece presented itself as the most logical educational alternative. In addition, the increasing sense of Ottoman decline, fostered during the eighteenth century by such popular writers as Dimitrie Cantemir (whose “insider” account of the Ottoman administration was widely read in Europe), made curious travelers eager to visit.¹⁸

Other, more subtle factors, too, contributed to the rise in popularity of travel to Greece. In *Early Greek Travellers and the Hellenic Ideal*, David Constantine has effectively demonstrated that even before the Napoleonic Wars, Greece was gaining in popularity over Italy as an educational travel destination.¹⁹ Piracy in the Mediterranean was on the decline, and the establishment of Ottoman supremacy throughout the Greek islands following the 1669 Siege of Candia contributed to the overall safety of the region. Moreover, the strengthening of French and British mercantile relations with the Ottoman Porte facilitated travel in the area.

Cultural concerns, too, contributed to this gradual shift in the Western traveler’s itinerary. By the eighteenth century some were beginning to feel that Italy was a bit too much “done,” not exotic enough or far enough off the beaten track to provide the traveler with the desired sense of adventure and apprehension of Otherness. Moreover, there was increased interest in the classical civilization of Greece and the developing sense that Italy was but a poor imitation of the real thing. As Flaubert wrote after his first visit to Greece, “The Parthenon spoiled Roman art for me: it seems lumpish and trivial in comparison. Greece is so beautiful.”²⁰

Such comments arguably constitute one version of Orientalism. Flaubert’s stance is authoritative, his dismissal of Roman art striking in its completeness, and his embrace of the Hellenic aesthetic paternalistic in its simplicity. But whereas so-called Orientalist discourse has most frequently had as its backdrop colonialism and Western imperialism, such mechanisms of Western political control are absent in the preponderance of the lands of the Ottoman Empire. They are completely lacking in the instance of the southern Balkans. Rather, in the territories with which this book is concerned the backdrop for discourse is travel—specifically, travel to “classical” Greece.

¹⁶ Eisner 1991. On the demise of the Grand Tour and the Napoleonic Wars, see chapter 4 of Eisner’s work, which is particularly relevant. See also Tregaskis 1979.

¹⁷ There were, of course, early British and French travelers to Greece, but they became numerous only after the start of the Napoleonic Wars made travel in Italy untenable. For an excellent overview of early French travelers to Greece (1550–1750), see Augustinos (1994).

¹⁸ Dakin 1955, 6. Cantemir (1673–1723) was Peter the Great’s publicist, and his account of Ottoman decline was widely translated and read in Europe (Cantemir 1734–35).

¹⁹ Constantine 1984.

²⁰ Flaubert 1979, 1:137.

Travel to Greece was not merely a matter of geography but also of chronology. The breathless students who viewed a visit to Greece as an essential part of their educational curricula were not primarily interested in “modern” Greece or even in its Byzantine predecessor. Rather, they regarded travel to Greece as a sort of anachronistic interactive exhibit in which they could find nothing less than the vestiges of Periklean speech, religion, and philosophy. Indeed, even those travelers most critical of the Greeks saw in their failings some continuity with the past. In the words of one seventeenth century traveler, “Of their ancestors [the Greeks] have retained the worst qualities: namely, deceit, perfidy, and vanity.”²¹ Further, they believed that Greek physical and cultural relics represented not just Greece’s past but also Europe’s past, and accordingly they helped themselves to whatever they liked. As Lord Broughton explained, “No one likes to pass through such a country without collecting a little.”²²

The myth of Hellenic continuity fused with the European belief in Greece as the fount of all Western civilization to produce a strong proprietary interest in the southern Balkans.²³ The fact that these lands were under the control of Ali Pasha—not just a non-Greek, but a figure who by virtue of association with the Ottoman regime and religion was, to the Western Orientalist cultural imagination, wholly other—led philhellenes to believe that conflict with Ali would constitute a salvific and liberating act on behalf of Europe’s own cultural origins.²⁴ Attendant upon such a view, of course, were powerful impulses of cultural superiority—superiority both to the modern Greeks, who if descended from the classical Hellenes were also regarded as poor shadow images of them, and to Ali Pasha, their “despotic” Oriental captor.

These two experiences of Greece—the diplomatic and the cultural—were thus at odds with one another. On one hand, French and European diplomatic knowledge of Greece was bound up with qualms about Ali’s political and economic strength and his geographically strategic position. On the other hand, the cultural impulses of philhellenism and Orientalism cast him as weak, depraved, pathetic, and inconsequential. The tension inherent in the simultaneous adoption of these two points of view is one of this book’s central interests.

²¹ *Sieur du Loir* 1654, 166. Cited in Augustinos 1994, 67.

²² Broughton 1855, 1:156.

²³ This myth was not without its opponents. Jakob Fallmerayer and post-war “neo-Fallmayerism” notwithstanding, the myth of Hellenic continuity has dominated since at least the late eighteenth century.

²⁴ Moreover, participation in a battle against Ali was understood by some as analogous to participation in ancient Greek battles against other “Oriental inva[ders],” such as Darius and Xerxes (Leake 1826, 1–12). By participating in the Greek Revolution, philhellenes could vicariously take part in the battles of epic tradition.

The Impact of the Eastern Question

Even just within the context of contemporary geopolitics, Ali's status vis-à-vis the West was ambiguous. The period of Ali's domination of mainland Greece coincided with the first decisive phases of the so-called Eastern Question, as the Russo-Turkish Wars of 1768–1774 and 1792 and the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars brought to the fore the possibility of a European joint partition of the Ottoman Empire. Central to any such partition would be Ali Pasha and his lands, a fact to which the governor was not oblivious; Ali clearly recognized that European intentions of partition could, if finessed, meld nicely with his own plans for secession.

At the turn of the century the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire was regarded as an impending, if unwelcome, inevitability. In 1802 the British consul in Baghdad expressed both the hope that the Ottoman regime could be prolonged and the belief that it could not. "My situation and the duties of my office," he wrote, "have caused me to reflect on the probable consequences of the dissolution of the Turkish Empire; and the information I have obtained from channels not accessible to many makes me think a great revolution in the Turkish Empire is near at hand, unless . . . the period of it shall be protracted by some fortunate and unforeseen event."²⁵

In Russian quarters, too, there was a sense of the inevitability of Ottoman demise, but the response to it was less fatalistic than that of the British. In 1804 the Russian deputy minister for foreign affairs made an urgent call for his government to delay Ottoman "collapse" for as long as possible: "There is no doubt that the Ottoman Empire threatens to collapse and that its future fate touches on the most essential interests of Russia. It is therefore urgent that our court should draw up a plan on this important subject. . . . Our objective at the moment cannot be other than that of preserving the Ottoman Empire in its present state and hindering its partition."²⁶ This was a dramatic reversal of the advice given the czar just five years earlier by his chief adviser on foreign affairs, Count Rostopchin, who had called for Russian collusion with Austria and France in the proposed Ottoman partition. This latter view prevailed again in the 1807 negotiations of Tilsit, where Napoleon and Czar Alexander I made contingency plans of a joint assault on Ottoman possessions in Europe.²⁷

As far as the western European powers were concerned, Ali could play

²⁵ Vane 1851, 173.

²⁶ Prince Czartoryski, Russian deputy minister for foreign affairs, cited in Anderson (1970, 23–24).

²⁷ For the complete text of the agreement of Tilsit, see Adair (1845, i).

a part in either scenario, if more conveniently in that of Ottoman partition. If the Ottoman Empire was to be dismantled, then Ali's secession could, they hoped, be bought with promises of greater sovereignty, of ongoing control over the Greek mainland, and even of royal status: at one point Ali hoped to be crowned king of Dalmatia by Napoleon.²⁸ Conversely, were the Ottoman Empire to be propped up, suppression of Ali would allow the West, in one fell swoop, to save a huge portion of the empire's European holdings.

It is well known that the latter policy, as articulated by Prince Klemens von Metternich and the 1814–15 Congress of Vienna, dominated throughout the nineteenth century. Its dominance in the eighteenth century, although less systematically articulated, is amply testified by the fact that throughout the course of that century the only Balkan European possession lost by the Ottomans was the Banat of Temesvár, which had been the only shred of territory left to them by the 1699 Peace of Sremski Karlovci (Karlovitx). The Ottoman loss of the Peloponnese, also effected by that same treaty, was in fact reversed in the course of the eighteenth century.²⁹ As Peter Sugar has observed, the remarkable Balkan territorial persistence of the Ottomans throughout the century can in large part “be explained by the jealousy among the great powers that worked against each other always giving the Ottomans a ‘friend’ in the foe of their enemies.”³⁰

Such cobbled-together alliances were the precursors of the solution to the Eastern Question as articulated by the Congress of Vienna. The rapidly shifting alliances of the eighteenth century were closely monitored by Ali, whose cachet among the Great Powers rose and fell according to each new configuration.

Subsequent historical events, too, conspired to influence western Europe's impression of Ali Pasha. Even long after his death, contemporary international affairs conditioned depictions of him. By way of example, consider the tenor and context of the 1878 edition of Richard Alfred Davenport's biography *The Life of Ali Pasha, Late Vizier of Jannina: Surnamed Aslan, or the Lion*. In his introduction to the work, the publisher writes that Davenport's aim is to be didactic, aphoristically stating that he hopes “to point a moral and adorn a tale.”³¹ He goes on to elaborate on just what it is that Davenport aims to teach: perseverance brings results; a lack of religion and morality, when combined with unlimited power, leads to no good end; “passion must not triumph over reason.”

It must be noted, though, that the publisher writes at a time when Eu-

²⁸ Hadji Seret, National Library of Greece.

²⁹ For a partial account of the Ottoman reconquest of the Peloponnese, see Brue (1870).

³⁰ Sugar 1977, 203.

³¹ Davenport 1878, 1.

rope was still in the thick of its policy of actively supporting Sultan Abdülhamid II's failing efforts to strengthen the Ottoman Empire, as in the latter part of the nineteenth century it was widely believed that the perpetuation of the empire would maintain the tenuous balance of power in Europe. Indeed, this belief was in the publisher's day far less contested than it had been in Ali's own.³² The publisher, then, cannot help but see Ali as critical to the process of the empire's decline and hold him in large part culpable for it.

In the publisher's preface to Davenport's work this is made explicit. "Ali," the reader learns, was "one of the numerous dilapidators of Turkish resources. . . . The reader will here see with what vampyre effect subaltern tyrants can exhaust the vital principle of an extensive empire."³³ The tenuousness that characterized the European power balance in the years prior to the Balkan Wars retrospectively colors the writer's view of Ali, who by the publisher's construct is not just secessionist but also morally and religiously depraved. Again, diplomatic concerns are here melded with cultural ones, and Davenport's publisher expresses his allegiance to the diplomatic policy of his day through the vocabulary of cultural observation and superiority.

Orientalism, Philhellenism, and Travel

I recognize that it is a convention of historiography to include bibliographic commentary at the conclusion of a work, rather than use it in the introduction. The nature of the available materials on Ali, however, is somewhat peculiar, and this peculiarity has colored my account of him, as it has others', although perhaps in somewhat different ways.

As I mentioned, the backdrop for the Orientalism fed by Ali Pasha is not colonialism and Western imperialism but travel, specifically, travel to classical Greece. The philhellene impulse underlying such travel can be seen as representative of a different form of colonialism, in which the history and ideology, rather than territory, of another country have been claimed, invaded, and annexed. Many of the philhellene European travelers who visited Ali's lands believed that they saw nothing less than the source of their own civilization and that its Greek inhabitants were the fossilized "survivals" of an earlier, more pristine, place and time.³⁴ In this belief, they were articulating a cultural, if not political, imperialist claim.

³² Richard Alfred Davenport's dates are 1777–1852.

³³ Davenport 1878, v.

³⁴ Leake, for example, declared: "The domestic manners of the Greeks of Ioannina . . . seem not to have undergone any great alteration since the time of Homer" (Leake 1835, 4:145–46). On "survivalism" and Greek folklore studies, see Stewart (1991, 5–8).

For the student of Ali's time and place, this backdrop of European travel has significant implications. First and foremost is its powerful impact on the sources available for writing history. The secret nature of much of the diplomatic negotiations between Ali and the European powers makes for a relative paucity of consular archival materials, both European and Ottoman. Ali himself kept only a partial systematic archival record of his negotiations with the West.³⁵ Moreover, there were no Ottoman cadastral surveys of Epiros undertaken during any portion of Ali's rule. There are, though, in abundance, copious and comprehensive travelogues, kept by the numerous European travelers who visited Epiros in the course of their itinerant education. At the height of Ali's powers, many such visitors went to Greece specifically to document Ali and his renowned eccentricities.

The use of such materials is undertaken with some trepidation by historians of my generation. Edward Said's *Orientalism* is the most famous attack on Western writing that aims to portray non-Western peoples. Both predecessors, such as Hayden White,³⁶ and a slew of successors (ranging from post-Foucaultian critiques of power to Johannes Fabian to the emergence of such historical approaches as the subaltern school)³⁷ have provided ample corroboration of the basic problematics identified most famously by Said. Needless to say, Western travel literature on the Orient has not, as a genre, fared well in such a climate. It is widely assumed that such literature represents nothing more than the consummate illustration of Said's point. It is viewed as voyeuristic, manipulative, distorted, and thoroughly bankrupt.

This is a point of view with which I take issue, for a number of reasons. First is the fact that, in the completion of this project, I have had to rely heavily on travelogues for much of my information, particularly that pertaining to Ali's impact on the economy of his *paşalık*. More important, however, is my belief that the travel literature of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries constitutes a sort of protoethnography. The aim of travel to distant lands was not solely voyeuristic; the desire to apprehend the Other was not based only on titillation and thrill. In 1693 John Locke observed that ideally the traveler to France and Italy—then the de rigueur destinations of the educated English gentleman—would have the capacity “to govern himself, and make Observations of what he finds in other Countries worthy his notice, and that might be of use to him after his return: And when too, being thoroughly acquainted with the Laws and Fashions, the natural and moral Advantages and Defects of

³⁵ The Greek documents in Ali Pasha's archive are currently being edited and cataloged for publication by the Fondation Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique in Athens.

³⁶ White 1973.

³⁷ Fabian 1983; Guha and Spivak 1988; Guha 1985; Spivak, Landry, and MacLean 1996.

his own Country, he has something to exchange, with those from abroad. . . ."³⁸ In short, exposure to the foreign lent a critical ability to the traveler, who by comparing what was familiar with what was alien, was to both come to a better understanding of his own culture and have the means of improving it. Knowledge of the Other was viewed as playing an important critical function.

Arguably, this has been the fundamental approach guiding the relationship between travel, historiography, and ethnography since the time of Herodotus. In a recent and excellent book, Olga Augustinos forcefully demonstrates that "the importance of the voyage as an educational experience and a means of securing tangible and intangible gains became an ever increasing force in Renaissance Europe."³⁹ Central to this educational experience was the recalibration of one's understanding of one's own culture and history through the lens of the novelty of foreign lands.

This understanding of travel as having a large educative component both fostered and was fostered by philhellenism. On one hand, the belief in the pedagogically beneficial aspects of travel propelled classical scholars eastward in the quest to see their subject matter with a greater degree of immediacy. On the other hand, travel itself was understood to be a central feature of the lives of the ancient Hellenes whom these scholars studied. Classical tradition glorified travel, and the Hellenes themselves had preserved in their literary record the stories of mythic travelers and the importance of travel to their maturation and education. Again, in the words of Augustinos, "Their greatest heroes, Theseus and Jason among others, as well as their most original thinkers, used the voyage to accomplish their tasks."⁴⁰

In undertaking the Grand Tour, Western students were engaged in an imitative act. In many instances, this imitation was both self-conscious and quite literal. Travelers attempted to retrace the steps of Odysseus, locate the mooring place of Theseus's ship on Naxos, and find the labyrinth where he had slain the Minotaur. And, again in the Herodotean tradition, one of the central educative features of travel was understood to be its benefits as a self-critical as well as a mind-opening enterprise. Finally, it was expected that one would write about what one had seen, both as a means of fostering such reflection and in the hope of spreading the educative benefits of travel to those unable to undertake it themselves.

The West's understanding of the critical function served by travel and, latterly, by anthropological ethnography endures today. George Marcus and Michael Fischer, for example, recently restated the case for study of the other as a self-critical enterprise. Writing of the dual function of an-

³⁸ Locke 1989, 263.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁰ Augustinos 1994, 57.

thropology, Marcus and Fischer claim that its first function is to identify and “save” distinct, non-Western cultural forms from “apparent global Westernization,” and its second is “to serve as a form of cultural critique for ourselves. In using portraits of other cultural patterns to reflect self-critically on our own ways, anthropology disrupts common sense and makes us reexamine our taken-for-granted assumptions.”⁴¹

Marcus and Fischer’s point of view, that of Locke three centuries earlier, and that of Herodotus are in basic agreement. The end of travel aiming to discover that which is “not like us” is not merely voyeuristic entertainment but also education about ourselves. Self-reflection and self-criticism are at the heart of Herodotus’s history, Locke’s travel, and Marcus and Fischer’s ethnography. Travel, like ethnography, is a possible form of cultural critique. Similarly, the travel literature of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries is a form of history and a sort of protoethnography; it is not just a critical but also a self-critical literary form.

Travel literature is the genre most liberally represented in the list of materials pertaining to Ali. It also is, incontestably, as many have noted, a genre that is not without its problems *qua* historical source.⁴² The special circumstances of philhellenism and the educative vision that undergirded it, however, make the use of travel literature for the writing of modern Greek history not just inevitable but appropriate and necessary. These materials not only provide a repository of quaint, amusing, and colorful Orientalism, but also constitute an entirely viable and extremely rich source for the writing of history—not just of Greece, but of the countries from whence its authors hail. This, then, is a second significant way in which cultural and political concerns are interwoven in this book. I make use of European travel literature both as a source for Ottoman history and as a source for western European cultural history.

An Overview of the Contents

This book is divided into two sections, one concerned with diplomatic history, the other with cultural history. The first section also serves as an introduction and overview and provides basic information on Ali’s historical context, the history of historiography on Ali, available sources, and a brief biography of the pasha.

I also include a more comprehensive, if synchronic rather than strictly chronological, biography based largely on the travel literature of the period. This biography provides material on the economy of Epiros in the

⁴¹ Marcus and Fischer 1986, 1.

⁴² Lewis 1968; Dodd 1982.

late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a discussion of the various bases for nationalism within Ali's territories, and a survey of the relationship between the pasha and the powers of western Europe.

The core of the first section is a detailed examination of the political relationship between Ali Pasha and the West and is based largely on British and French diplomatic materials. It is the intention of this core material to demonstrate Ali's attempt to reconstruct himself according to his understanding of Western statecraft, to document his increasing dissatisfaction with the imperial system of which he was a part, and to illustrate the diplomatic insecurity experienced by the West in dealing with Ali Pasha. It is subdivided according to chronology so as to make it more accessible to readers who may want to learn about a specific period but may not want to read the chapter in its entirety.

The book's second section turns away from diplomatic history, focusing instead on the literary, musical, and artistic output generated in western Europe in response to the figure of Ali Pasha. It also suggests that Ali himself understood in some way the workings of western European philhellenism and Orientalism and manipulated them to his favor and benefit. Finally, this section highlights the inherent tension between the West's diplomatic and cultural understandings of Ali Pasha.

The process of researching and writing this book has raised for me some fairly substantial theoretical concerns. I have tried to avoid being driven by questions of theory and have not wanted my findings to be overly colored by them. I take the opportunity in a brief final chapter, however, to raise such questions as a way of suggesting the theoretical utility both of the types of sources used in this book and of their historical and geographic specifics. Although by now there is a fairly extensive literature concerning the theoretical implications of travel and the literatures it generates, little of this has been based on the Balkans; of the latter, still less has attempted to make fruitful use of contemporary sociological and literary theory. In addition to the ample possibilities for cultural and diplomatic study, the figure of Ali Pasha of Ioannina in specific has presented itself to me as ideally suited to theoretical work as well.