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VANGELIS KECHRIOTIS

**CONTESTING THE OLD ORDER:
GREEK ORTHODOX AND MUSLIMS IN IZMIR
WELCOME THE OTTOMAN
CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION**

I. Political/Cultural Identity in the Urban Space

In 1908, after thirty three years of autocratic rule and following the successful course of the Revolution organized by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) (*Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), which was set up by dissident young officers and bureaucrats better known as Young Turks, the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II was urged to restore the Constitution that he had suspended in 1878. The news triggered enthusiasm among all communities, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, and preparations for the parliamentary elections soon began. As a matter of fact, this period entailed a totally new experience in the way Ottoman subjects, particularly in the urban centers, contemplated their relations with the authorities, in the sense that decision-making and mobilisation of populations took place mainly in the major urban centers, Izmir, Salonica and the capital Istanbul. Thus, to begin with, our interest revolves around the urban space and the ways the urban population perceived and responded to the new challenges. In this paper, our aim is to address some of the questions generated by our study of the Greek-Orthodox community in a major urban center like Izmir (Smyrna). To what extent, for instance, did the urban experience of an ethno-religious community in a particular city of the Empire bear the marks of its specific geographical coordinates? Moreover, to what extent was this experience determined by the ethno-religious background of its population? To what extent, finally, can this experience be comprehensible to outsiders?

The approach we will employ, despite the fact that it emanates from the framework of political history, gives a clear priority to the articulation of the cultural conditions within the given urban space and the way it can be traced through the agents' performance. Such a choice owes obviously a great deal of its methodological premises to anthropology. Political history, after the

marginalisation it had suffered for years, has recently started to recuperate through adoption of more inspiring interpretations of authority, power and social perception. In this respect, political ceremony has become one of the key-notions.¹ In the past, historians interpreted politics either as an autonomous narrative or in the best case as an outcome of economic and demographic indicators. Recently, however, the influence of anthropology has led political historians to focus on political ceremonies as ‘metaphors’, through which one can read the underpinning of a specific political order. This approach, they hope, will enable them conceive the configuration of cultural expression and political consciousness. In other words, political ceremonies are regarded as the depiction of a particular political/cultural identity.² We use this term to describe the particular experience that an individual derives from participating in the collective activities of a community.³ Unlike the language-inspired preference for structural/cultural explanations that push the individual agent into the background, this approach, as described by Preston, underlines the significance of human agency and its creative character exactly at the point that private concerns coincide with public issues. At the same time, though, it does not disregard the role that belonging to a particular political or social group plays in formatting individual agency and the ways through which it is transformed.⁴ However, as Cohen has demonstrated, the focus of the analysis should not be on the social form itself but on the meaning that it obtains. The most appropriate way to achieve this is to take ‘culture’ and not ‘structure’, as the point of departure. In addition, since people become most sensitive to their own culture when they encounter others, the ideal area where attitudes can be observed is at its boundaries. Cohen suggests that, as the structural basis of the boundary is undermined through change, ‘people resort increasingly to symbolic behavior to reconstitute this boundary’⁵. Following the same approach, we shall consider ‘community’ in its role as a symbol, which allows people to imbue meaning into it.

II. Izmir: An ‘Insolent’ Ottoman City:

The western coasts of Anatolia had attracted Greek-Orthodox migrants from the Aegean islands and the Peloponnese, as a result of wars, natural disasters or opportunities for a better life, since the end of 17th century. These groups were fairly easily distinguished from the indigenous population, which was mainly Turkish-speaking and predominantly rural. Immigration was accelerated in the 1770s, due to the favorable circumstances the treaty of Küçük

1 Sean Wilentz (eds.), *Rites of Power, Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics since the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 3.

2 *ibid*, 3.

3 P. W. Preston, *Political/cultural identity, Citizens and Nations in a Global Era* (SAGE, 1997), 1.

4 *ibid*, 2.

5 A. P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of the Community* (London: Routledge, 1989), 70.

Kanarca (1774) brought for all Christian subjects of the Sultan. Moreover, during the same period, favorable conditions in international trade initiated an era of prosperity for Izmir.⁶ The boom of commercial activity resulted in an unprecedented development of the city. By the end of the 19th century, its population was at least two times larger than a century before, and the fact that this activity was controlled by locally based groups meant that the city port itself controlled the whole region. Thus, it was in Izmir that one could find financial institutions such as banks, insurance companies, commercial firms and buildings for storage and processing. These edifices sheltered the economic activity and formed the core of the network and the site of collection and transference.⁷ Moreover, as a result of this boom, the old organization of the city in ethno-religious neighborhoods yielded to a new arrangement where the criterion tended to be social status rather than ethnic affiliation, thus transforming the traditional planning of the city into a modern one. This enhanced the contacts among different communities, contacts which despite the segregation typical for Ottoman cities until the 1820s, had been already promoted by the commercial and social interaction in the bazaars and places of recreation.⁸

Despite the distrust of the Ottoman authorities against them, after their successful War of Independence Greeks took advantage of the policy of free trade, upon signing of the Anglo-Turkish treaty of Balta Limaný in 1838, in order to increase their commercial influence and therefore gain in financial influence what they had lost in social and political power. In this period, they enhanced their position in commercial networks without having to press for political representation. In this atmosphere of liberal economy and imperial rivalry, they could be granted the status of *protégé* or even become subjects of a foreign power, frequently switching from one nationality to another, depending on the circumstances and thus creating a space of social activity where the state authorities could hardly intervene.⁹

The local Ottoman authorities also profited from this development and even supported it. For the administration of Kâmil Pasha, who had been exiled in Izmir, after having served several times as a Grand Vizier, the existence of liberal circles and the diverse socio-economic structure of the city were an impediment for the authoritarian policies of the Sultan Abdülhamid, since they opened the ground for political activism. Even if the Muslim population

6 Resat Kasaba, 'Izmir' in the special issue, *Port-Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean, 1800-1914*, Review, V.XVI, 4 (Fall 1993): 387-410, 395.

7 *ibid*, 400-401.

8 Mari-Carmen Smyrnelis, 'Smyrne au XIX siècle, organization et utilisation de l'espace urbain', *Πρακτικά συνεδρίου: Η πόλη στους νεότερους χρόνους*, (Conference: The city in modern times), EMNE- MNIMON, 2000, 377-378.

9 For a relevant critical account, see Vangelis Kechriotis, "Between professional duty and national fulfillment: the Smyrniot medical doctor Apostolos Psaltoff (1862-1923)", in Meropi Anastassiadou (eds.), *Médecins et ingénieurs ottomans à l' age des nationalisms* (Paris: IFEA, Maisonneuve & Larose, 2003), 331-348.

was deprived of economic and cultural opportunities, it has been argued that the social depression that the regime had inflicted among the Muslims did not touch the non-Muslim and foreigner communities, which were prosperous and, as a matter of fact, ruled the city.¹⁰ It has been also argued that since Izmir was always an exceptional city, the *Vali* (local governors) sent there were well-known dissidents who contributed to its social and cultural development.¹¹ Already, in the 1870s, the most significant figure of the early constitutional movement Midhat Pasha, who had been sent there, in a manner similar to Kâmil Pasha, as a *Vali* in order to be kept away from Istanbul, encouraged the work of the first local Muslim authors. It was, however, Kâmil Pasha's tenure in office (1890-1907), which left the most significant imprint on city's social and education development. Thus, appointment of these *Vali* in Izmir had the characteristics of banishment from the center of decision-making that was Istanbul. One should not wonder why it was so difficult for the regime emerging after 1908 to curtail the political and social self-confidence of the city elites, which relied on a political/cultural identity of insolent autonomy.

III. The News of the Restoration of the Constitution Reaches Izmir

When in July 1908 the news of the uprising in Macedonia spread in Izmir, it found a fertile ground. The French Consul describes, with both surprise and relief, that 'the cafés are full of Muslims who are discussing the current events and do not hide their hope to see soon the end of a regime which makes them suffer so cruelly for so many years. On the contrary, the spies disappeared and the rest (officials) are confined in their places and they are even afraid to show themselves in public'.¹² The government had already received the ultimatum by the revolted troops led by Niyazi bey and Enver bey, in Resna and Manastir. On the 23rd, the Grand Vizir had been replaced and the constitution of 1876 had been restored.

The demonstrations in Izmir soon turned into an unprecedented feast. In the *Café de Paris*, in the middle of the Quay of Izmir, Muslim Turks including many officers ordered the barkeeper to play the *Hamidiye* (the Ottoman national anthem), the *Marselleise* and finally the Hellenic national anthem, and then they cried in French: 'Vive la Constitution, Vive la liberté absolue, Vive la nation'. In the Muslim quarters, even if no manifestations took place, people looked relieved and congratulated each other.¹³ Soon, however, the ma-

10 Yaşar Aksoy, *Bir kent Bir Ýnsan, Izmir'in son Yüzyýlý S. Ferit Eczacıbaşı 'nyn yaşamý ve Anýlary*, Dr Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı vakfý yayýnlarý, Istanbul, 1986, 81-82.

11 For a detailed account regarding intellectual life in Izmir during this period, see Ziya Somar, *Yakýn Çaðlaryn Fikir ve Edebiyat Tarihinde Ýzmir* (Izmir: Izmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Yayýný, 2001).

12 A.M.A.E, (Nantes), No 133 *Surexcitation des esprits en Turquie*, Blanc (Smyrne) to Constans (Constantinople), 21 Juillet 1908.

13 A.M.A.E, (Nantes), No 137, Blanc (Smyrne) to Constans (Constantinople), 27 Juillet 1908.

nifestations spread everywhere, were crowded and enthusiastic. Students of the Sultanic *Ýdadi* school (Lycée), carrying red white ribbons on the chests, gathered in front of the *Saat Kulesi* (Clock Tower) at the *Konak* (Administration building) square and started parading towards the *Kordon* (Waterfront), northbound, along the seaside.¹⁴ Soldiers and officers who were not allowed before to stroll in the European quarter, invaded the cafés holding flags and carrying badges hailing freedom and the army. Moreover, the battalions who arrived from Macedonia were now welcomed as heroes by the population, were offered banquets and were accompanied by military music. In an interesting commentary, the French consul claims that the real ‘victims’ of this enthusiasm were the members of the military bands, who would not cease playing day and night, “expressing in noisy fanfares the joy of the population and contributing in propagating the enthusiasm of the popular mass.”¹⁵ At the same time, the newspapers, spared of the threat of censorship, were publishing numerous supplements.

Contemporary descriptions of people embracing the Turkish flag in tears, in the course of enthusiasm, are accompanied by narrations of violent incidents. Spies in the service of the old regime, who had just arrived, avoided any unpleasant encounter by hiding themselves. Indicative of the atmosphere of insolence is the fact that the local CUP branch sent a delegation to the *Vali* inquiring of him why he had not participated in the celebrations and urging him to demonstrate his loyalty to the new regime. The *Vali* Faik Bey, in order to compensate for his absence, was urged to walk to the *Café*, instead of using his car, in order to show that he was willing to associate himself with the people. Moreover, the delegation obliged him to wear a red and white badge, the emblem of the Young Turks. The French Consul confers the comment of a Muslim Turk, who was watching the scene and pointed out that as the French had obliged Louis XVI to wear the red ribbon, they (the Turks) obliged their *Vali* to wear white and red colors, an emblem of French devise.¹⁶ Apart from the *Vali*, Tevfik Pasha, the General of the local Division, who had ordered the public bastinado of six soldiers, was arrested and demoted, a common fate for several other military officers of the old regime. Eventually, in an act of revenge a group of protesters even attempted to tear down the *Saat Kulesi* (Clock Tower), in the *Konak*, a symbol of the absolutist period, since it had been built upon the 25th anniversary of Abdülhamit’s ascension to the throne. However, they were prevented¹⁷.

14 Nail Morali, *Mütarekede Ýzmir önceleri ve sonralari*, (The armistice period in Izmir, before and after), Istanbul 1976, 46.

15 A.M.A.E, (Nantes), No 142 *Manifestations politiques*, Blanc (Smyrne) to Constans (Constantinople), 29 Juillet 1908.

16 A.M.A.E, (Nantes) No 148, *Agitation en Asie Mineure*, Blanc (Smyrne) to Constans (Constantinople), 3 Août 1908.

17 Yaşar Aksoy, *Bir kent Bir Ýnsan, Izmir’in son Yüzyýlý S. Ferit Eczacıbaşı ‘nyn yaşamý ve Anýlarý*, (One city, One Man, the last century of Izmir: The life and memoirs of S. Ferit Eczacıbaşı,) Dr Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı vakfý yayýnlarý, Istanbul, 1986, 88.

Indicative of the atmosphere was, according to the French consul, the fact that the name of the *Padishah* was not among the celebrated ones. “One would say that the Smyrniot Young Turks who tried hard to retain peace ... do not even dare pronounce the name of the Sultan out of fear of hostile manifestations”¹⁸, contrary to what had taken place in Istanbul, where the manifestations were in favor of the Sultan, who had been given the credit for the restoration of the Constitution. At this moment of public jubilation, it became once again obvious to what extent the political/cultural identity in Izmir was quite distinct from that of the capital. Accordingly, the organizers of the Constitutional Revolution there are considered “more sincere than their colleagues in Istanbul, or more independent in their actions.”¹⁹

It was this popular resentment against the ‘solitaire de Yildiz’ that the Young Turks wished to instigate, at least as long as the Constitutional Revolution had not been consolidated and they had not yet taken over control of the army. The French Consul considered popular participation to be of great importance in the course of the events since “The people counts today on the Young Turks Party which presented itself as a liberator. ... If this party betrays the hope that the people place in it, one should expect, I am afraid, violence.”²⁰ In this interesting account, it is the ‘people’ and not the Young Turks or the army that are presented as the subject of the Revolution. Therefore, the Revolution had to consolidate its power through political means in order to gain legitimacy.

This task was to be achieved through elections and parliamentary representation. However, in order to safeguard the loyalty of the Muslim population, it was necessary for the CUP representatives to depict the restoration of the Constitution as an attempt to restore the Islamic tradition. In a Friday meeting at the Hişar mosque, at the center of the city, attended by the *Vali*, all the *Vilayet* officials and CUP members, the weekly midday prayer was followed by the reading of an article of the CUP newspaper *Mehveret* (Counsel) regarding parliamentary representation. According to the British Consul, the fact was stressed “that the Prophet of Islam was assisted by a council of twelve whose advice he sought before embarking upon any business, that therefore there was nothing in the idea of a parliament which was in spirit opposed to Islam, and that the grant of a Constitution with all its liberal consequences had been approved by the Grand Mufti.”²¹ The reading of the article was followed by political speeches, which described the legitimate rights of a citizen. One of the orators even claimed that under the new regime “there should be no difference between the *Vali* and the meanest peasant.” Eventually, the congregation was also reminded that they should maintain friendly relations with the Christian subjects.²²

18 No 142 *Manifestations politiques*, *ibid.*

19 *ibid.*

20 *ibid.*

21 PRO 195/2299, Barnham (Smyrna) to Lowther (Constantinople), No 80, August 3rd, 1908.

22 *ibid.*

IV. The Christians Are Rejoicing Too

The non-Muslim communities of the city, after initial reservations against publicly manifesting their joy until it was clear that Istanbul had given the lead, participated in the celebrations wholeheartedly as well. For a banquet given by the Armenians in honor of Tahir bey, a leading figure of the CUP in Izmir, the entrance of the Kramer hotel, the most central and popular place of entertainment for the European Smyrniots, was decorated with the motto ‘Vive l’ Armée, Vive la nation, Vive le Sultan’ and in the dining hall on a shield towards a green background appeared the words ‘Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité’. On another shield one could read the word ‘Justice’ accompanied by the motto ‘Vive la Constitution’ below.²³ The British consul describes “remarkable demonstrations in which every barrier of race and creed seem to have been forgotten, when Turks, Greeks and Armenians joined hands and voices in hailing the great event as their common salvation. Each community also held a separate demonstration, advertised beforehand on the local press.”²⁴ We know, for instance, that a delegation headed by the Orthodox Metropolitan Vasilios visited the *Konak* in order to express the enthusiasm of his community for the event.²⁵ The British Consul, however, points out that in Greek manifestations the Hellenic national flag was always displayed first and he comments on “the latent hope of the Greek rayah that in the new era he may find protection under that blue and white banner.”²⁶

The Hellenic Consul Evgeniadis, in his turn, describes “a demonstration of scientists” which took place spontaneously “without having been prearranged”, and adds: “At the *Konak*, from where I was watching the event, I could see arriving up to 5,000-6,000 people with Greek and Ottoman flags. Speeches were delivered by military officers, the Governor, I responded, hailing the Turkish nation.”²⁷ However, he does not appreciate at all the prevailing excitement, nor does he expect from the political change the establishment of law and order, as long as the chief of police is allowed to take part in the ‘usual abuses’²⁸. His discourse seems to reflect the embarrassment of the Hellenic authorities, which were caught totally unprepared in view of the new developments. Therefore, Evgeniadis distances himself by pointing out that “it would be impossible for me to follow the views of the demagogues here in Smyrna, especially the locally published newspapers which try everything in

23 A.M.A.E, (Nantes), No 154, *Agitation à Smyrne*, Blanc (Smyrne) to Constans (Constantinople), 7 Août 1908.

24 PRO 195/2299, Barnham (Smyrna) to Lowther (Constantinople), No 84, August 7th, 1908.

25 Zeki Arýkan, ‘II meprutiyet döneminde Ýzmir 1908-1918’, 219-225 in *Üç Ýzmir*, Yapý Kredý yayýnanlarý, 1992, 220.

26 PRO, No 84, *ibid.*

27 AYE 1908, I Proclamation of the Constitution, Greek-Turkish Relations, 3603, July 20th, 1908. Evgeniadis (Smyrna) to Baltatzis (Athens).

28 AYE 1908, I, 3566, July 19th 1908. Evgeniadis (Smyrna) to Baltatzis (Athens).

order to make themselves pleasant to the Committee of Union and Progress and who even took advantage of the visit (appointment/election?) of the princes in order to achieve the electoral goals of their editors.”²⁹

Indeed, following the proclamation of the Constitution, the Hellenic prince Andreas and his wife visited Izmir, on July 25th, on their way back from a trip to Russia. The event was considered a good occasion to celebrate the new regime. Distinguished members of the Greek-Orthodox community welcomed the princely couple on a small vessel the next morning³⁰. At the same time, the Director of Political Affairs of the *Vilayet* Fuat bey informed the prince that the *Vali* would visit him in the Hellenic consulate. The Consul, however, considered such a visit unnecessary, since this was not an official trip but simply a stop by. This is another example demonstrating how unwilling Evgeniadis was to socialize with the Ottoman leadership, whether state authorities or CUP representatives, under these precarious circumstances. The Smyrniot Greeks, however, did not demonstrate a similar reservation when they welcomed the honorable guests. We are informed that, when the latter came ashore, the enthusiasm and the magnitude of the crowd was such that they could hardly manage to reach the Consulate. The crowd released the horses from the coach and dragged it the distance to the Consulate. The official reception was going to be held at the Hellenic Club. Before that, however, the princely couple visited the Metropolitan Palace. Interestingly, a CUP delegation paid a visit to the Metropolitan exactly that same morning “in order to express to him their compliments to the Orthodox community for its demonstrations in favor of the constitution.” There, Dr Nâzim, head of the delegation and the most distinguished local CUP leader, requested that an officer would address the crowd with a speech, presumably in Greek, referring to the reconciliation and cooperation between the peoples of the Empire. Obviously, the Young Turks would not lose any opportunity to propagate their ideas and the new regime. The Hellenic Consul had managed to avoid the *Vali*’s visit but there was nothing he could do in view of this new practice of propaganda, which was pertinent to a different political/cultural identity³¹.

Indeed, the CUP representatives did not miss any opportunity to propagate the fraternity the new regime would promote for the diverse religious communities. On July 27th, two CUP representatives, the officers Hamdi bey and Roupev bey, arrived in Izmir where they were received with enthusiasm. According to the Hellenic Consul, after stopping by the *Konak*, the two officers

29 AYE 1908, I, 3856, July 26th, 1908, Evgeniadis (Smyrna) to Baltatzis (Athens).

30 Upon this occasion, we are informed that many among the distinguished Smyrniot Greeks lived in the suburbs during the summer. Thus, they should have been informed personally of the arrival of the princely couple. This compels us assume that, despite the proclaimed enthusiasm, a large part of the actual elite groups of the community had not deemed the Constitutional Revolution important enough to disturb their summer vacations.

31 AYE 1908 I, 1576, July 28th 1908, Evgeniadis (Smyrna) to Baltatzis (Athens).

paid an official visit to the Metropolitan Palace, where they were welcomed by the Metropolitan of Effesos, also based in Izmir, while the bells of all the churches were ringing. One of them addressed the crowd in Greek, praising the Greek-Orthodox and described the friendly sentiments that should prevail between Christians and Muslims for the benefit of both. Moreover, before they left, they set up a committee of four Muslims and four Greeks to represent the CUP locally.³² Later on, when four battalions arrived from Salonica at the Izmir harbor, they received the order to pay their respects to the non-Muslims who had shown their enthusiasm for the new regime. The soldiers in full parade, with fixed bayonets carrying standards of 'liberty' in Turkish, Greek, Armenian and Hebrew, visited the Armenian Metropolitan Church, then the Greek-Orthodox Church and the central Synagogue. At every stop, speeches were delivered celebrating the fraternity between all Ottomans. On their way through the city streets, the soldiers were applauded and cheered by the crowd. The French consul who describes the scene points out that the soldiers, wearing their white fez with the red crescent and carrying flowers and badges all over "looked very excited by the admiration they enjoyed; however, I wonder whether the majority among them had any idea about the reasons which had compelled the CUP to make them march by the Christian churches and the Jewish synagogue."³³ It is interesting that, in this period of enthusiasm, the foreign colonies did not at all participate in the turmoil, since the foreigners were concerned about the fact that the developments were directed by secret committees and they wondered what would be the outcome if an incident took place among these enthusiastic crowds: "what liberty seemed to unify, religion could very well split at a critical moment"³⁴, Blanc concluded.

His intuition did not totally fail him. Over the following months, things would quickly deteriorate. Enthusiasm would turn into fear and apprehension. Already in early October, the inertia of the local authorities *vis a vis* the strikes in the Aydin railways and the impact it had on the economy of the city but also the riots due to the sinking of a ship of the *Hamidiye* Company, at Kordelio (Karpiyaka), where two hundred Smyrniots were drowned, had brought the city to the brink of anarchy. It was clear that the authorities did not dare to impose law and order out of fear that they would face reaction by the CUP leadership, whereas the latter did not have the power to do that on their own. This circumstance would lead the French Consul to complain: "we do not know today if it is the *Vali* or the Committee which holds the power in the city or if there is any authority whatsoever."³⁵ It was enough for a dispute of two

32 AYE 1908 I 224, July 28, 1908, Evgeniadis (Smyrna) to Baltatzis (Athens).

33 A.M.A.E, (Nantes), No 148, *Agitation en Asie Mineure*, Blanc (Smyrne) to Constans (Constantinople), 3 Août 1908.

34 *ibid.*

35 A.M.A.E, (Nantes), No 192, *Situation à Smyrne*, Blanc (Smyrne) to Constans (Constantinople), 6 Octobre 1908.

soldiers in the bazaar to create a panic in the European quarter where shops were closed down, people sought refuge in the churches and the monasteries and women fainted in the middle of the street. Thus, the leaders of the local CUP realized that they needed to do something to restore calm. They organized a public demonstration with students from Muslim, Greek, Armenian and Jewish schools who walked through the city and stopped by all the important consulates of the city in order to “publicly affirm the understanding among the different communities and condemn the intrigues of those who seek to spread discord and fear.”³⁶ The Hellenic Consul informs us about the participation in this demonstration of Greek students who visited the Consulates of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Greece and Russia to express their gratitude for the attitude of their governments *vis a vis* the new regime. When they reached the Hellenic Consulate, in his speech, Evgeniadis denounced the rumors of massacres, which had instigated panic. Later in the evening, a dinner was held and a speech was delivered by Pavlos Carolidis, who was a candidate for the parliamentary elections.³⁷

V. The 1908 Elections and the Hellenic Professor

The mounting tension should be mainly attributed to preparations for the elections. After the restoration of the constitution and the proclamation of elections, in Izmir a vigorous debate took place regarding the nomination of individual candidates. Very soon the discussion focused on Pavlos Carolidis (1849-1930), History Professor at the University of Athens. In 1908, the office of the Hellenic Minister of Foreign Affairs was held by Georgios Baltatzis (1868-1922), a member of one of the most famous Smyrniot families, who had been one of Carolidis’ students when the later was a professor in the *Evangelical School* in Izmir and his personal friend. Baltatzis had himself considerable experience in Ottoman state affairs, as he had served earlier as secretary of the Hellenic embassy in Istanbul. The Minister announced to his old teacher that the Greek Smyrniot population had unanimously offered him the candidacy.³⁸ This proposal did come as a surprise to Carolidis, both due to the bonds the latter had retained to Izmir and also his vast experience in Ottoman history and civilization.

In the meantime, in Athens, the happy news of the restoration of the constitution was welcomed with enthusiasm. In September, a group of journalists and politicians organized a visit to Istanbul in order to convey to the Ottoman government their support and spirit of cooperation. Carolidis, who was among them, was warmly welcomed by many Ottoman officials, who were

36 Ibid.

37 AYE, 1908, MA (1), III 3, (Προξενείον Σμύρνης) Smyrna Consulate, 6211, Evgeniadis (Smyrna) to Baltatzis (Athens), October 14 1908.

38 Pavlos Carolidis, *Λόγοι και Υπομνήματα (Speeches and Memoranda)* (Athens, 1913), 12.

not aware, however, that he was going to be a candidate for the elections. Such considerations could not have preoccupied the participants in the several banquets that were given in the honor of the Hellenic delegation. Carolidis was even awarded the highest honor for a lay scholar with the title of ‘Archon Great Teacher of the Greek Letters of our Great Church of Christ’ (Ἀρχων Μέγας Διδάσκαλος των Ελληνικῶν Γραμμάτων της Μεγάλης του Χριστού Εκκλησίας), by the Patriarch himself during a welcoming ceremony at the Patriarchal Church of Aghios Georgios in tribute to “the beloved visitors and pilgrims who for the first time come from the pious Hellenic Kingdom.”³⁹ Carolidis was on friendly terms with Joakim III, most probably since the latter’s first period in office.⁴⁰ This award, however, bears, we argue, an ambivalent connotation. Carolidis describes how the delegation made its way through the huge crowds and reached Fener. He even commented that “those who knew the City (Istanbul) before said that they realized now that the City was Greek.” Extravagant as it may seem, this comment depicts the contemporary atmosphere. His official address to the Patriarch was an encomium of the ages-long contribution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and “its moral and spiritual quality, the strength and grandeur of the Church in its great and the life-giver center, ... and the uncorrupted moral power gathered in the Church of the Queen of the Cities.”⁴¹ Despite the atmosphere of enthusiasm for the new regime, which had emerged as a result of the Constitutional Revolution, in his official address, Carolidis seemed reluctant to discuss the values and conditions this entailed. He only referred to the freedom that the new regime heralded while he mainly focused on the ‘ecumenical character’ of the Patriarchate and the ‘martyrdom’ of the nation. On the other hand, Joakim III responded by honoring the professor for his contribution to letters and education in an attempt to incorporate the ‘new order’ within traditional practices.

This was the only way that the Patriarchate could comprehend demonstrations of innovation. After the visit in Istanbul was concluded, the group, on their way to Athens, stopped by Izmir. The Greek Smyrniots who were informed of their arrival, organized a magnificent welcome and accompanied Carolidis to the Metropolitan Church of Aghia Fotini where the community authorities, gathered there for the occasion, formally announced to him his nomination. Later, the professor met with bishop Iakovos, who had taken over the duties of the aged Metropolitan Vassilios. On the other hand, the Hellenic Consul Evgeniadis avoided inviting Carolidis to the Consulate to avoid the accusation that he interfered.⁴²

39 Patriarchal Codex A’/ 82, 7153, p. 408 – 409, 8 Sept 1908.

40 Joakim III was a Patriarch between 1878-1884 and 1901-1912. In 1884, he was compelled to resign after a protracted controversy with the Hellenic prime-minister Charilaos Trikoupis over the control of education in Ottoman Macedonia and with the Ottoman authorities over the historic ‘privileges’ of the Patriarch.

41 Carolidis *Speeches*, *ibid*, 26-37.

42 Carolidis, *Speeches* *ibid*, 41.

Not long after this first visit, Carolidis was called to return to Izmir. This time, his arrival was announced in the press. From then on, the Hellenic Consul would take upon himself the coordination of all activities. The professor's daily program was very intensive. He gave many lectures in Greek schools, in Greek, but also in Turkish in the *Ýdadiye* school (lycée). His speeches, however, were met with the reaction of certain Turkish newspapers. As the date of the elections approached, the tension between Greeks and Muslims was escalating. The atmosphere of suspicion was aggravated by the promulgation, in October, by the Greek-Orthodox majority of Crete of their island's annexation to Greece⁴³.

The Turkish press both in Izmir and in Istanbul, inspired mainly by the activity of the Muslims of Crete who had been deported to Izmir, spoke out extensively against Carolidis. The local newspaper *Ittihad*, a CUP organ, accused Greeks of trying to present Carolidis as a martyr of the Hamidian regime, who like so many others fled his country. But even if this were true, it is claimed, even if the constitutional regulations were ignored, it was still the case that Carolidis was now a Hellenic subject.⁴⁴ Contrariwise, the Greek newspaper *Amalthia*, underlined the professor's Ottoman origin, reminding that his brother Iordanis had been a member of the Council of the State (*Sura-i Devlet*).⁴⁵ This conflict, as Carolidis claims, turned into a matter of honor for many Smyrniots who wished to prove that the Hellenes of the city had the power to invite a Hellenic professor and elect him as their representative.⁴⁶ On December 1st, he was going to take the boat for Istanbul, where only two days later the opening ceremony of the Parliament was to take place. That day, the city had been decorated in his honor. In many Greek quarters, Hellenic flags had been put on balconies, something which incited fury among certain Muslims, who warned the local CUP branch that they would organize demonstrations in protest. Moreover, an official protest was submitted to the Metropolitan authorities, who issued instructions to the effect that all Hellenic flags at least be accompanied by Ottoman ones⁴⁷. This tense atmosphere would certainly not contribute to settling misunderstandings. Carolidis visited the Metropolitan Palace, where both the community authorities had gathered. There, from the window of the Metropolitan's office, he addressed the gathered crowd, which cheered him enthusiastically. After the ceremony was concluded, he left for the harbor, walking through the European street (Frenk mahalesi, Φραγκομαχαλά) where many Greeks used to inhabit.

43 *ibid*, 45.

44 *Ittihad*, 1 Tebrinievvel 1324, in Zeki Arıkan, *Ýzmir Basýnýndan Seçmeler*, *ibid*. 194-195.

45 *Amalthia* 'Υποψήφιαί βουλευταί' (Parliamentary candidates), 9122, Oct. 7th 1908, 3.

46 Carolidis, *Speeches*, *ibid*, 47.

47 *ibid*, 57.

This used to be the narrow but long thoroughfare parallel to the harbor where in the pre-Tanzimat period all residences of the Europeans and their consulates were located. These long and narrow constructions, which were called *verhanes* and had their main entrances in the *Frank mahalesi*, through their back entrance, had access to the sea. Thus, each one of them had its own tiny dock from where legal or illegal mercantile activity took place. The development of this quarter marked the expansion of the city northwards during the 18th century and contributed much to the eventual 19th century distinction between a Muslim upper city and a non-Muslim lower city. After the *Tanzimat*, however, and since Europeans were now free to inhabit any part of the city and a new harbor was built in the 1870s, the *verhanes* were deprived of their commercial function. They were turned into passages between the *Frenk Mahalesi* and the new spacious *Kordon* of the Quay, and were gradually occupied with shops owned by local Christians, mainly Greeks but also Armenians. As a matter of fact, the parades on the occasions of religious celebrations of the non-Muslim communities, such as the Corpus Christi and the Orthodox Easter, which became a usual practice from the 1840s onwards, would take place exactly in this narrow street and the surrounding area, which was drawn by the Orthodox Metropolitan Church of Aghia Fotini and the Catholic Archbishopric Church of Saint Polycarp on the south edge and the Fasoula square on the north edge. Always accompanied by Ottoman troops, these parades offered the opportunity for a ritual appropriation of the urban space by the communities as well as the demonstration of their loyalties to both the Ottoman state and the foreign power which was protecting each one of them, namely France, Greece or Russia.⁴⁸ The parade for Carolidis would follow the same itinerary, through Fasoula to *Kordon*, on the north-west part of the city. All the windows and streets along this thoroughfare were full of crowds holding Hellenic flags. When, finally, he reached the harbor, the professor was carried in the arms of young men of the neighborhood, one of whom gave him as a present the icon of Mother Mary, “a valuable souvenir of that memorable day.”⁴⁹ All the small boats in the harbor were full of people and thus, even on board Carolidis had to appear and deliver his last speech before he left the city.

A similarly impressive ceremony had been organized few days earlier by CUP on the occasion of the departure of the Muslim Smyrniot deputies. According to the description provided by the newspaper *Ahenk*, despite the rainy weather, participation was remarkably strong. “On Sunday, the farewell ceremony which took place in honor of both the deputies and the visitors to Istanbul,

48 Sibel Zandi-Sayek, “Orchestrating Difference, Performing Identity: Urban Space and Public Rituals in Nineteenth Century İzmir”, in N. AlSayyad (ed.), *Hybrid Urbanism: On the Identity Discourse and the Built Environment* (Westpost: Praeger, 2001), 42-66.

49 Carolidis, *Speeches*, *ibid*, 59-60.

was held in an exceptional manner which, until today, really had no precedent, a living symbol of patriotism and beauty of respectful words which demonstrated the high noble sentiments nourished by our nation and our honored patriotic people and became a source of pride. A farewell committee consisting of the owners of the newspapers *Ahenk* Ali Nazmi, *Hizmet* Ibrahim Refik and *Köylü* Ismail Sýtký together with other prominent figures, some *zeybeks* which had been called from Manisa, Ödemi and Tire for the occasion and young men of the city holding in their hands national banners (*milli sancak*) passed in front of our building and arrived at the Hiþar Mosque. After the midday prayer, the deputies, the notables and a big crowd were gathered in front of the Town Hall. There, they were joined by the bands of the Navy, the Industrial school and national music (*milli havalar*) groups with *davul* and *zurna* who were already waiting there. After speeches were delivered in the name of our people, this honorable committee and a large crowd visited the *Konak*, and there one of our deputies, Çelebizade Seyit effendi, delivered a very moving speech. A prayer was then read. ... After the ceremony was concluded, our honorable deputies with the farewell committee walked to the *Kordonboyu* and the *Kazino Hürriyet*. To reach the ship *Romania*, they went aboard company boats, which had been wonderfully decorated with ceremonial banners. A speech was delivered by the deputy Gani bey, who thanked the farewell committee and the honorable people, and read a prayer. ... It is estimated that there were more than 20,000 who had gathered and joined in this ceremony of national respect. Everybody prides themselves in having joined the joy of the national crowd (*milli alay*). And they were congratulating each other. There were more than 500 patriotic dignitaries and people who joined the visit to Istanbul.”⁵⁰

This description reveals that the Ottoman equivalent of the farewell celebration for Carolidis, equally impressive, had a strongly Turkish-Muslim character and was sponsored by the official authorities. The celebration was marked by prayers in the mosque and visits to the town hall, the *Konak* and the barracks and performance of *zeybeks* with folk dances groups. By contrast, the Greek parade had set out from the Metropolitan Church, and visited the Hellenic Consulate without visiting any of the official Ottoman buildings. Moreover, in the above description, on three different occasions, we come across the term *milli* (national). Even if it is not easy to make out whether the term refers to an Ottoman nation or a Turkish Muslim one, the elements of the ceremony are very revealing. Eventually, all Greek celebrations took place in the north-west (European) part of the city, whereas the Turkish Muslim ones in the south west (Muslim). Thus, it looks as if two different cities coexisted side-by-side demonstrating a certain tolerance for each other, for the time being.

The Hellenic professor describes the day of his departure from Izmir as the

50 *Ahenk*, 15 Aralık 1908 in *İkinci Mesrutiyet*, *ibid.*.

peak in the triumph of the 'Hellenic Izmir'. However, in a demonstration of his political awareness, he confesses that this triumph could only have a political and a moral value for the community's past. For the present, all it could do was to irritate the Turkish element in the city and in Istanbul. There are two extremely important points indicating the idiosyncratic outlook of the political/cultural identity he represented. First of all, the difference he describes between Izmir and Istanbul. In light of the bitterness he experienced due to the fact that his election had been achieved after the mobilisation of the Greek-Orthodox population and their protests against what they considered an electoral fraud, Carolidis complained that: "Definitely, if Smyrna was the capital of the Ottoman state or at least if in the Ottoman state there was strong national public opinion holding together the people of the cities in a society that would be morally and politically developed and educated in liberal institutions and laws (I would have been elected)." ⁵¹ This is surely an outsider's view. Carolidis came from a background that was heavily marked by a different political/cultural identity. Despite the fact that he had spent his youth in the city and was familiar with the Ottoman context, the political atmosphere he encountered under the new circumstances seemed incomprehensible to him. Moreover, he considers it a great drawback that he did not belong to the local community, that he was an 'outsider'. For the Hellenic prestige of the community, nominating someone who came from Greece looked like the ideal achievement. The selection of an 'outsider', however, was embarrassing not only for the Muslims but also for the Greek Ottomans themselves. For them, no matter what their personal motives might have been, being a Smyrniot and not being a Hellene was the crucial point.

VI. Concluding Remarks: the End of the Imperial Cities

In this paper, I have attempted to demonstrate how the two major ethno-religious communities of Izmir, Muslim and Greek-Orthodox, by symbolically appropriating the urban space, through ceremonies and demonstrations, took advantage of the new circumstances following the Constitutional Revolution of 1908. Moreover, I have tried to grasp the importance for the communities of sharing the specific locality, with respect to the formation of a particular political/cultural identity that would reach its limits within these extraordinary conditions. The sweet and sour experience of tension triggered by the elections would be, eventually, put aside. However, these few months allowed for the development of a new political/cultural identity that would leave its mark on the years to come. In this process, the power that had been released by the pledges of the Young Turks for popular sovereignty and freedom were to reshuffle the loyalties not only of the different communities towards the Ot-

51 *ibid.*, 61.

toman authorities but also the loyalties of the population of these communities towards their own traditional authorities. Most importantly, however, the political shift marked a temporary triumph of ‘insolent’ Izmir, which, with its diverse communities, formed an exceptional Ottoman setting that tended to challenge or at least negotiate with both Istanbul and Athens. This triumph, though, would prove to be the twilight for both the city and all it represented. It is ironic that in the power struggle between Istanbul and Izmir, both of them would be defeated by a new emerging center, Ankara. This ambitious town represented ideals and visions of a nation-state, totally different from the ones articulated by the two imperial cities. As Goffman points out, the notorious fire of 1922 was the culmination of this procedure. Fires had occurred many times before and had been treated by all citizens regardless of the community they belonged. However, nobody had ever thought of accusing a whole community for the calamity.⁵²

52 Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, Bruce Masters, *The Ottoman City Between East and West, Aleppo Izmir-Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 132.