

Chapter 2

Between Sovereignty and Suzerainty: History of the Ottoman Privileged Provinces

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Introduction

In the long 19th century, despite every academic discussion to the contrary, equality among states was rarely acknowledged. For Western states, it was always legitimate to discriminate against the allegedly barbarous non-Western nations under the pretext of the notorious “standard of civilization” [Gong 1984]. The Ottomans were considered barbarians *par excellence*, whose agency was often arbitrarily negated by the Great Powers. Notwithstanding that the Ottoman Empire had actively participated in European diplomacy for centuries,¹ many theorists of international law believed that the 1856 treaty of Paris first introduced the Ottomans to the Concert of Europe. Even after this alleged introduction, Westerners dared to declare that they should apply a different rule to the Ottomans simply because they were Muslims and thus, barbarous.² One only needs to consult the view of James Lorimer, who without hesitation stated, “the Turks, as a race, are probably incapable of the political development which would render their adaptation of constitutional government possible”, and, therefore, “to talk of the recognition of Mahometan States as a question of time, is to talk nonsense” [1883–84: vol. 1, pp. 123–4].

Confronting such Eurocentric counterparts, the 19th-century Ottomans had to adapt to the new, Western concept of law, because only in this way would the European audience consider the Ottoman Empire civilized and thus, worthy of existence. Consequently, the *Tanzimat* reforms in the middle of the century introduced a new concept of written law as enacted by the state, but without abandoning the Islamic legal tradition. As the self-proclaimed leader of Muslims worldwide, the Ottomans had little choice but to be both modern and Islamic simultaneously. *Tanzimat* produced a *sui generis* dual legal system of both the state and Islamic laws. The concept of “Islamic law” as contrast-

¹ See among other studies [Berridge 2004; Faroqhi 2007; Goffman 2007; Isom-Verhaaren 2013].

² On the Eurocentrism of modern international law, see [Allain 2004; Anghie 2005].

ed with secular civil law was invented in this process.³ In the context of international law, the Ottomans experienced a no less complicated process of introduction, appropriation, and invention of new concepts. One spectacular case showcasing this phenomenon is in the realm between the Ottoman *sovereignty* and *suzerainty*, namely the privileged provinces (*eyalat-ı mümtaze*).

Privileged provinces are an understudied subject, and little information is available on these in standard encyclopedic works.⁴ While these provinces have recently attracted renewed attention in the context of “Ottoman international law”, few studies examine more than one province, address changes over time, or argue their significance in Ottoman law as a whole.⁵ I contend that the nature of the privileged provinces is best understood when studied with other privileges and in the over-all development of modern Ottoman law, including both international and domestic laws. I also argue that the Ottoman privileged provinces were central to the development of “modern suzerainty”, reflecting the Ottomans’ unique place in the Eurocentric history of international law.

Privileges (*imtiyazat*) were a key concept in modern Ottoman legal history. Even if today’s scholars consider the privileges of foreigners (*imtiyazat-ı ecnebiye*) or Capitulations the most important meaning of this term [İnalçık 2000], religious privileges (*imtiyazat-ı mezhebiye*) were the sources of no less intriguing problems, as seen in Chapter 10 of this volume. Furthermore, autonomy in the form of privileged provinces was one of the first things modern Ottomans considered when hearing the term *imtiyazat*. For example, a Turkish-Greek dictionary published at the turn of the century equated *imtiyazat* with autonomy (*αὐτονομία*) [Χλωρός 1899: vol. 1, p. 198]. Renowned lexicographer Şemsettin Sami defined *imtiyazat* as “distinction, privilège, autonomie, capitulation, concession” [1883: 142]. Moreover, Şemsettin Sami explained the phrase *muhtariyet-i idare*, which he translated into the French “autonomie” [1883: 993], as “the state of a province governed specially and with privileges” (*ayrıca ve bazı imtiyazatla idare olunan eyaletin hali*) [Şemsettin Sami 1317h: 1307]. It is no wonder Şemsettin Sami provided the following as one meaning of the term *imtiyaz*: “the right of a country to be governed with laws specific to it and semi-independently; autonomy; autonomous rule” (*bir memleketin kendine mahsus nizamla ve nim-müstakil suretle idare olunmak salâhiyeti, muhtariyet-i idare, idare-i muhtare*) [1317h: 164].

³ [Bedir 2004]. For a comparison between empires, see [Akiba 2015].

⁴ Mehmet Zeki Pakalın’s glossary is an exception, but he did not specify the historical background of this legal institution [1983: vol. 1, p. 577].

⁵ Among the works that appeared around and after the publication of the Japanese original of this chapter in 2014, two articles are worth mentioning here [Kostopoulou 2013; Genel 2016]. Other studies that examine privileged provinces include [Panaite 2000: chap. 12; Ekinci 2008; Σαρηγιάννης 2013; Ceylan 2014].

Western lexicographers rarely included autonomy in the meanings of *imtiyaz*. Neither Meninski [1780: vol. 1, p. 298] nor Zenker [1866–76: vol. 1, p. 95] considered *imtiyaz* as equivalent to autonomy. Kazimirski interpreted *imtiyaz* as “Distinction, état de ce qui est séparé et se distingue” [1860: vol. 2, p. 1172]. In Redhouse’s dictionary, *imtiyaz* was explained as “1. A being separated or distinguished from others; distinction. 2. A special privilege of any kind accorded by the Sultan”, thus coming close but not directly referring to autonomy [1890: 196].

Presumably, *imtiyaz* began to mean autonomy as a neologism in the second half of the 19th century, derived from the legal-bureaucratic usage of the Sublime Porte, as suggested in Hüseyin Agah’s book of vocabularies, which equated “Autonomie” with *idare-i mümtaze* and “Principauté autonome” with *emaret-i mümtaze* respectively [1308: 13, 54]. Therefore, to understand the nature of privileged provinces in terms of its historical development, the specific context in which the term *imtiyazat* became synonymous with autonomy must be examined.

In the following, I examine the evolution of privileged provinces in the context of modern Ottoman legal history. Certainly, this study is preliminary, but I hope it elucidates the history of suzerainty from the Ottoman perspective.

1. Transitory Period, 1774–1840

The early modern Muslim Ottomans identified their territory with the Abode of Islam (*Dār al-Islām*), where God’s law was fully in force under the righteous guidance of the Caliph facing the Abode of War (*Dār al-Ḥarb*) or land of unbelievers. As the Caliphs of Muslims and Emperors who inherited the lands of Romans, Ottoman Sultans proudly projected a vision of universal rule. At the same time, the early modern Ottomans were aware of political borders with other states [Kołodziejczyk 2012]. Even the once unilaterally given *‘ahdnâmes* gradually came to resemble bilateral treaties. Eventually, the Ottomans demanded reciprocity with the European nations. After the peace of Zsitvatorok in 1606, the Sultan abandoned his superior position vis-à-vis the European sovereigns, opening a way to equal inter-state diplomacy with fixed borderlines. The Ottoman Empire began to behave like a sovereign state, similar to its European counterparts.⁶

Nevertheless, for the early modern Ottomans, the distinction between direct and indirect rule had little significance, as long as the local ruler or governor in question recognized the Sultan’s authority. After the penetration of the tax firm system (*iltizam*),

⁶ [İbrahim Hakkı 1303h: 92–3]. On the early modern Ottomans’ contact with the Europeans, see also [Yurdusev 2009].

the old distinction between fief (*timar*) and tributary (*salyane*) lands gradually lost meaning [Imber 2009: chap. 5]. Furthermore, tributary and diplomatic gifts did not necessarily represent two different things. The Sultan bestowed some rights to non-Muslim prelates (like the Greek and Armenian Patriarchs), tributary states (like the city state of Dubrovnik or Danubian principalities), and foreign rulers (like the kings of Britain or France) in exchange for obligations, albeit to a different degree.⁷ There was no clear line between inside and outside the Ottomans' sovereign rights.

However, at the turn of the 19th century, the Ottomans were forced to clearly determine where their sovereignty ended. The treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774 was the watershed in this process. The Ottoman Empire had to recognize the independence of its vassal, the Crimean Khanate, only to see it annexed by the Russian Empire nine years later. At the same time, Article 3 acknowledged that:

comme les Tartares professent le même culte que les Musulmans, et que S. M. le Sultan est regardé comme le souverain Calife de la religion mahométane, ils se conduiront à son égard comme il est prescrit par les préceptes de leur loi, sans cependant compromettre par là leur liberté politique et civile (*zat-ı madeletsimat-ı şehriyaranem İmamı 'l-müminin ve Halifetü 'l-muvahhidin olduğuna binaen taife-i merkume akd olunan serbestiyet-i devlet ve memleketlerine halel götürmeyerek umur-ı diniye ve mezhebiyelerini taraf-ı hümayunum hakkına şeriyet-i İslamiye muktezasınca tanzim edeler*) [de Martens 1817–35: vol. 2, pp. 286–322; *Muahadat Mecmuası*: vol. 3, pp. 254–73].

Interestingly, this clause divided the Ottoman power into “religious” and “political”. As is well known, in subsequent years, the Ottomans employed Pan-Islamism in the religious sphere to claim authority over the areas already detached from their direct control. For the same purpose, in the political sphere, the Porte introduced, appropriated, and invented new legal terms, adapting themselves to the European diplomacy. Hence, the emergence of suzerainty and privileged provinces.

1. 1. Ionia: The First Appearance

The Ottomans' *suzerain* rights first appeared during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.⁸ In 1800, following their victory over France, the Ottoman Empire and

⁷ On the early modern Ottomans' overlapping administration of religious, tributary, and foreign affairs, see [de Groot 2003; Kármán 2013].

⁸ [Şakul 2009]. On the Ottomans' position during these wars in general, see [Yaycioglu 2016].

Russia placed the Septinsular Republic of Ionia, “à l’instar de la République de Raguse”, under the Ottoman “suzeraineté” (*Dubrovnik cumhuri misillu Devlet-i Aliye’ye tabi olarak*). As *suzerainty* seemed a foreign word for both the Ottomans and Russians, both parties felt it necessary to clarify the meaning thereof as follows in Article 1:

S. M. l’empereur Ottoman et ses successeurs étant suzerains de la susdite république, c’est-à-dire seigneurs, princes et protecteurs, et la dite république étant vassale de la S. P., c’est-à-dire dépendante, soumise et protégée (*şevketlu padişah-ı al-i Osman hazretleri ve ahlafl u akab-ı übbehet-i ittisafları cumhur-ı mezkurun suzeni yani hakim ve hami ve metbuu ve cumhur-ı mezkur dahi Devlet-i Aliye’nin vassalı yani tabi ve mahkum ve mahmisi olmak*).

In addition, a set of rights granted to the Ionians under the Ottoman suzerainty was collectively termed “privileges” or *imtiyazat* [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 4, pp. 28–34; von Martens 1817–35: vol. 7, pp. 41–7]. Nonetheless, Ottoman suzerainty meant different things for different actors, including the Porte, Russians, and native Ionians, with Russia holding actual power over the islands. The Ionian case set a precedent for similar developments in the Balkans: Russia’s (actual) protection necessitated, invented, and accompanied the Ottomans’ (nominal) *suzerainty*.

The Ottoman suzerainty over Ionia was not stable. In 1807, following their defeat, the Russians ceded with the treaty of Tilsit the “souveraineté” of Ionia to France [*Внешняя политика России...* 1960–: vol. 1, pp. 631–42]. After 1809, Britain occupied Ionia, and with the consent of Prussia, Austria, and Russia, this *fait accompli* was formally recognized by the convention of Paris in 1815. The United States of the Ionian Islands were declared independent under British protection [Martens 1817–41: vol. 2, pp. 637–42], but the question whether Ionia under a British high commissioner was really a *sovereign* state interested contemporary jurists like Henry Wheaton [1855: 46–8]. In 1819, the Porte acknowledged the new status of Ionia, but did not explicitly abandon its *suzerain* rights. The Ottomans only admitted the following: while the Ionian Islands had been “sous la souveraineté de Notre Sublime Porte, et nommées ses tributaires et protégées” (*Devlet-i Aliyem’in zir-i hükümette olarak mahkumu ve südde-i aliyemin haraçgüzar ve mahmisi olduğu*),

dès à présent, Sa Majesté le roi de la Grande-Bretagne fût considéré comme souverain protecteur de ces Iles, leurs habitants considérés comme sujets protégés par Sa Majesté, et traités comme les autres sujets de la Grande-Bretagne (*bundan böyle Cezayir-i mezkure ahalisi İngiltere devletine tabiyet-i metbuiyet misillu merbut add olunarak haklarında İngiltere tebaası misillu muamele [...] kılınması*) [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 1, pp. 270–2; von Martens 1817–41: vol. 5, pp. 387–90].

It was unclear whether the Ottoman *suzerainty* remained. As late as 1864, when Greece annexed the Ionian Islands, the Great Powers felt it necessary to have the explicit consent of the Sultan [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 5, pp. 40–9; Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 3, pp. 231–5], suggesting that the legacy of the Ottoman suzerainty was not completely forgotten.

1. 2. Greece, Romania, and Serbia: Concept Development

In the first stages after the Greek War of Independence erupted in 1821, three Great Powers, namely Britain, Russia, and France, attempted to solve the question by giving the Greeks autonomous status. In 1824, Russia proposed to “former, trois principautés, analogues aux deux Principautés danubiennes”, over which “la Porte continuerait d’exercer sa souveraineté” [Driault 1925–26: vol. 1, pp. 222–5]. This plan was replaced by another when in 1826, Russia agreed with Britain to create an autonomous Greece that would make a yearly tribute to the Porte [Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 2, pp. 114–16]. Finally, in 1827, Britain, Russia, and France through the treaty of London elaborated the novel status of Greece: “Les Grecs relèveront du Sultan comme d’un Seigneur suzerain; et, en conséquence de cette suzeraineté, ils payeront à l’Empire Ottoman une redevance annuelle” [von Martens 1817–41: vol. 7, pt. 2, pp. 465–9]. This status of Greece under the Ottoman *suzerainty* was reconfirmed in 1829 between Britain and France [de Clercq 1880–1917: vol. 3, pp. 542–6].

Admittedly, the Ottomans had no place in the negotiations of the three Great Powers, which finally made the Kingdom of Greece independent, not autonomous. After the treaty of Istanbul in 1832, the Ottoman Empire had no authority, nominal or real, over the Greek territory. Another case of Ottoman suzerainty did not materialize. Regardless, the concept of suzerainty born in Ionia took more definite shape during the Greek War of Independence, despite the will of the Ottomans. Another outcome of this development was the Ottoman suzerainty in the Danubian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, or today’s Romania.

Russia’s interest in the Danubian Principalities dated back to the 18th century, and the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca enhanced its influence over the Romanians. Whereas the treaty of Iași in 1792 did not refer to “privilèges” or *imtiyazat* [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 4, pp. 4–13; Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 2, pp. 16–21], in 1802, a Sultan’s decree given to the Prince (*voivode* or *voyvoda*) of Wallachia mentioned *imtiyazat* [Cevdet Paşa 1309: vol. 7, pp. 352–61]. In 1812, through the treaty of Bucharest, the Russians and Ottomans agreed on the status of the Principalities based on their “privilèges” (*imtiyazat*) [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 4, pp. 49–57; *Внешняя политика России...* 1960–:

vol. 6, pp. 406–16]. Presumably, this new usage of privileges/*imtiyazat* to collectively express a set of rights bestowed to local rulers followed the Ionian model. In 1826, during the Greek War of Independence, the treaty of Ackerman reconfirmed the “privileges” (*imtiyazat*) of the Danubian Principalities [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 4, pp. 58–70; von Martens 1817–41, vol. 6, pt. 2, pp. 1053–65]. In 1829, through the treaty of Edirne, the Ottomans acknowledged the treaty of London, which as mentioned, gave Greece status under the Ottoman *suzerainty*. At the same time, the Porte first defined its relationship with Wallachia and Moldavia using the word *suzerainty*. According to Article 5:

Les principautés de Moldavie et de Valachie s'étant par suite d'une capitulation placées sous la suzeraineté de la Sublime Porte, et la Russie ayant garanti leur prospérité, il est entendu qu'elles conserveront tous les privilèges et immunités qui leur ont été accordés soit par leurs capitulations, soit par les Traités conclus entre les deux Empires, ou par les *Hatti-Chérifs* émanés en divers temps (*Eflak ve Boğdan memleketleri kendilere ita olunan şurut üzere taraf-ı Devlet-i Aliye'ye tabiyeti kabul ettiklerinden ve Rusya devleti dahi onların refah hallerine mütekeffil olduğundan gerek şurutları ve gerek beyne devleteyn münakid olan muahede ve gerek tevarih-i muhtelifede sudur eden hutut-ı şerife mucibince kendilere ita olunan imtiyazat ve muafiyata kemakan nail olacakları derkardır*) [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 4, pp. 70–80; von Martens 1817–41, vol. 8, pp. 143–51].

While the privileged status of the two Principalities had been long recognized, this was the first time international recognition was afforded to what the Romanian historiography termed the “forgeries” or “invention of the legal traditions”, namely the myth of Romanian autonomy granted by Ottoman “capitulation” [Taki 2014: esp. 41–8]. In this process, the Porte’s *suzerain* rights began corresponding with local rulers’ privileges (*imtiyazat*). Henceforth, semi-sovereign Romanians vacillated between the Russian protector and Ottoman *suzerain* in their quest for further autonomy.

A similar development was in progress in Serbia [Aslantaş 2013]. After the two uprisings in the first two decades of the 19th century, the Serbs acquired *de facto* autonomy by 1817. In this process, the Ionian and Romanian cases were seen as precedents and the Russians made demands on Serbia throughout the negotiations that led to the treaties of Bucharest in 1812 and Ackerman in 1826. Finally, Russia compelled the Porte to admit Serbian autonomy by a decree issued in 1829 after the treaty of Edirne the same year [Belgradi 1291h: 232–4]. In 1830, the Ottomans reconfirmed Serbian autonomy with one (nominal) condition, namely that the Prince or “knièze” (*knez*) remain loyal to the Sultan. The Porte took it for granted that Serbia was part of the Empire, but did not define its status with terms such as *sovereignty* or *suzerainty* [Aristarchi Bey 1873–88: vol.

2, pp. 56–60; Belgradi 1291h: 235–8]. A decree in 1833 only referred to the *imtiyazat* of the Prince [Belgradi 1291h: 238–42], and the decree that bestowed Serbia the so-called Turkish Constitution in 1838 read as follows: “une organisation et une constitution particulière, privilégiée et inaltérable” (*imtiyazlı bir idare-i dahiliye ve bir nizam-ı mukar-rere-i milliye*) was granted in accordance with “les privilèges et les libertés” (*müsaadat-ı seniye ve imtiyazat-ı mülukanem*) that Serbia had enjoyed. Based on these privileges, the French version of the decree allowed the Serbian parliament to submit bills to the Prince with the condition that they “ne porteront aucune atteinte aux droits légitimes de la suzeraineté de Ma Sublime Porte”. However, in the Turkish version, the Sultan only admitted the bills that would not hurt the “legitimate sovereign rights of my Exalted Empire, which is the possessor of the land” (*sahib-i mülk olan Devlet-i Aliyem’in istihkakat-ı meşrua-i hükümranei*) [Aristarchi Bey 1873–88: vol. 2, pp. 60–9; Belgradi 1291h: 242–51]. Apparently, the Porte used different expressions in different languages.

To summarize, at the turn of the 19th century, first in the Ionian Islands and then in Greece, Romania, and Serbia, the Great Powers elaborated and the Ottomans accepted a new concept. A set of rights granted to (semi-)autonomous rulers under the (nominal) authority of the Porte was now collectively called privileges or *imtiyazat*. In so doing, they also came to a new understanding that local rulers’ “privileges” meant autonomy under the Ottoman *suzerain*. However, this does not mean that diplomats always used *sovereignty* and *suzerainty* as two clearly distinct terms. For example, a separate act attached to the treaty of Edirne declared that the Ottomans’ “droits de Souveraineté” (*hakk-ı hükümet*) over the Principalities would not be damaged [*Muahadat Mecmuası*: vol. 4, pp. 83–7; von Martens 1817–41: vol. 8, pp. 152–5]. Likewise, as late as 1834, Article 2 of the treaty of Petersburg stipulated that “la Sublime Porte ne trouvait rien dans les articles de cette constitution”, that is the “Règlement Organique” of Danubian Principalities, “qui puisse affecter ses droits de souveraineté” (*Devlet-i Aliye nizam-name-i mezkurda münderiç olan şuruttan hukuk-ı mülkdarisine bir guna halel tatarruk etmeyeceğine tahsil-i vukuf eyledikten*) [*Muahadat Mecmuası*: vol. 4, pp. 93–7; Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 2, pp. 232–5]. Apparently, there was no clear distinction between *sovereignty* and *suzerainty*. After all, the Russian protection always had the upper hand over whatever the (nominal) Ottoman *suzerainty* (or *sovereignty*, if you like) meant. Presumably, the idea of *suzerainty* was introduced because it could give the Ottoman Empire a nominal right and Russia a substantial influence in the same area simultaneously. In the Orient, whenever a crisis erupted, Great Powers tried to produce a new balance of power at the expense of the Ottomans, but avoiding the complete dissolution of the Empire. *Suzerainty* was one conceptualization of how to serve this purpose.

1. 3. Samos, Algeria, and Egypt: Sovereign, not Suzerain

Not all the autonomous regions were placed under Ottoman *suzerainty*. The island of Samos was one such example. In the process of peace with Greece, in 1830, Britain, Russia, and France urged the Porte to “assurer aux habitants de Candie et de Samos une sécurité contre toute réaction quelconque, [...] rappelant leurs anciens privilèges, ou leur accordant ceux que l’expérience aurait prouvé leur être nécessaires” [de Clercq 1880–1917: vol. 3, pp. 565–7]. The Porte granted autonomy to Samos in 1832 (but not to Crete, which was administered until 1840 by Mehmet Ali of Egypt). Even though the title of its ruler, Prince (*bey* or *ἡγεμόνας*), had high esteem among the Neo-Phanariot Greeks, who held this position as a ticket to the European world of aristocracy, the Ottomans took it for granted that Samos “fait partie des États héréditaires de S.M. le Sultan Mahmoud Khan, à condition qu’ils soient dorénavant sujets fidèles de l’Empire Ottoman”. In other words, Samos was under Ottoman *sovereignty* [Aristarchi Bey 1873–88: vol. 2, pp. 145–6; Λαϊῶν 2013b: 467–8]. Similar to the case of Romania, although there was no record of “privileges” in early modern Samos in the Ottoman documents, from the 1830s in Greek historiography, a newly invented tradition was that Samos had been “privileged” since the 16th century [Λαϊῶν 2013a]. Meanwhile, after 1830, Ottoman *sovereignty* outlived Istanbul’s effective control in Algeria. While *de facto* French rule deprived most of the Porte’s actual power, the Ottomans did not claim their *suzerainty*, as they did in the Balkans, implying that they never abandoned *sovereignty* over Algeria.⁹

The most important among the areas that were made autonomous but remained under Ottoman *sovereignty* is Egypt. With the treaty of London in 1840, the Porte and four Great Powers—Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia—agreed to maintain “l’intégrité et de l’indépendance de l’empire ottoman” at the expense of Mehmet Ali, who was to remain subject to the Sultan as a hereditary ruler of Egypt. Consequently,

Tous les traités et toutes les lois de l’empire ottoman s’appliquent à l’Egypte [...] comme à toute autre partie de l’empire ottoman” (*Devlet-i Aliye’nin kaffe-i muaheadat ve kavanini memalik-i Devlet-i Aliye’nin sair tarafları misillu Mısır[’da] [...] dahi meriü’l-icra olup*) [*Muahadat Mecmuası*: vol. 4, pp. 209–15; von Martens 1843–75: vol. 1, pp. 156–64].

Another convention concluded in London in 1841 further prescribed that “Mehemed-Ali a fait acte de soumission absolue envers son Souverain, et a sollicité son pardon” [Nora-dounghian 1897–1903: vol. 2, pp. 325–6]. Likely, Britain wanted Egypt under the Otto-

⁹ [İbrahim Hakkı 1326–27r: no. 23–24, p. 830]. See also [Kuran 1957].

man *sovereignty*, not *suzerainty*, because in so doing, it could incorporate Egypt in the free trade system with low tariffs, as stipulated in the Baltalimanı treaty in 1838 (see below). “Les égyptiens étant les sujets de la Sublime Porte”, all that the Ottomans recognized was “*privilèges héréditaire*”, or a set of rights granted to Mehmet Ali and his descendants [Aristarchi Bey 1873–88: vol. 2, pp. 137–40].

In theory and formally, as his *sovereign* act, the Sultan granted autonomy to one of his provinces, Egypt, through a decree by his own will. In reality and practically, the international treaties with the Great Powers determined the fate of this “domestic affair”. The same held true for the Danubian Principalities and Serbia under Ottoman *suzerainty* [İbrahim Hakkı 1303h: 183; 1327h: 111–12, 153–60]. The Sultan granted both areas “privileges” through his decrees, but their statuses were diplomatically determined, especially under Russian pressure. The autonomy of Samos and abortive plan of autonomous Greece demonstrated similar development under the collective pressure of the three Great Powers.

To safeguard their sovereignty, the Ottomans on their part were reluctant to admit suzerainty. When possible, the Porte attempted to incorporate peripheries in the range of its *sovereign* rights. Unwilling to explicitly admit (semi-)independent status to its (former) vassals, which would suggest their agency in international politics, the Porte employed the same Turkish term *imtiyazat* to describe areas under its *suzerainty* (Serbia and Romania) and *sovereignty* (Samos and Egypt), notwithstanding their different international status in the Western legal discourse. These autonomous areas constituted the medium between Ottoman domestic and international affairs.

1. 4. Capitulations Turning into Privileges

Transformation regarding the concept of provincial rule was not an isolated phenomenon. It was part of a structural change occurring in the Empire as a whole. The other two privileges, the religious privileges of non-Muslims examined in Chapter 10, and the Capitulations were also transforming during this transitory period.

After the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, the Porte treated Russia as the most favored nation, granting it the same Capitulatory rights as Britain or France, “avec tous les mêmes privilèges et avantages dont jouissent dans les susdites possessions les nations les plus amies de la Sublime Porte”. This status was reconfirmed by subsequent treaties including the convention of commerce and navigation in 1783 [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 3, pp. 284–319; Aristarchi Bey 1873–88, vol. 4, pp. 346–74]. The commercial treaties with Spain in 1782 [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 1, pp. 212–23; Aristarchi Bey 1873–88: vol. 4, pp. 150–5] and Austria in 1784 [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 3, pp. 152–5; Aristarchi Bey 1873–88: vol. 4, pp. 63–6] similarly recognized the Capitulatory rights

and the most favored nation treatment. Interestingly, while the French version of these treaties used the word “privilèges” to describe a set of rights the Western nations (had) enjoyed, the Turkish text did not use its equivalent *imtiyazat*. At this stage, the Porte presumably considered these rights a sign of “favor” (*müsaade*) on the part of the Sultan, as was the case in the early modern period.¹⁰

The watershed was the peace with France in 1802, which admitted the latter “des mêmes droits, privilèges et prérogatives dont la France jouissait avant la guerre dans les autres parties des États de la Sublime Porte, en vertu des anciennes Capitulations”. In Turkish, “according to the old treaties” (*uhud-ı kadimeye binaen*), France was to enjoy the same “rights, privileges, and interests” (*istihkak ve imtiyazat ve menafi*) as before the war.¹¹ Added to this is the treaty of Dardanelles with Britain in 1809, which stated in Article 4:

Le Traité des Capitulations stipulé en l’année Turque 1086 [that is, 1675 of the Gregorian calendar], à la mi de la lune Gemmaziel Akir, ainsi que l’Acte relatif au commerce de la Mer-Noire et les autres privilèges (Imtiyazat) [*sic*] également établis par des Actes à des époques subséquentes, doivent être observés et maintenus comme par le passé comme s’ils n’avaient souffert aucune interruption.

The Turkish text used the term *imtiyazat* in the same place as in the French version.¹² The Ottomans and Westerners came to the understanding that commercial treaties, or the Capitulations, contained “privileges”. This led to the idea that the Ottomans could also enjoy similar privileges in foreign countries. Thus, the treaty of commerce and navigation with the United States of America in 1830 prescribed that the Ottoman subjects in America “jouiront de tous les privilèges et de toutes les distinctions dont jouissent les sujets des autres puissances” (*düvel-i müşarünileyhüm haklarında cari olan bilcümle muafiyat ve imtiyazat biaynihi Devlet-i Aliye tüccar ve reayası haklarında dahi cari ve düsturü’l-amel tutula*) [*Muahadat Mecmuası*: vol. 2, pp. 2–6; Aristarchi Bey 1873–88: vol. 4, pp. 156–8].

However, their weak bargaining position compelled the Ottomans to admit the further rights and privileges of foreigners. In the course of the Egyptian question, in

¹⁰ [Eldem 2006]. Although Eldem thought that the transformation of the Capitulatory rights into privileges occurred in the late 19th century, it must have taken place earlier, as discussed in this chapter.

¹¹ [*Muahadat Mecmuası*: vol. 1, pp. 35–8; von Martens 1817–35: vol. 7, pp. 416–18]. The significance of this treaty in the history of Capitulations was indicated by [İbrahim Hakkı 1326–27r: no. 14, pp. 6–7].

¹² [*Muahadat Mecmuası*: vol. 1, pp. 266–9; Hertslet, L. 1820: vol. 2, pp. 370–6]. On the significance of this treaty, see also [Ahmad 2000: 4–5].

1838, the new concept of privileges/*imtiyazat* took definite form in the treaty of commerce and navigation, or Baltalimanı treaty with Britain. The Porte admitted that “Tous les droits, privilèges et immunités qui ont été conférés [...] par les capitulations et les traités existants sont confirmés maintenant et pour toujours”, while “tous les droits, privilèges ou immunités” that the Porte would grant to any third party be equally enjoyed by Britain. Likewise, the Turkish text guaranteed Britain that “all the rights, privileges, and immunities would be forever in force according to the old treaties” (*bilcümle hukuk ve imtiyazat ve muafiyat uhud-ı sabıka muktezası üzere ilelebed meri ve muteber olmak*). In addition,

les dispositions établies par la présente convention seront générales pour tout l’empire ottoman, soit pour la Turquie d’Europe, soit pour la Turquie d’Asie, l’Egypte ou les autres possessions africaines, appartenantes à la sublime Porte, et seront applicables à tous les sujets de domaines ottomans, quelle que soit leur qualité (*işbu muahedenamenin şamil olduğu bilcümle tanzimat ve ahkamı memalik-i mahrusa’nın cemi mahallerinde yani Avrupa ve Asya kıtalarından ve ülkat-ı Mısır’da ve sair Afrika’da kain memalik-i Şahane’de ve herhangi tabakat olur ise olsun Devlet-i Aliye’nin kaffe-i tabakası hakkında meriü’l-icra olmak*) [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 1, pp. 272–5; Aristarchi Bey 1873–88: vol. 4, pp. 109–15].

In this manner, the Capitulatory rights became the established privileges that should be in force *forever* in all Ottoman territories including Egypt. As most European Powers were the most favored nations, these newly reconfigured Capitulatory privileges quickly became widespread.

Finally, in 1861, commercial treaties with France, Britain, and Italy again equated “privilèges” with *imtiyazat*. If we take the French case for example, the text read as follows:

Tous les droits, privilèges et immunités qui ont été conférés aux sujets et aux bâtiments français par les Capitulations et les Traités antérieurs, sont confirmés [...] Il est en outre expressément entendu que tous les droits, privilèges et immunités que la Sublime Porte accorde aujourd’hui, ou pourrait accorder à l’avenir aux sujets et aux bâtiments de toute autre Puissance étrangère, seront également accordés aux sujets et aux bâtiments français qui en auront de droit l’exercice et la jouissance (*Uhud-ı kadime ile Fransa sefaini ve tebaasına ita olunan kaffe-i hukuk ve imtiyazat ve muafiyat [...] tasdik kılınmış ve bir de taraf-ı Devlet-i Aliye’den bilcümle düvel-i saire tebaa ve sefainine elhaletü hazihi ita olunan ve müstakbelde ita olunabilecek kaffe-i hukuk ve imtiyazat ve muafiyata Fransa tebaası ve sefainine dahi bihakkin haiz ve nail olmaları mahsusun mukarrer bulunmuştur*).

Remarkably, these same treaties explicitly declared the Capitulatory privileges an exception to the rule of non-interventionism:

Il demeure entendu que le gouvernement de S.M. l'Empereur des Français ne prétend par aucun des articles du présent traité stipuler au-delà du sens naturel et précis des termes employés, ni entraver, en aucune manière, le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, dans ses droits d'administration intérieure, en tant toutefois que ces droits ne porteront pas une atteinte manifeste aux stipulations des anciens traités, et aux privilèges accordés par le présent traité aux sujets français et à leurs propriétés (*Saltanat-ı Seniye'nin zikr olunan hukuk-ı idare-i dahiliyesi Fransa devletiyle mevcut olan uhud-ı kadime şeraitine ve işbu mukavelename ile Fransa devleti tebaası ve emvali hakkında müsaade olunan imtiyazata nakz-ı aleni-yi mucip olmayacaktır*) [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 1, pp. 44–51, 281–6; Aristarchi Bey 1873–88: vol. 4, pp. 115–24, 210–16, 282–91].

In short, Westerners and their *protégés* virtually formed a “state within a state”, in which the Ottoman authorities could hardly interfere. The Capitulations, or “privileges of foreigners” (*imtiyazat-ı ecnebiye*), as the Turkish neologism put them, effectively restricted the Ottoman *sovereignty* in its own territory. Arguably, Ottoman participation in the Concert of Europe was possible only if the Capitulatory regime was made an exception to the principle of the sovereign state system.

In conclusion, from the 1770s to 1830s, the Ottoman terms for diplomacy, commerce, and provincial administration changed dramatically. Previously, the Sultan unilaterally granted “favor” to foreigners and local rulers. With the Ottoman position vis-à-vis the Western Powers deteriorating, these “favours” became established privileges even the Sultan could not abolish. In this process, the Turkish term *imtiyazat* was deliberately chosen to describe all kinds of privileges, which lay in different sectors of the state. One such field was the provincial administration, where the Ottomans applied this term for Westerners’ autonomy.

2. Tanzimat, 1839–76

2. 1. Ottoman Territorial Integrity in the Concert of Europe

During the *Tanzimat* era, the Ottoman Empire was increasingly integrated into the European sovereign state system. As a winner of the Crimean War, Ottoman *suzerainty* was reconfirmed with the treaty of Paris in 1856. Article 22 stipulated that:

Les Principautés de Valachie et de Moldavie continueront à jouir, sous la suzeraineté de la Porte et sous la garantie des Puissances contractantes, des privilèges et des immunités dont elles sont en possession (*Eflak ve Boğdan beylikleri Devlet-i Aliye'nin tabiyet-i seniyesi ve düvel-i muahedenin kefaleti tahtında olarak malik oldukları imtiyazat ve muafiyatın menafından mütemetti olmağa devam edeceklerdir*).

Article 28 declared:

La Principauté de Servie continuera à relever de la Sublime Porte, conformément aux Hatts impériaux qui fixent et déterminent ses droits et immunités, placés désormais sous la garantie collective des Puissances contractantes (*Sırp beyliği dahi bundan böyle düvel-i muahidenin kefalet-i müşterekeleri tahtında bulunacak olan hukuk ve muafiyatını tesis ü tayin eyleyen hutut-ı hümayun mucibince Saltanat-ı Seniye'ye tabiyetinde devam edecektir*).

Moreover, in Article 7, the Great Powers “déclarent la Sublime Porte admise à participer aux avantages du droit public et du concert européen” (*Saltanat-ı Seniye'nin Avrupa hukuk-ı umumiyesi ve cemiyeti menafiden hissedar olmağa dahil olduğu*), and promised to respect “l'indépendance et l'intégrité territoriale de l'Empire Ottoman” (*memalik-i Saltanat-ı Seniye'nin tamamıyetiyle istiklal-i alisi*) [Noradounghian 1897–1903, vol. 3, pp. 70–9; *Muahadat Mecmuası*: vol. 4, pp. 242–58].

Consequently, the commercial treaties with France, Britain, and Italy in 1861, similar to the Baltalimanı treaty of 1838, defined the Ottoman “territory” to which these treaties could be applied:

Le présent traité sera exécutoire dans toutes les provinces de l'Empire Ottoman, c'est-à-dire dans les possessions de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, situées en Europe et en Asie, en Egypte et dans les autres parties de l'Afrique appartenant à la Sublime Porte, en Servie et dans les Principautés-Unies de Moldavie et de Valachie (*İşbu mukavelename memalik-i Devlet-i Aliye'nin kaffe-i eyalatında yani Avrupa ve Asya ve Mısır ve Afrika'nın memalik-i Devlet-i Aliye'den olan aktar-ı sairesinde ve Sırbistan ve Eflak ve Boğdan emaretlerinde meriü'l-icra olacaktır*).

The “territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire”, including areas under its *suzerainty*, seemed to have obtained international recognition.

Nevertheless, within a few years, this “territorial integrity” proved unstable. In 1859, the Danubian Principalities chose the same person, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, as their

common Princes and three years later, the United Principalities of Romania were duly established. The Ottoman suzerainty over Romania was preserved [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 5, pp. 2–18; Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 3, pp. 109–18], but it became increasingly apparent that this *suzerain* right meant nothing more than a nominal authority. In 1860, a confessional strife in Syria led France to intervene on behalf of the Maronites, resulting in the creation of the autonomous province of Mount Lebanon, as stipulated in the “Règlement” of 1861 and 1864.¹³ Since the 1850s, the Porte had attempted to assert its sovereign rights in its frontier zone with Montenegro [Reinkowski 2003], and in 1862, agreed on the borderline [Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 3, pp. 202–4]. While not stipulated in the text, this agreement, or the treaty of Cetinje, later became the basis of the Ottoman claim for its *suzerainty* over Montenegro [Aristarchi Bey 1873–88: vol. 2, p. 117]. From 1866 to 1869, taking advantage of the Porte’s difficult position due to the Cretan question, İsmail Pasha of Egypt acquired the title of *khedive* with hereditary rule based on the principle of primogeniture.¹⁴ This made the privileged status of the Mehmet Ali dynasty visible in both practice and name, which differed from that of ordinal governors (*valis*).

Meanwhile, the Cretan question was temporarily resolved by granting semi-autonomous status to the island through the “Règlement Organique” (*Girit vilayet nizamnamesi*) in 1868.¹⁵ Furthermore, the Porte’s endeavor to increase its authority bore one fruit in 1871, when a decree confirmed the Sultan’s “souveraineté” (*hukuk-ı mukaddese-i mülkdarane*) over Tunisia.¹⁶ Between the Husainids, who had obtained *de facto* independence in the 18th century, and France, whose colonial ambition over Africa was apparent, the Ottomans succeeded in asserting their *sovereign* (not *suzerain*) rights, even if this had little meaning in the theater of imperialist diplomacy.

2. 2. *Emergence of the Privileged Provinces*

All these (semi-)autonomous regions remained under Ottoman *sovereignty*, and therefore, did not contradict the territorial integrity of the Empire, at least theoretically, because they did not change the political borders of the state. Nonetheless, the increase of (semi-)autonomous regions inevitably decreased the authority of the Porte to the benefit

¹³ [Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 3, pp. 144–9; Aristarchi Bey 1873–88: vol. 2, pp. 204–10]. Also see *Düstur*, vol. 4, 1295h (1878), pp. 695–701. For more on the autonomy of Lebanon, see [Akarlı 1993].

¹⁴ [Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 3, pp. 254–5, 292–3]. See also [Pınar 2012].

¹⁵ *Düstur*¹, vol. 1, 1289h (1872/73), pp. 653–87. [Aristarchi 1873–88: vol. 2, pp. 169–203].

¹⁶ *Düstur*¹, vol. 1, pp. 789–91. [Aristarchi 1873–88: vol. 2, pp. 147–9].

of local power holders, who were more often than not supported by one or some of the Great Powers. Facing this situation, the Porte's attempt to strengthen its power resulted in standardizing the administrative system and produced an image of the monolithic Ottoman "mainland". Already in the 1840s, the Ottomans had made a concerted effort to create a standardized system of provincial administration. The abolition of *iltizam* with the foundation of provincial councils was the first step in this direction. In 1864, the Law on the Danube province (*Tuna vilayeti nizamnamesi*) was enacted as a pilot case.¹⁷ It was followed by the Province Law (*Vilayet nizamnamesi*) of 1867, which introduced the hierarchical units of provincial administration across the Empire.¹⁸ The new framework was further systematized by the Law for the General Administration of Provinces (*İdare-i umumiye-i vilayat nizamnamesi*) of 1871.¹⁹

The concept of privileged provinces (*eyalat-ı mümtaze*) was a product of this legislation. A contemporary glossary translated *eyalet-i mümtaze* into the French "Autonome: Province" [de Schlehta-Wssehrd 1870: 32]. Now that the ordinary provinces in the "mainland" were called *vilayet*, the differences between the areas where the provincial laws were applied (*vilayet*) and not applied (*eyalet*) became visible. The latter were special in their privileges [İbrahim Hakkı 1312r: vol. 1, p. 56]. It is no coincidence that *eyalat-ı mümtaze* first appeared in the State Almanac (*Salname*) in 1871. The Khedive of Egypt (*Hıdiv-i Mısır*), governor of Tunisia (*Tünis valisi*), Prince of Danubian Principalities (*Memleketeyn beyi*), Serbian Principality (*Sırp emareti*), and Prince of Samos (*Sisam beyi*) belonged to this category. The (semi-)autonomous provinces of Mount Lebanon and Crete were not included in this category. The Principality of Montenegro (*Karadağ beyliği*) was regarded a privileged province only in 1877–78 in *Salname*. The bureau of privileged provinces (*eyalat-ı mümtaze kalemi*) must have been established a little later, as it first appeared in *Salname* in 1882. In 1890–91, İbrahim Hakkı wrote that this bureau was "recently" established [1307–08h: vol. 1, p. 86].

The idea of privileges (*imtiyazat*) reflected the vague and precarious character of Ottoman sovereignty, and obscured the different statuses among its (semi-)autonomous areas. Serbia, Romania, and Montenegro under Ottoman *suzerainty* stood alongside Egypt, Tunisia, and Samos under Ottoman *sovereignty* in the same category. In this process, the Ottomans endeavored to defend their *sovereign* rights in diplomatic, administrative, and religious spheres, but the privileged status of some actors—non-Muslim prelates, autonomous rulers, and foreign nationals and their *protégés*—became evident. Eventually, these privileges were integrated in the most basic text of Ottoman *sovereign-*

¹⁷ *Düstur*, 1282h (1865/66), pp. 517–36.

¹⁸ *Düstur*^l, vol. 1, pp. 608–24; [Aristarchi 1873–88: vol. 2, pp. 273–89].

¹⁹ *Düstur*^l, vol. 1, pp. 625–51; [Aristarchi 1873–88: vol. 3, pp. 7–39]. See also [Findley 1986; Akiba 2009].

ty, namely the Constitution.

3. Hamidian Era, 1876–1908

3. 1. From Suzerainty to Informal Empire

The thirty-three-year reign of Sultan Abdülhamit II, or the Hamidian era, began with the promulgation of the Constitution of 1876. In Article 1, this Fundamental Law (*Kanun-ı Esasi*) proclaimed that the Ottoman Empire “forme un tout indivisible dont aucune partie ne peut jamais être detachée par quelque motif que ce soit”, while it also admitted that the Empire “comprend les contrées et possessions actuelles et les provinces privilégiées” (*Devlet-i Osmaniye memalik ve kıtaat-ı hazırayı ve eyalat-ı mümtazeyi muhtevi ve yekvücut olmakla hiç bir zamanda hiç bir sebeble tefrik kabul etmez*). Moreover, according to Article 7, the Sultan “donne l’investiture aux chefs des provinces privilégiées, dans les formes déterminées par les privilèges qui leur ont été concédés” (*eyalat-ı mümtazenin şerait-i imtiyaziyelerine tevfikân icra-yı tevcihatı*). By implication, the integrity of the Ottoman territory was complete only when the privileged provinces were preserved. Ottoman statesmen intended that the Constitution be applied in privileged provinces and planned to let Egypt and Tunisia send their representatives to the Chamber of Deputies [Kılıç 2016: 52, 75, 124]. Unsurprisingly, the Romanians felt obliged to assert the contrary [Devereux 1963: 85–7]. The Cretan Christians were less than enthusiastic to participate in Ottoman constitutionalism, and they stopped sending deputies to Istanbul [Zimmermann 2010].

The allegedly indivisible Ottoman territory was divided shortly afterward. The treaty of Berlin in 1878 gave birth to some sovereign states and a few privileged provinces. While Serbia, Romania, and Montenegro acquired formal independence, the Principality of Bulgaria was newly established under the Ottoman *suzerainty*. The treaty also created the semi-autonomous province of Eastern Rumelia under Ottoman *sovereignty*. In addition, the Habsburgs occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina and further “reform” in Crete was to be implemented.²⁰ A decree based on the agreement between the Porte and Cretans, namely the pact of Halepa, broadened the autonomy of the island.²¹ Moreover, shortly before the Congress of Berlin, Britain occupied Cyprus [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 1, pp. 165–7; Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 3, pp. 522–5].

Ottoman *suzerainty* was diminished only to Bulgaria. Other (semi-)autonomous

²⁰ [*Muahedat Mecmuası*: vol. 5, pp. 110–41; Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 4, pp. 175–92]. On the province of Eastern Rumelia, see [Aydn 1992].

²¹ *Düstur*¹, vol. 4, pp. 806–10.

provinces with whatever privileges remained under the Ottoman *sovereignty*, such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Crete. Even in areas occupied by a foreign state, like Bosnia-Herzegovina or Cyprus, Ottoman *sovereignty* (not *suzerainty*) was theoretically preserved [Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 4, pp. 209–22]. This does not mean that the Ottomans' rights were respected. On the contrary, this marked the beginning of an era in which even the Ottoman *sovereignty* became increasingly nominal. Instead of paying lip service to the academic distinction between *suzerainty* and *sovereignty*, in the “sophisticated” manner of an informal empire, the Great Powers preferred to hold practical power, regardless of the types of (nominal) authority the Ottomans claimed to retain [Koskeniemi 2001: 150–1].

3. 2. *Tunisia, Egypt, and Bulgaria*

In the first half of the 1880s, as if the outcome of the Berlin treaty was not enough, these privileged provinces again became the focus of imperialist diplomacy [Yasamee 1996]. French invasion of Tunisia in 1881 did not theoretically abolish Ottoman *sovereignty* or “droits souverains”, although practically Tunisia became a protectorate of France after the treaty of Bardo, to which the Porte protested in vain [Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 4, pp. 285–91]. Neither the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 nor the Bulgarians' *de facto* annexation of Eastern Rumelia in 1885 changed the legal status of these two privileged provinces. The Porte kept asserting its *sovereign* rights over Egypt and Eastern Rumelia, but in reality, the Ottomans had already lost everything but name. This situation tragically produced a legal chimera: theoretically, Prince Ferdinand was simultaneously the Prince of Bulgaria under Ottoman *suzerainty* and governor of Eastern Rumelia under Ottoman *sovereignty* [Hertslet, E. 1875–91: vol. 4, pp. 3152–7]. In 1885, the Ottoman Empire sent a High Commissioner (*fevkalade komiser*) to Egypt, one of its provinces. Moreover, the Porte had to admit that “Les engagements internationaux contractés par S.A. le Khédive seront approuvés par le Gouvernement Ottoman, en tant qu'ils ne seraient par contraires aux privilèges octroyées par les Firman Impériaux”. Nevertheless, the Ottomans did not forget to claim their *sovereign* rights over Sudan after the joint Anglo-Egyptian rule was established there.²²

3. 3. *Crete*

The idea of Ottoman *suzerainty* did not disappear, though. The Cretan revolt in 1895 led

²² [Noradounghian 1897–1903: vol. 4, pp. 364–6]. See also [Kızıltoprak 2010].

to an Ottoman-Greek war in 1897, resulting in the Great Powers' intervention and occupation of the island. During the war, the Porte was compelled to entrust the island *en dépôt* to the Great Powers for peacekeeping purposes. Despite their victory, the Ottomans lost most of their authority over Crete, not to mention restored it. The four Great Powers—Britain, France, Russia, and Italy—appointed Prince George of Greece as their High Commissioner in Crete, allowing the *de facto* establishment of the Cretan “state”, but without openly denying the Ottoman *sovereignty* over the island. The Ottomans took it for granted that Crete remained under their *sovereignty*, but Greek and European observers as well as the Cretan Christians believed that there was a *semi-sovereign* autonomous Cretan “principality” under the nominal *suzerainty* of the Porte. In their view, George combined three separate positions, namely the Prince of Crete, prince of Greece, and High Commissioner of Crete, into his person. Even a guidebook on Ottoman administration described Crete as “un État autonome, soumis à la suzeraineté de la Porte, mais non tributaire” [Heidborn 1908–12: vol. 1, pp. 35–6]. All the Porte could do was to remind the Great Powers of its *sovereign* rights over the island [Fujinami 2016b].

3. 4. *The Gulf and Arabian Peninsula*

At the turn of the century, the British informal empire expanded to the Gulf and Arabian coast, a vitally important strategic area for the British as a route to India. Local chieftains and emirs acted both as local collaborators of the British Empire and peripheral power holders of the Ottoman Empire, causing the question of the borderline between the two.

Conventions between Britain and the emirs of Bahrain in 1892 and Kuwait in 1899 did not mention either the Ottoman *suzerainty* or *sovereignty*. Britain simply ignored the Ottomans and quietly made these emirates British protectorates [Hurewitz 1956: vol. 1, pp. 209, 218–19]. The Ottomans did not stay idle. Being aware that the borderline mattered to sovereignty, the Porte attempted to keep its *sovereign* rights, but the emirs did not want to submit to the Ottoman centralization policy. The British imperialists in their turn were ready to secure the emirs' position at the expense of the Ottomans. The local emirs, eager to have as wide a bargaining power as possible vis-à-vis the Porte, accepted the offer of protection and became happy collaborators of British imperialism [Anscombe 1997; Kurşun 1998; 2004; Çetinsaya 2006: chap. 6].

First in Cyprus, and then Egypt and finally the Gulf, the British informal empire steadily expanded, but theoretically without hurting the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans had to acquiesce as long as the Westerners did not openly dismiss their authority. The Aqaba crisis, or borderline question between Egypt and the Ottoman “mainland” in 1906 was one such case where the interest of Britain overwhelmed the Ottomans' authority, but did not openly challenge the latter's nominal *sov-*

ereignty [Burman 2009]. Becoming increasingly defensive in the arena of imperialist diplomacy, the Ottoman Empire tried to enhance its international position through image and law, rather than might and force. In the Ottomans' attempt to assert their rights over contested countries, Pan-Islamism and international law worked closely together [Deringil 1998].

One field targeted by Ottoman public relations was international conferences. The Porte never missed an opportunity to introduce the Empire as one Great Power. In the protocol of European diplomacy, there was no doubt that the Ottoman Sultan belonged to the rank of emperor, not king or prince, like some European sovereigns. All the Great Powers exchanged with the Porte ambassadors, not ministers, as in China and Persia or small European countries. Further evidence of being a "civilized" Great Power was the possession of colonies. The Ottoman Empire participated, albeit with little success, in the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 to impress the European audience with its capacity to colonize the hinterland of its own provinces, in this case Libya [Le Gall 1990]. Some allegedly civilized Ottoman bureaucrats even attempted to colonize its own "barbarous" peripheries, especially Libya and Yemen, but their plans rarely materialized [Deringil 2003; Kuehn 2011].

In this sphere of domestic politics, the Porte fully employed the ambiguities inherent in the French and Turkish legal terms. In *Salnames*, which were primarily aimed at those who knew Turkish, Bulgaria and Egypt belonged to the category of privileged provinces, impressing its readers as if these two areas were under the same degree of Ottoman authority. Moreover, at the turn of the century in *Salnames*, Cyprus (until 1904), Crete (until 1908), and Mount Lebanon continued to appear as ordinal provinces, as if they were still under the Porte's direct control. In public education too, privileged provinces served to impress children with the geographical expansion of the Ottoman territory [Fortna 2002: chap. 5]. These public relations exercises were expected to enhance the authority of the Caliph; however, the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 ended the autocratic rule of the Sultan.

4. The Young Turk Era, 1908–22

4. 1. Revolution for National Sovereignty

After 30 years of autocracy, the Ottomans welcomed the restoration of constitutional rule with the slogan of "national sovereignty" (*hakimiyet-i milliye*). They were eager to restore their *sovereign* rights, which had been neglected and/or damaged through various forms of privileges. The new regime expended great effort on abolishing or diminishing these privileges, which it thought were contradictory to the one and indivisible Ottoman

sovereignty. Consequently, the privilege question precipitated the struggle between the Porte and non-Muslim communities, as argued in Chapter 10. Privileged provinces could not escape the attention of Ottoman patriots either. Political decentralization became a taboo in the theater of Ottoman constitutional politics; all that the Ottoman politicians could demand was administrative decentralization or “delegation of authority” (*tevsi-i mezuniyet*), because a widespread assumption was that any type of autonomy was detrimental to Ottoman *sovereignty* [Fujinami 2013a].

However, the Ottoman territorial integrity again proved to be a dead letter. Neighboring states quickly announced their official rule over the areas that had been under the nominal authority of the Porte. Just after the Revolution, in 1908, the Habsburgs formally incorporated Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Bulgaria finally became independent and annexed Eastern Rumelia [Ünal 1998]. The Cretan Christians also declared unification with Greece, but to their dismay, neither the Ottoman Empire nor Kingdom of Greece accepted it. Ironically, the Young Turk Revolution ended informal occupations only to accelerate formal annexations. With the independence of Bulgaria, the last area in which the Ottoman *suzerainty* existed was gone.

Furthermore, after the Italian invasion of Libya in 1911 and Balkan Wars of 1912–13, the Empire lost as many territories as after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877–78. The Ottoman Empire abandoned Macedonia and Crete, no longer claiming *suzerain* or *sovereign* rights. However, the Ottomans attempted to minimize their loss through legal subtleties by claiming their *sovereignty* over Libya. The Porte granted “full autonomy” (*muhtariyet-i tamme*) to Libya under a “representative of the Sultan” (*naibu’s-Sultan*).²³ Libya, or *Trablusgarp ve Bingazi*, moved to the category of privileged provinces in *Salname*, but the Aegean Islands remained among other ordinal provinces of the “mainland” during the Great War. This is because the Ottomans had not yet formally ceded these islands, as their fate had not been settled between the Greek claimants and Italian occupiers [Gooch 1926–38: vol. 9-2, pp. 1049–51].

The diminution of Ottoman authority did not end here. During the Balkan Wars, French intervention compelled the Porte to extend the autonomy of Mount Lebanon.²⁴ In 1913, the Ottomans formally abandoned their rights over Bahrain and Qatar, which was already under *de facto* British protection. In addition, the Porte recognized the convention of 1899 and admitted that Kuwait became a “kaza autonome”. This recognition meant the practical end of Ottoman control over the Gulf [Gooch 1926–38: vol. 10, pp. 190–6]. Furthermore, in 1914, under Russian pressure, the Porte had to admit the creation of autonomous Armenia in the guise of a “reform” in East Anatolia. The six prov-

²³ *Düstur*², vol. 4, 1331h (1912/13), pp. 690–1; vol. 7, 1336h (1917/18), pp. 8–14.

²⁴ *Düstur*², vol. 6, 1334h (1915/16), pp. 5–8.

inces (*vilayat-ı sitte*)—Erzurum, Van, Mamuretülaziz, Diyarbakır, Sivas, and Bitlis—were to be divided into two, each of which would be administered by a foreign governor [Türkmen 2006]. Only the outbreak of the Great War stopped this “reform” from being realized. The Great War provided the Young Turks with the last chance to restore their *sovereign* rights by getting rid of all privileges.

4. 2. *The Great War and After*

The first thing the Young Turks did after the outbreak of the War was to unilaterally abolish the Capitulations, to the dismay of their powerful ally, Germany.²⁵ In 1915, the Porte unilaterally abolished the autonomy of Mount Lebanon. The Ottomans displayed their firm position in the notes addressed to Germany and Habsburgs, in which the Porte unilaterally announced the abrogation of the treaties of Paris and Berlin as well as the autonomy of Mount Lebanon.²⁶ Taking advantage of the climate of War, the Ottoman Empire demonstrated its will to abolish all the privileges that ran contrary to its sovereignty. In this historic document, the Ottomans manifested their animosity to the Great Powers, who had hurt their *sovereign* rights in the guise of respecting their territorial integrity, with the application of a manifest double standard. The Muslim Ottomans’ hatred erupted against both the privileges and the people who had enjoyed them.

However, the Ottoman defeat stopped this process, as the victorious Entente Powers felt no need to respect the Porte’s decisions during the War. In 1919, the Ottomans were “quite willing to enter into negotiations at the proper moment with the Government of His Britannic Majesty with a view to define clearly the political status of Egypt and of the Island of Cyprus” and assured that

The Arab provinces lying to the south of the Turkish countries, and including Syria, Palestine, the Hedjaz, the Asyr, the Yemen, Irak, and all the other regions which were recognized as forming an integral part of the Ottoman Empire before the war, would have a large measure of administrative autonomy, under the sovereignty of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan [Hurewitz 1956: vol. 2, pp. 59–61].

The Entente Powers turned a deaf ear to these outdated propositions. Already at the beginning of the War, Britain unilaterally declared that Egypt “will henceforth constitute a British Protectorate”, which was “freed [...] from all rights of suzerainty [*sic*] or other

²⁵ *Takvim-i Vekayi*³, No. 1938, p. 1; *Düstur*², vol. 6, p. 1273.

²⁶ *İkdam*, no. 7084, 2 November 1916, p. 1. [Mandelstam 1917: 402–4].

rights heretofore claimed by the Ottoman Government” [Hurewitz 1956: vol. 2, pp. 4–7].

Finally, the treaty of Sèvres in 1920 denied Ottoman *sovereignty* and *suzerainty* for most of its (former) territory. According to the treaty, the Ottoman Empire was to recognize the autonomy of Kurdistan, independence of Armenia and the Hijaz, Mandate of Syria and Mesopotamia, and the French Protectorate in Morocco and over Tunisia; agree to the *de facto* cessation of Izmir; and renounce “tous ses droits et titres” in, over, or relating to Egypt, Cyprus, and the Aegean Islands as well as “tous droits et privilèges qui, en vertu du Traité de Lausanne du 12 octobre 1912, avaient été réservés au Sultan en Libye”. In short, the Ottomans formally renounced “tous droits de suzeraineté ou de juridiction de quelque nature qu’ils soient, sur les musulmans soumis à la souveraineté ou au protectorat de tout autre Etat”.²⁷ The treaty of Sèvres was essentially a death sentence for the Ottoman Empire.

However, the Turkish nationalists died hard. In 1920, they formulated the “National Pact” (*Misak-ı Milli* or *Ahd-ı Milli*) and declared their will to defend the land inside the armistice line as of 1918, which “the Muslim Ottomans” inhabited.²⁸ The Republic of Turkey was founded in this area. After their victory, the Turks concluded the treaty of Lausanne with the Entente Powers in 1923 to resettle the question of sovereignty. Turkey had no ambition to have authority outside its territory, and the clauses in the treaty of Sèvres that determined the end of Ottoman *suzerain* or *sovereign* rights outside Anatolia remained almost intact.²⁹ In contrast, the Turks held firm to abolish privileges inside their territory, especially the Capitulations and religious privileges, as discussed in Chapter 10.

The intriguing (hi)story of suzerainty in Europe ended with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. After the Great War, instead of suzerainty, Britain and France invented a new method of colonial rule: Mandate under the League of Nations.³⁰

Conclusion

Suzerainty was a foreign word transported from the West to the Ottoman East in the long

²⁷ [*Traité de paix entre les puissance...* 1920; Erim 1953: 525–691]. Interestingly, the treaty did not refer to Algeria, but mentioned Morocco, over which the Porte had not claimed its *suzerain* or *sovereign* rights.

²⁸ *Meclis-i Mebusan Zabıt Ceridesi*, Dördüncü Devre-i İctimaiye, Birinci İctima, 11inci İnikad, p. 115.

²⁹ *Düstur*³, vol. 5, 1931, pp. 13–357; [*Traité de paix avec la Turquie...* 1923].

³⁰ [Mazower 2009]. The question of sovereignty in the Mandate remained a curious academic issue, albeit with little practical meaning. See [Anghie 2005: chap. 3, esp. 147–9].

19th century. The Porte and Great Powers agreed on the existence of Ottoman *suzerainty* in five areas wherein Christians constituted a majority: Ionia, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria. All these areas formed a *semi-sovereign* “state”.

Until the end of the Empire, no generally accepted equivalent of *suzerainty* existed in Turkish, while *hakimiyet* became the standard translation of sovereignty. The Ottomans used expressions such as *tabi*, *hakk-ı tabiyet*, *metbu*, and *metbuiyet* in the formal texts of treaties as equivalents to *suzerainty*. However, these did not really express the substantial difference with *sovereignty*, as the root t-b-‘ we find in these words means “to follow”. From this, words such as *tebaa* and *tabiyet* were derived, the most common expressions for subject and nationality (of a sovereign state) respectively [Lewis 1991: 62–3]. Indeed, one could interpret the Turkish word *metbu* as *souverain* and *suzerain* simultaneously [Şemsettin Sami 1883: 965].

Between their *suzerain* and *sovereign* rights, the Ottomans invented a neologism in Turkish, namely privileged provinces, preferring this term in their description of autonomy under any type of Ottoman authority. In the Ottoman administrative wordings, not only those areas whose autonomous status under Ottoman *sovereignty* was internationally recognized, like Egypt, Tunisia, Samos, and Eastern Rumelia, but also the abovementioned semi-sovereign “states” under Ottoman *suzerainty* belonged to this category. Ottomans also called privileged provinces areas under foreign occupation: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Crete, and Libya. However, not all areas outside the Porte’s direct control were termed privileged provinces. It took a long time for Cyprus and Crete to become privileged provinces. Mount Lebanon and the small emirates in the Gulf were never considered privileged provinces.

This new concept of privileged provinces likely lessened the damage the Ottomans experienced in front of the international and domestic public. Whereas the term *imtiyazat* entered the Ottoman vocabulary to designate the areas over which the Porte had already lost *de facto* control, eventually the Ottomans applied this term to claim their *de jure* authority. According to the Porte, the territorial integrity of the Empire meant maintaining both the “mainland” and privileged provinces including semi-sovereign “states” like Romania (before 1878) or Bulgaria (after 1878). By using the term *imtiyazat*, the Ottomans confused the substantial differences between their *suzerain* and *sovereign* rights, if such differences existed at all.

In fact, European jurists were not unanimous regarding the nature of *suzerainty*. For example, Lassa Oppenheim argued:

The union and the relations between a Suzerain and its Vassal State create much difficulty in the science of the Law of Nations. [...] What makes the matter so complicated, is the fact that a general rule regarding the relation between the suzerain and vassal, and, further regarding the position, if any, of the vassal within the Fam-

ily of Nations, cannot be laid down, as everything depends upon the special case. [...] Suzerainty is a term which originally was used for the relation between the feudal lord and his vassal; [...] With the disappearance of the feudal system, suzerainty of this kind likewise disappeared. The modern suzerainty scarcely contains rights of the Suzerain State over the Vassal State which could be called constitutional rights. The rights of the Suzerain State over the Vassal are principally international rights only, of whatever they may consist.

In other words, there are two types of *suzerainty*: feudal and modern. Most of the semi-sovereign states under the “modern suzerainty” that concerned international lawyers were (former) Ottoman dependencies. Oppenheim mentioned Egypt, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, and Crete [1905: §90]. Johann Caspar Bluntschli in his discussion on suzerainty referred to Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt, in addition to Serbia, Romania, and Montenegro before 1878 and Bulgaria after 1878.³¹ Georgios Streit, professor of international law and later Minister of Foreign Affairs in Greece, examined Egypt, Bulgaria, Crete, Tunisia, and Ionia in his argument on “États mi-souverains” (*Ημικυρίαρχοι πολιτεῖαι*) along with the privileged provinces (*προνομιούχοι ἐπαρχίαι*) of Samos and Mount Lebanon [Στρέϊτ 1900: 19–21, 32–5; 1905: §§18, 21]. This is no coincidence. Bluntschli, in his *Le droit international condifié*, argued that:

Comme la souveraineté tend naturellement à l’unité, elle ne peut laisser longtemps subsister ce dualisme entre la souveraineté vassale et la souveraineté suzeraine. Les états vassaux s’élèvent avec le temps au rang d’états entièrement souverains, ou l’état suzerain retire peu à peu les droits qu’il avait conférés à l’état vassal et se l’annexe. [...] Il existait au moyen âge une foule d’états vassaux, tant en Europe qu’en Asie. Aujourd’hui ils ont presque tous disparu, parce qu’ils se sont transformés en états souverains, ou ont été absorbés par un état puissant. Cette transformation ne reste plus à opérer qu’en Turquie.³²

Or, according to John Westlake, whose opinion was more exact from the viewpoint of Ottoman history,

“Suzerain” and “vassal” are terms of mediaeval origin [...] The term “suzerainty,” little used in Western or Central Europe since 1806, has since been revived in connection with the gradual emancipation of the provinces of the Turkish Empire

³¹ Compare his discussion before and after 1878. See [Bluntschli 1878: §§76–8; 1881a: §§76–8]

³² [Bluntschli 1874: §77]. In the third edition, he argued, “cette transformation s’est opérée actuellement en Turquie” [Bluntschli 1881a: §77].

chiefly inhabited by Christians. The Ottoman sultans created a privileged position for Moldavia and Wallachia by ordinances, called capitulations [...] and when in 1856 those provinces and Servia were erected by the treaty of Paris into autonomous principalities [...] the name of suzerainty was given to the position reserved to Turkey with regard to them. Similarly, when in 1878 these principalities became independent states by the treaty of Berlin, Bulgaria was made an autonomous principality under the suzerainty of the Sultan, as she still is. [...] The mention of the privileged portions of the Turkish empire makes this an appropriate place of speaking of Egypt, a privileged province in which the family of Mehemet Ali governs under a series of firmans granted by the sultans [...] The practical authority is however in the hands of Great Britain under an occupation which began in 1882, and the case is too anomalous to admit of classification [1904: 25–7].

The Ottoman experience was *the* historical case of “modern suzerainty”.

*

In conclusion, “modern suzerainty” was a concept invented for Westerners to enhance, control, and explain the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. In the context of the Eastern Question, the Great Powers employed this concept to sustain the European balance of power at the expense of the Ottomans but without—at least theoretically—hurting the “territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire”. Because of this diplomatic concern, the meaning of *suzerainty* from the outset was made ambiguous among Ottoman, European, and Balkan contenders. Oppenheim argued,

Suzerainty is by no means sovereignty. If it were, the Vassal State could not be Sovereign in its domestic affairs and could never have any international relations whatever of its own. And why should suzerainty be distinguished from sovereignty if it were a term synonymous with sovereignty? [1905: §90]

However, despite its theoretical clarity, this is off the mark. As is clear from the examination in this article, the term *suzerainty* was deliberately chosen because it was not clearly distinguished from *sovereignty*. Many European jurists only saw the “nominal” Ottoman *suzerainty*, even in areas over which the Great Powers admitted Ottoman *sovereignty*, such as Egypt and Crete. This might be a result of their “liberal” attitude to think independently from political powers, but more likely, it reflected the specific Ottoman background against which the “modern suzerainty” developed.

No less important is the fact that the Ottoman experience served as a precedent when the concept of suzerainty was introduced, adopted, and appropriated in the Far

East. As discussed in the next chapter, Henry Wheaton's description of Ottoman suzerainty determined the Far Easterners' understanding of the concept. According to the viewpoints of European and Japanese jurists, the Egyptian, Bulgarian, and Cretan questions ran parallel to the Korean, Tibetan, and Mongolian questions.³³ In his argument on *suzerainty*, Takahashi Sakue 高橋作衛 faithfully adopted and quoted (in English!) the whole section (which I cited above) from the description of his mentor, Westlake.³⁴ Tachi Sakutaro 立作太郎 argued the case of "Turkey" at length, long after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, in his explanation of *suzerainty*.³⁵ In 1913, just after the Chinese Revolution and Balkan Wars, an anonymous writer suggested that Japan did not have to respect the territorial integrity of China, as the Great Powers' assurance of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire had proven to be a mere scrap of paper [anon. 1913]. The underlying assumption is that Japan could invade China, notwithstanding the subtleties of international law, as it had done in Korea and the Great Powers had done in the Ottoman Empire. The Japanese learned a lesson from the Ottoman *suzerainty* in their encroachment of Chinese territories.

In the long 19th century, international law and lawyers travelled, along with the modern concepts of the sovereign states system, from the West through Ottoman to Far East. One such term was *suzerainty*, which represented and accelerated this process. The Ottomans' view on East Asia reflected one intriguing intellectual interaction between the East and West, as the Ottomans understood the international relations around China through the quintessentially Ottoman concept of privileged provinces. This concept became so deeply rooted among the Ottomans that they hardly felt embarrassed to apply the term to almost every type of autonomy in the world. Before concluding this chapter, I quote two encyclopedic entries written by Şemsettin Sami, whose definition of *imtiyazat* was examined at the beginning of this chapter. On China, this Ottoman patriot-cum-Albanian nationalist argued:

Because the Chinese state rules even such territories as Tibet, Mongolia, Eastern Turkistan, and Manchuria, there is a great difference between the Chinese state and the land of China proper. [...] Muslims are the majority in the privileged provinces of China like Eastern Turkistan [...] Mongolia and Eastern Turkistan are consid-

³³ For a brief analysis of the views of modern Japanese international lawyers, see [Akashi 2012].

³⁴ [Takahashi 1910: 222 乙ノ 1–11]. Even after Bulgarian independence, Takahashi continued to repeat Westlake's remark in 1904 that "Bulgaria was made an autonomous principality under the suzerainty of the Sultan, as she still is" (「土耳其皇帝ノ宗主権ノ下ニ自治國ト為ルヲ得テ今日ニ至レリ」).

³⁵ [Tachi 1932]. See also his earlier argument on the relationship between "Turkey" and Egypt [Tachi 1911].

ered dependent lands; but, because Manchuria is the homeland of today's sovereign dynasty and the Manchu people the ruling nation, even though governed differently from the provinces of China proper, Manchuria must not be regarded as a dependent land (*Çin devleti Tibet, Moğolistan, Türkistan-ı Şarki ve Mançuriya gibi birtakım memalike dahi hükm ettiğinden, Çin devleti ile asıl Çin memleketi arasında büyük bir fark vardır. [...] Çin'in Türkistan-ı Şarki gibi eyalat-ı mümtazesinde Müslümanlar ekseriyet üzere bulun[du] [...] Moğolistan ile Türkistan-ı Şarki memalik-i tabiadan madud olup, Mançuriya ise, şimdiki hanedan-ı hükümdarının vatani ve Mançu kavmi millet-i hakime olmağla, asıl Çin eyalatından ayrı idare olunduğu halde, memalik-i tabiadan add olunmaz*) [Şemsettin Sami 1306–16h: vol. 3, pp. 1892–1900].

On Korea, he wrote:

Korea is a large peninsula in the Far East, next to the Manchurian part of the Chinese state, and officially dependent on the Chinese state, but actually an independent state. [...] Even though it is considered dependent on China, this is merely a tribute to the Chinese sovereign with a yearly envoy. The Chinese state calls this tribute a tax. Actually, 20 years before, first Japan and then the European states and America officially recognized the independence of Korea. [...] In the past, Korea was considered part of the Chinese territories. In the Christian year 935, Korea gained independence, and in 1392, after nearly 500 years thereof, a Korean sovereign recognized the Chinese state and was forced to become dependent on the Chinese Emperor. However, since this dependency was voluntary and the sovereign and suzerain ties eventually loosened, only a nominal and formal dependency remains (*Kore: Corée Asya'nın münteha-yı şarkında Çin devletinin Mançuriya kutasına merbut ve resmen Çin devletine tabi büyük bir şibh-i cezire olup, hakikatte müstakil bir devlettir. [...] Çin'e tabi zan olunuyorsa da, bu tabiyet beher sene Çin hükümdarına mahsus bir heyet-i sefaretle birtakım hedaya göndermekten ibaret [idi] [...] Kore eskiden beri Çin memalikinden madud olup, 935 tarih-i miladisinde istihsal-i istiklal etmiş, ve beşyüz seneye karib müddet büsbütün müstakil bulunduktan sonra, 1392de Kore hükümdar Çin devletini tanıyarak Çin imparatoruna tabi olmağa mecbur olmuş ise de, bu tabiyet ihtiyari olmağla, gittikçe revabıt-ı tabiyet ve metbuiyet gevşeyip, büsbütün ismi ve itibari bir irtibat halinde kalmıştır*) [Şemsettin Sami 1306–16h: vol. 5, pp. 3728–31].

Alongside the arguments of other chapters in this volume, the implications of these lines become clearer. Ottoman *suzerainty* sheds light on the intellectual interactions and international relations between the East and West. This enhances the understanding of not

only the Ottomanist historians but also the specialists in East Asia and international law with regard to the Eurocentric world order of the long 19th century and the Ottomans' unique place in it.