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MINISTRY OF THE COLONIES

GENERAL DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS

# NOTES

ON THE

NATURE OF THE « CALIPHATE » IN GENERAL

AND ON

THE ALLEGED « OTTOMAN CALIPHATE »

BY **C. A. NALLINO**†

PROFESSOR OF THE HISTORY AND INSTITUTIONS OF ISLÂM

IN THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF ROME

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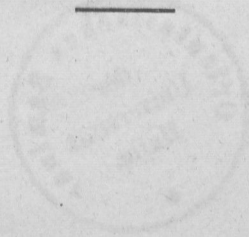
## THE ALLEGED « OTTOMAN CALIPHATE »

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I.

What is meant by « Caliph » (1).

Mahomet founded both a religion and a State (2); both had, while he lived, the same territorial extension. The religious power was always exercised by himself alone, in his character of prophet and apostle of God; such a character, as conceived by him and his followers, did not admit the delegation of spiritual powers to others, still less the transmission of such powers as a legacy after his death. As the Koran itself declares, the series of divine revelations closes definitively with Mahomet; afterwards the believers have only to follow faithfully his teachings. Accordingly there is no trace in Islâm of an ecclesiastical hierarchy or of sacred priestly orders; the conception of the christian « sacraments » and of an intermediary between God and the individual believer, is entirely wanting. To find anything at all approaching the spiritual powers of the Catholic or Greek or Protestant clergy, one must come to

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(1) Be it understood that in this *pro-memoria* (written in 1916) we speak only of the Caliph of the Sunnites and not of the Caliph (or rather, Imâm) as understood by the small fraction of the Shiite Mussulmans, Persians for the most part, who do not concern us for the present.

(2) Mahomet became head of a State only after his migration (hijra) from Mecca to Medina in September, 622 A. D. His death took place on a Monday, which almost certainly corresponds to June 8th, 632 A. D.; the date of his birth is not known. — Under the Caliphate of Omar (634-644 A. D.) it was agreed to reckon the years (lunar) of the Mussulman calendar from the beginning of the Arab year in which the hijra took place, or from the sunset of July 15th, 622 A. D. (since, with the Arabs, as before that with the Jews, and at one time also in Italy, the day of 24 hours does not begin at midnight, but at sunset); hence the error of many European books which make July 16th, 622 A. D. the date, not only of the beginning of the Mussulman era, but also of the actual migration (not « flight ») of Mahomet to Medina.

those later manifestations of Islamism, about six centuries after Mahomet, — the religious confraternities; in these alone one finds a true cure of souls, a true spiritual power, which, however, only regards the relations between the master and the disciple who has voluntarily enrolled himself in the confraternity after his novitiate, and, in any case, has nothing to do with dogma or ritual.

The only succession for which provision had to be made, after the death of Mahomet, was that of the *sovereignty* over the whole Mussulman State, which, based on a common religion, had foundations radically different from those on which, before Islâm, the various politico-social constructions of that part of Arabia were raised up.

Should one consider the political work of the Prophet finished with his death, thus returning to the old particularism of the tribe? Or, should the State that had risen at Medina remain in vigour without changes? And if so, who should rule over it? — Neither the Koran (which for Mussulmans is the « word of God », not the word or work of the Prophet), nor Mahomet had given any instructions on the matter.

On the very evening of the day on which the Prophet breathed his last, after many hours of violent discussion and tumult, the prevailing opinion was that the political unity of the Mussulmans should be maintained, and so Abu Bekr was elected as *head of the Mussulman State*; it seems that to him was then given the title of *Caliph (khalîfa)* (1), an Arab word that signifies both « successor » in a public office and « representative » or « vicar » of a superior authority in a more restricted post. It seems not improbable that the choice of the word was influenced by two verses of the Koran referring to Adam and King David respectively.

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(1) It is not quite certain that this title was already given to Abu Bekr, at least officially. The fact is certain only for his successor Omar (634-644 A. D.); but in any case it is to be noted that the designation *khalîfa* was always rather in historic and literary use, than in burocratic. In fact in the official title used in public acts, inscriptions and coinage, the Caliph, in accordance with the rule established by Omar, is designated always as *amîr al-muminîn* (the « miramolino » of our medieval chroniclers), that is, « the Lord of the faithful »; and by this title, not by that of *khalîfa*, he was addressed by officials, courtiers, and private persons.

Historically then, the Caliphs are the successors of Mahomet in the *government of the whole Mussulman State, that is, of the entire body of Mussulmans*; presupposing (as was indeed the fact for several centuries) the non-existence of any Islamic peoples under a non-Islamic rule. — But here one comes on a fact inexplicable at first sight to a European; while these universal Monarchs of Islâm possessed, like any other Mussulman sovereign, limitless executive and judicial powers, they were *destitute of legislative powers*; legislation in the proper sense of the word could be nothing less than the divine law itself, the *scerîa*, of which the only interpreters are the *ûlama* or doctors. — In the religious field the only duty belonging to the Caliph, as to every other Islamic sovereign, is to defend the faith with the power of his secular arm against enemies within or without, and to see to it that public worship, consisting in the common prayers on Fridays, is regularly celebrated.

This character of the Caliphate, a necessary consequence of its historic origins, is also fully recognised in the theory of the jurists and of the other Sunnite Mussulman writers. I translate here, as an example, the part referring to the Caliphate in the famous Islamic catechism of Abu Hafs Omar an-Násafi, who died 1142 A. D.; I choose this book, not only for its celebrity, but also because it is among the prescribed text-books in the «*médrese*» (that is, higher schools of theology and canon law) of Constantinople.

«*Mussulmans must have an Imâm (1), who sees to it that the*

(1) The theologians and jurists are wont to reserve for the first four Islamic sovereigns (Abu Bekr, Omar, Othmân and Ali) the title of «*Caliph*», as the only ones who, besides having been illustrious companions of the Prophet, governed with exclusive regard to the rules contained in the Koran or indicated by Mahomet; on the other hand, they call «*Imâm*», that is «*head*» (sovereign), all the later rulers, as those who introduced into the government and public administration innovations not based on the Koran and the Sunna. In fact, one reads in the book of an-Násafi, immediately before the passage here translated: «*The Caliphate lasted thirty years; afterwards there was only a kingdom and emirate*», or a government not dissimilar from that of any Islamic sovereign whatsoever. The thirty years (lunar; that is, more than 29 solar years) correspond to the period running from the death of Mahomet (632 A. D.) to that of the fourth Caliph (661 A. D.).

« regulations of Islamic law are observed, that the punishments  
 « prescribed in the Koran are carried out, that the frontiers are  
 « defended, that the armies are ready for action, that the Islamic  
 « tenth is collected, that rebels, robbers and brigands are brought  
 « to obedience, that the public prayers of Friday and the other fes-  
 « tivals are celebrated, that controversies arising between parties  
 « are decided, that evidence in matters of right be heard, that pro-  
 « vision be made for the marriage of minors of both sexes who  
 « have no guardians, that war-booty be justly divided, and suchlike  
 « matters.

« It is necessary that the Imâm be visible, not hidden, nor  
 « awaited in the future (1); and that he be of the [kin of the]  
 « Koreish, not of others, without that, on the other hand, he should  
 « properly appertain to the sub-kin of Hâshim or to the descen-  
 « dants of Ali (2). It is not to be laid down as a condition for the  
 « Imâm that he be impeccable and infallible, nor that he be supe-  
 « rior in merits to his contemporaries (3); on the other hand, it  
 « is to be laid down as a condition that he be apt for absolute  
 « and complete power, a good governor, and capable of causing to  
 « be observed the regulations of Islamic law, of warding the con-  
 « fines of Mussulman territory, and safeguarding the rights of the  
 « oppressed against the oppressor. The Imâm cannot be deposed  
 « on account of bad moral conduct and of tyranny ».

This concise exposition of an-Nâsafi clearly shows that the  
*Caliph* is nothing other than the *Supreme Monarch*, to whom is  
 entrusted the care of the interests of *all* the Mussulmans and the

(1) This is a polemic against the supernatural Imâm of the Shiites, who was to disappear at a certain moment, and to remain hidden until his re-appearance at some future epoch unknown, when he would return and restore the age of gold on the earth.

(2) This too is a polemic against the Shiites, for whom the Imâm is such by divine right, limited to the descendants of Ali; a polemic also against the fanatical partisans of the Abbasids who, contending that the Caliph should descend from the Koreishite sub-kin of Hâshim (to which Mahomet and Ali belonged), implicitly declared that the preceding Caliphate of the Ommiads (Koreishites, but not of the branch of Hâshim) was illegitimate.

(3) Further polemic against points of the Shiite doctrine.

maintenance of their *political unity*; he is the secular head of all the Islamic territory, the supreme judge, the head of the army, the defender of the faith by the sword or other coercive means, but he is not the interpreter of the divine law nor the director of consciences, and he cannot interfere in matters of dogma or ritual, unless one except his duty, as the State Authority, to see to the regular performance of public worship.

It may be objected: Why then do the catechisms, which ought only to treat of religious matters, handle the question of the Caliphate? — The answer is given in the books of the Sunnite Mussulmans, which speak thus: The Shiites having made of the Imâmate a dogmatic question, having invested it with a religious character of divine right (thus withdrawn from the operation of man's will), they of necessity treat of it in their theological books; we Sunnites, having to oppose every heterodoxy and to eliminate every error derived therefrom, are compelled to speak of the Imâmate in our dogmatic works, although it does not belong to matters of dogma or faith, just in order to guard the faithful against the affirmations of the Shiites (1).

The Sunnite Islamism *has never admitted a supreme Head of the Islamic Church*. A Church, in the sense of a sacerdotal hierarchical organisation, does not exist. Religious unity is maintained, not by the Caliph, but by the *doctors* (the *ûlama*), who are « the heirs of the prophets »; they alone in the past have elaborated the *dogma*, the *ritual*, the *canon law*, without any interference from the Caliphs or other Sovereigns (2); to them alone it now belongs to preserve unaltered the traditional doctrine, and to decide on the orthodoxy or heterodoxy of new teachings and new usages. In all

(1) In consequence of the diminished importance, in theory and practice, of Shiite doctrine, modern Sunnite Mussulman catechisms, composed in the last thirty years for school use in Turkey and Egypt, have quite ceased to occupy themselves with the Caliphate or the Imâmate.

(2) The Councils of Doctors summoned by the Abbasid Caliphs, are simply fantasies of the Christian Greek, Savvas Pasha, author of that most unhappy and most harmful book, *Théorie du droit Musulman*, which has wrought such confusion in the minds of European students who did not know Arabic. No Councils were ever convened in the Arab world.

these matters, it is not the will of the Caliph that counts, but the consent of the Doctors; a consent that was naturally in certain cases the fruit of bitter disputes drawn out through several generations, from which a final common opinion was at last formed.

The *ülama* are not a body of men connected with the State, but those who freely devote themselves to study; eminence publicly recognised, not government authority or Academic diplomas, confers on them the doctor's title; only those among them become public functionaries who accept nomination as judges (*cádi*) or as *müfti* of the Government, that is, legal government advisers on abstract theoretical questions.

Books on Ethics, on Jurisprudence, and on the Religious Sciences earnestly warn off the Doctors from too great intimacy with Sovereigns and high State functionaries; they cite examples of illustrious *ülama* who pertinaciously refused the career of judge offered them by Caliphs, and they do not fail to set in relief that, among the causes of the falsification of the traditions relative to Mahomet, not the least was the desire « to ingratiate oneself with high political authorities, such as the Caliphs and the Emirs », by means of words or examples meant to justify questionable acts and tendencies of such personages.

Recapitulating, then, what has so far been expounded, we can say that the *Caliph* is the *Prince of the faithful*, the universal Monarch of the Mussulmans, *not the head of the Mussulman religion*; as regards dogma or ritual he is a simple believer, obliged to observe the traditional doctrine preserved by the *ülama*. He is a defender of the Islamic faith, an enemy of heresy, only in the same way that European Emperors, Kings and Princes were defenders of the faith and extirpators of heresy in bygone days.

The Caliph is distinguished from other Mussulman sovereigns (Sultans, Kings, Emirs, etc.) only by the fact that his sovereignty extends, or at least should extend, over the whole Islamic world, and that his mission is to conserve the *political and territorial unity of all* the Mussulmans, and to bring to submission all the States of the Infidels as soon as he has the means to do so. Hence it comes that the position of the Caliph in the Islamic world corresponds almost exactly to that of the *Emperor* or universal Monarch of

Christendom (1), according to the conception of the medieval Ghibelline jurists. And as, according to these last, Kings, Princes, Dukes, etc., are rightful sovereigns of a given region only when the Emperor has conferred on them the feudal investiture for that region, thus, according to Islamic public law, only those *Sultans, Kings* or *Emirs* are legitimate to whom the reigning Caliph has delegated his own authority over a determined region, that is, has granted the temporal or feudal investiture.

It comes out clearly from the text of an-Násafi translated above (p. 8), that, according to the Sunnites, two things are indispensable for one who would be Caliph: 1) Descent from the tribe of Koreish; 2) Governing capacity. This second requisite implies that one is of full age (which, according to Mussulman law, coincides with the age of puberty), since the non-pubescent is judicially incapable; it implies further the absence of grave physical defects (as blindness and deafness), mental sanity and a certain degree of culture. An-Násafi is silent about two other indispensable requisites, viz.: 3) To be a Mussulman; 4) To be a free man; but this silence is explained by the fact that it was superfluous to mention these things, it being Islamic law that the non-Mussulman and the slave cannot exercise dominion (*wiláia*, « imperium ») over Mussulmans.

One should also add that, by the jurists, the conferring of the dignity of Caliph is considered as a contract between him who accepts the office and the Mussulman community; the contract is not complete unless accompanied with the *báia* or proffering of homage on the part of the representatives of the community (2). The nomination can be made either in virtue of an election when the office falls vacant, or by the previous designation of an heir to

(1) The parallel has not escaped some Arab authors. Thus Ibn Abi Dinâr, writing the history of Tunis in 1681, when treating of the efforts of Charles V against Tunis, notes how he had assumed the title of *imbratúr*, « a title that belongs to the German Sovereigns (*mulúk al-almán*), since their kingdom is most ancient and the Emperor is for them what the Caliph is for the Mussulmans ».

(2) The *báia* is also used for the other Sovereigns by their respective subjects; for example, at the nomination of Husein Kâmel to be Sultan of Egypt (December, 1914), on his declaration of independence of Turkey by the actual Sherif of Mecca, Husein ibn Ali (1916), and is always in use for the Sultans of Morocco, the Bey of Tunis, etc.

the throne made by the reigning Caliph; but also in this latter case, it is necessary that the person designated be of full age and have formally accepted, and that there have been performed previously in his favour the *bâia* by the representatives of the Islamic community. Thus also in the ages when the Caliphate was hereditary in the dynasty of the Omniads, or Omayyads (661-750 A. D.), and in that of the Abbasids (750-1258 A. D.), the hereditary succession was always understood, either under the form of a real election by the representatives of the community, or under the form of the designation of an heir to the throne previously approved by the community itself; minors were always excluded from candidature, and the choice of an heir was freely made among the sons (first born or otherwise), the brothers, or other relatives.

Finally, to make clear something about which I shall have to speak later on, let me add here that, owing to a custom that has grown up through the abuse (1) of centuries in most Mussulman Countries, one of the *insignia of sovereignty* is, that the benediction of God be invoked on the name of the reigning Sovereign of Islâm at the *khutba* or sermon on Friday, which is held in the so-called Cathedral Mosque. According to this custom not to name the Sovereign towards the end of the *khutba*, when the preacher invokes the benediction of God on all the faithful, is equivalent to a proclamation of rebellion against him; Mussulman history supplies us very frequently with examples of this (2). Accordingly, when the Caliph exists, his name, as ruler of all the Mussulmans, must always be mentioned in the *khutba*; and to his name must be added that of the ruler (Sultan, King, Emir, etc.) of the region

(1) In the classical manuals of law, invocation of the divine favour « for the Mussulmans of both sexes » is considered as one of the five indispensable parts of the *khutba*, but they are silent as to invocation for the reigning Sovereign (whether Caliph or not). In more recent manuals, if reference is made to invocation for a special reigning Sovereign, such invocation is declared to be an innovation that is « *unadvisable* » (*makrûh*); notwithstanding, the preacher should retain it when, by its omission, there would be fear of bodily danger for himself or of causing a riot.

(2) Accordingly, in the Arab writers the expression « in such a country the *khutba* is held for X. » signifies that in that country X. is recognised as legitimate sovereign.



where the khutba is held, to whom the Caliph has granted investiture (1). When the Caliph does not exist, the prayer in the khutba is made only for the Islamic Sovereign of the country.

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## II.

### The fundamental European error as to the nature of the Caliphate.

The conception which Europeans generally have of the Caliph, on which is based the policy of many States towards the Ottoman Empire and towards their own Mussulman subjects, is the following: « The name Caliph designates the head of the Islamic religion, the spiritual chief of all the Mussulmans; in other words, the Supreme Pontiff of Islâm. The Sultan of Constantinople is Sultan inasmuch as he has temporal power over the Ottoman territories; he is Caliph inasmuch as he has supreme spiritual power over all the Sunnite Mussulmans, whatever State they may be subjects of ».

From this completely false conception have sprung, in the European mind, the following practical corollaries, equally false:

a) As Catholicism and the catholic hierarchy are inconceivable without a Supreme Pontiff, so Islamism is inconceivable without the supreme spiritual authority of the Caliph.

b) Therefore, unless one wish to commit a grave act of religious persecution, every European State which has Mussulman subjects, ought to allow free relations between them and the Caliph, whose existence and authority should be recognised and respected;

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(1) Thus article 7 of the Ottoman Constitution of 24th December, 1876, says: « The dismissal and appointment of Ministers, the filling of public offices, the conferring of honourable rank and of decorations, the nomination of heads of the privileged provinces on the basis of their privileges, the coining of money, the mention of his name in the khutba, the making of treaties with foreign States, the declaring of war and peace, the supreme command of the land and sea forces, the carrying out of military operations, the enforcing the observance of the rules of the Sharîa [= Islamic law] and the laws of the State, the drawing up of regulations for the public offices, ... the summoning or the proroguing of Parliament, the dissolving of the Chamber of Deputies ... all this forms part of the rights of the Sacred Majesty of the Pâdishâh [= the Sovereign] ».

just as it would not be admissible to deny to catholic subjects free spiritual and hierarchical relations with the Holy See.

c) Since peculiar historic conditions would make too dangerous the union of the temporal power (limited to the Ottoman territories) and the spiritual power (extending to all Mussulmans without distinction) in the hands of the Ottoman Sovereign, a European State should show its political acumen by provoking among the Mussulmans a sort of « pronouncement » against their chief sacerdotal authority, that is, against the Caliph, and by getting recognised as the High Priest of Islâm some personage taken from among the Arabs, who becomes the creature of the European power which has brought about this great change.

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The *theoretic premiss*, whence these corollaries arise, is false; the blame of having introduced it into Europe and of having made it a sort of dogma for the European diplomacy of the XIXth century, rests on D'Ohsson, an Armenian of Constantinople, who in his *Tableau Général de l'Empire Othoman* (published at Paris in 1788 and the following years; a book, in other ways, of very high value) speaks precisely of « Pontife des Musulmans », of « autorité sacerdotale du Souverain », etc. This is not the place to explain by what equivocations (the chief of which is linguistic, — an error as to the meaning of the Arab word *imâm*), and perhaps also for what political ends D'Ohsson made so grave a mistake, in contradiction with the very Arab legal texts which he elsewhere translates. The evil has been, that this first theoretic error has had serious consequences for the Islamic policy of the European States.

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### III.

#### **The end of the true Caliphate; the alleged Ottoman Caliphate; the origin of the fable of the spiritual power of the Caliph.**

The Caliphate *died out definitively* in 1258 A. D., when the Tartars under Hulâgu Khan sacked Bagdad, putting an end to the

Caliphate of the Abbasids, whose race was destroyed. In name and in fact the Caliphs then ceased to exist (1).

None the less, four years later, in 1262, a black man appeared in Egypt, who asserted that he was a member of the Abbasid family who had escaped from the Tartar slaughter. The Egyptian Sultan Baibárs I (al-Bundukdâri), of the dynasty of the Circassian or Bahrite Mamelukes, thought it would serve his own ends to believe the story, despite its unlikelihood (2); he solemnly recognised him as Caliph and received from his hands the investiture of Sultan of Egypt (3). In this way Baibárs sought to be pardoned by public opinion for having mounted the throne through the slaughter of his predecessor by his own hand; he also counted on increasing his dignity before the other Mussulman princes, who now no longer derived their power from a supreme authority. Thus arose a new ephemeral Abbasid Caliphate of Egypt; a Caliphate purely *nominal*, because, besides the fact that it was not recognised by the majority of the Islamic Sovereigns, it delegated all its powers to others, renounced the right of coining money in its own name (this being one of the chief emblems of sovereignty among the Mussulmans), and only reserved for itself the office of drawing rich allowances and granting the investiture to every new Egyptian Sultan. It appears also that in course of time some Princes outside

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(1) Naturally one cannot take account of the Caliphian longings of individual Sovereigns or individual dynasties, whose aspirations were never recognised by others. For example, soon after the fall of the Abbasids, the Hafsid Sultans of Tunis arrogated to themselves the title of *amîr al-muminîn*, « Lord of the faithful », a title peculiar to the Caliphs; but their Caliphate did not get any further than this, although they preserved this title among their other official ones until their fall, which took place in 1534 A. D.

(2) Contemporary Arab historians, or those who write shortly after the event, speak of the matter with small respect; thus Abulfeda, writing in Syria in 1329, entitles his chapter on the subject « Mention of the recognition of such a one as Caliph », and in the course of the chapter names the presumed Abbasid, « the black Caliph ». Also a modern Turk-Arab writer, Hasan Husni et-Tueirâni, who wrote in 1891 an Arabic pamphlet favourable to the Ottoman Caliphate, considers the presumed Abbasid as an impostor.

(3) Be it noted that Baibárs, not being of Arab race and so in no possibility of descent from the Meccan stem of the Koreish, could never himself have aspired to become Caliph.

of Egypt requested investiture from these caricatures of the Caliphs who, in any case, had never any *religious* powers, nor any moral or material authority whatsoever before the *ûlama*.

In 1517 the Ottoman Selim I conquered Egypt and broke the dominion of the Mameluke Sultans. The Abbasid pseudo-Caliph al-Mutawakkil was brought to Constantinople as a private person; after the death of Selim (1520 A. D.) he was able to return to Egypt, where he died in 1543, or, according to others, in 1538. And with him disappeared for ever this artificial resurrection of the Abbasid Caliphate.

The Ottoman Sultans meantime reached the summit of their power and made Europe tremble before them. Then it was that the flattery of learned men about the court, in dedications of books, smuggled in the name of Caliph or some allusion to the Caliphate among the long list of official titles of the Ottoman Sultans; nothing but literary flattery this (1), in complete opposition to the Islamic doctrine that the Caliph must be of Koreishite origin. And in fact Caliph titles do not appear in diplomas, moneys, or official inscriptions emanating directly from the Sultan, in that pompous Turkish heaping-up of titles, where, only exceptionally, there appears, among numerous other epithets, that of *khilâfet-penâhî*, « asylum of the Caliphate ».

The first example of an Ottoman Sovereign being officially and explicitly qualified as both Sultan and Caliph (be it added, in the European version an *arbitrary and new* signification is given to this latter title) is to be found in a treaty concluded with *strangers*; it is the treaty of *Küchük Kainargé* of 21st July, 1774, between Abdul Hamid I and Catherine II of Russia. In this document Abdul Hamid I is always referred to by his Sultanic titles; but in the third article, where he recognises the complete independence of the Tartars of the Crimea and of Kuban, it is said that they « being of « the same religious customs as the Mussulmans, and *His Sultanic* « *Majesty* being as *Supreme* Mahometan Caliph, they must regulate « themselves with regard to him as is prescribed in the rules of

(1) One has examples of the same thing in the case of Sovereigns not Turkish.

« their religion, without however compromising their established « political and civil liberty (1) ». The ability of the Ottoman plenipotentiaries thus succeeded in deceiving the Russians; causing to re-enter by the window, under the false guise of a spiritual power which did not exist, that which the treaty was intended (according to the Russians) to entirely eliminate, viz, the Turkish sovereignty over the Tartars. The Ottoman plenipotentiaries played on the ambiguity and on the ignorance of their adversary (2); they were also favoured by the fact that the Emperor of Russia, as head of the Greek-Schismatic Church, assumed a kind of religious patronage over the Moldavians, Valaks, and other followers of the same Church in Ottoman territory; hence the invention of an Islamic Caliphate or Pontificate held by the Monarch of Constantinople, did not seem an absurdity to the inexperienced eyes of the Russians (3), but

(1) So runs the original Italian text of the treaty (in Martens, *Recueil des principaux traités*, Gottingue, 1791-1801, t. IV, p. 612), the only one furnished with the signatures and seals of the plenipotentiaries of both parties. The French translation which the Russian Government afterwards published and circulated in 1775, aggravates the error by saying, « ils se régleront à l'égard de Sa Hautesse comme *Grand Calife du Mahométisme* selon les préceptes que leur prescrit leur loi . . . ». The other French version, given by G. Noradounghian, *Recueil d'actes internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman*, Paris, 1897-1903, t. I, p. 322, is as follows: « et que S. M. le Sultan est regardé comme « le *Souverain Calife de la religion mahométane* . . . ». The Turkish text which, as written for Mussulmans, could not contain such a blunder, says: « since « my sovereign person, stamped by equity, is the head (imâm) of the believers « and the Caliph of those professing the unity of God . . . ». Similarly, what the Italian text calls « religious customs » and the French version « cérémonies de religion », are necessarily rendered in the Turkish edition *umûr i dînîye ve mezhebîye* « matters religious and of the *mezheb* », or of the hanaphite school (*mezheb*) of canon law (ritual, civil, judicial and penal)! The Turkish text is in the *Muâhedât-Mejmûasî*, Constantinople, 1294-1307 A. H., vol. III, p. 256.

(2) Or at least they took pleasure in drawing profit out of it, if it be true what D'Ohsson writes, that the merit of the subsequent convention of Ainali Kavak is due to the Count of Saint-Priest, French ambassador, « dont la sagesse sut concilier, dans une négociation aussi épineuse, les intérêts de la religion d'une part, et de la politique de l'autre, entre les deux puissances contractantes ». It may therefore be that Saint-Priest was the inventor of the *spiritual powers* of the Caliph.

(3) Nor will this appear absurd to Europeans who, not being versed in Islamic matters, judge Eastern affairs from the standpoint of Western con-

might seem a just counter-change. None the less Islamism is that which it is, not that which the diplomats of Europe shape according to their own fancies; therefore, on the basis of the good Islamic laws, Turks and Tartars could not draw from the third article of the treaty any other conclusion than this, the necessity of temporal investiture for the Khans of Tartary at the hands of the Sultan-Caliph, and the sending or the nomination of Cadi, or magistrates of a judicial character, and of Mufti, also by Ottoman hands, — matters that later on appeared also to the Russians as evident signs of Tartar *vassalage* to Turkey, and of *political* (not religious) dependence. Accordingly on March 10th, 1779, there had to be signed at Ainall Kavak (near Constantinople) the « Convention explicative of the treaty of Küchük Kainargè », in which the long articles 2 and 3 try to harmonize two irreconcilable things (the recognition of a Caliph and the complete political independence of other Islamic States with regard to him), and so the effort is made to establish the fantastic distinction between the temporal and spiritual power of the Sultan, uniting the double quality of Monarch of the Ottomans and « Khalife suprême de la religion mahométane »! But facts showed once again the absurdity of the thing, for Russia was compelled to impose on Turkey the *convention* of 28th December 1783, relative to « the previous treaties and to the boundaries of the Crimea », which abolished article 3 of the treaty of 1774, and the articles 2, 3, 4, of the explicative convention of 1779, and thus definitely removed all Ottoman interference, even of a so-called religious or spiritual kind, with the Tartars.

The *phantasm of a religious Caliph*, then, ought to have been for ever banished from the minds of European diplomats. But soon after came the hurtful action of the Armenian D'Ohsson who, as was said above in § II, in 1788 developed for European use the theory of the sacerdotal character of the Caliphate. It was an

ceptions. They cannot imagine a positive religion without a hierarchical, priestly organisation, needing no intermediary between the individual conscience and God, without spiritual powers, and at all costs they wish to find again in Islâm a Pontiff, with bishops and priests, and even to see in the canonical Mussulman prayer something that corresponds to the Mass and the Christian sacraments.

*absurd* theory from the historical point of view, and also from the point of view of the doctrine of Islâm, a theory no Mussulman has ever sustained, but which became for the *Turkish Government* an excellent and unexpected means for regaining by *moral influence* what was lost materially. Above all the Sultan Abdul Hamîd II (1876-1909), a century away from the treaty of Küchük Kainargé, well understood how this error, now diffused throughout Europe, permitted him to work effectively for the Turkish pan-islamic hegemony, also among the more than one hundred and fifty million Mussulman subjects of Christian Powers. Accordingly, while still holding fast to the epithets that regard the dignity of the Sultan, in the official titles and the coinage, the Turkish Government ended by conquering every scruple, and decided to consecrate for the first time in a document addressed to its own *subjects* (the *Constitution* of December 24th, 1876) its pretensions to the Caliphate. Articles 3 and 4 of this Constitution are as follows:

Art. 3. — « The sublime Ottoman Sultanate, which possesses the supreme Islamic Caliphate, will appertain to the eldest of the descendants of the race of Osmân, conformably to the ancient laws ».

Art. 4. — « H. M. the Sultan, as Caliph, is the protector (1) of the Mussulman religion. He is the Lord (hükümdâr) and Sovereign (pâdishâh) of all the Ottoman liege-men ».

In spite of this Constitution, however, in official acts emanating directly from the Monarch, the use of other titles than those belonging to the Sultan only was steadily avoided. The same Abdul Hamîd II understood that it was illegal, when confronted by the majority of the Mussulmans, to assume directly the qualities of Caliph; he was content to reach his aim by indirect, unofficial methods. One of the many methods used was, for example, to have printed at Constantinople in Arabic several collections of *khutba* for Fridays, in which his name was introduced (2); *khutba* that were then recited in their entirety also in the mosques of India

(1) Let it be carefully noted: « protector » (hâmi) and not « head »; that, for a Sunnite Mussulman, would be a heresy. See above, pp. 9-10.

(2) Be it noted that in these *khutba* (see above, pp. 12-13), whether destined for the Ottoman Empire or for abroad, the ruler of Constantinople is always called *Sultan* only, never given the title of *Caliph* or any Caliphian titles.

and the Malay Archipelago, and gave by degrees the impression that the Sultan of Turkey was the Supreme Monarch of the Islamic world. But above all Abdul Hamid II ever studied to appear as the protector of the Mussulmans, also if subjects of European Governments, just as France posed for a long time as the protector of Christians in the East; and the Turkish consuls, making abusive use of the European belief in the spiritual-religious character of the Caliphate, often succeeded in gaining an excessive influence among the Mussulman subjects of other States, above all in the English possessions.

Very illuminating and characteristic, in fine, for this whole exposition, is the collection of unilateral and bilateral acts of the two contracting parties, which form the Italo-Turkish Treaty of *Lausanne* of October 18th, 1912 (1). In that Treaty the qualities of Caliph are solemnly consecrated for the Sultan of Turkey in the *unilateral Italian* acts (Regio Decreto, October 17th, 1912); but no reference to these qualities is to be found in the *bilateral* acts (*Modus procedendi* of October 15th, 1912; Treaty of October 18th, 1912), and still less in the *unilateral Turkish* acts (firman of the Sultan of October 17th, 1912), in which the Monarch of Constantinople is purely and simply a Sultan. In a solemn act like that the Turks could not assert before Mussulmans things Islamitically erroneous.

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(1) The acts which make up the Treaty of Lausanne are composed of the following parts:

- a) *Modus procedendi*, at first held secret, which establishes the formalities to be followed.
- b) Firman of the Sultan, provided for in the *modus procedendi*, addressed to the inhabitants of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.
- c) Decree of the King of Italy regarding the same inhabitants.
- d) The Treaty of peace itself.

Of these parts, *a* and *d* are bilateral; *b* and *c* are unilateral.

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## IV.

## The Ottoman Caliphate and the Treaty of Lausanne.

The erroneous conception of European diplomacy, expounded and criticised in §§ II and III, as to the nature of the Islamic Caliphate and the alleged Caliph of Constantinople, have found solemn sanction in the acts which constitute the Treaty of Lausanne of October 18th, 1912. That Treaty in fact presupposes (1):

1° That the Sultan of Turkey holds also the office of Caliph (art. 2 of R. D. October 17th, 1912). — Compare instead all § III.

2° That the Caliph is the supreme head of the Mussulman religion and of the ecclesiastical hierarchy (a conception implied in the above mentioned article, as well as in no. II of the *modus procedendi*, October 15th, 1912). — Compare instead §§ I, II, and the second half of § III.

3° That to invoke the divine benediction on the name of the Caliph in the *khutba* of Friday, signifies the recognition of his spiritual powers, and is therefore an act of religious homage on the part of the faithful (art. 2 of R. D. aforesaid). — Compare instead the end of § I.

4° That the supreme Cadi of the territory is a « chef religieux » that is, a sort of Bishop hierarchically dependent on the Caliph, the Pope of the Mussulmans, and that the Naib (or local Cadi) are also « chefs religieux », that is, a sort of parish priests under the Cadi (art. 2 of R. D. aforesaid, and no. II of the *modus procedendi*). — Instead it is well known that the Cadi (in common with his Naib) is nothing but a magistrate administering justice according to the canon law of Islâm, in name and in stead of the Sovereign who appoints him, and who can take his place whenever it pleases him. On this compare p. 10, and, for example, artt. 1800 and 1801 of the *mejella* or Ottoman Civil Code, as well as any manual of Islamic law.

(1) As I said at the end of the preceding paragraph, these erroneous presuppositions are only found in the unilateral Italian acts of the Treaty.

Thus it comes about that from the Lausanne Treaty the following consequences flow :

a) The Italian Government, recognising officially the existence of a Caliph, and obliging their own Libyan subjects to perform the *khulba* for him, in reality declared as illegitimate their own possession of Libya, and pointed out the Caliph to its inhabitants as their true and legitimate Lord.

b) Imposing on their Libyan subjects the recognition of the Sultan of Turkey as Caliph, the Italian Government violated the conscience of the great part of these their subjects, who know that the Sultan lacks at least one of the essential requisites for the dignity of Caliph according to Islamic tradition.

c) Admitting that the supreme Cadi of Libya should be nominated by the « Cheik-ul-islam » of Constantinople (1), establishing that his stipend should be a charge on the Turkish imperial Government (n°. II of the *modus procedendi* and firman of the Sultan), laying down finally that the Naib or local Cadi should be nominated by the Cadi; the Italian Government abandoned the local magistracy to a strange Sovereign, forewent no small part of its own sovereign rights, confirmed the illegitimacy of its possession of Libya, and also placed under the surveillance of a stranger the whole administration of the goods *aucâf* (or *vacûf*) of Libya.

d) Admitting a special representative of the Sultan, in his capacity of Caliph, to exercise a presumed tutelage of religious interests (art. 2 of R. D. already cited); agreeing to call him « représentant du Sultan » (art. cited, and n°. II of the *modus procedendi*), or, as the Imperial firman calls him and as he has in consequence been styled in the acts of the Government of Italy, *Naib-ul-Sultan* (2); admitting in a special article that « le susdit représentant est aussi reconnu à l'effet de la protection des intérêts de

(1) Thus art. 2 of R. D. already cited. But the firman of the Sultan, of the same date, says with greater truth: « Nous Nous réservons . . . la nomination du Cadi ».

(2) That is, « vicar » or « substitute » of the Sultan. The ambiguous expression was evidently chosen by the Ottoman plenipotentiaries to give the idea that this personage was a « Vice-Sultan ».

*l'Empire Ottoman et des sujets ottomans* . . . . « (art. 3. of R. D.) ; determining finally that his stipend should be a charge, not on the Turkish treasury, but « sur les recettes locales » (as is done for the *Viceré*, whose emoluments are drawn from the local funds), the Italian Government came to admit a kind of *Vice-Sultan* in Libya (1), a defender of the natives from any possible wrongs done them by the Italian authorities. And in fact, in the two solemn discourses in which Shams ad-din (2) announced to the natives, both at Tripoli and at Bengasi, the mission conferred on him by the Sultan and the decree of the same for their autonomy, his exact words were: « I come to you as vicar of the Caliph and as watchful patron » (*nâiban 'ani-l-khalifa wa waliyan shâhidan*).

e) Admitting that the supreme Cadi of Libya should be nominated by Turkey, as was said in letter c), and that the Naib or local Cadi should be nominated by him, the Italian Government procured new embarrassments for itself. In canon law the Turks follow the hanafite school which, in the second half of last century, they imposed also on Libya, where, on the other hand, the inhabitants by an uninterrupted tradition of centuries professed themselves followers of the malikite school. Accordingly, in 1912, shortly after the Italian occupation, the inhabitants of Tripoli requested and obtained, first verbally and then in an official manner (decree of General Caneva, Commander in Chief of the expedition, dated July 30th, 1912), the restoration of the malikite law. In the stipulations of the Lausanne Treaty no thought had been taken for such an eventuality; accordingly, if the Treaty should have been applied in its entirety, a hanafite Cadi would have come from Constantinople who would have nominated his Naib or local judges of the hanafite school, according to which last Islamic justice would have been afresh administered, despite the solemn pledge given to the inhabitants.

(1) The matter appeared all the clearer in the eyes of the Mussulmans because the Turkish Government in none of the acts, bilateral or unilateral, of the Treaty, recognised the sovereignty of Italy over Libya, and limited itself to granting to the inhabitants of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania « une pleine et entière autonomie » (Firman of the Sultan).

(2) The « Naib-us-Sultan », sent to Libya Dec. 1912.

Based on erroneous premisses that completely contradicted the real Islamic institutions, the Treaty of Lausanne, like that of Küchük Kainargè, was seen at once to be impossible of realisation, because its application would have been a continual source of offence to the Sovereignty of Italy. Such action had to be taken that neither was the Cadi nominated, nor had he the nomination of the Naib or local judges; on the other hand, through want of the Cadi, the administration of native justice and that of the goods aucâf (or vacûf) was irregular; in the end thorny questions constantly arose, either with the Ottoman Government or with the natives, from which only the declaration of a fresh war with Turkey freed us, followed by the decree that annulled the agreements of Lausanne (R. D. August 22nd, 1915). Here also the analogy with the end of the agreements of Küchük Kainargè is marvellous.

How slightly Turkey cared for the *religious* interests, in the agreements entered into with Italy, evidently appears from the fact that the Treaty of Lausanne does not contain a word about a Reis ul-úlama, a college of úlama, Mufti, Imâm, or other persons who have to do with religious matters, and are without political influence, holding no government office; according to the Treaty of Lausanne the « religious heads » are instead the Caliph and the Cadi! — It is worth while repeating that this error of considering Caliphs and Cadi as « religious heads » is only found in the *unilateral Italian* acts of the Treaty of Lausanne; in the *unilateral or bilateral Turkish* acts good care is taken by the Ottoman plenipotentiaries to avoid such heresies. Here again one recalls the various editions of art. 3 of the treaty of Küchük Kainargè.

Some journals and some politicians justified at the time the dispositions of the Treaty of Lausanne, declaring that it conformed in substance to that of the protocol between Austro-Hungary and Turkey for the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (February 26th, 1909). But in reality the analogy is limited to the right of khutba for the Sultan « as Caliph », a right that has remained as a curious relic from the period 1878-1908 of the Austro-Hungarian administration under the high Ottoman dominion, and which, in a country where the Mussulmans form hardly one third of the inhabitants, has very much less importance than it has in Libya, entirely

Mussulman. For the rest, the difference is enormous. In an explicit manner the Turkish Government recognised the complete sovereignty of Austro-Hungary over Bosnia-Herzegovina (1), a thing they did not wish to acknowledge for Italy in the case of Libya. And accordingly, there is not a trace in the Austro-Turkish treaty of all those symbols of Ottoman sovereignty which were heaped up in the Treaty of Lausanne: no sending of a Naib-ul-Sultan, no sending of a Cadi, and therefore no interference with the Islamic magistracy and the administration of the goods *aucâf*, in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the Bosniac agreement there is a slight trace of relations with Constantinople only for the Reîs ul-Ulema; but here it treats of a person of a true and exclusive religious character, head of the commission of the *ûlama* or doctors, set up to care for the religion and worship of Islâm; he is nominated by the Emperor of Austria-Hungary from a list of three proposed by a Bosniac electorate, Austrian subjects, which electorate (and not the Austro-Hungarian Government), after the Imperial nomination, begs of the Sheikh ul-Islâm of Constantinople a diploma of investiture for the newly elected. He must, further, be an Austro-Hungarian subject, and can be deprived of his office by the Emperor. The Bosniac Reîs ul-Ulema, therefore, does not in any way correspond to the Libyan Cadi.

At Lausanne, on the other hand, the Ottoman plenipotentiaries succeeded in turning to the advantage of Turkey some ambiguous and innocuous formulae of the Austro-Turkish protocol of 1909. In art. IV of that protocol one reads: « Les droits des fondations pieuses (*vakoufs*) seront respectés, comme par le passé, et aucune entrave ne sera apportée aux rapports des musulmans avec leurs chefs spirituels qui dépendront comme toujours du Cheik-ul-Islamat à Constantinople lequel donnera l'investiture au Reîs-ul-Ulema ». Who are these « chefs spirituels »? The protocol says nothing

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(1) Art. II of the protocol says: « .....Le Gouvernement ottoman reconnaît d'une façon expresse le nouvel état de choses en Bosnie-Herzégovine créé par la dite décision » (that is the autograph letter of October 5th, 1908, from Francis Joseph I to Count Aehrenthal, his Minister for Foreign Affairs, in which the Monarch declared that the rights of his sovereignty extended over Bosnia-Herzegovina, and that accordingly those territories were annexed to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy).

anywhere about it; and since in the Bosniac agreement, save the above-mentioned investiture *pro forma* of the Reîs-ul-Ulema, there is no trace of relations of Mussulman functionaries with Constantinople, and since, on the other hand, the *ûlama* (that is, the only men to whom, *cum grano salis*, the title of spiritual heads could be applied) are learned private persons, as explained on page 10, it is evident that the Austro-Hungarian Government does not in reality concede anything and only offers words deprived of effective content. That was possible for two reasons: because the Young Turks, only a few months in power and full of Western ideas, often ill digested, were incredibly ignorant of Islâmic religious matters, and because one of the two Ottoman signatories was the Armenian Christian Gabriel Noradounghian. — The passage just referred to, which in substance was therefore a clever humbugging of the Ottoman Government on the part of the Austrians, was transformed thus in art. 2 of R. D., October 17th, 1912: « Les droits des fondations pieuses (vakouf) seront respectés comme par le passé et aucune entrave ne sera apportée aux relations des Musulmans avec le chef religieux appelé Cadi, qui sera nommé par le Cheik-ul-Islamat, et avec les Naibs nommés par lui-même... » After all that has been said above, it is not necessary to add a single word in order to show that, while we thought we were treading in the footsteps of the Austro-Turkish protocol (1), we in reality did something very different.

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(1) Be it noted that, in virtue of the Austro-Turkish treaty of April 21st. 1879, for the whole period (1879-1908) of Austrian administration under the high Ottoman sovereignty, the supreme Cadi for Bosnia-Herzegovina, with residence at Serajevo, was sent by the Turkish Government. The protocol of 1909 has simply suppressed him.

## V.

**The so-called arguments in favour of the Ottoman Caliphate  
and the possession of the Holy Places of Islâm.**

In order that, in these days of ours, a Caliph may once more securely establish himself, one *first* and indispensable condition is, that he not only have his own direct territorial dominion, but also that the great majority of the Mussulmans recognise him, and that, as a consequence, the other Sovereigns or Princes of Islam (Sultans, Khan, Bei, Emir, etc.) consider themselves nominally as his vassals, and confirm the legitimacy of their power by his regular investiture. If this condition be wanting, it is evident that one will have, not a Caliph, but a simple aspirant to the Caliphate. — Now it is well known that no independent Mussulman Prince (in Arabia, Afghanistân, Beluchistân, etc.), has ever gone or goes to the Sultan of Constantinople to have his own sovereignty legitimated by means of a diploma of investiture (1), an evident sign that in our days the Islamic Princes do not recognise the effective existence of a Caliphate, whether Ottoman or otherwise.

A *second* condition, based on past history and on sayings attributed to Mahomet, is required of a Caliph by the public canon law of Islâm, — that he be descended from the great tribe of *Koreish*, to which the Prophet and the majority of his contemporaries dwelling at Mecca belonged. Also this essential requisite is lacking to the Turkish Sovereigns.

How then could, or can, the Sultans of Constantinople be Caliphs?

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(1) Needless to say, the people of Morocco have always disdainfully resisted any Turkish effort at interference in their affairs, and every Caliphian aspiration on the part of the Ottoman Sultans. It is also a typical fact that in Algeria, during the *Turkish* domination (direct, or under the form of a protectorate), which ceased only with the French occupation, the Ruler of Constantinople was always regarded only as Sultan, never as Caliph; this appears clearly, not only from the historians, but from the official inscriptions on public monuments, in which the titles specially characteristic of the dignity of Caliph are entirely wanting.

The *European* books do not speak of the first difficulty; as to the second, they assert that it was overcome thus: When Selim I conquered Egypt in 1517 and brought to Constantinople the supposed Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil (compare § III, first part), this latter was made to give up his right to the Caliphate. — If this were true, the cession would have been illegal and void from the Islamic point of view (1). But in reality we are dealing with a simple *fable*, which Europeans found in the book, already cited, of D'Ohsson, of 1788. Of an event which would have had such capital importance for the entire Mussulman world, no mention is to be found in the ample Turkish and Arab chronicles of the period (2); no reference in the Histories, official or otherwise, composed later by Arabs and Turks; so that to find any such reference in Islamic authors one must come to our contemporaries, who have learned this great fact from European books! And the silence of the historians is confirmed by what has been explained in § III: that officially the Sultan of Constantinople appears as Caliph for the first time in the treaty of 1774 with Russia, where the title serves only as a clever diplomatic expedient to *trick* the Russians and to preserve actual sovereignty over the Tartars, declared independent; while with regard to his own Mussulman subjects, the Sultan officially proclaims himself Caliph only in the constitution of 1876.

In *European* books *another argument* is used in favour of the Ottoman Caliphate, an argument only to be found in germ in D'Ohsson, but which seems to have assumed great importance in the eyes of several politicians after the *European* war broke out; I mean, the effective possession of the *Holy Places* of Islam, that is, of the sacred territories (*haram*) of Mecca and Medina, which

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(1) And that for the following reasons: *a*) that a Caliph has not the right to abdicate in favour of another person, but can only appoint, in agreement with the Mussulman community, his successor after his own death, as was said on pp. 11-12; *b*) that in any case the *báia* (see p. 11) would have been necessary in favour of the Caliphate of Selim I, while we know from history that this *báia* never took place; *c*) that Selim I, being a Turk and not of Koreishite origin, could not receive the Caliphate.

(2) Which, on the contrary, inform us how Selim I after having conquered Egypt and Syria loved to be addressed by the title of « Servant of the Holy Places », a title up till then used by the Mameluke Sultans of Egypt.



the respective Sharifs (Barakât ibn Mohammed at Mecca) ceded to Selim I in 1517 (1). — The argument is very ingenuous, and confounds in a strange manner the effect with the cause. A Prince does not acquire a special right to become Caliph because he in fact possesses the Holy Places; but whoever is recognised by the Islamic community as Caliph becomes *ipso jure* master of the Holy Places (as of all the territories inhabited by Mussulmans); he has the right of governing them directly or of entrusting the lordship over them to a Prince (Sultan, Emir, etc.) through regular investiture, in that case reserving to himself the high dominion alone. In the times of the Caliphate the absolute independence of the Holy Places, as of any Islamic territory whatsoever, would be a legal nullity; it would be an abnormal state of affairs, an act of rebellion in no way invalidating the theoretic rights of the Caliph (2), which, even without having recourse to arms, would in the end be recognised by the rebels themselves, under the pressure of Mussulman public opinion. If the Sultan of Turkey were really a Caliph, the actual revolt of the *Sharif of Mecca* with the proclamation of himself as « King of Hijâz » (of which, for the rest, he possesses only a part) would not have any consequences for the Caliphal dignity of the Sultan.

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(1) This took place when Selim I had conquered Syria and Egypt, putting an end to the dynasty of the Circassian or Bahrite Mamelukes, who ruled there. Mecca and Medina were under the high sovereignty of the Mamelukes; on their fall, the Sharifs of the two holy cities hastened to recognise the sovereignty of the conqueror, and it is said also that the son of the Sharif Barakât, head of the embassy sent to pay liege-man homage to Selim, presented him at Alexandria (May or June, 1517) with the keys of the Kâaba on a plate of silver. There is naturally in all this only an act of recognition of high sovereignty over the Holy Places, and not a recognition of the quality of Caliph, as has been wrongfully repeated by many in Europe since D'Ohsson.

(2) History gives us various cases in which Mecca (with or without Medina), was for longer or shorter periods withdrawn in fact from the supreme dominion of the Caliphs: in the later days of the fourth Caliph Ali (who reigned 656-661 A. D.) by the Othmanid party; from 681 to 692, under the Caliph Abd al-Malik, by the anti-Caliph Abd Allâh ibn az-Zubâir; in the Xth century by the Carmat heretics; in the XIIIth century by the Zeidit Imâms of Sânaa. But no one ever concluded from these facts that the Caliph and his rights had fallen.

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## VI.

**Practical consequences of the errors of Europeans regarding the actual existence and the nature of the Caliphate.**

It results from what was said in § I, that to recognise as Caliph the Sultan of Constantinople or any other Islamic potentate, signifies for every good Mussulman, to recognise in him the *political sovereignty* (not the spiritual) over all those who follow the religion of Mahomet, also if subjects of European Powers; signifies the seeing in him the Monarch who, with the help of God, will finally re-establish the broken unity of the peoples professing Islamism, and by degrees will free them from the yoke of the unbelievers and from the innovations contrary to the *Sharia* which these last have brought into the territories of Islâm. To recognise a Caliph is to nourish the hope of a final and complete recovery of the Mahometan world in face of the European world.

In truth for Mussulmans the *Caliphate was, in fact, dead for centuries*; it remained only a glorious memory of a better age now gone. It is owing to the slight knowledge which European Governments generally had of Islamic affairs that the idea of a Caliph was revived in the century just past. Having large Mussulman territories under their dominion, these Governments thought to win the good will of their new subjects by providing for their spiritual needs, seeing to it that they did not lack a Caliph, that is, as they thought, an Islamic Supreme Pontiff; and in their artlessness the Europeans thought that this high office belonged to the Ruler of Constantinople, who should therefore be temporal Sultan of the Ottoman territories and at the same time spiritual Caliph of all the Mussulmans.

In the second half of the XIXth century the Mussulmans found the time had come to profit by this most grave error of the Europeans. Turkey now appeared as the only Islamic State capable of confronting the Christian States, the only one to which the Sunnite reaction could look with confidence as a bulwark against

the European encroachment, which absorbed one by one the territories of Islâm and sought to impose its will on those few still independent; and so, Europe being accomplice through her ignorance, it was an easy matter for the Sultan Abdul Hamîd II to develop his very clever Pan-Islamic policy. For *Caliphate and political Pan-Islamism are one and the same thing*. As clearly results from what has been said at the end of § I, the faithful, subjects of a European State, when they pray for the Sultan as Caliph, in the khutba of Friday, do not recognise his spiritual authority, but simply his political suzerainty, with an implicit declaration of the illegitimacy of the Christian dominion. In this way, as Snouck Hurgronje, the eminent Dutch authority on all Islamic matters, has written more than once, the Sultan receives, through the unconscious aid of the Christian Powers, « a confirmation of his pretensions, but in a diverse manner from that intended by these Powers, and in a manner more conformable to the historical and legal principles of Islâm. The great majority of the Sunnite Mussulmans end by overcoming the grave difficulties which their own doctrine raises against the Caliphate of the Ottoman Sultan, because they have need of a *centre of political action* against the European dominion ».

Whoever follows the native press knows quite well that those Mussulmans who, without being subjects of the Ottoman Empire, turn their glance to Turkey, do so, not because they find that the Islamic faith is in danger, but only because they hope Turkey will restore the unity and political independence of Islâm. It would be easy to collect a long catena of quotations in proof of this statement; I shall confine myself to citing a small part of an article of enormous length, inspired by hatred of Italy, which an Indian, on his return from Cyrenaica, published in the nationalist journal *al-Alam* at Cairo (September 25th, 1912). Alluding to the talk of a speedy peace between Italy and Turkey, the writer waxes indignant; recalls the steady occupation of Mussulman territory by Europeans; declares that Turkey is the only State capable of resisting and hindering such a tragedy, and concludes: « This conviction is properly the cause why the khutba is performed in the

name of H. M. the Sultan in all the Islamic countries (1), although in them the Ottoman Government have not effective political power ». Nothing could be more explicit.

Accepting the *Ottoman Caliphate*, or any other *Caliphate* whatever, the peoples of Islâm have the clear consciousness of deceiving their Christian rulers and making a continual act of political protest against them. It is truly an extraordinary thing how European States disquiet themselves to revive artificially an institution that died spontaneously many centuries ago, which, if it did exist, would be completely opposed to their domination of territories inhabited by Mussulmans. It can never be repeated often enough, that the Caliphate is nothing else than the universal monarchy of Islâm, nothing else than political Pan-Islamism; and that the doctors, or *ûlama*, whose duty it is to maintain the unity and integrity of the religious doctrine, never have stood in relations of dependence — spiritual, moral, or hierarchial, — to the Caliphs. To recognise a Caliph does not signify, for a European State with Mussulman subjects, to provide for the religious or spiritual needs of these last, but only to introduce into its own Islamic domains a disguised, but none the less dangerous, foreign sovereignty, and besides that, to place itself in grave political embarrassment when, at some time, unforeseen, the majority of the Mahometan peoples might come to recognise a different Caliph; it signifies, finally, the helping to keep alight in the heart of Islâm the belief in a resurrection, perhaps near at hand, of that glorious ideal past when infidel States trembled before the power and the conquests of Islâm.

CARLO ALFONSO NALLINO

(1) An exaggeration of the writer; for example, in Morocco, in Algeria (after the French conquest), in the independent States of Arabia and in those of Central Asia, the khutba has never been performed for the Sultan of Turkey.

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