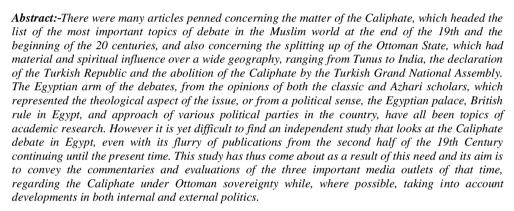


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Ottoman Caliphate in the Egyptian Press: Examples from Al- $Ahr\bar{a}m$, Al-Muqattam and Al- $Man\bar{a}r$ ¹

Mısır Basınında Osmanlı Hilâfeti: el-Ahrâm, el-Mukattam ve el-Menâr'dan Örnekler

Dr. Hilal LİVAOĞLU MENGÜÇ (ORCID: 0000-0002-0473-0815) İstanbul Üniversitesi - İstanbul



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Öz: XIX. sonu ve XX. yüzyıl başında İslam dünyasındaki önemli tartışma konularının başında gelen Hilafet meselesi, Tunus'tan Hindistan'a kadar geniş bir coğrafyayı maddi ya da manevi nüfuzu altında bulunduran Osmanlı Devleti'nin dağılması, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin ilanı ve TBMM'nin Hilafet makamını ilga etmesi sonrasında kaleme alınan hatırı sayılır bir yazın birikimi bıraktı. Hilafet tartışmalarının Mısır ayağı, gerek meselenin teolojik bağlamında Ezher'in ve klasik ulemanın görüşleri üzerinden, gerekse siyasi bağlamda Mısır sarayı, Mısır'daki İngiliz idaresi ve ülkedeki çeşitli siyasi parti programlarının meseleye yaklaşımları üzerinden akademik çalışmalara konu oldu. Bununla birlikte Mısır'da XIX. yüzyılın ikinci yarısından bu yana son derece aktif biçimde devam eden matbuat faaliyetlerini merkeze alarak Mısır'daki Hilafet tartışmalarını konu edinen, özellikle de Mısır'da Osmanlı Hilafetine bakış açısını yansıtabilecek müstakil bir çalışma bulmak zordur. Bu çalışma bu ihtiyaca binaen ortaya çıkmış ve döneminin üç önemli basın organında Osmanlı Hilafeti'ne ilişkin olarak gündeme taşınan yorum ve değerlendirmeleri, iç ve dış siyasetteki gelişmeleri de mümkün olduğu ölçüde dikkate alarak aktarmaya çalışmayı hedeflemiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hilafet, Mısır, Osmanlı Devleti, Basın, el-Menâr, el-Ahrâm, el-Mukattam

Introduction

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire and transition into the Republic of Turkey was an intense and compelling experience for the muslims all over the world which devoted their

¹ This article is extracted from a doctorate dissertation entitled "The Debates on the Caliphate in the Egyptian Press 1922-1926" presented by the author to Istanbul University in June, 2017.

spritiual loyalty to the last headquarters of caliphate. In the story of this transformation lasted more than two centuries, the need of adaptation to changing and developing conditions was one of the most crucial topics debated around the notion of caliphate. Egypt, and the Arab World in a broader sense, was the most productive area in the context of making contribution to these intellectual discussions. The debates related to the issue of the Ottoman Caliphate carried out in both the Arab world and the West were centred on the following issues: Whether or not Yavuz Sultan Selim officially took over the title of caliph from the last Abbasid Caliph Mutawakkil Alallah during or after his expedition to Egypt, whether or not the Ottoman Sultans used the title of Caliph, and whether or not the Ottoman Sultans were eligible to bear the title of Caliph from a figh perspective. From this aspect then, debates came into promience that argued that the Ottoman sultans in particular were not from the tribe of Quraysh, and there were objections to the inheritance of power from father to son. In the modern period it was the period of Abdulhamid II in which the Ourayshi aspect of the Caliphate was debated intensely. Following the taking over of the caliphate from Egypt by Sultan Selim I, the method of takeover became via 'inheritance and as a right'², and from the 10th century on, this method came to be implicitly accepted to be lawful by a group including Ikhwan al-Safa, Ibn Khaldun, Jalalluddin Dawwanī and many other Muslim thinkers or groups³. Despite this, it was in the period of Abdulhamid II, due to Arab nationalism in particular and incitement by Britain, that the matter of the Caliph being from the Ouraysh was brought up once more and this became the most important basis for the defence of an Arab Caliphate against the Ottoman Caliphate.

When the Ottomans began to form closer ties with the Germans, the British government distanced itself from them and rescinded various forms of support previously given to them while subsequently beginning to pursue a policy against the Ottomans⁴. At this time, articles prepared in accordance with the British foreign policy of that time, appeared in the British press and gave support to the idea that the Ottoman Caliphate did not have a legal basis⁵.



² The expression bi al-lṛṣ wa al- lstiḥqāq (by inheritance and as a right) is a term used in the Ottoman imperial edicts to describe the way of obtaining the sovereignity over the empire. This expression can also be found in the annuals from the period of Abdulhamid II and was used to explain the method of becoming a Sultan-Caliph. See Tufan Buzpınar, "II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Osmanlı Hilafetine Muhalefetin Ortaya Çıkışı: 1877-1882" [The Emergence of Opposition against to Ottoman Caliphate in the reign of Abdulhamid II: 1877-1882], İslam Siyasi Düşüncesinde Değişme ve Süreklilik: Hilafet Risalelerı II. Abdülhamid Devri [Change and Continuity in the Islamic Political Thought: Risalahs on the Caliphate, The reign of Abdulhamid II, ed. İsmail Kara (İstanbul: Klasik, 2002), 39.

³ For a discussion on usage of the title <u>halīfa</u> among the Ottoman sultans see Halil İnalcık, "Selīm I", *Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 9: 127-131.

⁴ With the 1876 Basic Ottoman Law, the official announcement that the Ottoman Sultan was the caliph of all the Muslims instigated the British authorities into taking their necessary precautions. See Azmi Özcan, "İngiltere'de Hilafet Tartışmaları 1873-1909" [The debates on the Caliphate in Britain], İslam Siyasi Düşüncesinde Değişme ve Süreklilik: Hilafet Risaleleri, II. Abdülhamid Devri [Change and Continuity in the Islamic Political Thought: Risalahs on the Caliphate, The reign of Abdulhamid II], ed. İsmail Kara (İstanbul: Klasik, 2002), 67-68.
⁵ The views put forth by the British Diplomat Wilfrid Scawen Blunt on the above-mentioned dates in regard to the

⁵ The views put forth by the British Diplomat Wilfrid Scawen Blunt on the above-mentioned dates in regard to the caliphate issue are of extreme importance in presenting the perspective of the British public on this issue. In his book, *The Future of Islam*, Blunt divides the history of the caliphate into four periods, with the fourth period being that of the Ottoman dynasty in which the 'sunni argument' was used to accept the legality of the Ottoman caliphate, but which were not accepted by some members of the Shafii school who defended the argument that that the caliph had to be from the Quraysh tribe. Thus it was claimed that the Ottoman dynasty was unable, at least on a theoretical level, to prove the legimitacy of its caliphate in the Islamic world. Blunt put forth certain reasons in order to prove why the Ottoman caliphate was illegal: the fact that after 1517 the Ottoman sultans did not invite those emirtes or kingdoms which lay outside of it own borders to accept the authority of the sultan as caliph and also that the they did not carry out the spiritual responsibilities of the caliphate. See W.S. Blunt, *The Future of Islam* (Lahore: Sind Sagar Academy, 1975), 50, 71. A rebuttal of Blunt's view came from the Ottoman poet Hasan Husnu al-Toyrānī, who studied in Cairo and was active in its media and press. al-Toyrānī touched on the debates on the caliphate that have continued throughout the history of Islam and stated that a great portion of them, including the legal aspects of

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Amongst the precautions taken by the British against the Ottoman Caliphate included supporting Sharif Hussein and his family in taking back the emirate of Mecca which would leave the Ottomans in a difficult position during the First World War on the Arabian peninsula and going against Sultan Abdulhamid II⁶.

Ottoman Empire, Egyptian Press and the Caliphate Question

In order to examine the notion of an Arab Caliphate in the ventures of the Arab world the first place to look is the place where Arabism was first put forth as an ideology and that is Syria. Even from the beginning of the period of Abdulhamid II's rule, certain Syrian thinkers and politicians came together to debate the future of Syria when the Ottoman empire became weak. In time this idea turned into the proposal to establish an Arab Caliphate and revolt against the Ottoman State. However during this period, the name of Sharif Hussein did not come up as a possible Caliph, but rather the Algerian Amīr Abdulqādir was suggested for the title of Caliph due to his influence over the Syrian region. No doubt that Istanbul was aware of these activities and the secret societies that were formed in Syria or in Hijāz, and as a consequence Abdulhamid was closely following the Arab press. When the Turkish Viceroy to Egypt Ismail Pasha was dismissed by Abdulhamid II, the activities he intitiated in Europe against the sultan and the Caliphate were closely followed by the Ottoman Palace. The entry of the Caliphate newspaper, which was under the protection of Ismail and which pionered his campaign, into the country was prevented many times by Abdulhamid II.⁸

When we examine the period in which these debates regarding the matter of the Arab Caliphate took place, we find that the references to Quraysh were generally from Syrian sources, while certain Egyptian politicians and intellectuals considered the idea of establishing the Arab Caliphate without any reference to the issue of the Quraysh, especially during the period of Khedive Ismail and Khedive Abbas II (1892-1914). In addition certain Orientalists commentating on these debates in the Muslim World, claimed that the matter of the Caliph being a Qurayshi was an extremely important criteria. Whereas in the propaganda activities aimed at the Arab caliphate, especially from the aspect of representing the interests of the Egyptian Viceroy the matter of the Ouraysh issue was ignored or was compelled to be so.

these debates were concerned with the 'fatwas given in accordance with the circumstances'. According to him, there were groups which accepted the Ummayyad and Abbasi caliphs solely because they were from the tribe of the Quraysh while there were some Ottoman scholars who stated that these did not incline enough towards providing an explanation for the legality of the Ottoman caliphate despite the Ottoman Empire being subject to great favours. In response to Blunt's claim that the Ottoman caliphate was not universal, al-Toyrānī argued that the inner struggles of the 18th century made it impossible to gather the entire Islamic ummah under one flag. Hasan Husnu al-Toyrānī, "Maqāla fī limāl al-kalām alā mas'alat al-hilāfa bayna ahl al-lslām", trans. Şükrü Özen, (Cairo: Matba'at almahrusa, 1309/1891), İslam Siyasi Düşüncesinde Değişme ve Süreklilik: Hilafet Risaleleri II. Abdülhamid Devri [Change and Continuity in the Islamic Political Thought: Risalahs on the Caliphate, The reign of Abdulhamid II], ed. İsmail Kara (İstanbul: Klasik, 2002), 298-308.

⁶ Azmi Özcan, "İngiltere'de Hilafet Tartışmaları 1873-1909", 74.

- ⁷ Buzpınar, "II. Abdülhamid Döneminde", 46.

⁸ A newspaper by the same name was being distributed in London by Louis Sabuncu. The distribution of this newspaper which was critical of the rule of Abdulhamid II to Europe was prevented by the Ottoman management See BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Belgrad Sefareti, 723-6.

Based on an article that was written in Egypt in the 17th century, Holt, stated that in a book whose author is unknown and which was published in 1656, Qahr al-wujūh al-abīsa bi-dikri nasab ulamā al-carākisa wa ittisālihī bi al-quraysh, a claim was made that the lineage of the Mamlukes went back to the Quraysh and that the aim of the author was to oppose the right off the Ottomans to the caliphate and rather give it to the Egyptian Mamlukes. P. M. Holt, "The Exalted Lineage of Ridwan Bey: Some Observations on a Seventeeth-Century Mamluk Geneology", BSOAS, 22/2 (1959): 221, 230. Holt went one step further claiming that this book and the claim it makes was proof that the Arab provinces were in search of autonomy from Ottoman rule as early as the 17th century. See Holt, "The Exalted", 230.

Likewise whether it was during the period of Khedive Ismail or Khedive Abbas Hilmi, there are claims of propaganda being carried out from Eastern Africa to Mesopotamia, for the establishment of an Arabian Islamic caliphate. As is known the Egyptian viceroys had no connection to Quraysh whatsoever, but they were yet able to consider themselves in the role of Arab-Islamic leaders. In fact, they claimed a historical right to a portion of Arabia and Sudan, even if they were not as serious in their aspirations for a Grand caliphate in the region from East Africa to Mesopotamia.

The propaganda directed towards an Arab caliphate that gradually increased towards the 20th century, became a nightmare for the capital of the Empire during the Balkan Wars. It was thus decided to take necessary precautions against publications with the reminder that this intense activity was continuing in both Syria and Egypt as well as in the Hijaz under the rule of Sharif Hussein. 12 Because of this intense propaganda Egypt constituted a centre of this activity due to its refusal to obey Istanbul. Thus it was that at the beginning of the 19th Century, Syrians who were uncomfortable by the policies of Istanbul, escaped to Egypt and brought with them their press experience which resulted in an important revival in the Egyptian press. In this respect, we find Egyptian political views gathered under three main points: defenders of ideal Pan-Arabism, consisting mainly of intellectuals of Syrian origin who were supporters of Arab unity, those who desired an autonomous Egypt within the borders of the Ottoman Empire, the leaders of which were the political movement of the *Hizb al-Waṭanī*, and lastly the secular-nationalist school whose aims were complete independence of Egypt together with westernisation and modernisation. The findings of Walther Braune, the German researcher, who identified two main currents in Egypt, one coming from Syria, whose main vein was Arab nationalism, and the other a patriotic movement which gave priority to religion and relegated racism and language to second place, support the above. ¹³ However Braune's approach appears relatively misleading in that he shows the two movements, namely the secular-nationalist movement and the conservative-nationalist movement, both nourished by the Afghani-Abduh Reformist movement, but later, in the second half of the 20th century arriving at two completely different points, to be in essence the same main current. The correct identification of the similarities and differences of these two political styles which arose in Egypt and initially pursued a political solution under the banner of the Ottomans is important in respect of that period of time, which is the topic of this study, being correctly understood. It will only then be possible to correctly understand the different perceptions of the 'foreigner' in the mind of the Egyptian intellectual. Both movements were extremely sensitive to the British invasion



¹⁰ See Elie Kedourie, "The Politics of Political Literature: Kawakibi, Azoury and Jung", *Arabic Political Memoirs and Other Studies* (Londra, 1974), 107-123; I. Gershoni - J. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam and Arabs: The Search for Egyptian Nationhood, 1900-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 18.

managed by Shayh Alī Yūsuf who was known for his close ties to the viceroyship during the years 1907-1909. See Gershoni - Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam and Arabs*, 18. Accordingg to Elie Kedourie, Khedive Abbas II saw himself at the head of such an right and in fact, in 1896 even attempted to remove the name of the Ottoman sultan caliph from the sermons that were given in Egyptian mosques but when faced with the reaction from the scholars of Cairo, was forced to change his mind. Kedourie writes that Abbas Hilmi II sent envoys to the rulers in Arabia with the same aims. In fact, in his book written against the Ottoman caliphate, *Umm al-Qurā*, the famous author Abdurraḥmān al-Kawakibī, is mentioned as one of those envoys sent by Khedive Abbas Hilmi to suggest an Egypt-based caliphate. Kedourie, "The Politics of Political Literature", 19.

¹² BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti Siyasi Kısım, 86-2.

¹³ Walther Braune, "Die Entwicklung des Nationalismus bei den Araben", *Beitraege zur Arabistik, Semitistik und Js/amwissenschaft*, ed. Richard Hartmann/Helmut Scheel, (Otto Harrassowitz:Leipzig, 1944), 432-434; Gershnoni and Jankowski also point to the existence of these two main currents. Gershoni - Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam and Arabs*, 3-20.

but, in particular from 1920 onwards, came to possess different opinions on the topic of Islamic unity and the Ottoman caliphate.

An arena of thought which advanced along these three main lines appeared in Egypt, with the beginning of the First World War in Egypt, and the Ottomans taking stance against and fighting the British. Out of these movements which were now focused on the ideal of a country which was independent and ruled according to its own constitution, perceived the Egyptian viceroyship as a threat which needed to be eliminated and which was viewed by some as being in cooperation with Britain, with the Ottomans or other foreigners. This ideological deployment was also reflected in the press media and in the leadup to WWI, many media outlets were supported by foreigners. ¹⁴

al-Ahrām

Established in Alexandria by two brothers of Syrian origin, Selim and Bishara Taqlā and later moved to Cairo in 1898, al-Ahrām was Egypt's first widely circulated daily newspaper. Taking over from Bishara Taqlā in 1908, Gabriel Taqlā was not content with taking important news from foreign news agencies and consequently opened up offices in important capital cities. As a result of the journalists there, the newspaper presented itself to its readers with a rich content. As a result of its broadcasting policy which gave regular space to articles written by leading intellectual and political figures in Egypt, *al-Ahrām* became one of the most important newspapers in Egyptian press life. ¹⁵ Since its inception, the newspaper tried to forge good relations, both with the vicerovship and its connected governments and with 'Urābī Pasha, though these efforts did not always produce good results. ¹⁶ However the political stance of the newspaper until WWI in particular, was to forge a warm relationship with Istanbul and oppose the British occupation of Egypt. al-Ahrām was a newspaper that was in essence, close to French politics and, thus frequently gave space to the opinions of nationalist intellectuals who after the British occupation, in particular, saw France as an ally against Britain. Mustafa Kāmil was also one of the nationlist writers of al-Ahrām until al-Liwā was founded. 17 At the end of the 1800s the newspaper drew a reaction from the British rulers in Egypt for its broadcasting policies and was closed down for a time. Avalon writes about the close ties between Al-Ahrām and France that came to light when French Government protested this decision. When we take into account the intensification of the political and cultural ties of Lebanon with France in the 19th Century and the influence of France there, it is highly probable that the Taqla brothers, both Francophones and both from Beirut and of the Catholic



¹⁴ Three nationalist newspapers that appeared during the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century all of which were published by Egyptian intellectuals and which managed to relatively preserve their popularity until WWI were *al-Muayyad* (1889-1915), *al-Liwā* (1900-1912) and *al-Jarīda* (1907-1915). However due to the oppressive pressures of media laws during the war they were forced to end their distribution. After WWI *al-Aḥbār* (1920) entered the arena, and together with *al-Ahrām* was one of the two strong voices of the nationalist wing in Egypt. In 1922 *al-Siyāsa*, which began circulation and was from the publishing group *al-Aḥrār al-dustūriyyīn* under the editorship of Maḥmūd Azmī, and in which nationalist-modernist writers such as Tāhā Husayn, Muhammad Husayn Haykal, Qāsim Amīn wrote far from daily political matters and which was prominent due to the diversity of its topics and *al-Balāġ* (1923) which was in line with the Wafd Party but which was not as vocal, these being two of the most important media organs that began distribution after the war. However despite both newspapers being showered with attention by Egyptian intellectuals they were yet unable to attain to the popularity of *al-Ahrām and al-Muqaṭṭam*. See İbrahim Abduh, *Taṭawwur al-ṣaḥāfa al-misriya*, 209.

This was the first newspaper (1917) to bring to Egypt a Linotype printing machine that was able to publish photographs (1881) and use a printing technique that was able to print the characters in one line and which was an important development in newspaper publishing. See Arthur Goldschmidt, *Historical Dictionary of Egypt* (Lanham:Scarecrow Press, 1994), 31.

¹⁶ Goldschmidt, Biographical Dictionary of Modern Egypt (Londra: Lynne-Rienner Publishers, 2000), 207.

¹⁷ Ami Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East: A History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 54-55.

faith, had brought with them to Egypt their own ideals. However more research needs to be undertaken to shed light on this topic. Thus it was that *al-Ahrām*'s connections with the French were justified through their editorial policy of being against the British and this view has been supported by other evidence. The fact that the newspaper remained popular throughout Egypt for many years and was able to continue for a lengthy period is an indication that the view that the newspaper served the interests of the French was unable to find support amongst from the Egyptian public. In evaluating the connections of *al-Ahrām* with France, Ibrāhīm 'Abduh states that *al-Ahrām* was the only newspaper that was able to resist the heavy censuring that was applied to Egyptian press after the British invasion, and this resistance prevented the death of the spirit of nationalism in Egypt, thus leading the way to the *Hizb al-Watanī* movement.¹⁸

al-Muqattam

In 1888 two Lebanese Christians by the name of Ya'qūb Sarrūf and Fāris Nimr established al-Mugattam. Born in Lebanon, Ya'qūb and Fāris are mentioned as the first students at the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut. When Fāris's father died after the Events of Lebanon in 1860, he went to Beirut with his mother and then graduated from the Protestant College here. 19 Ya qub graduated from the college in 1870 and taught in Lebanon for a period, then began to teach Natural Philosophy and Mathematics at the college he graduated from. According to Goldschmidt Ya'qūb was forced to flee Lebanon after he had defended Darwin's theory of Evolution, and he then went to Egypt in 1885 where a few years later he began to publish Al-Muqattam along with Faris Nimr. 20 al-Muqattam was known as a newspaper that supported politicians partial to the British until the end of the British invasion in Egypt. As a result of its editorial policy al-Muqattam became the target of the student movements under the leadership of Mustafa Kamil, whose protests criticised the newspaper's partiality towards the British and its stance taken against the Ottoman Sultan and Turkey. These protests compelled the Egyptian government to officially warn al-Muqattam of the crime of 'publishing various articles and writings that have been harming out the empire for a long time²¹. It can also be seen that the editorial policy of *al-Muqattam* was the cause of contention with the *Hizb al-Waṭanī* newspaper group. The leader of the *Hizb al-Waṭanī* group at that time, Muhammad Farīd wrote on many occasions that al-Muqattam was founded and supported by the British and was established as a newspaper that aimed to compel the public to accept British policy.²² In 1912 when the newspapers of this group, *al-Liwā* and *al-Sha* were closed down, this was evaluated by al-Mugattam as being the fault of the editors of those newspapers, and this can be considered evidence supporting Farīd's view.²³



¹⁸ In an article by Helen Kitchen written in 1950, she described *al-Ahrām* as 'the widely-accepted voice of Islamic and Egyptian thought'. Helen A. Kitchen, ""*al-Ahrām*": The "Times" of the Arab World", *Middle East Journal*, 2/2 (1950): 155-170. We believe that her description was due to the continuation of this publication along the lines of *Hizb al-Waṭanī* which continued from the British invasion until WW1. However though there can be no problem with the term 'Egyptian', the use of the word 'Islamic' cannot be plausible, especially in consideration of the publishing policy after 1919 in particular.

publishing policy after 1919 in particular.

¹⁹ Goldschmidt, *Biographical Dictonary of Egypt* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000), 182, 156-157.

²⁰ Goldschmidt, *Biographical Dictonary*, 182.

²¹ Abduh, *Taṭawwur al-ṣaḥāfa*, 152.

²² Abduh, *Taṭawwur al-ṣaḥāfa* 151.

²³ Abduh, *Taṭawwur al-ṣaḥāfa*, 204. *al-Muqaṭṭam* was also criticized by other actors in the Egyptian press on account of its support of Britain. The owner of the newspaper *al-Ustād* which was from the Nationlist front, Abdallah Nadim, wrote in a satire of *al-Muqaṭṭam* of how it hoped to gain the support of the British by publishing news, whether true or not. In the newspaper *Surāṭ al-musṭaqīm*, it was written that the British supporter *al-Muqaṭṭam* was trying to make the British King the caliph. See. Ayalon, *The Press*, 177.

al-Manār

This paper was established by Muhammad Rashīd Ridā (1865-1935) and began as a weekly newspaper which later became a monthly journal in 1889. It acted along the lines of Jamāaluddīn Afghānī and Muhammad 'Abduh and was a continuation of al-Urwat al-Wutaā²⁴ with the aim of eliminating the false beliefs that had entered Islam, destroying the innovations that had entered through the tariqut, breaking the dogmatism of the madhhabs, and ensuring the advance and development of the Muslim nations through education. Sections included articles covering tafsir and political topics, education and learning.²⁵ In its first issues, al-Manār lauded praise on Sultan Abdulhamid II, however towards the period of the Second Constitution, it became very vocal in its criticism. It hoped for a move towards a period of constitutionalism and for the spirit of a constitution being settled in the Ottoman lands. It was in this vein that it supported the CUP. During this period, al-Manār took its place amongst those newspapers banned from entering the country by the government of Abdulhamid II, on the basis of being 'a pernicious publication that incited the people'. It was followed closely and Rashīd Riḍā 's house was even searched and documents taken which were used in court proceedings against him, after complaints were received about the newspaper's harmful articles.²⁶ However al-Manār began to fight against the Young Turks after the Second Constitution, using their Pan-Turkish policies as an excuse. al-Manār supported Sharif Hussein against the Committee for Unity and Progress (CUP), which was considered the engineer of the Westernisation process during the downfall of the Ottomans, however on learning of the secret deal made by Sharif Hussein with the British, stopped supporting him and began to support the Saudi House instead.²⁷ At this time also, the close relationship of Rashīd Ridā with the Saudi family and the Wahhābī creed drew the attention of Istanbul and became one of its targets due to its publications along these lines.²⁸

Even though articles concerning the issue of the caliphate appeared early on in *al-Manār*, it was through the debates that were ignited over the abolition of the sultanate, that Rashīd Riḍā penned long articles concerning the nature of the caliphate and its function during the years 1922-1923. He collated these articles into a book called *al-Khilāfa aw al-lmāmat al-'Uzmā (The caliphate or the great imamate)* in the year 1923. In these articles concerning the demands in regards to the caliphate which were understood to be addressed to the Turks and the new republic in Ankara, he uses terms from the classical Sunni literature such as *taġallub* (*predomination*), *ahl al-ḥall wa al-'aqd* (*those qualified to elect of depose a caliph on behalf of the Muslim community*), *ğamā'a* (*community*), *umma*, *sulṭat al-umma* (*the authority of the ummah*), thereby expressing some of his suggestions and his opinion of the ideal caliphate order. Another name that stands out amongst those writers in *al-Manār* who wrote about the caliphate, especially after its abolition was Abdul'azīz Jāwish. Jāwish (1872-1929) was born in Alexandria, to a Tunisian father and a Turkish mother, and completed his education in Azhar and London. He was a journalist who stood out as an educationalist. He took his place in the *Hizb al-waṭan* movement alongside Muṣṭafā Kāmil and was made editor of *al-Liwā* in 1908.²⁹



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²⁴ Kenneth Cragg, "Muḥammad 'Abduh", *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Modern Islamic World*, ed. John L. Esposito, (Oxford University Press, 1995), 11.

²⁵ Muhammad Harb, "el-Menâr", TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2004), 29:117.

²⁶ BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi Evrakı, 1090-39.

²⁷ Muhammad Harb, "el-Menâr", 117.

²⁸ BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi, 406-39.

²⁹ Goldschmidt, *Biographical Dictionary of Egypt*, 151; Omar Ridā al-Kahhāla, *Mu'jam al-Mu'allifīn*, (Beirut, 1957), 3:246.

Due to pressure from the British he went to Istanbul in 1912 and became an important figure in the Sublime Porte and the CUP, during the Second Constitution. He played an active role in the Arabic versions of the publications of the CUP outlets in Istanbul.³⁰

After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt's special circumstances and its focus on its own interests brought an end to the Egyptian ideal of a Muslim identity under the spiritual influence of the Ottomans, which had been the dominant discourse beginning from the period of Abdulhamid II to the time of the war. Even those who could be considered to be followers of the conservative-nationalist discourse gave importance to the Muslim and oriental identity of Egypt during this period, but also spoke of the impossibility of a common solution that would encompass all nations that bore these two characteristics. They consequently spoke haphazardly about how each nation would have to solve their own problem in their own style and confronting their own personal conditions.³¹ It is still possible however to speak of the Ottoman caliphate as being a source of hope, in a spiritual sense, for the Egyptians against the British invasion, even though that hope came to an end politically with its abolition in 1924.

The Position of the Caliphate After the Abolition of the Sultanate

In the history of the institution of the caliphate, the abolition of the sultanate was undoubtedly one of its turning points. Even though debates regarding the nature and function of the caliphate began in the 19th century, in Egypt in particular and in the wider Muslim world in general, as a result of the colonising activities of European powers in particular, Istanbul came to be seen as a centre for Muslim states, the most powerfull position politically. The abolition of the sultanate however, was interpreted as leading to the rule of Turkey coming into the hands of a group in Turkey that found wide support in the eyes of the public who had become more devoted to their national values in the face of European colonisation – Mustafa Kemal and his team. This was supported by the writers of *al-Ahrām* in particular. ³²

Amongst the articles that appeared in the Egyptian press, those which, in the light of the developments in Turkey, deal with the conflict between the revolutionaries of the time and the members of the government, are conspicuous. The debates in some of the articles were analysed in the light of the speeches that appeared in the Turkish press. ³³ After the abolition of the sultanate *al-Ahrām* and *al-Muqaṭṭam* shared commentaries on Turkey and the caliphate in the foreign press, and gave space to arabic translations of articles that appeared in the British press in particular. Evaluations of those articles that were translated laid stres on Britain's close following of the events in Turkey and that the change of power in Turkey and the issue



The newspaper that he published here, al-Hilāl al- 'Utmānī was closely followed in Egypt however it was forced to come to an end when it was banned by the British commissariat in Egypt. See Muhammad Eroğlu, "Abdülaziz Çâviş", TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1988), 1:187.
Immediately before the abrogation of the caliphate the newspaper Kawkab al-šarq began on the 21st September,

³¹ Immediately before the abrogation of the caliphate the newspaper *Kawkab al-šarq* began on the 21st September 1924 and its editorial policy perfectly reflected this mood. See Abduh, *Taṭawwur*, 214.

³² Muhammad Labīb al-Battānūnī, "al-Khilāfa wa al-Sulṭān", *al-Ahrām*, 29 June 1922, p. 1; "al-Muslimūn wa al-khilāfa", al-Battānūnī, "al-Khilāfa wa al-Sulṭān", 22 November 1922, 1; "al-'Ulamā wa al-mas'alat al-khilāfa", November 1922, 1.

³³ It is interesting that in *İleri*, a newspaper belonging to the representative for Gallipoli at that time, Celal Nuri Bey, an article called "Devrim Tartışmaları (The debates on the revolution)" was partially translated into Turkish by *al-Muqaţţam* and evaluated in terms of the political agenda in Turkey. Another member of parliament who allowed for the views of *al-Muqaţţam* was Hakkı Bey, the representative of Van. Hakkı Bey conveys such ideas to its readers for example, the Turks are in no need of sultans, hakans, or padishahs for their rule, and that the Turkish nation should have a voice in their rule represented by their own representatives. See "Fī al-inqilāb al-turkī", *al-Muqaţṭam*, 10 December 1922, 1.

of bringing a new caliph were not just issues that concerned Turkey only. 34 This parlance, which supported Mustafa Kemal and the government in Ankara and the positive struggle in the Egyptian public, became clearer in the Egyptian press in the reviews/assessments that appeared there where the theme of the awakening of Anatolia was frequently used in the transformation from Ottoman Turkey to the Turkish Republic. Both in *al-Muqatṭam* and in *al-Ahrām* praise is lauded on the revolutionary activities embarked upon in Anatolia in the Turkish War of Independence and after. There also appear many articles on the legal aspect of the issue in both of these newspapers. 35 *al-Manār* generally looked favourably on the end of the Ottoman sultanate. In fact Rashīd Riḍā so embraced the spirit of the National Struggle that in his article that appeared in the November issue titled 'The New Turkish revolution' he criticised the *Dürrizade fatwa* that called the people to fight against the Turkish National Movement and supported the National Struggle. 36

After the separation of the sultanate from the caliphate with the decision by the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Abdülmecid Efendi was selected as caliph and a ceremony of allegiance took place at the Fatih Mosque. This event was related in both *al-Ahrām* and *al-Muqaṭṭam* with all its details.³⁷ Abdülmecid Efendi's rising to the status of caliph was published in the newspapers and much of this information was translated into Arabic which is an illustration of the importance of this issue in Egypt and the declaration of a new caliph was one that the Egyptian public waited for in expectation.³⁸

After the sultanate was abolished and Sultan Vahdeddin was taken care of, the reactions by the Egyptian public to the appointment of Abdülmecid II to the position of caliph were diverse. Amīn al-Rāfiʿī evaluated these opinions and divided them into four groups. The first expressed the notion that the allegiance that was made was real and sound, and the Turkish Government's demands that the caliph refrain from interfering in the legislative and executive branches was wrong. The second group believed that the pact of allegiance was sound and true but the caliph did not need to have absolute authority and power and claimed that history was

³⁴ "al-Muslimūn wa al-khilāfa", *al-Ahrām*, 22 November 1922, 1. It is interesting that the newspaper gives space to commentaries that state that a Turkey which has the caliphate within its structure is a great threat in the eyes of Western states. In the same article, the success of Mustafa Kemal as leader was emphasized along with the fact that his various military victories prepared the way for a close relationship between the Turks and the Arabs and despite the fact that the Arabs wished to be rid of the political yoke of the Turks, the Arabs still accepted the Turks as having the caliphate. "al-Muslimūn wa al-khilāfa", 1.

³⁵ See; "al-Khilāfa wa al-luġat al-'arabiyya", *al-Muqaṭṭam*, 8 December 1922, 4; "al-Muslimūn wa al-khilāfa", *al-Ahrām*, 22 November 1922, 1; "al-'Ulamā wa al-mas'alat al-khilāfa", *al-Ahrām*, November 1922, 1.

³⁶ Bkz.: "al-Khilāfa wa al-luġat al-'arabiyya", *al-Muqaṭṭam*, 8 December 1922, 4; "al-Muslimūn wa al-khilāfa", *al-Ahrām*, 22 Kasım 1922, 1; "al-'Ulamā wa al-mas'alat al-khilāfa", *al-Ahrām*, November 1922, 1.

³⁷ Portions of the declaration prepared for the ceremony of allegiance were conveyed to the readers, and emphasis placed on the caliph thanking the assembly for selecting him, the unity of Islam and Muslim solidarity that caliph's committment to carrying out the responsibilities and necessary deeds of the caliphate to the best of his ability and the emphasis on the importance of consultation between the Muslim people and the scholars. See "Haflat al-bay'a fī al-fāteḥ", *al-Muqaṭṭam*, 8 December 1922, 1; "Haflat al-bay'a fī al-fāteḥ", 7 December 1922, 1.

³⁸ "Haflat al-bay a fi al-fateh", 8 December 1922, 1. Also it is interesting that the newspaper did not share the fact that this text, which was like the first Turkish *hutba* was prepared in Turkish which went against the tradition. This matter was in fact a bargaining issue between Abdülmecid Efendi and Mustafa Kemal, with Abdülmecid Efendi wanting his first *hutba* to be translated into Arabic so that he could address the Muslims directly. His wish was denied however by Mustafa Kemal. That this skipped the attention of journalists from *al-Muqaṭṭam* is highly unlikely. The matter was in fact debated in Turkey at the same time. See Mustafa Bakır, "Hutbe", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1998), 18:425.

full of such examples.³⁹ According to the third group the real aim of the Turks was to apply the separation of the church and the state that applied in Europe. This group expected the Turkish Government to express the clause that the 'The State has no religion'. The fourth group believed that the separate of religion and the state was invalid according to religion and as a consequence the pact of allegiance made to the new caliph who indirectly accepted this separation would be null and void. Amīn al-Rāfi'ī writes that because the first group did not correctly interpret the intentions of the Government in Ankara or the general course of affairs in the world they thus yet agreed to support the new caliph even though it did not abide by the basic principles of the caliphate. The second group unknowingly (ignorantly) supported this step of the Ankara government. According to Amīn al-Rāfi'ī the third group was a group that had distanced itself from religion anyway and were fully aware of the intentions of Ankara, supporting them regardless. The only group that was fully cognizant of the situation and of the rules of the sharia' was the fourth group. However the reactions of this group did not reach Ankara because there were few writers of this persuasion who wrote in the newspapers. It was because of this lack of response that Mustafa Kemal and his followers were of the view that the Islamic world supported his actions.⁴⁰

Amongst all of these groups listed by Amīn al-Rāfiʿī, the strongest and most united not just in Egypt but in the entire Islamic world was the first group. After the abolition of the sultanate, the appointment of Abdülmecid II to the rank of caliph with no political authority was met with favourably in the Muslim world. However demands were made on Ankara to make positive steps in addressing this limited power that was objectionable according to the shariah. Great struggles were made in India in particular, where the communication with official Turkey was not cut off and a high volume of traffic was seen amongst delegates. A similar agenda could be seen in Egypt in regards to the re endowment of the caliph with political power and scholars from Azhar University and institutes affiliated with it could be seen to have shown allegiance to Abdülmecid Efendi, albeit with certain caveats.

After the allegiance from Azhar, the second collective pact of allegiance came from the scholars from the Alexandria branch of Azhar. The special circumstance of this allegiance to Abdülmecid by the scholars of Alexandria is noteworthy in that the scholars of Alexandria would later declare their support of the Ottomans and withdraw from any debates on the appropriateness to the sharia' or the notion of soundness of the caliphate after its abolition. They announced their pledge of alliance to Abdülmecid Efendi and in an article published in the December 13, 1922 issue of *al-Muqaṭṭam*, stated that they did not stipulate any conditions to this allegiance. ⁴³ Even though they were affiliated with Azhar, their unconditional pledge of



³⁹ The writer probably indicated the last period of the Abbasis when the caliphate had no political authority. For discussions about this see P.M. Holt, "Some Observations on the 'Abbāsid caliphate of Cairo", *BSOAS*, 47/3 (1984): 501-507.

Amīn al-Rāfi î, "al-lnqilāb al-siyāsī wa al-dīnī fī ğumhūriyyat al-turkiyya", al-Manār, 4 May 1924, 25: 277-285.
 For the attitude of Indian Muslim towards the Ottoman Caliphate see Azmi Özcan, Pan-Islamism, Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain (1877-1924) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 184-215.

⁴² "al-'Ulamā wa al-mas' alat al-khilāfa", *al-Ahrām*, November 1922, 1. Though it is known that the idea of a caliphate devoid of political authority was questioned by the Islamic tradition, the scholars of Azhar pledging their allegiance to Abdülmecid Efendi –despite the ongoing debates – shows that the Ottoman dynasty was accepted as the 500 year owner of the caliphate and that Abdülmecid Efendi, due to him being a member of this family was considered a legal candidate for the position of caliph. Together with this it was thought that the political and military successes of Mustafa Kemal which was dominant in the Egyptian public gave inspiration to Muslim states and that this was the reason for the affinity felt for him which resulted in the situation not being questioned too much

much. 43 "Mubāya'at al-ulamā' al-Iskandariyya li jalālat al-khalīfa", *al-Muqaṭṭam*, 13 December 1922, 3.

alliance to the new caliph, raises the notion that the atmosphere of Alexandria was different to that of Cairo in terms of devotion to Istanbul.

Another matter that is stands out in regards to the debates on the legality of the new caliph that took place after the abolishment of the sultanate was, in contrast to the stance of Azhar, that there was not much concern amongst the liberal-nationalist Egyptian intellectuals about whether the caliphate should or should not remain in the Ottoman family. In most of the opinion pieces that appeared in al-Ahrām and al-Mugattam the condition that the person selected by the Turkish Grand National Assembly should be from the family of Othman was not mentioned. al-Mugattam was one of the newspapers that frequently gave space to the success of the Anatolian Movement under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, and in addition to daily news about this matter and editorial pieces, also frequently gave space to readers' opinions. In the December 1922 issue of the newspaper a comment made by an Egyptian teacher reflects the admiration felt in Egypt for the struggle for Turkish Independence under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal. It also perfectly reflected the atmosphere that showed that in the case of the institution of the caliphate being stripped of its political authority that this would be accepted and not meet with any significant opposition in the Arab-Islamic World.⁴⁴ A similar view was expressed by the famous Kurdish printer Farajullah Zakī al-Kurdī, who was a resident of Egypt. Kurdī, like the anonymous writers of al-Muqattam, believed that in Islam both religious and worldly power united in the same branch and could not be separated which is why he believed that the Turkish Grand National Assembly held political authority and was also a representation of the spiritual authority innate to the caliphate. 45

Rashīd Riḍā on the other hand, recommended pledging allegiance to the caliph selected by the Turkish Government, namely Abdülmecid, and that when all the Muslim countries gained their independence, they should gather together a large council in order to solve the issue. In his writings Riḍā stated that the solution to the issue of the caliphate lay in the formation of a real council of consultation. He focused on the contents of this insitution, named *ahl al-hall wa al-ʿaqd*, ie those who tie and those who untie, and debated who should make up its. 46

The Announcement of the Republic and the Ensuing Debates

After the sultanate was abolished those who did not acknowledge the institution of the caliphate from a legal point of view surprisingly became apparent after the decision was made to abolish the sultanate on the 3rd March, 1924. Those who remained silent whilst the topic was being debated after the 1st November, 1922 or those who supported the decision of the Turkish Grand National Assembly mounted the stage after the abolishment and began to claim that the announcement of Abdülmecid Efendi as the caliph was null and void from the beginning. This retrospective claim which began after the 3rd March, 1922 was frequently made in conservative media outlets in particular. The late acknowledgement of the background



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⁴⁴ "Kalimat al-ḥaqq fī al-Khilāfa wa al-dawlat al-khilāfa al-mansūra", *al-Muqaṭṭam*, 12 December 1922, 3. The anonymous writer of the letter addresses the Egyptian public using the pronoun 'We' and states that he is of the same opinion as the Turkish government on the matter of Vahdettin being in cooperation with the British and needing to be taken care of. He also states that he is not against them in their desire to abolish the Ottoman State, and that the real issue for the Muslims of the world is the existence of a powerful Muslim state that can fight against Western colonialism and that the name or regime of this can change. The author states that he would prefer to to see the war veteran Mustafa Kemal at the head of such a state but he would accept anyone from the Ottoman family or another Turk.

⁴⁵ Farajullah Zakī al-Kurdī, "Haqīqat al-khilāfa wa al-salṭana", *al-Muqaṭṭam*, 17 November 1922, 2.

⁴⁶ Rashīd Riḍā , "al-Aḥkām al-shar'iyya al-muta'alliqa bi al-khilāfat al-Islāmiyya -2", *al-Manār*, 17 January 1923, 24/34: 60-61.

plan of the Turkish revolutionaries and their eventual intentions brought about indignation in certain of those above-mentioned circles after the abolishment of the sultanate.

The Turkish Grand National Assembly was accused of animosity to Islam and the retrospective dismantling of the caliphate of any authority was seen as the first act of this religious enmity. In contrast to the utter leniency shown towards Mustafa Kemal by *al-Manār* in 1922, in 1924 Amīn al-Rāfīʿī wrote an article that made the claim that Abdülmecid Efendi was never a true caliph anyway. Rāfīʿī, who reminded the Azhar scholars of the time of their collective pledge of allegiance to Abdülmecid Efendi, criticised the scholars for this act, and claimed that they acted in line with groups who were not aware of the principles regarding the imamate. He stated that this appointment contradicted the understanding of a true caliph right from the beginning, and that far from this appointment making Abdülmecid II the absolute caliph of the Muslims, these scholars turned a blind eye to the fact that in the new Turkish Republic, it did not even make him an imam who should be followed.⁴⁷

In the ongoing debates about the caliphate in the Egyptian public opinion, the next important development after the abolishment of the sultanate was the declaration of the Republic. During the time from 1 November, 1922 to the 29th October, 1923, while there was no clear judgement about the qualificatios of the new regime aside from the existence of the Ankara Government and the end of the Ottoman Dynasty, after the declaration of the Republic the role of the caliph in the new regime became a topic of debate, and in fact, immediately after the declaration, rumours that Caliph Abdülmecid Efendi had abdicated the position were spread in the Egyptian press. *al-Muqaṭṭam* published an evaluation of the writings from journalists on the topic and refuted the above-mentioned rumours whilst reminding the people that the tension between the Caliph and Ankara could not be ignored.⁴⁸

Another important finding of the newspaper was that the steps of the government under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal had the target of modernisation and westernisation and the institutions taken from the old regime would be transformed and that developments should be interpreted with this in mind. Likewise another evaluation by the newspaper at the same time stated that steps may be taken against Abdülmecid Efendi, even though not against the position of caliph itself by Ankara and also mentioned the possibility of the men in Ankara intentionally spreading the rumours about the caliph stepping down from his position in order to gauge the reaction of the public. In ensuing issues articles appeared regarding the fact that the government in Ankara might be preparing for a new revolution by stripping the caliph of his position or altering the position of caliph itself. The use of the title 'The fourth revolution' many times in the November-December issues of 1923 is an indication that the Egyptian public were expecting a 'radical' reordering of the rank of caliphate by Ankara and that this reordering was, in any case, against the traditional customs and would be in opposition to the Ottoman dynasty.



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⁴⁷ Amīn al-Rāfiʿī , "al-Khilāfa wa al-muʾ tamar al-islāmī", *al-Manār*, 2 July 1924, 25: 372.

⁴⁸ "Hal yastaqīl al-khalīfa?", *al-Muqaṭṭam*, 11 November 1923, 2. In this respect the annulment of the assembly by Mustafa Kemal and the announcement of elections, with the hopes of being rid of any opposing voices to the decision taken about the sultanate, was interpreted as raising the possibility of new restructuring in regards to the caliphate in the new legislative term.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 2.

⁵⁰ "al-Mu'tamar al-islāmī", *al-Muqaṭṭam*, 13 November 1923, 1. In justification of such an assessment, the newspaper pointed to these rumours being published in the *Akṣam* newspaper, in particular, which was known for its close ties to the Republican Party. See "al-Khilāfa wa al-turk", *al-Muqaṭṭam*, 28 November 1923, 3.

⁵¹ These radical steps which were expected to be taken in regards to the issue of the caliphate was referred to in articles in *al-Muqattam* as 'the fourth revolution'. Using this expression, it is understood that what was being

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The intense debates regarding the Ottoman caliphate in Egypt, which, though existent from the second half of the twentieth century, intensified after the caliphate was separated from the sultanate in November 1922, and reached a peak after the declaration of the Republic and the decision to abolish the caliphate, continuing until the Cairo Conference on the Caliphate in 1926 and then losing its vitality when no result was attained. However much views had intensified over the necessity to revise the functional nature of the caliphate which was as of much concern as its abrogation, other opinions were put forth, after its abrogation, that asserted that it needed to be reconsidered as an international institution which would ensure the social and cultural solidarity of the Muslims. These views, which bore the patent effects of the Pan-Islamism of the 19th Century, show that the political agenda of the Pan-Islamists in the first quarter of the 20th Century, was ever in the background. When we examine the picture portrayed in the works of Muslim intellectuals of the 1920s we find that an understanding of a universal caliphate which would gather together the Muslims under one political agenda in order to organise them was long gone and replaced with an understanding that it would gather them under one spiritual roof in order to strengthen solidarity amongst them and support them in the diverse paths they had chosen for themselves. In this framework, it can be said that there is a significant number of intellectuals, religious men an deven politicians who saw the Ottoman State and the household, even after the abolishment of the caliphate, as a structure that will provide social, cultural and economic solidarity among the Muslims of the World.

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emphasized was the dismissal of Vahdettin from the sultanate and the caliphate, the separation of the sultanate from the caliphate, and that the caliphate's turn was coming after the declaration of the republic. See "al-Khilāfa wa alturk", al-Muqattam, 3.

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