Practices of Photography: Circulation and Mobility in the Nineteenth-Century Mediterranean

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To cite this article: Michèle Hannoosh (2016) Practices of Photography: Circulation and Mobility in the Nineteenth-Century Mediterranean, History of Photography, 40:1, 3-27, DOI: 10.1080/03087298.2015.1123830

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2015.1123830

Published online: 16 Mar 2016.

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I would like to thank Aliki Tsirgialou, Chief Curator of the Photographic Archive at the Benaki Museum, Athens, who first called my attention to the Benaki album discussed here and assisted me in my research; Maria Georgopoulou, Director of the Gennadius Library, Athens, who invited me to present my work at the Gennadius; and Eleftheria Daleziou, Reference Archivist of the Gennadius, and Natalia Vogeikoff-Brogan, Doreen Canaday Spitzer Archivist, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, who facilitated my work in the Gennadius archives. I am indebted to two anonymous reviewers for History of Photography, whose comments significantly improved the article. Most of all I am grateful to Vasiliki Hatzigeorgiou, Director of the Photographic Archive of the Hellenic Literary and Historical Archive (EAIA-MIET), Athens, and Mathilde Pirli, Curator: their knowledge of the rich collections of the EAIA and of nineteenth-century photography and Greek culture generally were of enormous benefit to me and I thank them wholeheartedly for their generosity and their exceptionally warm reception over a period of many months.

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Recent theoretical work on the Mediterranean has emphasised the sea as an agent of ‘connectivity’ over a highly fragmented space, bringing peoples, goods, languages, and ideas into contact. Early photography in the Mediterranean manifests this connectivity and mixedness across the whole field of its practice: among photographers, sitters, printers, dealers, consumers, patrons, and even the photographs themselves. Focusing on the eastern Mediterranean, this article treats early photography in its ‘Mediterranean’ context: located within a space of multiple languages, ethnicities, and religions, of personal and commercial networks between cities and across borders, and of spatial and social circulation and exchange. Such an approach complicates the two prevailing scholarly narratives of Mediterranean photography: one based on place, nationality, or ethnicity; the other on Orientalism. Seen in this light, the early history of photography in the Mediterranean may have implications for understanding the ways in which modernisation took hold and operated in the region.

Keywords: early photography, Mediterranean photography, nineteenth-century Greek photography, nineteenth-century Ottoman empire, photographic portraits, carte de visite, costume photography, photographic albums, Mediterranean connectivity, Costumes populaires de la Turquie, Petros Moraites (1832–ca. 1888), Pascal Sebah (1823–86), Alexander C. Evangelides (1847–1905)

Within the two months following the demonstration of the daguerreotype before a joint meeting of the Académie des Sciences and the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris on 19 August 1839, the Swiss-born, French-raised Canadian seigneur Gustave Joly de Lotbinière and the French painter Frédéric Goupil–Fesquet independently learned the process, equipped themselves with daguerreotype apparatuses and set off separately for Greece, Egypt, and the Near East.¹ Theirs were the first daguerreotypes made of these regions and they inaugurated a veritable explosion of photographs of ancient sites and modern customs of the countries of the Mediterranean basin, taken by travellers from Europe and North America such as Joseph-Philibert Girault de Prangey (1842–44), Jules Itier (1845–46), Maxime Du Camp (1849–50), John Shaw Smith (1850–52), James Robertson (1853–58), Francis Frith (1856–60), Gustave Le Gray (1860–68), William James Stillman (1860–82), and others.² No other region of the world was so extensively represented in the early years of photography. From the very beginning, then, the history of photography was closely tied to the Mediterranean: to travel, scholarship, archaeology, art, global politics, and war.

History of Photography, Volume 40, Number 1, February 2016
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2015.1129830
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Western European and North American visitors were not the only photographers in the Mediterranean, however. In the eastern Mediterranean, in particular – the region covered by the then Ottoman empire (including Egypt and Palestine) and a newly independent Greece – photographers learned the technique within a few years of its being made public and began to operate in the major cities and in transitional spaces such as ports and islands. The discovery of photography was reported in the official Ottoman state paper Takvim-i Vekayi (‘Calendar of Events’) on 28 October 1839, and the translation of Daguerre’s manual on the daguerreotype was available in Istanbul before August 1841. Foreign photographers were giving lessons and selling equipment in Istanbul and Smyrna (Izmir) by 1842, in Algiers by 1843, and in Athens by 1846. With the development of reproductive photography, particularly through the use of glass negatives, studios sprang up all over the region, frequented by both a resident and a visiting clientele.

As the growing bibliography indicates, scholarship in recent years has made great strides in advancing our knowledge of early photography in specific places in the Mediterranean region. Thanks to this work, we have a good understanding of who the photographers were, where and when they practised, what type of images they produced, and for whom. Research on the Ottoman empire has notably begun to study the production, circulation, and reception of photographs. In what follows, I will take a different, but related, approach to these latter questions, to consider early Mediterranean photography in what we might call its Mediterranean context: located within a space of multiple languages, ethnicities, and religions, of personal and commercial networks between cities and across borders, and of spatial and social circulation and connectedness.

Theoretical work on the Mediterranean in recent years has emphasised the sea as an agent of ‘connectivity’ over a highly fragmented space, bringing peoples, goods, languages, and ideas into contact with one another. Not that this implies unity or homogeneity: such contacts were often unstable and shifting, violent or conflictual, reinforcing distinct identities along national, religious, ethnic, and linguistic lines, and were inflected by local circumstances. But they nonetheless occasioned an exposure to, engagement with, and/or accommodation to the practices of others which left their mark in a variety of ways.

As I shall argue here, early photography in the Mediterranean manifests this connectivity and mixedness across the whole field of its practice: among photographers, sitters, printers, dealers, consumers, patrons, and even the photographs themselves. An album in the Benaki Museum, Athens, which I shall discuss at the end of this article, provides an illuminating example of the circulation of photographs in the mid-nineteenth century Mediterranean. In general, I will focus on the eastern Mediterranean, where photography was established early on and where such connectivity and circulation in the initial period are most evident. While more work remains to be done on other parts of the Mediterranean, with their historical particularities, recent research on the high numbers of migrants in cities in the central and western Mediterranean, with the multiple languages and diverse cultural traditions associated with them, suggests a level of connectivity consistent with that of the East. Photography may indeed provide evidence of this which is lacking in so many other domains.

Communication and mobility, so central to Mediterranean existence, were crucial to the spread of photography there: photographers travelled from city to city, taking their equipment and knowledge with them, learning new techniques, acquiring equipment and supplies, and exhibiting their work; they opened up secondary branches of their businesses, partnered with locals or employed

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2. Engin Çizgen, Photography in the Ottoman Empire 1839–1919, Istanbul: Hàjet Kitabevi 1987, 20–22; and Özuncaray, Photographers of Constantinople, 16.

3. An unidentified French daguerreotypist referred to as ‘Kompa’ is mentioned in the Istanbul paper Çerâde-i Hovadâs of 17 July 1842 as demonstrating the technique, taking portraits and views, giving lessons, and selling equipment at the Beliveau hotel in Pera (Çizgen, Photography in the Ottoman Empire, 64; Özuncaray, Photographers of Constantinople, 40). An article on photography in the Smyrna paper Phölogia in January 1842 states that ‘happily in our city the darkroom has become well known to almost all’ (cited in Xanthakis, History of Greek Photography, 28, my translation; cf. his Η Ιστορία της Ελληνικής Φωτογραφίας, 153).


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11 – See Xanthakis, History of Greek Photography. Many were in Istanbul, and Greek photographers are also attested in Edirne (Adrianopolis), Izmir ( Smyrna), Alexandria, Cairo, Beirut, Jerusalem and Port Said, and on Syros, Crete, Mytilene, Samos and Chios. See also Perez, Focus East, 184–85 and 218; and Athens 1839–1908: A Photographic Record, Athens: Benaki Museum 1985 (rev. edn Fani Constantinitou and Aliki Tsirgialou, 2004).  
13 – Ibid., 42–47.  

local assistants, bought out each other’s firms and took over the negatives, and probably sent pictures back and forth. Photographers themselves came from mixed and varied backgrounds. Many of the examples discussed below are of Greek origin, since they were prominent throughout the Ottoman empire and beyond, starting with Istanbul, where Vassilik Kargopoulo opened a studio in 1850; or the (later) Zangaki brothers from Milos who established an important business in Port Said with a branch in Cairo. Armenian photographers were everywhere: the most famous of them, the Abdullah brothers, were of Armenian Christian origin and practised in Istanbul, Cairo, and Smyrna, and many others were in Salonica, Beirut, Amman, Haifa, Baghdad, and Jerusalem. Yessay Garabedian, who in 1865 would become the Armenian Patriarch in Jerusalem, learned photography from the Abdullah brothers in Istanbul in 1859, returned to Jerusalem, and opened a studio and training school in the Orthodox monastery of Saint James; in 1863 he travelled to Paris, London, and Manchester where he acquired equipment and learned the latest techniques. Levantines were also prominent: Pascal Sebah, of Syrian Melchite Catholic background, practised in Istanbul from 1857 and then, from the early 1870s, in Cairo, having spent time in Greece and collaborated with the Athenian photographer Petros Moraites. These are the more famous examples, but the lesser-known ones indicate that this diversity and mobility were common: the Kastania brothers, Levantines from Malta who later settled on Chios, first worked in Smyrna as part of the El Beder Company; the Athenian Yiorgos Damianos moved to the Greek island of Syros, opened a studio in 1860, worked later in Athens, and travelled around Europe; and the ubiquitous Nikolaos Pantzopoulos seems to have opened a studio in Istanbul around 1870, and subsequently practised in Smyrna, Sparta, Syra, Herakleion, Athens, and Thessaly.

Western Europeans were part of this circulation too, as they travelled to or through the East or set up shop there more permanently. The Corfu-born British subject Felice Beato collaborated with his brother-in-law, the British photographer James Robertson, himself employed for forty years as chief engraver at the Ottoman Imperial Mint in Istanbul; together they took pictures in Istanbul, the Crimea, Athens, Jerusalem, Malta, and Cairo. The Italian Carlo Naya opened a studio in the Beyoglu district of Istanbul in 1845, moved to Venice in 1857, and in the 1870s had a partnership with the Cairo photographer Schoeff; Louis Royer and Clovis Auferie ran a studio in Cairo in the early 1860s and in Marseilles from 1863. Many photographers began in Istanbul and spread to other cities: Paul Vuccino to Bombay; his partner in the Istanbul firm, Constantin Fettel, to Alexandria; Tancrède Dumas to Beirut; and Garabed Krikorian to Jerusalem. A small number even crossed the traditional divide between the eastern and western Mediterranean which had evolved for reasons of travel and politics: Spain and the Maghreb were on a different route from the eastern Mediterranean, so travelling photographers did not usually take in both on one trip; in historical terms, the Ottoman empire and Greece comprised a loose-knit unit, and France and its colonial holdings in North Africa another, however much these categories were blurred. Mobility between east and west was not uncommon among travellers (John Beasley Greene went from Egypt [1853–54] to Algeria [1855–56]; Jakob Loret visited Egypt, Algeria, Spain [1859–60], and later Palestine [1863–64]), but was rarer for photographers with permanent studios. Luigi Fiorillo is one of the few: trained in Naples, he had a business in Alexandria in the 1870s and 1880s, and at some point took views of Algeria, Nubia, Lebanon, and Jerusalem. This circulation resulted in a rich transmission and exchange of knowledge, skills, and practices, as photographers encountered, joined, or competed with one another. Early photography in the region was thus a very mixed, culturally diverse, and highly
internationalised field, displaying the exchanges and intersections that mark the Mediterranean of the time as a cultural, social, economic, and political space.

This mobility and diversity complicate the two prevailing scholarly narratives of photography in the Mediterranean: one which classifies it by place, nationality, or ethnicity ('Photography and Egypt', 'History of Greek Photography', 'L’Orient des photographes arméniens', to name just a few examples); the other which follows the model of Orientalist painting – Western Europeans creating an image of the region for audiences back home, images of desire and fantasy more than of reality or interpretative depth, reflecting a colonial or imperialist perspective. As a substantial body of scholarship has shown, photographic depictions of the Near East suggest a position of totalising domination, encompassing the foreign within a delimited frame; Western European photographers concentrated on aspects of the culture that were part of their own history (monuments, ruins), thus converting the foreign into a part of themselves, or alternatively showed it as a barbaric other, a degraded or unworthy successor to a glorious past; they drained the present of its historicity and reality, fabricating instead an artificial image outside of time; they converted people into nameless types which confirmed racial and cultural stereotypes. The work of ‘local’ photographers has been seen as largely imitative of Western European trends, adopting the same conventions and subjects. Some scholars have even expressed frustration and disappointment at the fact that local photographers, too, photographed ancient monuments rather than contemporary subjects, or took picturesque views rather than ‘real’ street scenes; that they used similar settings for portraiture to that used by Western Europeans or doctored their photographs in similar ways; that they catered to a market of tourists or published their work for publics abroad, thus replicating and, some have argued, internalising a western European perspective on their own history and present.

But a model of place, nationality, or ethnicity cannot account for a figure such as Wilhelm Berggren, a Swiss national who settled in Istanbul in 1866, gallicised his first name to Guillaume, and spent the rest of his life photographing street scenes and urban neighbourhoods in which a spontaneity and even haphazardness contravene touristic convention (figure 1). Or Alexander Svoboda (1826–96), who was born in Baghdad to a Croatian father and an Armenian mother, studied

Figure 1. Guillaume Berggren, Port of Constantinople, albumen print, ca. 1870. The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Ken and Jenny Jacobson Orientalist Photography Collection.
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29 – See John de St Jorre, ‘Pioneer
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Andriomenos. As Çizgen suggests, the lack of photographic studios run by
Muslims may have had less to do with Muslim attitudes toward images than
with the perceived status of photography as a business, less prestigious than
professions such as the military or the state administration which attracted the
Muslim middle classes. 28 Muslims who could afford to do so certainly had themselves photographed. Sultan Abdulaziz (r. 1861–76), photographed by the
Abdullah brothers in 1863 and many times thereafter, set the tone, followed by the
members of his family and officials in his administration. The royal princesses
were avid collectors of photographs, as were the children of Ismael Pasha, the
Egyptian khedive, 29 in the 1880s Abdullahim II would build a major collection of
about 33,350 photographs. 30 Soon the middle classes joined the photographic
trend, including women: an advertisement for the ‘Astras’ couple (the name
suggests Greek origin) in 1847 indicates that Mme Astras is available to take photographs ‘of ladies who are adherents of the Muslim faith’ and can personally
go to clients’ homes. 31
Just as our classification by place, nationality, or ethnicity fails to account fully
for the practice of photography in the Mediterranean, so does our other model,
Orientalism: when we look beyond a certain range of examples, as some scholars
have begun to do, the critical commonplace that Mediterranean photography was
principally Orientalist, at least in the sense described above, becomes difficult to
sustain. 32 Subjects were far more varied than the Oriental types and pristine views
of ancient monuments that appealed to tourists. Photographs of public works’
projects, religious and civil institutions, and public spaces such as markets or ports
often contain passers-by and unpredictable details, and thus a wealth of informa-
tion about the society. 33 Picturesque and panoramic views, too, may have hapha-
zard or ‘incongruous’ elements – people on a balcony or path, laundry on a line, a
modern structure among the antiquities. 34 Albums commissioned or compiled by
governments usually display a ‘modern’ image: the fifty-one albums amounting to
1,819 photographs which Abdullahim II gave to the USA and Britain in 1893
contain images of schoolchildren (including girls), professional and military
painting in Budapest and Venice, practised painting and photography in Bombay
in the 1850s, and settled in Smyrna in 1858 where he opened a photographic
studio in the rue Franque, producing views of Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor, as
well as portraits; he later lived in London and Paris before settling at the end of his
life in Istanbul. 24 Such a model is also inadequate to the mixed identities of most
of the major native-born photographers such as Sebah, the Abdullah brothers, and
Kargopoulou, Ottoman subjects coming from different ethnic backgrounds and
working for a broad-based clientele, including the sultans themselves. Some
photographers from Western Europe, such as Félix and Lydie Bonfils, settled
permanently in the East; their children, born and raised there, eventually took
over the family business. These mixed identities confound the neat classifications
which have dominated our approach to the subject of Mediterranean photogra-
phy, even the most basic ones of ‘foreign’ and ‘local’. As Issam Nassar notes with
respect to nineteenth-century Palestine, the millet system by which non-Muslims
in the Ottoman empire were administered from their religious communities
blurred the meaning of ‘local’ itself, making it irreducible to birthplace, residency,
or ethnicity alone. 25
While photographic studios within the Ottoman empire were run largely by
minorities – Greeks, Armenians, Levantines, resident Western Europeans – there
were nevertheless Muslim photographers: these were usually ‘military’ photographers,
trained at the military academy and employed on official assignments involving
state events, public works projects, the design of equipment and weapons,
and later the recording of war. 26 The Egyptian engineer and officer Mohammed Sadiq photographed Medina in 1862. 27 Sultan Abdullahim II had
a studio in the royal palace, and the royal princes were given lessons by Nikolaos
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academies, construction works, hospitals (including a women’s ward), street scenes, and industrial and public works projects. William Allen notes that these photographs, which were probably not commissioned specially but were selected from the archive of a photographic firm, were done by many of the same photographers – the Abdullah brothers, Kargopoulo, Sebah and Joaillier – who produced the well-known ones of exotic types and professions for the tourist trade.\footnote{Commercial photographers, too, produced modern images, such as Marino Vrêto’s bilingual *Athènes moderne/Ati Νεα Αθήνα* of 1861.\cite{35} As Michelle Woodward has argued of photography in the Ottoman empire, the conventions of representation are not monolithic or hegemonic, but rather reflect a range of perspectives, often ‘negotiating’ between tradition and modernity, touristic images and ‘local’ self-conceptions.\cite{37} Perhaps most revealing is the fact that that quintessentially ordinary, unexotic genre – portraiture – had a thriving existence.}

Considering early photography in its ‘Mediterranean’ context thus involves changing our focus from subject matter and style to the photographic experience, the ways in which photography was practised, used, received, and consumed by local, immigrant, and travelling photographers, clients from different backgrounds and classes, suppliers, printers, dealers, and the press in numerous countries and languages. This entails examining the experience of the studio for clients and photographers, the geographical and social reach of photographers, their professional and business practices, and the circulation of photographs around and across the sea via producers, merchants, consumers, and diplomats. Early photography in the Mediterranean was, to use Issam Nassar’s phrase, an art of heterogeneous groups of practitioners and mixed production sites.\footnote{As such, it may in turn provide a special window onto the societies in which it operated and which it represented. Even when the subject or style seems to correspond to Western European models, or to conceptions of the ‘Orient’, the practice of photography, in contrast, may reveal something of the social, religious, ethnic, and linguistic variety in these societies, the degree of interaction or separation between groups, and the ways in which identities were represented, affirmed, or complicated in a period of transition, transformation, and modernisation. It may be practice, rather than subject or style, which allows us to consider this photography as a Mediterranean phenomenon and, alternatively, the Mediterranean as a photographic space.}

We can start with one of the most striking features of photographic practice in the Mediterranean: the linguistic variety through which it was conducted. The backings and mounts of studio photographs, as well as advertisements and announcements in the press, are a rich source of information about photographers and their intended clientele. Multiple languages came together in the photographer’s business, so much so that it is rare to find a backing, card, or advertisement in a single language. French being the cosmopolitan language of photography, as well as a key language of commerce and modernisation, they were normally in at least French and one other language, and often as many as four, especially in Istanbul: an advertisement for Vincent Abdullah’s firm from around 1858 is in Turkish, Greek, Armenian, and French, with their four corresponding scripts; similarly, Pantzopoulos and Caracachian, Tsicoura & Co., N. Merakli, P. Hekimian, and Nikolaos Andriomenos have backings in these four languages (figure 2). In other places we find Arabic, Italian, German, or Russian alongside one or more of these languages.\footnote{The Athenian Xenofontos Vathis had backings in Greek, French, and English; Garabel Krikorian, in 1870s Jerusalem, in French, Armenian, and an Ottoman near-identical to Arabic (figure 3).\footnote{A bill from the Abdullah brothers is printed in Armenian, Ottoman, and French, and has handwritten annotations in Ottoman and French (figure 4); another, from Kargopoulo, dated 25 September 1872 – for princesses of the imperial family, purchasing *cartes de visite* and larger portraits (some coloured) – is printed in Greek, Ottoman, and a Record of Five Years’ Residence at the Court of Ismael Pasha, Khedive, Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood 1893, 155.)} For the Egyptian princesses too, ‘as [they] could not be taken by any of the chief photographers of the town, went into the harem to exercise the art’ (Chennells, *Recollections of an Egyptian Princess*, 155).


33 – See Yeşilçepeli Çelik’s discussion of three albums dealing with railways, coal mines, and medical practice and what can be gleaned from them about labour history, relationships among national identities, ethnic groups, social classes and women’s history (*Photographing Mundane Modernity*, in *Camera Ottomana*, 154–203).

French, and is made out in Greek and Ottoman (figure 5); yet another by Kargopoulo is made out in French and Ottoman. 41 Crucially, these multiple languages are indications of the clientele targeted and served: the presence of the local languages alongside a foreign one indicates that foreigners were not the only market for the kinds of images the photographer produced. 42

Photographers themselves were usually polyglot: Kargopoulo knew Greek, Turkish, and French; Moraites operated in Greek, French, German, and probably English. They often translated their names: Dimitrios Konstantinou became Démétre Constantin or Constantine, Spiridon Venios was also the Italianised Spiro Venio. This linguistic mobility enabled the photographer to circulate among the communities which he – and sometimes she – aimed to serve, and made photography a space of encounter for people of different languages.

Indeed, photography in the Mediterranean may have been the vehicle of a kind of circulation and mobility in societies which were otherwise highly stratified socially and highly differentiated ethnically, linguistically, and religiously. For one thing, the studio was a space open to women. While most were run by men, some were operated by women. Anna Guichard ran her own studio in Istanbul’s ‘European’ district, Pera, in the late 1860s; she also had an address in Pest at Deakgasse, 4 (figures 6, 7). In Algiers, the widow of a ‘negociant’, Lucien Jacob Geiser, seems to have opened a studio in 1852, before partnering with Antoine Alary in 1855; her (widowed) daughter-in-law ran a studio in 1872 at 11, passage Malakoff. 43 Little is known of women photographers in Greece – Xanthakis notes a Zoe Papanikolaou in Janina around 1870 and an Evangelia Petuchaki in Herakleion by 1880 – until the 1880s when the Kanta sisters opened a studio in Athens that would become extremely

Figure 2. E. Pantzopoulos and R. Caracachian, backing for carte de visite in Armenian, Greek, French, and Ottoman, ca. 1870. EAIAMIEET, Athens, 1405.73.

Figure 3. G. Krikorian, backing for carte de visite in French, Armenian, and Ottoman, ca. 1880. American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library, Stephanos Dragoumis Papers, disj. memb. 0434.
successful. Women also practised alongside their husbands or sons, photographing, developing, and arranging the view. Lydie Bonfils in Beirut and 'Mme Astras' in Istanbul, already cited, are examples, as is the wife of Jean Prod’hom in Bône, Algeria (in 1867). In Algiers, Juliette Geiser prepared clients for their pictures, did their hair, and then developed the negatives. While, as we have seen, some women were photographed at home (by women photographers), others went to the studio to have their own picture taken or, especially, that of their children.

Where clients are concerned, photography remained for much of the early period beyond the reach of many, the province of the court, elites, and the middle classes. But as prices fell – a phenomenon that was advertised widely – people of different backgrounds and social levels acquired photographs (of rulers and officials, for example) and also had themselves photographed — Muslims, Christians and Jews, men and women, families and schoolchildren, old and young, country and urban folk. The studio became the space of a certain egalitarianism and social mobility, as the same props, backgrounds, and costumes were available to all and markers of social and cultural differentiation could be selected and appropriated at will. Not that this was ‘democratic’ in any

Figure 4. Bill from Abdullah Brothers printed in Ottoman, Armenian, and French. Annotated in Ottoman and French, 4 September 1873. From Öztuncay, Photographers of Constantinople, 214.

40 – ‘Fotográfb Karabet Krikoriyân Quds-i sherfi’: although this rendering of ‘Jerusalem’ consists of Arabic words, Arabic itself would probably have ‘al Quds’. I thank Gottfried Hagen for this clarification.
42 – Micklewright (‘Late Ottoman Photography’, 67) rightly points out that Carlo Naya’s 1845 advertisement, in Ottoman Turkish, for his photographic services in Istanbul indicates that it was aimed at non-European residents.
44 – Xanthakis, Ιστορία της ελληνικής φωτογραφίας, 200–03.
47 – Edhem Eldem, however, observes that studio portraits (as opposed to ethno-graphic types) of Muslim women were rare until late in the century. See ‘Powerful Images. The Dissemination and Impact of Photography in the Ottoman Empire 1870–1914’, in Camera Ottomana, 108.
48 – See, for example, the advertisement by Caranza and Maggi in the Journal de Constantinople, 14–19 May 1853, for ‘prices reduced by half’ (quoted in Öztuncay, Photographers of Constantinople, 161).
political sense; but photography nonetheless provided a common, shared experience to people of different backgrounds and milieux. It was a homogenising art, the studio a mixed space, and photographers mediating figures, operating in multiple languages and scripts or a neutral *lingua franca*, creating an otherwise rare equality of experience among them.

This is particularly evident in portraits. As practised in the early period, photographic portraiture in the Mediterranean is usually considered devoid of specificity and historicity, purely formulaic in composition and effect, using stereotypical poses and conventional props, and following Western European models.49 But portraiture was the most common of the photographer’s activities, carried out for a local clientele more than for tourists or foreign markets.50 The thousands of portrait photographs that exist in private and public archives show that portrait photography was a common feature of everyday life. Such sitters were not nameless models who served the photographer as types, but subjects who had themselves photographed, often commemorating an event or a coming of age, and exchanged their photographs with friends and family. They posed according to a stock repertoire of gestures,

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50 – Portraiture was not subject to the law affecting pictures of sites in Istanbul, for which permission had to be obtained from the authorities. The law was introduced in 1853 and remained in force until the end of the nineteenth century. See Oztuncay, *Photographers of Constantinople*, 74.
angles, expressions, positions, and décor, even as the portrait sought – or claimed – to represent them in their individuality. Focusing on Istanbul, Nancy Micklewright has called attention to the status of photography as a means by which people controlled their representation of themselves and their society, experimenting with and defining new personal and social identities as they confronted the changes brought by an emergent modernity. Certainly photography was associated with ‘Western’ modernisation and was a major means of projecting a modern image at the personal, professional, and governmental levels. As such, it provided the occasion for crossing well-defined boundaries between different ethnicities, nationalities, and classes.

The formulaic nature of photographic portraiture was crucial in this regard. With the advent of the carte de visite in the late 1850s – the small-format (6 cm × 9 cm) photograph produced on a collodion-coated glass plate allowing for multiple shots – portraiture became, as Anne McCauley observes, a ‘great equalizer’. Little distinction was made in pose, attitude, décor, or expression between sultan or officer, king or bourgeois, cleric or clown. Roger Hargreaves remarks that early portrait photography ‘homogenized everyone into a single identity’, effecting a ‘fluidity of status’ that made the monarch an ordinary citizen and raised the ordinary citizen to the level of the monarch: ‘By the early 1860s it was possible to visit a studio and have your image reduced, formatted and packaged in exactly the same way as that of an emperor or a queen’. This homogeneity of format and pose cut across cultures as well as classes: a middle-class man adopted the same pose as the king (figures 8, 9). The carte de visite removed meaningful symbols of

52 – Mary Roberts has shown how Abdulaziz, the first Ottoman ruler to disseminate his own photograph and to travel abroad, used photography to project the image of a modern ruler (‘Ottoman Statecraft and the Pencil of Nature. Photography, Painting and Drawing at the Court of Sultan Abdulaziz’, Ars Orientalis, 43 [2013], 10–31).
identity, culture, or milieu, ‘isolating’ subjects from their environments,\textsuperscript{56} bending them to a predetermined model, commodifying them to a certain extent; but it also freed them, in the delimited space of the studio and the frame of the photograph itself, from the defined hierarchies and identities in which they lived. In societies as heterogeneous as those of the nineteenth-century Mediterranean, photography thus became the agent of a certain social mixing and movement: Christian photographers photographed Muslims and Jews; sitters in traditional or local dress frequented the westernised space of the studio; middle-class Greek sitters leaned on the same table and chair as a janissary or a mullah; and the shop-window or display-case brought all these people together in a motley social gallery.\textsuperscript{57}

The conventional, interchangeable nature of studio props and décor, and their lack of strong symbolic meaning, made them especially apt vehicles of social blending. Particular chairs, tables, columns, balustrades, drapery, carpets, and backgrounds recur in pictures of very different sitters. In pictures by Petros Moraites, a woman in the dress of Megara – clearly a costume study – stands on the same carpet as a middle-class family and Queen Olga and her children (figures 10–12). A carpet and decorated column recur in portraits of a bourgeois woman, a dandy, a man in traditional costume in a theatrical pose, and King George I.\textsuperscript{58} Another carpet recurs in pictures of two serious-looking Catholic priests and two ludicrous clowns.\textsuperscript{59} In portraits by Xenofontos Vathis, bourgeois ladies lean on the same stand as a revolutionary fighter in traditional uniform and a naval officer in ‘Western’ dress,\textsuperscript{60} and two have the same painted background of flower pots and Parthenon (figures 13–16). In portraits by the Abdullah brothers, royal princes lean against the same table as a captain from the Navigation Company and his friend,\textsuperscript{61} in others by Kargopoulo, the photographer’s daughter stands against the...
Figure 10. Petros Moraites, Woman in costume from Megara, Greece, carte de visite, ca. 1880. © Benaki Museum, Athens, Photographic Archive ΦΑ 19ος.454.

Figure 11. Petros Moraites, Middle-class family, albumen print on mount (with mount 13.5 × 9.5 cm), ca. 1870. EAIA-MIET, Athens, 1Φ03 MOR 136.

Figure 12. Petros Moraites, Queen Olga and her children, carte de visite, 1871. EAIA-MIET, Athens, 1Ε00.26.
Figure 13. Xenofontos Vathis, Portrait of the revolutionary hero and statesman Rigas Palamides in the costume of the Royal Phalanx, carte de visite, 1860s. EAIA-MIET, Athens 1Φ00.174.

Figure 14. Xenofontos Vathis, Portrait of a woman, carte de visite, 1860s. EAIA-MIET, Athens 1Φ00.60.

Figure 15. Xenofontos Vathis, Portrait of a naval officer (Dimitrios Krieziot?), carte de visite, 1860s. EAIA-MIET, Athens 1Φ00.74.

Figure 16. Xenofontos Vathis, Portrait of a woman, carte de visite, 1860s. EAIA-MIET, Athens 1Φ00.73.
same chair in which an Ottoman military officer sits. Such props said little, or even nothing, about the identity of the sitter; but this weak meaning meant precisely that they became shared and exchangeable objects, ones which interacted with, and thus linked, the various people who were photographed with them, and who became ‘interchangeable’ themselves.

One of the most interesting aspects of the studio in this regard was the availability of costumes: advertisements indicate that photographers kept a store of costumes, especially ethnic and national ones, for clients to adopt as they wished. Nikolaos Pantzopoulos’s advertisement, in both Greek and French, is typical: ‘The studio puts, for free, at the disposal of those who wish to be photographed sumptuous national costumes (country dress and court fustanellas) for men, women, and children of all ages’. Photographers throughout the region did this: Kargopoulo kept a stock of costumes, as did Cosmi Sebah: ‘The establishment maintains a selection of costumes for both sexes’. The Krikorian–Sabouni studios in Beirut, Jerusalem, and Jaffa similarly advertised the availability of costumes, as did those of Garabed Krikorian and Khalil Ra’ad in Jerusalem and Petros Moraites in Athens. Certainly, Western Europeans took advantage of this, as many examples attest: Oscar Wilde was photographed in traditional Greek costume by Moraites when Wilde visited Athens in 1877, William Holman Hunt in Turkish costume by James Robertson in 1856, Heinrich Schliemann by an unknown photographer around 1858, the amateur photographer Count du Manoir in Arab costume by the Abdullah brothers in Istanbul, in addition to countless ‘ordinary’ visitors and their families. But this was not only for tourists. The fact that the practice was advertised in both the local and foreign languages indicates that it was aimed at local clients as well. This use of costume in photographic portraiture has been little studied, but it was remarkably widespread. The myriad portraits which survive of people in traditional costume thus depict not necessarily what the sitters actually identified with, or of course wore, in their normal lives, but rather a costume that they had selected in the studio for the occasion, like the background, balustrade, or table (figures 17, 18). Middle-class Greeks donned regional or peasant costume, alternating with fashionable western dress: Heinrich Schliemann’s Greek wife Sophia posed in traditional costume and also in the most European fashions (figures 19, 20); sometimes the alternation came in the same sitting, as in an example by Moraites where the sitter wears western clothes in one picture and a traditional (although non-Greek) costume in another (figures 21, 22). Egyptian women dressed as peasants complete with water jugs, urbanites as Bedouins; as Mary Roberts has shown, Princess Nazih, granddaughter of Mehmet Ali, was photographed not only in western dress, but even cross-dressed, in a picture featuring the same stereotypical props and background, a kind of parody of the Orientalist genre. As Micklewright notes, the use of costume allowed for a ‘trying on’ of different identities during a period of dramatic transformation in Ottoman dress and social practices, identities which could change as easily as the sitter’s clothes. Ironically, therefore, costume – the marker of tradition, stability, and continuity – became an indicator of modernity – of changing conceptions of, and possibilities for, the self and of the social hierarchies that dress represented. Costume no longer indicated belonging (to region, town, or village, to social class, trade, or profession, to age, gender, and marital status), differentiating one group from another, establishing boundaries that enforced a social order, but was, rather, a sign of the fluidity of such definitions. Like a theatre, the studio had its own costumes and sets, allowing sitters to become actors who assumed a persona that others, from different backgrounds, could also assume. It provided a common experience in which people could step outside the markers of identity with which they were usually associated; in this way, photography constituted, and indeed promoted, a shared experience among otherwise separate groups.

62 – Ibid., ill. 415 and 417.

63 – See Edwards’s discussion of the carte de visite as a form which established equivalencies among people, rendering them interchangeable in the circuit of exchange (Making of English Photography, 81–82).

64 – Reproduced in Xanthakis, Η Ελλάδα του 19ου αιώνα με τον φακό του Πέτρου Μωραίτη, 40.


66 – ‘On trouvera dans l’établissement des costumes choisis servant à poser pour les deux sexes’: advertisement in L’Orient illustré, 30 January 1875, reproduced in Ozancay, Photographers of Constantinople, 272.


68 – For example, Jean Geiser’s ‘group of French people in Algerian costume’, 1880 (Photographes en Algérie, ed. Ades and Zaragozi, ill. 98). The Wilde portrait is in the Irish Institute of Hellenic Studies, Athens; the Holman Hunt is reproduced in Ozancay, Photographers of Constantinople; the Schliemann is in the archives of the Gennadius Library, Athens (reproduced in David Traill, Schliemann of Troy: Treasure and Deceit, London: John Murray 1995), 69 – Graham-Brown, Images of Women, 142, notes that a ‘handful’ of such photographs of ‘dressing up’ from the Middle East can be found: ‘[…] there have always been a few people in every culture who, whether in earnest or for fun, have tried to escape these labels of class, community, and gender by dressing up as someone else’. Nassar suggests that it was a practice of the wealthy and urban segments of Palestinian society (‘Familial Snapshot’, 147).

70 – I thank Vassiliki Hatziioannou for this point.


72 – Micklewright, ‘Late Ottoman Photography’, 73–74. She cites two portraits by the Ottoman photographer Ali Sami of Hamide Hanim, daughter of another photographer: in one, she is in western dress; in another, playing on Orientalist conventions, she is portrayed as a dancer in Oriental dress (ibid., 75). See also Micklewright’s discussion of a series of photographs of a family posing now costumed in a ‘harem’ scene, now in European dress (‘Alternative Histories’, in Photography’s Orientalism, ed. Behdad and Gartlan, 85–88).
Figure 17. Petros Moraites, Portrait of a man in traditional costume, carte de visite, ca. 1868. EAI-A-MIET, Athens, 1φ03 MOR 64.

Figure 18. Ioannis Lambakis, Portrait of a couple, carte de visite, ca. 1875. EAI-A-MIET, Athens, 1φ03.143.

Figure 19. Petros Moraites, Portrait of Sophia Schliemann, née Engastromenos, in Greek costume, carte de visite, ca. 1870. Inscribed ‘To my dear spouse from your beloved wife’ (Τῷ ἀγαπητῷ μου σύζυγῷ ἡ προσφιλὴς σύζυγός Σου Σοφία Σλιέμανν). American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library, Heinrich Schliemann Papers, series 1A Box 1, no. 7.

Figure 20. Rhomaides brothers, Sophia Schliemann, née Engastromenos, and her daughter Andromache, carte de visite, ca. 1877. American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Gennadius Library, Heinrich Schliemann Papers, series 1A Box 1, no. 39.
Photographic portraiture as a genre had always – and everywhere – had strong ties with the theatre. Gestures and attitudes were borrowed from the theatre, and studios maintained sets like those of the stage. In the Mediterranean, such sets tended to depict iconic monuments such as the Parthenon or Pyramids, iconic views such as Istanbul’s Golden Horn, or generic settings such as a villa or garden, which photographers could purchase at certain studios or supply shops. These are easily recognisable and have the same ‘exchangeable’ status that recurrent props do. Costume was part of this repertoire. Because it was ethnic, national, or folkloric, and not overtly ‘exotic’, it is usually taken as a true indicator of the identity or self-identification of the sitter. But, as the advertisements make clear, a Greek fustanella or Bedouin garb might be no more individual than the background Parthenon or Golden Horn, and could be just as exchangeable.

73 – Graham-Brown, Images of Women, 142 and ill. 23.
74 – Ibid., 122.
75 – Hargreaves, ‘Putting Faces to the Names’, 46.
76 – Oxendes (Abdullah frères, 17) reproduces an advertisement from Caracachian from 1895 which mentions ‘painted backgrounds’.
Such a challenge to the authenticity of costume and the stable regimes of identity which it traditionally represented became, later in the century, a matter for the law. For their genre studies, photographers had regularly employed non-Muslim models, particularly for representing women: even men sometimes served as models for commercial depictions of 'Oriental' women. As Abdülhamid II's long reign grew increasingly repressive, an imperial decree of 19 January 1892 sanctioned the Abdullah brothers and other photographers for depicting non-Muslims in Muslim dress: '[... ] it has been discovered that some Armenians have had their photographs taken in various costumes in order to malign the Muslim community and cast aspersions on Islam'. The glass plate was reportedly seized and broken, as were photographs and negatives ‘of a similar nature’ at other studios. ‘And it has been resolved to warn photographers not to take such photographs again. [...] The photograph in question shall be published in the illustrated newspaper Servet-i Fünun, with a caption explaining that it does not depict Islamic dress but is a photograph of an Armenian’.77 While no such decree was issued for portraits, it is clear that the relation of costume to identity had become a contentious issue. The compilation of the photographic albums given the following year to the USA and Britain should be seen in the context of such a decree. These albums – dominated, ironically, by photographs by the censured Abdullah brothers themselves – were certainly linked to official frustration at the persistence of Orientalist clichés in the representation of the empire: Abdülhamid explicitly criticised images ‘for sale in Europe’ which ‘vilify’, ‘mock’, and ‘insult’ Islamic peoples, showing them ‘in a vulgar and demeaning light’, and he specified that all photographs by Ottoman photographers destined for the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893 should be vetted by the Palace to ensure that they did not do this.78

Although the offending images seized in 1892 were surely of generic ‘types’ – representing different social groups, professions, ethnicities or regions, and done from models – rather than portraits which were meant to depict the sitter in his or her individuality, the theatrical use of costume in photographic portraits blurred the line between the two. To some extent, this is inherent in portrait photography as a mass-market practice: the individuality of the portrait is belied by the indistinctive, assembly-line quality of the carte de visite or cabinet format, with its recurrent backgrounds, props, poses, and gestures regardless of sitter. As Micklewright shows, it is often difficult to distinguish a type (and equally a costume study) from a portrait on the basis of the image alone.79 Indeed the two were (and still are) frequently confused, depending on whether the figure has been identified.80 This merging of the individual and the type may reflect the prefabricated, mechanised nature of modern subjectivity, but it also allows the individual to become something, and someone, else.

Given the increasing fluidity of the use of costumes from the mid-century onwards, it is not surprising that photography should have been enlisted in efforts to catalogue and inventory them. Nearly all studios produced series on ethnic costume, and many were reissued as postcards when these became widespread at the end of the century.81 Such images tended to reflect the tradition of eighteenth-century prints, with elaborate, fake settings, props, and backgrounds; they were often coloured, with a brief, sometimes handwritten indication of what the costume was, and they were meant primarily to be sold abroad or to visitors. A different enterprise, which sought to harness the realism associated with photography rather than to have it reproduce the aesthetic of earlier prints, was the photographic costume book, Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873 (figure 23). Conceived by the Turkish painter, archaeologist and future minister of Fine Arts Osman Hamdy Bey for the Universal Exhibition of 1873 in Vienna, this work contained seventy-four phototypes from plates by Pascal Sébah and an accompanying text in French by Osman Hamdy and Victor Marie de Launay, an official of the Pera municipality and member of the Imperial Commission for the Ottoman exhibit.82 The photographs themselves were shown in the Exhibition and the book released afterwards.83 The pictures were taken
in the studio, and the same model is occasionally recognised in different ones, although most have different models. Uniform in format – usually two or three figures standing on a carpet in front of a plain background with wainscoting and without accessories or props – and obviously posed, the pictures were meant to show the ethnographic range of the empire, the diversity of peoples that it encompassed (figures 24–27). Diverging from Romantic and Orientalist precedents, with their generic props and vague markers of ‘local colour’, these costume studies are precise and nuanced, reflecting the distinct characteristics of region, religion, ethnicity, and class. Accordingly, the focus in each picture is on the costume, rather than the sitter or setting, each costume representing an element of difference within the plain, non-descript sameness of the setting. Interestingly, this diversity is brought out in the Preface through a distinction made between clothing and costume: clothing is associated with the ‘caprices’ of fashion and ‘is tending to become uniform throughout the world and to erase all distinction not only between the different classes of society, but also between different nations [. . .]. Tout au contraire, le costume, en s’adaptant aux convenances particulières, aux nécessités climatériques, aux usages de chaque contrée, offre aux études ethnographiques et sociales une source inépuisable de renseignements certains [. . .]. Le vêtement tend à devenir uniforme dans le monde entier, et à effacer non seulement toute distinction entre les diverses classes de la société; mais encore entre les diverses nations [. . .]. Tout au contraire, le costume, en s’adaptant aux convenances particulières, aux nécessités climatériques, aux usages de chaque contrée, offre aux études ethnographiques et sociales une source inépuisable de renseignements certains [. . .]. Le costume entretenait naturellement chez ceux qui le portaient des sentiments de solidarité [et] impose [. . .] une responsabilité mutuelle.”

Such communitarian identity and the differentiation between communities which it implies are openly acknowledged in the first chapter on Constantinople, where the dark jacket, trousers, and fez of modern ‘Europeanising’ dress are presented as equalising all the religions, nationalities, and social classes: ‘[…] they have helped, and still help, to placate the hatred which all too often divided

84 – The same models are used for a Muslim from Rhodes (pl. VI, p. 120) and a Christian from Mytilene (pl. VIII, p. 123); a Christian horseman from Chania (pl. 1, p. 104), a Christian villager from Chanoia (pl. II, p. 106), and a Christian from Magossa (pl. IX, p. 123); a labourer from Erzeroum (pl. XIX, p. 215) and an Armenian priest from Aghtamar (pl. XX, p. 218). Öztuncay (ibid., 268) identifies Marie de Launay, author of the text, in two of the plates (pl. XIII, p. 62; pl. XXIII, p. 91). On the Costumes populaires, see Ahmet Ersoy, ‘Osman Hamdi Bey and Victor Marie de Launay: The Popular Costumes of Turkey in 1873’, in Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770–1945): Texts and Commentaries, Ahmet Ersoy et al., here vol. 2, National Romanticism: The Formation of National Movements, ed. Balázs Trencsényi and Michal Kopecké, Budapest and New York: Central European University Press 2006, 174–77.

85 – Osman Hamdy Bey and Victor Marie de Launay, Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873, Constantinople: Imprimerie du Levant Times & Shipping Gazette 1873, 5–6 (my translation): ‘Le vêtement tend à devenir uniforme dans le monde entier, et à effacer non seulement toute distinction entre les diverses classes de la société; mais encore entre les diverses nations [. . .]. Tout au contraire, le costume, en s’adaptant aux convenances particulières, aux nécessités climatériques, aux usages de chaque contrée, offre aux études ethnographiques et sociales une source inépuisable de renseignements certains [. . .]. Le costume entretenait naturellement chez ceux qui le portaient des sentiments de solidarité [et] impose [. . .] une responsabilité mutuelle’.

Figure 23. Osman Hamdy Bey and Victor Marie de Launay, Cover page of Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873, Constantinople, Imprimerie du Levant Times & Shipping Gazette, 1873. University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library), Ann Arbor.
Figure 24. Pascal Sebah, *Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873*, Part I, pl. XIX: Peasant, Poor, and Middle-Class Arnaouts (Ottoman Albanians), phototype, 1873. University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library), Ann Arbor.

Figure 25. Pascal Sebah, *Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873*, Part I, pl. XXII: Jewish woman from Thessaloniki, Christian (Bulgarian) woman from Prilep (Macedonia), and Muslim woman from Thessaloniki, phototype, 1873. University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library), Ann Arbor.
Figure 26. Pascal Sebah, *Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873*, Part III, pl. VIII: Greek priest, Mullah, and Armenian priest, phototype, 1873. University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library), Ann Arbor.

Figure 27. Pascal Sebah, *Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873*, Part II, pl. I: Christian bourgeois, Muslim woman, and Christian horseman from Crete, phototype, 1873. University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library), Ann Arbor.
86 – Ibid., 13: ‘[…] ils ont aide, et aident encore a l’apaisement des haines qui divisaient trop souvent, autrefois, les diverses religions et nationalités de l’Empire’; to efface les différences marquantes qui signalent les non-musulmans au répertoire des fanatiques […] ; à permettre que […] se soit habitué à appeler effendi, bey, pacha, etc., des grecs, des arméniens, des latins, des étrangers’. Ibid., 6: ‘[…] le costume réalise la définition rationnelle du beau et du bon, qui est, comme on le sait, la variété dans l’unité.’
87 – Ibid., 7.
88 – This applies to different ethnicities too: pl. X (161) has an Armenian woman from Burdur, a Turkmen woman from Utmuk, and a Kurdish woman from Sarikaya.
89 – For examples, see Athens 1839–1900: A Photographic Record, nos 223–39.
90 – Jacobson documents many such exchanges; for example, between Pascal Sebah and Horr, between Hippolyte Arnoux and Henri Rombau, and between Félix Bonfils and Tancrède Dumas (Odalisques and Arabesques, 46, 207, and 227).
91 – This was common wherever photography was practised. In the Mediterranean, examples include the Abdullah brothers who were bought out by Sebah and Joaillier; Pascal Sebah seems to have bought negatives from Émile Réchar in the 1870s (Jacobson, Odalisques and Arabesques, 212), and possibly from James Robertson in 1867 (Ortuncay, Photographers of Constantinople, 149); and Jean Sebah, Pascal’s son, ran a studio in Cairo in which he sold pictures by Réchar, Zangaki, and Lekgian as his own (ibid., 275). Aqil Samancı took over the Istanbul studio of Guillaume freres and during the 1922 crisis moved to Athens, taking the negatives with him (ibid., 306). Nikolai Andriomenos took over Cosmi Sebah’s studio in 1879 (ibid., 307); Dimitri Michalilides may have taken over the negatives from Kargopoulos’ Edirne studio (ibid., 322). 92 – These were signalled in travel guides. For example, Murray’s 1873 Handbook for Travellers in Egypt describes the Cairene bookshop of J. Robertson & Co.: ‘Some very excellent photographs of Egypt by a Constantinople artist called Sebah may be obtained here’ (Sir John Gardner Wilkinson, A Handbook for Travellers in Egypt, 4th edn, London: John Murray 1873, 118).
93 – Prominent publishers in Europe and the Near East advertised mail order from the 1860s onwards, especially for series and large orders. For an example of an early traveller’s album consisting of photographs purchased in 1852–53, see Malgorzata Maria Grabcewska, ‘Adam and Katarzyna Potocki’s Photograph Album of the Near East’, History of Photography, 382 (May 2014), 173–86. Later, photographs also circulated through reproductions in the illustrated press and through postcards (Eldem, ‘Powerful Images’, in Camera Ottomana; see also the sections ‘Orientalist Reality’ and ‘Personalized Photo Cards’ in ibid., 228 and 232). The different religions and nationalities of the Empire in the past; to erase the essential differences that designated non-Muslims to the contempt of fanatics […] ; and to allow […] Greeks, Armenians, Latins and foreigners to be called effendi, bey, pacha, etc’. Yet the differentiation of costume nevertheless enables the image of a unified empire: ‘Costume manifests the rational definition of the beautiful and the good, which is, as everyone knows, variety in unity.’ As the rhetoric suggests, it thus fulfils the ideological pretensions of the empire, maintaining unity within the diversity of its peoples. The bringing together of different costumes reflects an ideal of ethnic pluralism which the organisers of the Ottoman installation at the exhibition wished to project. The book itself is structured like a ‘tour’ (‘voyage’) of the empire’s territory, starting with Constantinople, continuing through the European provinces, returning to the Asian littoral and proceeding to Africa. Although each plate features costumes from a single region, it freely mixes nationalities, religions, classes, and genders in one image, creating a visual pluralism within the identitarian context of a costume book (figures 24, 25).

The status of costume evoked by a costume book or costume studies as a marker of identity, belonging, and insertion into tradition is particularly undermined by the theatrical use of costume in photographic portraiture as something which could be adopted and exchanged at will. This ambiguity makes it difficult to interpret not only pictures of individuals in costume, but also the many family portraits which mix traditional local and modern western dress, top-hats with fustanellas. Do these reflect a changing society, in which an older generation clings to traditional dress while a younger one assumes western clothes, or is the situation more complex than that? Only the contexts and circumstances of each portrait will provide an answer, but in every case the question must be asked. The idea of a Mediterranean of fixed identities is belied by practices of photographic portraiture which privileged a common, shared repertoire of forms and modes of self-presentation, and thus promoted a common, shared experience, allowing people of different groups to circulate outside their habitual identities. In addition to photographers, photographs themselves circulated around the Mediterranean. Little is known of this, because the uncertain and sometimes haphazard nature of photographic collections makes tracking the movement of photographs difficult. But it certainly happened; photographs, especially cartes de visite, were exceptionally portable. Photographers who established branches of their businesses in other cities sent photographs to those branches; some exchanged negatives and photographs among themselves; others took over negatives and reused them, often signing them with their own names; bookshops, stationers, and even hotels sold works by photographers from elsewhere. And travellers themselves moved photographs from place to place. Albums were for sale, and people could insert photographs which they acquired anywhere or even by mail.

One such album in the Benaki Museum in Athens is unusual for being inscribed with a name, place, and date: ‘Alexander C. Evangelides. Alexandriâ 29th December 1864’ (figure 28). This information enables us to ascertain the owner’s identity and to follow his movements in the Mediterranean and across the Atlantic. Evangelides was a Greek, the son of Christodoulos (‘Christos’) Evangelides who, himself an Ottoman subject originally from Thessaloniki, had as a boy fled the fighting in his native town and taken refuge in Smyrna. There, in 1828, Christos had been adopted by some American Philhellenes who were delivering aid to the Greeks and who subsequently took him to New York. They enrolled him in the Mount Pleasant Classical Institute in Amherst, Massachusetts, and then, under the patronage of the influential New York banker Samuel Ward, he entered Columbia College from which he graduated in 1836. In New York Christos moved in the circle of prominent Philhellenes and later Abolitionists such as William Cullen Bryant and Ward’s daughter, the poetess Julia Ward Howe. In 1837, he returned to Greece and settled in Hermoupolis (Syros), a
thriving port, where he opened a lyceum and married; his eldest son Alexander, the future owner of the photographic album, was born in Athens in 1847.\(^94\)

Little is known of Alexander’s early life in Greece, but by 1863 he was living in Alexandria, Egypt. From Alexandria he wrote a letter on 2 March 1863 to *Harper’s Weekly* stating his enthusiasm for the Union cause in the American Civil War and his admiration of the founding fathers and democratic principles, which may account for several of the photographs in the album, as we shall see.\(^95\) In late 1866 or early 1867 he went to the USA, where he passed his consular examination, began work in the New York Customs House, and then set out for Alexandria via Paris with the promise of a vice consulship. Having fallen out with the consul, G. M. Butler, he left Alexandria and the foreign service in 1871 and settled in the USA where he worked for the Civil Service Commission in Brooklyn, and in the late 1880s was chief clerk in the bureau of construction in the Navy Yard. He became a journalist for the Brooklyn *Eagle* and died in Brooklyn in 1905.

The Benaki album is printed in German ('Photographie-Album') and Evangelides’s handwritten inscription is in English (figure 28). The list of portraits at the start (figures 29, 30), still in his hand but more regular, is written in a kind of pidgin based on French – ‘Roi de Suède’, ‘Empereur d’Autriche’, ‘Le Pape’ – but with obvious errors such as ‘Chatobrian’ for ‘Chateaubriand’, ‘Jeanne d’Albert’ for ‘Jeanne d’Albret’, and ‘Empératrice’ for ‘Impératrice’ (by association with ‘Empereur’). There are hybrid forms mixing English and French such as ‘Colombus’, ‘Roi de Portuguese’, ‘Prince of Walles’ (cf. French ‘Galles’), and ‘Empereur de China’; there is also the linguistically unidentifiable ‘Gortscof’ for ‘Gortchakov’.\(^96\) Evangelides’s obituary states that he was a fluent linguist and much sought after as a translator, and these mixed forms and minor contaminations indeed suggest someone who knew multiple languages; at his father’s school in Hermoupolis he would have had to learn English, French, and Italian in addition to his native Greek.\(^97\)


\(^96\) – I have found ‘Gortscof’ in an Italian book from 1908 (Giovanni Amadori-Virgili, *La questione rumeliota e la politica italiana*, Bitonto, N. Garofalo); nineteenth-century French usually uses ‘Gortskoff’.

\(^97\) – Gregoriadis publishes the curriculum (‘The Greek Boy’, 619–20).
Figure 29. Photograph album, first page of index, 1864–65. © Benaki Museum, Athens, Photographic Archive, Λεύκωμα 2, Κ47.

Figure 30. Photograph album, pages 2 and 3 of index, 1864–65. © Benaki Museum, Athens, Photographic Archive, Λεύκωμα 2, Κ47.
The album originally included forty-seven cartes de visite \(^98\) historical figures such as those he explicitly admired (for example, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin), writers and other figures from the arts past and present (Boccacio, Shakespeare, Bellini, Adelaide Ristori and, unsurprisingly, given his political sympathies, Byron and Victor Hugo), contemporary political figures, including some prominent republicans and reformers (Thiers, Vittorio Emmanuelne, Garibaldi, the Hungarian Kossuth, Fuad Pasha), and heads of state from Europe and the Ottoman empire (Queen Victoria, the emperors and empresses of France, Russia [or Prussia] and Austria, the kings of Spain, Portugal, Sweden, and Denmark, the prince and princess of Wales, Sultan Abdulaziz). As usual with such photographs, most have a pencil inscription on the back with the name or title of the sitter and a catalogue or series number; there are occasional other handwritten annotations, such as Shakespeare’s name in Greek (Σακξπίρη). The photographs of historical figures and even of some contemporary ones were done after prints, by mainly French firms (Nadar, Mayer & Pierson, Neurdein & Paris, Charlet & Jacotin), with one Venetian (Cartoleria Paggi). There are two photographs by Greeks: Andreas Vlachakis, who practised in Crete in the mid 1860s and then on Syros from 1868, and A. G. Anastasakis who was active on Hydra from 1862 to 1870.

The complex mechanisms by which French, Italian, and Greek photographs ended up in a German album belonging to a Greek in Alexandria in 1864 have yet to be fully worked out – did Evangelides obtain the photographs in Alexandria or elsewhere, at this time or another, all at once or gradually? – but we can offer some hypotheses. The last few photographs in the album are not listed in the index and would have been added later: the presence of the Cretan revolutionary leader Michail Korakas by Vlachakis suggests a date during or after the Cretan uprising (1866–69), which Evangelides supported and in which he sought to interest the US government; \(^99\) that of Abraham Lincoln, a date following his assassination; a picture of the US Capitol by an unidentified photographer (from a painting), a date around Evangelides’s departure for the USA in late 1866 or early 1867. The indexed photographs would have been acquired earlier than these added ones from about 1867. They could have been bought after the date of 27 December 1864 inscribed in the album, or before, although not too long before, since most of the photographic firms responsible for the extant ones cluster around that year: Neurdein & Paris, the source of the majority of them, had a short-lived partnership in 1864 at 8, rue des Filles Saint Thomas, Paris, near the Bourse (the address printed on the backings here), and Jules Deplanque was established at 40 rue Beaubourg in the same year. \(^100\) These dates make it likely that at least some of the pictures were bought in 1864–65 in Alexandria, which would thus have had a wide selection on offer from major European houses. \(^101\) The added ones are more difficult to situate: the portrait of Korakas by Vlachakis may have been acquired in (or from) Herakleion, where the photographer was located in the mid 1860s, or on (or from) Syros, where he moved in 1868, and where Alexander had family. It is impossible to know whether Alexander bought the photograph of the US Capitol in Alexandria before his departure for the USA, somewhere along his journey, or upon arrival in the country. The woman in the portrait by Anastasakis is not an historical figure and is probably a family member or friend, in which case it would have been either acquired on Hydra by Evangelides, sent to him, or transported by someone else and given to him.

Other albums contain pictures by photographers from across the Mediterranean: one, again in the Benaki, features portraits (and some views) by several photographers from Corfu (Bartolomeo Borri, Fratelli Marinelli, E. J. Müller, N. Jameson), in addition to Smyrna (Rubellini), Athens (Margarites, Moraites), Port Said (Grigorios Saridakis), Marseilles (D. May), Alexandria (L. Anagnostis), and Constantinople (Mathieu [Mateos] Papazian). \(^102\) While much work needs to be done on the constitution of such albums, they nonetheless

\(^98\) – Twenty-five of the original forty-seven remain; twenty-two are missing, and five others were added later. In this tally, I am tentatively counting the emperor and empress of ’Russia’ in the index as a mistake for ‘Prussia’, since Wilhelm I of Prussia is represented in the album but not listed, whereas there are no photographs of Alexander II of Russia and his wife Maria Federovna. I have not been able to identify one of the original portraits (of a woman). The pictures are now out of order relative to the original list. The album remained in the possession of the family until 2005 when it was given to the Benaki.

\(^99\) – Mr. Alexander C. Evangelides, of Greece, is now in Washington on business connected with the Cretan movements now progressing’ (Augusta, GA, _The Daily Constitutionalist_ [9 February 1867], 1).


\(^101\) – Oztuncay notes the high number of sales of royal portrait photographs, especially of English, French, and German royalty, in this period (‘The Origins and Development of Photography in Istanbul’, in _Camera Ottomanum_, 92).

\(^102\) – Benaki Museum 19th K36. The photographs are datable largely to the 1870s.
provide a rare record of, and a potentially rich source of information on, the photographic field in the nineteenth-century Mediterranean. Their mixed character, bringing together photographers of diverse origin practising in different places, photographs produced in one place and made available in others, mass-produced images sold across the region (and beyond) alongside more personal ones meant for family and friends, bears witness to the contacts and networks of communication which defined the Mediterranean historically.

The features of early photography discussed here suggest the special role that photography can play in advancing our understanding of the Mediterranean in this period. The spatial mobility, social circulation, and ethnic and linguistic diversity evident in photographic practice may suggest ways in which the technologies, systems, spaces, and institutions of modernisation were accommodated in, and to, the region, as their ‘homogenising’ tendencies confronted the mixed character of Mediterranean societies, and modernity’s ‘global’ phenomena were calibrated to the heterogeneity and variety of everyday life. Photography thus offers an important – and instructive – example of the experience of modernisation in the nineteenth-century Mediterranean.