



I.B. TAURIS

JERUSALEM IN WORLD WAR I

The Palestine Diary of
a European Diplomat

Conde de
Ballobar

Edited by
Eduardo Manzano Moreno
and Roberto Mazza

Antonio de la Cierva y Lewita – Conde de Ballobar and Duque de Terranova – was born in Vienna in 1885 where his father was serving as Spanish military attaché. In 1911 Ballobar entered the Spanish consular service and in May 1913 Ballobar was appointed consul in Jerusalem. In 1920 he married Rafaela Osorio de Moscoso and the year after Ballobar resigned his commission as consul and moved back to Spain where he served the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with different assignments. Between 1949 and 1952 he served again as consul in Jerusalem and until 1955 as director of the Obra Pia. Ballobar died in Madrid in 1971 aged 86.

Eduardo Manzano Moreno is Research Professor at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) and Director of its Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales (CCHS). His research has concentrated on the history of Muslim Spain and the political implications of historical memory. While studying at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, he came across references which led him to identify, locate and publish in Spanish the Diaries of Conde de Ballobar. His recent publications include, 'The Iberian Peninsula and North Africa', in *The New Cambridge History of Islam; Epocas Medievales* and *La gestión de la Memoria*.

Roberto Mazza is Assistant Professor in the Department of History, Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL. He is also Research Associate in the Department of History at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.

‘[This is a] fascinating narrative of daily life in Jerusalem during the Great War as observed by the Spanish consul Ballobar – one of the few European diplomats who remained in the embattled city during the war. Roberto Mazza’s erudite introduction – based largely on the underutilized Spanish and Italian archives – contextualizes the diary within the debate about the nature of Ottoman rule of Palestine at the turn of the century. Of particular importance, and originality, is the discussion about the diarist’s close relationship with the controversial figure of Cemal Pasha, the Military Governor of Syria, and a leading figure of the Young Turks.’ – **Dr. Salim Tamari, Director of the Institute for Palestine Studies, Editor of the Jerusalem Quarterly, Professor of Sociology at Birzeit University.**

‘With this excellent translation of the Spanish consul Conde de Ballobar’s diary, another invaluable historical record is added to our growing knowledge of the history of Jerusalem and its communities during the years of World War I. The diary offers a vivid and lively description of the city and enriches our understanding of the complex reality of this period, with the different agents acting within it: its residents from the various religious and national groups, the representatives of foreign powers as well as the Ottoman authorities. This translation will surely be used as a source for future studies of the city of Jerusalem during the fascinating times of World War I and the change of regimes.’ – **Dr. Abigail Jacobson, author of From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem Between Ottoman and British Rule.**

‘The diary of the Spanish consul in Jerusalem, Conde de Ballobar, is a treasure for historians of World War I in Palestine. [Until now] it was a hidden treasure. This translation of the diary into English presents this treasure to the astonished public. From now on, this diary will be an indispensable tool for those who try to really understand the situation in this decisive period almost one hundred years ago.’ – **Dr. Norbert Schwake, author of Deutsche Soldatengräber in Israel.**

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THE PALESTINE DIARY OF A
EUROPEAN DIPLOMAT

CONDE DE BALLOBAR

Edited by

EDUARDO MANZANO MORENO

and

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with an introduction and notes by

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To my Parents: Paolo and Carla

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Designed and edited by George Adam Smith and prepared under the direction of J.G. Bartholomew. London, Hodder and Stoughton [Public domain]

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACTS	Archivio Custodia di Terra Santa
AMAE	Archivo Ministerio des Asuntos Exteriores
ASMAE	Archivio Storico Ministero degli Affari Esteri
ASV	Archivio Segreto Vaticano
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
MAE	Ministère des Affaires Étrangères
NARA	National Archives and Record Administration
TNA	The National Archives

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I began researching the life of Antonio de la Cierva, Conde de Ballobar, almost by accident. When I was working on my PhD I came across the diary of the Spanish consul, and it came to be one of my most important sources in attempting to discuss Jerusalem in the period of the First World War. I then realized that, as the diary was in Spanish, this source was likely inaccessible to many working on Middle Eastern or transnational history. When presenting at conferences and talks, discussing Ballobar, his views of Jerusalem and its residents through his recollection of social events such as dinners, parties and even pool games, I was often pushed to pursue the translation of the diary.

Reaching the end of this work of translation and contextualization, I am indebted to many people and institutions. First and foremost I am indebted to Professor Eduardo Manzano Moreno, the editor of the Spanish edition of the diary. We first met in 2004 when I was researching the Spanish archives looking for evidence supporting the entries of the diary, and I was really happy to get more information about the personal side of the consul. His edition of the diary has been a useful source for my previous work and an inspiration for the English edition of the diary. Similarly I must thank the family of the Conde de Ballobar. Not only did they allow me to translate the diary but also provided me with more personal information and invaluable pictures: Their kindness is inestimable.

In the summer of 2009 I left London for the unknown prairies of the American Midwest, moving from SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) to Western Illinois. Here, the project of the translation rapidly became a reality when I met Professor Colleen Combs. She had been Professor of Spanish language and literature at Western Illinois University, and she was about to retire when I asked her to translate the diary. She immediately loved the idea: One last goal to accomplish before leaving academia. I must say that she did an excellent job: Considering the way in which Ballobar structured his entries, and the massive use of jargon, it would have been very easy to miss what the consul wished to convey. It has been a pleasure working with her, and I hope Colleen and her husband enjoy their deserved retirement.

I would like to thank my friends and colleagues who read the diary in part or in full and offered valuable advice and were willing to share their

sources and knowledge with me. In particular I must thank Abigail Jacobson, Issam Nassar, Norbert Schwake and Vivian Ibrahim. On several occasions I presented and published papers relating to Ballobar, and I want to thank everyone who provided useful feedback and contributed to ameliorating my research and writing. In particular I would like to thank Neli-da Fuccaro at SOAS and all my colleagues in the History Department at WIU and at SOAS. I am also grateful to the staff of the Archives of the Spanish Foreign Office in Madrid, the Italian Foreign Office in Rome, the Archives in London and in particular the staff of the Vatican Archives and of the Archives of the Custody of the Holy Land and Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem: I am really grateful to Father Narcyz Klimas and Sister Marija Sijanec.

I would like also to express my gratitude and feelings of friendship with the people of the Kenyon Institute in Jerusalem, as most of the diary was edited while there working on my next project of research. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Joanna and Victoria of I.B.Tauris for their constant support and to Cypriano Stephenson for his impeccable editing.

Finally, my greatest thanks go to Monica, my parents and my friends: Without them this book would not have seen the light of day in such a short amount of time.

PREFACE

The current edition of the diary is based on the publication of the original manuscript by Professor Eduardo Manzano Moreno in 1996. The original was written by Antonio de la Cierva y Lewita and is composed of six books.¹ After perusing the manuscript, I decided to adopt the version edited by Manzano Moreno, omitting irrelevant descriptions and very personal issues; missing parts are identifiable by an ellipsis (...). Some modifications have been made to make the English text more readable. In the introduction, I have used the modern Turkish alphabet and spelling for Turkish names, and for Arabic I followed the spelling of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; in the edition of the diary, however, I chose to follow Manzano Moreno's simplified transcription of names and places, adopting a more common spelling (Cemal in Turkish is rendered Djemal in the diary). Ballobar often referred to persons and places without providing much information; I have therefore written entries in the glossary and notes in order to provide more information on names which may be unfamiliar to the reader. Some names and dates were not entirely legible from the manuscript; to keep this edition more scientifically correct I tried to find the correct names and dates, but where this was not possible it has been recorded in the notes. I have anglicized nearly all places' names, and as mentioned above I tried to spell correctly most of the names mentioned in the diary; nevertheless I had been able to make corrections only when I was able to find sources: To this extent I benefited by the precious suggestions of Dr. Norbert Schwake. I added brief comments in the text always between squared parentheses [...] in order to give a full name or the exact geographical location of less known places.

It is difficult to know whether the Spanish diplomat planned to publish the diary at some stage in his life, but I suspect it was written more as a companion to record events and impressions of war-time Jerusalem and partly to overcome his immense sense of isolation and distance from Madrid. The language is colloquial, though emotions ranging from anger to excitement are well articulated and very clear. Despite the clear subjectivity of the diary, Ballobar changed his attitudes and opinions of people and philosophies throughout his diary, making the diary a genuinely interesting historical source. Unlike some of his contemporaries, such as T.E. Lawrence and Ronald Storrs, Ballobar never had time to edit his own work,

barring some annotations in the margins of the original manuscript itself. Ballobar was not interested in claiming to provide a unique perspective of Jerusalem and Palestine during the crucial age when the entire Middle East was re-designed by the winners of the First World War. He was merely recording his own thoughts for his own purposes.

One question, at least in my mind, remains unanswered throughout the diary: How did Ballobar develop his friendship with Cemal Paşa, and was it an authentic one, as it seems from the diary? In the unfolding of the diary it is clear the two men developed something more than a friendship of necessity; it was more than a 'simple acquaintance.' Nevertheless, as much as Cemal is mentioned so many times before the arrival of the British, he vanished from the diary after December 1917.² Perhaps Ballobar was concerned that his friendship with the Ottoman Paşa could become not only an obstacle to his career, but a threat to his life. The mystery remains, as there are no sources that have yet shed light on this relationship.

Ballobar's writings convey how deeply he suffered in Jerusalem, particularly due to a feeling of complete isolation; much of what Ballobar wrote expresses the challenges he faced and how he dealt with them. The diary can be understood also as confidant, a best friend in his isolation. Ballobar processed his experiences, difficulties and relationships, writing his understanding of these; at the same time he provided the reader with a vivid perspective of Jerusalem, Palestine and to an extent international politics from the point of view of a young Spanish man, resettled in the Ottoman Empire. The particular circumstances of the war, and the relatively marginal position of Ballobar in Jerusalem, have made the diary an invaluable source in highlighting the particular historical time and geographical space in which the Spanish consul acted as a historical agent whether he was aware of it or not.

INTRODUCTION

His diary [Ballobar's], judging from other samples with which he occasionally favoured me, is, to my regret, not likely to be published *in extenso* during his lifetime.¹

- Ronald Storrs

Antonio de la Cierva y Lewita Conde de Ballobar 'set out the first time for the Holy Land on 26 July 1913 by train.'² The fate of the Ottoman Empire was not yet doomed; however the empire in which the Spanish diplomat came to live was in its final stages of life. Ballobar arrived in Jerusalem in an extremely problematic period for the Ottomans, who were constantly assaulted by internal and external threats. In order to understand the contents of the diary, it is crucial to provide a general context into which the consul was placed. This introduction does not aim to be an exhaustive discussion of the late Ottoman Empire, or to provide a detailed discussion of Palestine and Jerusalem at the beginning of the twentieth century. The reader will be provided with a general overview of the late Ottoman era, particularly from the diplomatic point of view, and Ottoman entry into the First World War. Looking specifically at Palestine, late Ottoman Jerusalem, as well as the Spanish consular mission in the city and the region, will be under scrutiny to provide the historical context in which Ballobar came to act as an historical agent. Relying, then, on a variety of primary sources, I will provide a short biography of Ballobar, as well as a discussion of some of the major issues he had to deal with while staying in Jerusalem: The Custody of the Holy Land, the Zionist question and the living conditions of the city during the war. In conclusion a paragraph will be dedicated to the discussion of war-time Jerusalem as portrayed in other diaries and memoirs, in order to underline the relevance of Ballobar in the redefinition of the socio-political space of the city during a contested and often neglected historical period. To the non-scholarly reader this could be an interesting story; however, this publication also aims to provide a new historical source for scholars focusing on the late Ottoman history of Palestine. As such, before proceeding into the diary, I will briefly discuss sources available for further study.

Ballobar, as an historical agent, quickly disappeared from the stage of British-ruled Palestine, but for a short while he was both a witness and an

active actor in the context of war-time Palestine and Jerusalem. Not much has been written about him; in fact, apart from the publication of his diary in 1996, and a number of publications in which he only tangentially appears – often misspelled – he clearly never stood center stage in professional historical research. Besides material available in the Spanish Archives of Madrid and Alcalá de Henares, the name of Ballobar appears in a plethora of archives, including the British National Archives and the Archives of the French Foreign Office. It is therefore surprising that Ballobar was not studied *per se*, nor included in works dealing with Palestine, Jerusalem and the holy places. Perhaps Ballobar as historical source and agent has been underestimated, a situation which I aim to rectify with this current edition of the diary.

The Eastern Question and the late Ottoman era

Without getting into deep historiographical debates such as the legacy of Muhammad ‘Ali in Egypt and the paradigms of modernity and decline in the Ottoman Empire, it is important to understand the wider context into which Ballobar came to operate as an historical agent in the second decade of the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire, in Western eyes, was often referred to as the ‘Sick Man of Europe.’ Many scholars have argued that the process of disintegration of the Ottoman Empire began earlier, in the eighteenth century, with the signing of two treaties which marked a dramatic shift in Ottoman history. In 1699 the Ottomans signed the Treaty of Karlowitz with Austria, ceding Hungary to the Hapsburgs; in 1774 the Ottoman-Russian war, which had been launched by the Ottomans in 1768, ended with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, among the most humiliating treaties signed by the Empire.³ Not only did the Russians emerge as the main enemy of the Ottomans, but they also advocated the right of protection over the Greek Orthodox Church throughout Ottoman territories, although this was more an interpretation of the treaty rather than a proper given right.⁴ Thereafter, it was clear to the European powers that Ottoman military superiority was over and that the Empire was in a state of disarray, affected by political and economic disintegration. However, this is not to say the Ottomans were fundamentally incompetent, which was a common view, but it is indeed true that a number of causes, including the inability to face long-term challenges due to lack of human and physical resources, left the Ottomans unable to answer a number of internal and external threats.

The problems caused by the slow decay of the Ottoman Empire have been defined as the ‘Eastern Question.’ Though there is no easy definition of the ‘Eastern Question,’ the major issue centered around Russia and her desire to control the Ottoman’s possessions in Europe and above all the

Straits, which were intended as the Russian gate to the Mediterranean basin. The Eastern Question centered also on the conflict between Ottoman rulers and Christian subjects, particularly in the European lands of the Empire.⁵ Christians in the Balkans strongly advocated reform and autonomy, if not independence, requests the Ottomans resisted. Until 1878 (Treaty of San Stefano and Treaty of Berlin), European powers prevented Russia from reaching those goals, as it could have led to a major European conflict. The crisis of 1875-1878 marked the emergence of the Balkan states as independent entities, at the same time making the Ottoman Empire mainly a Middle Eastern empire, with a Muslim majority. The 'Eastern Crisis' also altered the interests and behavior of the Great Powers: The policy of strict maintenance of the Ottoman Empire was abandoned in favor of the idea that sooner or later the empire would be dismembered and that the European powers could only delay this event to avert open war over the spoils of the empire itself. It must also be said that despite the perceived threat of a major conflict over the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, this potential event never turned into reality as Europeans preferred to adjust their divergent interests through treaties and agreements. A good example of this is provided by the Crimean War (1853-1856), which could have turned into a major European conflict. A dispute over the control of the holy places in Palestine, eventually brought Russia to occupy the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. Ironically, the British and French could not allow Russian interference in Ottoman sovereignty over its subjects and therefore attacked the Russians in Crimea, where a multinational coalition won over Russian forces.⁶ It was only with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 that, finally, the 'Eastern Question' was resolved, at least in the eyes of diplomats and politicians.⁷

Diplomacy and politics were crucial in drawing up the borders of the Ottoman Empire and the new states in the Balkans. The 'Eastern Question,' however, can also be discussed through the lenses of nationalism and economics. The emergence of Muhammad 'Ali as ruler of Egypt in 1805 and Syria beginning in the 1830s, Greek independence in 1830, and the capitulations, were not only the outcome of diplomatic 'games' amongst European chancelleries or the result of internal struggles.⁸ Nationalism and economics went hand-in-hand, producing different results in different areas of the empire. In the Balkans, nationalist fervor spread not just as a result of strong nationalist feeling, but also as a result of class and religious struggles. Christian peasants revolted against their Muslim landlords, asking for a change from subsistence to capitalist agriculture; similarly, Christian merchants increased their trade with Europe and they lobbied the Ottoman government, asking for more freedom and less taxes.⁹ Rebellions eventually took on a nationalist character, though we should

not underestimate European involvement in these events. Less noted is the fact that many rebellions were against an expanding Ottoman state that, from the early nineteenth century, was engaged in the re-establishment of central power through economic and administrative reforms.¹⁰

The economic aspect of the 'Eastern Question' was represented by the capitulations, whose abolition Ballobar witnessed in 1914. The capitulations were bilateral treaties between sovereign states, but also unilateral concessions granted to groups of merchants which, in the Ottoman Empire, were first signed in 1536 with an agreement between the Sultan and the king of France, Francis I.¹¹ Known in Turkish as *abdnâme* or *imtiyazat*, the capitulations had precursors in the early Muslim tradition to the Fatimid and Mamluk governments.¹² The first capitulations were mainly commercial agreements which allowed French citizens the right of residence and trade in the Ottoman Empire, allowing them to enjoy rights of extra-territorial jurisdiction in the Empire.¹³

After the French signed capitulatory treaties, other European countries followed suit. In the sixteenth century, the Ottomans granted England and Holland capitulatory rights; later, in the eighteenth century, capitulations were also granted to Austria, Sweden and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.¹⁴ Initially, the capitulatory regime favored the Ottomans, but this became increasingly disadvantageous as it was exploited by the European powers. Capitulations originally granted the Ottomans an opportunity to share the benefits of world trade, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with Florence, Genoa, Venice, Netherlands, France and England.¹⁵ Meanwhile, they allowed European countries to maintain consular posts in Ottoman territories, but the same was not granted to the Ottomans who started to establish representatives in Europe only at the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁶ The capitulations became one of the most important instruments of economic and political penetration in the empire. Foreigners were granted a special status which eventually created social, political and economic divisions between Ottoman subjects and foreign residents. These divisions were particularly felt in Palestine, where the capitulations had a visible impact on the local indigenous population starting with the large presence of consulates whose primary purpose was to protect and promote their subjects' interests.

The Ottoman Empire lost its financial independence in 1881 when, following the unilateral decision on the part of the Ottoman government in 1875 to default on interest payments, the Decree of Muharram established the Public Debt Administration. This institution was composed of representatives of various creditors, mainly European governments and financial institutions, charged with collecting a variety of Ottoman revenues in

order to pay the interest on the debts. As payments to reduce the debts were given priority, the Ottoman budget was largely reduced, causing a strong negative reaction amongst Ottoman subjects.¹⁷

Late Ottoman Jerusalem

Literature produced until a few years ago in relation to Ottoman Jerusalem has often portrayed the development of modernity in the city as the combination of European encroachment, Zionist immigration and British rule since 1918. I have argued elsewhere that this is a very limited perspective which does not take into account the internal dynamics within the city.¹⁸ The diary of Ballobar is clearly affected by a strong disapproval of the Ottoman regime, but at the same time, he (perhaps unconsciously) provides the reader with evidence of a genuine autochthonous development, even in times of war.

Late Ottoman Jerusalem was part of the *beylerbeylik* (region) of Damascus, which included Palestine, and it was assimilated into the administrative structure of the empire soon after the conquest of *Bilad al-Sham* (Greater Syria) in 1517. The Ottomans, however, established a form of indirect rule, relying on local notables whose importance continued until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.¹⁹ The *beylerbeylik* of Damascus was composed of fifteen *sancaks*, a smaller administrative unit.²⁰ The *Sancak-i Kudüs-i Şerif* (Province of Jerusalem) was divided into a number of *nahiyes* (sub-districts) whose boundaries changed during Ottoman times.²¹ Until the beginning of the nineteenth century Jerusalem was a city with no particular economic or strategic value for the empire; nevertheless, with the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in 1798, the question of the Holy Land and the holy places was revived. French rule was short lived, but the legacy of Napoleon was picked up by Muhammad ‘Ali who eventually became the ruler of Egypt in 1805.²² In 1831, Muhammad ‘Ali and his son Ibrahim invaded *Bilad al-Sham*, which became part of Egypt, an event which was a turning point in the history of modern Jerusalem.

The city experienced two periods of administrative, political, social and economic change in the nineteenth century: First under the rule of Ibrahim Paşa, and then as a consequence of the *Tanzimat* reforms implemented by the Ottomans once they re-captured the city.²³ Muhammad ‘Ali’s dynasty in Jerusalem lasted only a decade (1831-1840), but its effects should not be underestimated; in fact, under Ibrahim Paşa’s rulership, the local governors fell under the check of a council, the *meclis*, composed mainly of the Muslim elite, but it also included some of the most influential Christian and Jewish members of the community. Elements of representation and of checks and balances were introduced, while several consulates were opened: The British did so in 1838, and other European

countries follow suit. European Powers promoted business, protected travelers, and supported the construction of hospitals and hospices for visitors and locals alike: The French, for instance, opened three hospices between 1851 and 1889.²⁴ The activism of the European powers reinvigorated pilgrimage and tourism. Moreover, Jerusalem's increased importance on the international stage coincided with the Crimean War (1854-1856), which brought the issue of control of the holy places to the forefront of intra-European politics. With the Ottoman restoration in 1841, the Ottomans established a municipality in Jerusalem which eventually became the most important local administrative body of the city.²⁵ The creation of this institution was part of a larger project of modernization which entailed the transformation of the traditional Ottoman administrative machine through the adoption of new legal and administrative tools.

The administrative organization of Palestine and Jerusalem was very much the by-product of the *Tanzimat* reforms; transformations were not carried out overnight, and should be understood in the larger context of reorganization of the empire itself. In the summer of 1872 the *sancak* of Jerusalem was detached from the *vilayet* of Syria and made independent, under the direct control of Istanbul.²⁶ The *sancak* (or *mutasarrıfluk*) of Jerusalem was ruled by a *Mutasarrıf* (governor). The *Mutasarrıf* of Jerusalem, after the *sancak* was detached from the *vilayet* of Syria, became unique amongst the other governors throughout the Ottoman Empire, as he was directly appointed and therefore responsible to the central administration in Istanbul rather than the *Vali* of Syria.²⁷ In the late nineteenth century, during the reign of Abdülhamid II, governors were appointed among the palace secretaries of the Sultan and, later, at the beginning of the twentieth century, by the Young Turks among Turkish officials.²⁸ The *Mutasarrıfluk* was the largest and most important administrative unit of Ottoman Jerusalem, and the governor was the most important Ottoman official Ballobar dealt with during the war barring Cemal Paşa.

Other administrative units were present in Jerusalem, such as the *Belediye* (municipality) - one of the first to be established in the Ottoman Empire - but during the war the municipality lost importance due to the effects of the military mobilization.²⁹ Jerusalem's administrative structure comprised three councils which, by the time of mobilization in August 1914, were frozen and their activities suspended. The *Meclis-i Belediye* (Municipal Council) was responsible for providing services: Cleanliness of the town and the streets; maintenance of roads and water systems; supervision of public health, cafés and restaurants; commercial activities and so forth.³⁰ The municipality also controlled a local police force which supervised urban communities and the sanitation of the city. The *Meclis-i Ummi*, the general council of the *Vilayet*, met once a year for a period of no

more than forty days. The general council had the power to review the draft budget for the province, as well as checking and supervising projects. The last council in Jerusalem was the *Meclis-i Idare*, the administrative council of the Jerusalem district, which was set up as a result of the issue of the *Vilayet* Law of 1864. The main purpose of the council was to deliberate on public works, police, land registry, agriculture, finance and tax collection.³¹

Besides the administrative structure controlled by the Ottomans, with the cooperation of local elites, a less formal structure existed, composed of local groups possessing, to different degrees, social and political influence.³² These groups, who formed the backbone of local elites, were a class of notables who functioned as intermediaries between the population and the Ottoman administration. These *a'yan* (notables), whose political profile was rather complex, derived their power from economic wealth and from their religious legitimacy. It is with these members of Jerusalem's elites that Ballobar dealt with, providing a variety of opinions about them and an interesting perspective.

Attempts on the part of the Ottomans to develop a genuine and locally-based administrative structure were often challenged by Europeans. One of the major issues in late Ottoman Jerusalem, as well as in the whole of the Ottoman Empire, was the capitulatory regime discussed earlier. From the mid-nineteenth century, as the Europeans renewed their interest in the Holy Land, the British government opened the first consulate in Jerusalem during the rule of Muhammad 'Ali. It was the beginning of the arrival of a considerable number of European and American citizens who earlier attempted, without major success, to settle in Palestine and particularly in Jaffa. They were not simply Christian pilgrims, they planned to settle in the city and start to work as physicians, teachers and businessmen.³³ Under the protection of the capitulations and the foreign consulates, educational and health institutions were built by European entrepreneurs and governments. The capitulations granted Europeans substantial reductions in tax and customs duties and extraterritoriality rights.³⁴

Capitulations were considered by locals as a restrictive measure and an interference with foreigners in several areas, while Ballobar believed them to be necessary to perform his duties. By late 1914, Jerusalem services like post offices and higher education were in the hands of the Europeans, who promoted their own interests. In the summer of that year the Ottoman government used the outbreak of the war in Europe to abolish the capitulatory system throughout the empire. In September, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a note to the foreign embassies of Istanbul, stating that the capitulations would be abolished starting October 1; meanwhile in Jerusalem, Macid Şevket, the Governor of the city, wrote to the foreign

consuls informing them of the closure of the foreign post offices which was tantamount to the abolition of the most visible capitulatory privileges.³⁵

The imperial order which abolished the capitulations was read to the people of Jerusalem in an official ceremony held in the garden of the municipality. After the Governor read the document, Said al-Husayni, a local member of the Ottoman parliament, delivered a speech on the value of this measure, but also asked the crowd to show respect for the foreigners.³⁶ As elsewhere in the empire the abrogation of the capitulations was hailed as the beginning of a new era. Religious orders, foreign clergy and laity had to deal with this new situation without relying on any foreign help.³⁷ Foreign citizens were threatened with expulsion (and many indeed were), and Jews began a movement of Ottomanization, the adoption of Ottoman citizenship in order to avoid deportation.³⁸ Ballobar and Glazebrook, the American consul, remained, while all the other consuls left. Among Christians panic spread rapidly as demonstrations against the Europeans started to be staged throughout the city, but, as Ballobar noted, in Jerusalem things did not turn as violent as in other parts of the empire.³⁹

The First World War, the Ottoman Empire and Jerusalem

Ballobar often discussed in his diary the military aspects of the conflict he was witnessing, so it is important to briefly outline the situation on the battlefield and to discuss some events which preceded the war itself. The outbreak of the First World War was not the first incident in which the Ottoman Empire was challenged both internally and externally. In 1908, the Young Turks overthrew the Sultan Abdülhamid II and re-instated the constitution, which had been suspended in 1876. The Empire was then attacked by the Italians in 1911, losing Libya. The following year, the outbreak of the Balkan wars further weakened the position of the Ottoman government.⁴⁰ Finally in 1913, the leadership of the Empire changed when a *coup d'état* staged by the member of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) installed a military dictatorship.⁴¹

In the months preceding the beginning of the war in 1914 the Ottoman Empire was diplomatically isolated. Most of the European governments considered the Ottoman government to be on the brink of a collapse. Prior to 1914, Britain acted as an ally to the Ottoman Empire, primarily to defend the Dardanelles from Russia and protect the imperial route to India. In June of the same year, the Anglo-Turkish convention regarding the Arabian Peninsula granted the Ottomans a little room to recover from the Balkan and Libyan wars.⁴² By the outbreak of the war in August 1914, the British were no longer interested in any alliance with the Ottomans, and British policies towards the Ottoman Empire changed radically.⁴³

Rough plans for the partition of the Ottoman Empire preceded the explosion of the war, and the conflict simply acted as a catalyst for the plans which had been drawn by Great Britain, France and Russia. They envisaged the complete and final downfall of the Ottoman Empire, finally solving the 'Eastern Question'.⁴⁴ It was taken for granted that, as a result of the war, the Ottoman Empire would be dismembered.

Prior to joining the Central Powers, the Ottoman Empire was in a state of ambivalent neutrality towards the warring parties.⁴⁵ This ambivalent neutrality was not meant to last, as the CUP was desperately looking for an ally in Europe. In the words of Erik Zürcher: 'they were prepared to accept any alliance rather than continued isolation.'⁴⁶ Isolation was not an option for the CUP. Slowly, a neutral stance became equally unacceptable for the Entente and for the Central Powers, as territories under Ottoman control were strategic for both alignments.⁴⁷ In the two years preceding the war, German-Ottoman relations were cold. Both the Young Turks and members of the CUP disliked Germany's support of the Hamidian regime.⁴⁸ Things, however, were to change. When the war began, the British government refused to deliver two warships - *Sultan Osman* and *Reşadiye* - commissioned by the Ottomans, which had been financed through a popular subscription. Although this caused a great deal of popular resentment, which was echoed in official circles, Great Britain was still considered the natural ally of the Ottoman Empire by many politicians, such as Cavid, the CUP Minister of Finance.⁴⁹ On July 28 1914, the Minister of War, Enver Paşa, met German ambassador Wangenheim in secret to discuss a defensive alliance with Germany while Cemal Paşa, Minister of the Navy, and well known for his sympathy with the French, continued to favor contacts with France.⁵⁰ In August, ideological, economic and geopolitical factors, and the personal pressure of the Kaiser Wilhelm II himself, brought together the Ottoman and German Empires with a secret agreement signed by the CUP triumvirate in power and German representatives.⁵¹

When Russia entered the war alongside the Entente, the *casus foederis* arose. The CUP, however, delayed the entry of the Ottoman Empire into the conflict for a number of reasons, including the fact that the government was in no condition to fight a war. Logistics was the main problem, as the government could not easily deploy the army through the empire's vast domains. Moreover, Ottoman involvement in war operations was dependent on supplies from their German and Austrian allies.⁵² On September 9, 1914, the Ottoman Empire unilaterally declared the abolition of the capitulations, finally regaining full sovereignty over its subjects. While the European powers involved in the war did not protest, neutral countries forwarded their complaints to the Ottoman government.

At the end of October 1914, Ottoman warships opened fire on a Russian naval base in the Black Sea, but it was only in November that the Ottomans officially entered the war. Nevertheless, the Ottoman army had already been mobilized earlier in August, and was comprised of four army corps whose effectiveness had yet to be tested. Ottoman officials hoped to increase military performance during the war thanks to German support. Palestine came under the military district of Syria, which included two army corps composed of two or three infantry divisions in each, plus one cavalry brigade, three howitzer batteries, a battalion of engineers and a company of telegraphers.⁵³ As soon as the fourth army was established in Damascus, it was sent to the Palestinian front under the direct command of Cemal Paşa.

For their part, since the outbreak of the war in 1914, the British government had focused on Egypt, which had been under British control since 1882. Although the war cabinet advocated the direct annexation of the country; it was instead declared a British protectorate in December 1914. British officials were concerned with the possibility of an attack against the Suez Canal, which was vital for British interests in the region and beyond. In the early stages of the war, Palestine was a secondary issue on the agenda of the British War Office as military operations conducted on the Middle Eastern front were to serve the strategic necessities of the British Empire.

While Britain, France and Russia were discussing the future of the Middle East, on the Ottoman front Cemal Paşa was appointed Governor and Commander in Chief of Syria and Palestine, and would later on become a good friend of Ballobar. He was assisted by the German Chief of Staff, General Friederich Kress von Kressenstein, who played a key role on the Palestinian front. According to Bruce, the Germanization of the Ottoman army led to tensions between the officers of both armies.⁵⁴ These tensions were confirmed in the following years by many observers inside Jerusalem.⁵⁵ A surprise offensive against the Suez Canal was launched from Syria in early 1915 but failed, with heavy losses on the Ottoman-German side. Ottoman victories in Mesopotamia and at Çanakkale (Gallipoli), and the hope that a further attack on the canal would raise an anti-British rebellion in Egypt in the name of Islam, led the German and Ottoman commands to plan a second strike. By the beginning of the summer of 1916 troops were ready, but the British soon discovered the advance through aerial reconnaissance. By mid-August, the British outnumbered the German-Ottoman troops, ending *de facto* their Palestinian campaign.⁵⁶

Palestine and Syria had remained virtually unscathed in relation to the direct conflict between the British and the Ottomans. In 1917, however,

led by General Archibald Murray, commander of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF), the British army moved from a defensive strategy to an offensive one. He twice attempted to take Gaza in the spring of 1917, but both campaigns failed. In London, the Military High Command and Prime Minister David Lloyd George viewed the inability to take Gaza as unacceptable. While the British army was advancing, the Ottoman and German commands established a new military unit called *Yıldırım* (Storm) under the command of General Erich von Falkenhayn.⁵⁷ The purpose was to launch a strike against the British forces in Southern Iraq using guerrilla tactics. Although this new corps was meant to be offensive, it turned out to be a defensive force. In view of the British advance towards Palestine, in 1917 Von Falkenhayn suggested that the *Yıldırım* should be sent to Palestine in order to defend the Gaza-Beersheba line rather than defending an indefensible Baghdad. It was, however, too late.⁵⁸ By November 7, 1917, the Ottoman-German troops were retreating from the Palestinian front, and the path for the British advance towards Jerusalem was opened. In June 1917, General Edmund Allenby assumed command of EEF, with instructions to prepare for an offensive campaign during the autumn and winter. He soon adopted new, and more hazardous, military strategies which allowed the British army to occupy Gaza through Beersheba. Jerusalem was eventually taken from Gaza before Christmas, in fulfillment of Lloyd George's order to make Jerusalem a gift for the nation.⁵⁹

Besides military action, the beginning of hostilities led to a greater deal of planning, and in 1915, Britain agreed to the Russian occupation of Istanbul and the straits while the French government began to claim Syria.⁶⁰ At the same time, Hebert Samuel, president of the local government board,⁶¹ submitted a proposal to the British Foreign Office in order to create a Jewish national home in Palestine. In London, British officials wondered whether the acquisition of new territories in the Middle East would strengthen or weaken the global position of their empire.⁶² As the idea of partition became increasingly prevalent, in 1915 the British government established the De Bunsen committee which made a number of recommendations according to different scenarios that could occur at the end of the war. Regarding Palestine, and particularly Jerusalem, the committee recommended that the city and the holy places be internationalized.⁶³ Jerusalem and Palestine were also mentioned in the Husayn-McMahon correspondence of 1915 and in the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916; however, the position of the city in the future arrangement of the Arab Middle East remained intentionally vague.⁶⁴

It is important to underline the fact that, though not at the center of major battles barring one in late 1917, Palestine and especially the civilian population, served as one of the 'home fronts' of the Ottoman Empire,

and was still very much affected by the war. The presence of Ottoman and German forces contributed to radical changes in the local landscape, as did the sea blockade which had grave consequences such as increasing of the price of basic resources, creating a long-term famine and isolating Palestine from the outside world.⁶⁵

Antonio de la Cierva y Lewita Conde de Ballobar

Antonio de la Cierva y Lewita, later on Conde de Ballobar and Duque de Terranova, was born in Vienna in 1885. His mother was Austrian, of Jewish origin, but had converted to the Catholic faith. His father was a Spanish military attaché to the Spanish embassy in the Austrian capital.⁶⁶ Educated in Zaragoza, in 1911 Ballobar entered the Spanish consular service and was appointed vice-consul to Cuba. In May 1913 Ballobar was appointed consul in Jerusalem; according to his personnel file, he began at the consulate in August 1913, though he then traveled for several months before settling down in Jerusalem, and remained until the end of 1919.⁶⁷ When Ballobar reached Jerusalem his task was limited to the protection of Spanish interests, mainly religious in nature, and to re-establish 'diplomatic' and more friendly relations with the Custody of the Holy Land.⁶⁸ By the time the British occupied Jerusalem in December 1917, he found himself the only consul in the city, in charge of the protection of the interests of all countries involved in the war; Glazebrook remained in the city until the US joined the war against Germany in April 1917. Ballobar became a crucial personality but, as will be shown later, rapidly faded away.

In January 1920, Ballobar took charge of the Spanish consulate in Damascus; however, in November of the same year, he moved to Tangiers where he served for a few months.⁶⁹ In 1920, he married Rafaela Osorio de Moscoso, Duchess of Terranova. On June 24, 1921, Ballobar resigned his commission as consul and moved back to Spain.⁷⁰ Ballobar was commissioned to carry out a report on the Spanish convents and hospital in Palestine in 1925 and then disappeared from the Spanish consular service. Until 1936 he took an extended leave of absence, which is reported in his file as 'excedente voluntario.' According to his family, Ballobar went back to Spain where he took care of the family business; his wife was not eager to raise their five children while traveling around the world. They mostly lived in Botorita, a small village in the outskirts of Zaragoza where Ballobar took care of his agricultural land, *Granja San Luis*.⁷¹ Maria Isabel, Ballobar's daughter, recalled that in Botorita Ballobar grew an olive tree that was taken from the Garden of the Gethsemane.

In August 1936, Ballobar decided to publicly support Francisco Franco and his 'Junta de Defensa Nacional de España' against the left-wing Popular Front, which won the election a few months earlier. Due to some

anti-clerical violence against the Church, which took place after the elections, it is not surprising that the pious Ballobar supported Franco; nevertheless, Ballobar remained a strong supporter of the monarchy, and his support for the new regime was more of a convenience than belief. From August 1936, Ballobar was first appointed to the Diplomatic Cabinet of the 'Junta' and then as Secretary of External Relations for Franco's Foreign Office. During the interwar period, and in the 1940s, Ballobar mainly worked at the Spanish Foreign Office, with a particular interest in the relations with the Holy See.⁷² During this time, Ballobar was offered important positions as consul around the world, including in Canada and the United States, but he did not accept these appointments. Ballobar's wife was not ready to move, and the education of their children was more important. Furthermore, he asked for short leaves of absence, which he alternated with short periods at the Spanish Foreign Office.⁷³ In January 1948 a terrorist attack carried out by the Haganah against the Semiramis Hotel in Jerusalem killed Manuel Allendesalazar, Spanish vice-consul in Jerusalem, who was the brother of Ballobar daughter's husband, José Allendesalazar. I am not sure if there is any connection, but a year later, in May 1949, Ballobar was appointed consul to Jerusalem; this time he accepted the appointment, and he served in Jerusalem until 1952.⁷⁴ He then moved back to Spain where he was appointed Director of the *Obra Pia* until he retired in 1955. Ballobar eventually died in Madrid in 1971, aged 86.⁷⁵

The Custody of the Holy Land

Central to Ballobar's mission in Jerusalem was the protection and support of the Custody of the Holy Land and, in particular, its Spanish clergy and properties. Among the Christian institutions of Jerusalem, *Custodia Terrae Sanctae* (Custody of the Holy Land) had some of the deepest roots in the religious-social fabric of the city at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Custody belongs to the Franciscan order, founded as a Franciscan Province during the thirteenth century by St. Francis of Assisi.⁷⁶ Since its establishment, the highest authority of the Custody, the *Custos*, has always been an Italian subject. Membership of the council, which regulated the life of the Custody, was also based on nationality. In the period under discussion, the Custody was administered by a Discretory composed of the *Custos*, one French vicar, one Spanish procurator and six members: One Italian, one French, one Spanish, one German, and, after 1921, one British and one Arabic-speaking member.⁷⁷ The *Custos* had religious jurisdiction over the Catholics of Palestine, parts of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Cyprus, and Rhodes, which meant a degree of competition occurred with the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. The *Custos*, alongside the Greek Ortho-

dox Patriarch and the Armenian Patriarch, became responsible for the enforcement of the *Status Quo* regarding the holy places.

The Custody had a complex relationship with the European governments. The balance in the ruling council of the Custody was quite fragile, as these governments attempted, through their members, to influence the institution. However, it was the very nature of the Custody, a transnational organization, which had protected its existence throughout the centuries. As an institution ruled by Ottoman law, the Custody was not allowed to own properties such as convents, schools and other buildings. Only individual clergy were allowed to own properties in their personal name, and the decision as to who should be entitled to ownership was taken by the Custody, according to nationality. The international character of the Custody meant that every decision was subject to international scrutiny; during the war, however, the Custody was left somewhat to its own devices, although the Spanish and Austrian consuls did intervene to support the Custody when it felt harassed by Ottoman authorities. During the war, Spain donated at least 60,000 French Francs to the Custody, while the Central Powers, and primarily Austria, supported the organization financially.⁷⁸

When the conflict broke out, the Ottoman Army began to seize buildings and properties of the Custody that had been registered in the name of the clergy of Allied citizenship.⁷⁹ The Vatican, concerned with the future of the Holy Land, urged Cardinal Dolci to explain to the Ottoman authorities that an infringement upon property rights was to be considered an act of defiance against the Vatican State, which claimed ownership of these properties contrary to Ottoman terms.⁸⁰

As it was customary for the *Custos* to keep a diary of events, it is possible to study the Custody throughout the war in a way that other institutions do not enable historians to do so. Although the *Custos* left at the beginning of the hostilities, the diary was maintained by Fr. Eutimio Castellani, President of the Custody, between 1914 and 1918, written in the form of a chronicle, and includes notes updated on a daily basis.⁸¹ Following the Ottoman government's entrance into the war, the Custody found itself isolated internationally; the functions of the Custody were then carried out only in Palestine and Jerusalem. The financial situation of the Custody began to worsen because its main sources of income, such as pilgrimages and agricultural production, were no longer available. Early in September 1914, the Custody reduced the activities of their workshops producing wheat, fabrics and other commodities, dropping the wages of their employees by fifteen percent.⁸² In November of the same year, Ottoman authorities ordered religious congregations scattered around Jerusalem to gather in the city center. The Franciscans hosted the clergymen in