MUSLIM OPPOSITION TO FREEMASONRY

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a. Introduction

Expressed in various ways, opposition to freemasonry manifested itself in certain areas of the Muslim East and the Balkans not long after its introduction there. Verbal and written attacks on freemasonry continued sporadically throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, not unexpectedly focusing on those regions where freemasonry seemed to make headway. This paper will attempt to describe some of the more salient features of opposition to freemasonry in the Muslim East and to analyze the main causes for these hostile attitudes. For better understanding, we shall start with an account of the background of freemasonry in the area discussed; this will be brief, due to limitations of space.

b. The Background

While the literature produced by freemasons, about them and against them, is quite considerable, a comprehensive history of

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freemasonry in Muslim lands has still to be written. The main reason appears to be the reluctance of freemasonic organizations to let others witness their secret rites or to publish materials which might be used against them by their detractors in the Ottoman Empire, and, later, Arab East.

Notwithstanding the paucity of reliable sources, it seems that organized freemasonry was continuously operative in Muslim coun-