In this presentation I argue that in nineteenth-century Ottoman Egypt the symbolic unification between the Ottoman governor (khedive) and the homeland was based on vocabularies of kingship in the Koran and in Arab-Persian-Ottoman traditions. During this process of constructing patriotism by rural men of distinction, the perceived “justice” of the Muslim prince meant the local elite’s participation in state affairs and in rural capitalist enterprises. Based on archival documents, petitions to the ruler by local village notables, and Arabic political poetry and plays, this presentation also introduces the notion of Muslim patriotism as an ideological tool of legitimating power in khedivial Egypt before and during the British occupation.

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