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The limits of going global: The case of "Ottoman Enlightenment(s)"

Marinos Sariyannis [ORCID]

Institute for Mediterranean Studies/Foundation of Research and Technology—Hellas

Correspondence
Marinos Sariyannis, Institute for Mediterranean Studies/Foundation of Research and Technology—Hellas, Rethymno, Greece.
Email: sariyannis@ims.forth.gr

Abstract

The paper seeks to summarize the discussions of the last two decades on the existence of a phenomenon that can be named "Ottoman Enlightenment." It discusses the German debates on Reinhardt Schulze's suggestion of an "Islamic Enlightenment," as well as more recent studies on the emergence of a different view of the nature and the world in Istanbul during the first decades of the 18th century. These debates are analyzed in the context of different definitions of "Enlightenment," as well as of the relations between different ethnolinguistic groups within the Ottoman Empire. The paper emphasizes the axes of a "democratization of knowledge" or the "massive diffusion of individual reasoning as a legitimate source of truth," on the one hand, and the procedure of a "disenchantment of the world" as it is connected with the Enlightenment phenomenon, on the other. It suggests that, whereas we may trace certain parallels of such procedures between the Ottoman and the Western and Central European model, the lack of integration of such ideas in the curriculum of institutional education in the Ottoman Empire might have been the most important obstacle that kept these ideas from being transformed into a real "Ottoman Enlightenment."

1 | INTRODUCTION

It is in the recent decades that the discussions on "global Enlightenment" reached the Ottoman world, at least if with this term, we focus in its Muslim component (the "Enlightenment movement" of the Greek Orthodox world under Ottoman rule, for one thing, has long been the object of research: Liakos, 2004).[1] Despite the significant critical mass of studies on Ottoman science (İhsanoğlu, 1992, 2004; Shefer-Mossensohn, 2015; Küçük, 2020), recently enriched with important studies of Ottoman medicine (Shefer-Mossensohn, 2009), until recently such studies confined themselves to a pattern of cultural transfer (usually beginning with Kâtib Çelebi's mid-17th century translation and encyclopedic projects), lacking the ambition to integrate these developments into a greater narrative. The lack of any self-conscience or, at any rate, of an expressed link with European developments from the part of the Ottoman authors themselves (in sharp contrast with the case of Greek authors) contributed to this situation.

The first appearance of the term "Enlightenment" in an Ottoman context came from specialists of religion, rather than of the history of science, and especially in the Arab provinces. The thesis for an "Islamic Enlightenment" (*islamische Aufklärung*) had been put forth by Reinhardt Schulze in 1990 and became the object of a bitter debate in German historiography that continued throughout the decade (Schulze, 1990, 1996). Schulze began with a criticism of the "paternalistic" European historiography and stressed the need to have the Islamic world integrated in a world history perspective; he maintained that the 18th-century Islamic world had its own indigenous elements of innovation, which were not to be explained as "introduced" from European models. More precisely, Schulze suggested that a tendency for an anthropocentric worldview, an insistence on the individual experience, and a positive re-evaluation of innovation as such emerged in the Muslim legal and mystical literature of this period. This "autochthonous Enlightenment" helped the reception of the European one later, and this whole process was subsequently concealed by the colonial encounter. Criticism of Schulze (most notably by Bernd Radtke), when it did not focus in specific points of his interpretations of Sufi texts and concepts (such as his emphasis on *tanwīr*, literally "enlightenment" or "illumination"), highlighted the lack of connections with economic, social, or political developments, as well as the presence of elements considered innovative by Schulze in earlier Sufi texts (see Peters, 1990; Radtke, 1994, 1996, 2000).[2]

One gets the feeling that the debate (which largely remained within the boundaries of German scholarly circles and did not inspire a wider discussion among Ottomanists) did not focus in the real essence of the matter: what can be defined as "Enlightenment," what changes can we detect in the Islamicate or, perhaps better, the Middle Eastern culture in the "post-classical" Ottoman era, how can these changes be paralleled with European developments, and how can we interpret such parallels. Nevertheless, the term "Enlightenment" continued to be used in various contributions to Ottoman intellectual history of the 17th and 18th centuries. Quite recently, Harun Bekir Küçük has used a more traditional definition of the term to talk of the rise of natural sciences in Ottoman court from the early 18th century onward; he traces Cartesian influences and stresses the importance of Phanariot scholars as channels connecting Ottoman and European science (Küçük, 2012, 2013, 2017, 2020). Like Schulze, relying on almost exclusively Arabic sources, Khaled El-Rouayheb has argued that there is indigenous innovation in Islamic philosophy of the Ottoman period, not only in the creation of new types of dialectical logic and syllogism but also in educational and legal theory (El-Rouayheb, 2015). Somewhat provocatively, Matthew Melvin-Koushki (2018) has recently argued for such innovations in philological and scientific literatures of the Islamic world being features this world shared with Renaissance humanism.[3]

2 | SCIENCE AND SECULARIZATION

I would like to argue that this debate has in fact two sides. One begins from the "classic" interpretation or definition of Enlightenment, as a stage of Max Weber's "disenchantment of the world," identical with the emancipation of science and philosophy from theological principles, and as such connected with the secularization of culture and the

emancipation of the individual. In this context, the study of the Ottoman case should focus on the history of science, on the one hand, and on the emergence of secular or even materialist tendencies in both learned and vernacular thought, on the other.

Concerning the first, the history of science, it is by now well-known that the interaction with European maps and, partly, methodology had led to spectacular progress in Ottoman geographical knowledge (mostly in map-making) already during the 16th century, but especially after the introduction of European sources into Ottoman geography and history through Kâtib Çelebi's encyclopedic project.[4] I already mentioned studies showing that, building upon this progress, from the early 18th century onwards the study of "natural philosophy" in the Ottoman court and the scholarly circles related to it flourished intensively. After all, scientific activity during the "Age of Tulips," as well as the role of Phanariot intellectuals, had already been stressed (Bouchard, 1981; Küçük, 2013). I will not argue that the so-called Neohellenic Enlightenment was nothing but an aspect of a wider, Ottoman one (as Molly Greene tended to argue in her recent book: Greene, 2015, pp. 192–215); this is a position difficult to maintain especially from the 1730s onwards, when the former acquired a "national" overtone and became more and more independent from Phanariot society.[5] Still, Ottoman sciences, as well as other aspects of Ottoman culture, were the object of significant changes at the turn of the century. Whereas the gradual disappearance of the "rational sciences" from the curriculum of Ottoman *medrese*s, lamented in 1640 by Kâtib Çelebi, did not mean the intellectual stagnation and the "triumph of fanaticism" we have been used to associate with the 17th century (El-Rouayheb, 2015),[6] it is in the beginning of the 18th century that the study of natural philosophy experienced a new thrust, insisting on a positive valorization of "innovation" (*bid'at*). It even seems that Ahmed III's Grand Vizier, Damad Ibrahim Pasha, conducted experiments of physics in the palace (Küçük, 2012, p. 172ff.). Küçük stressed the fact that the translations made by Yanyalı Esad Efendi (d. 1731) from Johannes Cottunius' comments on Aristotle's *Physics* introduced the idea that natural philosophy did not concern the knowledge of the future or the essence of things, but rather the movements of natural bodies (Pippidi, 1980, pp. 190–191; Stathe, 1986; Kaya, 1992; Küçük, 2013). And of course, we have to note here that Esad Efendi spoke Greek and had close contacts with Mavrokordatos and other members of Phanariot scholarship (Küçük, 2013; Hagen, 2006, pp. 230–231), whereas the Western European communities in Istanbul were all but isolated in their relations with their Ottoman peers (Coller, 2010). A contemporary of Esad Efendi's, İbrahim Müteferrika, translated and printed scientific treatises in his turn, continuing explicitly Kâtib Çelebi's project: apart from books on history and geography, the fields *par excellence* of his predecessors, Müteferrika also translated in 1732 a work on magnetism, substituting the traditional interpretation through the concept of "unknown causes"[7] with a natural theory supposing the existence of two great magnets underground (thus, this publication seems also to have been the first instance of Cartesian philosophy in the Ottoman Turkish language, as shown again by Küçük). In this vein, Müteferrika specifically praised innovation[8]:

> The ancients always made fine innovations (*ibd'â*). Modern scholars are no more hesitant than the ancients in coming up with new rules and laws by which to organize empires and nations. Writing has helped them preserve their histories and perpetuate their respective orders.

The legitimacy of using infidel and more particularly European knowledge had been established already by Kâtib Çelebi, but from the first decades of the 18th century was expanded further into the sphere of military institutions (Sariyannis, 2019a, pp. 381–431) as well as social life issues: opponents of tobacco had emphasized its "Frankish" origin, and its supporters, such as the sheikh Abdelgani al-Nabulusi (d. 1731), had to maintain that Muslims can benefit from the European experience insofar this does not touch issues of faith (Grehan, 2006, p. 1371; cf. Kermeli, 2014).

At the same time, and mostly through the diffusion of Ibn Khaldun's philosophy and sociology of history (initially by Kâtib Çelebi, then by the great historian Naima in the early 18th century; see now Sariyannis, 2019b), the idea of history as a process regulated by more or less strict laws, rather than by some divine plan, began to spread. Naima's text, especially, played a pivotal role in the diffusion of these ideas through its printing in the 1730s:

Let it be known that the divine custom and God's will have ordained that the situation of every state and community is always settled in a uniform manner; it does not stay perpetually on one path, but instead moves through several periods (from one situation) to a renewed one. The features of one period are different from (those of) another, and the necessities of one stage are unlike those of the preceding one. As for the children of the time [contemporary people], they are in accord with the characteristics of the period in which they live; men of each era are defined according to the circumstances necessary for their era. For it is an innate feature, based on concealed [divine] ordinance, that one conforms and complies to the necessities of the time, that the disposition of the state follows the period, and that it respects the nature of the creatures. Thus, the different periods of a state cannot usually exceed five stages. (İpşirli, 2007, p. 26)

Arguably, this emphasis on historical laws may have contributed to a new thrust, throughout the 18th century, of theological debates on the limits of causality and the role of individual will (Bruckmayr, 2011; Kurz, 2011, pp. 160ff., 193–194; Menchinger, 2016). The dominant idea in Ibn Khaldun's work is that every society has to pass from specific stages of rise and decline: during its Ottoman reception, Kâtib Çelebi and his followers emphasized the consequence that states in different stages also demand different reform policies. The natural result of this argument was that innovation (*bid'at*), a term traditionally negative in Islamic thought, acquired a positive overtone. At the same time, the diffusion of Ibn Khaldun's ideas contributed to a noted decline of Ottoman exceptionalism, a feature previously inherent in Ottoman historical and political thought. In the same context, one may speak of the development of an Ottoman-styled idea of progress, throughout the 18th century, through the use of a traditional concept meaning "reciprocity" or "mutual imitation" (*mukabele bi'l-misl*), in other words, the idea that there is a constant escalation in the competition between the Ottoman Empire and the West, where each side competes copying the military and other innovations of the other (Heyd, 1961, pp. 74–77; Menchinger, 2017, p. 87). We may multiply examples not only of translations of European scientific and philosophical works (for instance, Frederick the Great's *Anti-Macchiavel*, translated less than three decades from the composition of the original: Yılmaz Aydoğdu, 2018; in another striking example, one may note the historian Şanizade's verbatim plagiarism of Voltaire in the introduction of his 1826 historical work: Eldem, 2014) but also of Ottoman ideas which can be fruitfully compared with various *Leitmotif*s of European Enlightenment: for instance, Süleyman Penah Efendi's ideas on the role of language or of industry:

Because [the Albanians] have not been given any orderly arrangement, they are a wild and ill-mannered tribe that does not travel through the well-guarded domains and does not know commerce or craftsmanship .... In fact, the Albanian language is a rough language ... without any degree of subtlety, whereas the good manners of a tribe absolutely depend on its learning the language of its dynasty .... There must be a noble sultanly order to the effect that from now on Albanian should not be spoken. After some years they will thus change their language and nobody will speak Albanian; they will speak Turkish instead .... One may see that this is possible if one considers that when Spain discovered the New Indias the inhabitants were even worse than the Albanians: they did not discern heaven from earth and had absolutely no knowledge of arts and crafts. The Spanish brought some women from America and married them in Spain; their children spoke the language of both their mothers and their fathers. Then these children were sent back to America as translators, and, shortly after, this tribe forgot the American language and began speaking Frankish .... In the same way, some disciples from Delvine and Avlonya should be transferred to Istanbul and settled somewhere outside the walls; rations must be ordained for them and teachers must teach them ....

... When does a state or a tribe become rich? They become rich whenever they undertake ways to draw wealth from other places with crafts and products other than the money produced in their

protected domains, and whenever they produce cloths in their own lands, so their money does not go
to other countries. (Berker, 1942–1943, pp. 239–240, 309–311, 475–476)

On the other hand, a systematic quest for anticlerical or even materialist tendencies in the Ottoman Empire might bear impressive fruits, if we take into account that executions of scholars denying the resurrection of the dead or the existence of heaven and hell are attested already from the early 17th century; there are several references which imply that "deistic" or even materialist perceptions of the world were quite marked in some circles of Istanbul intellectuals by the end of the same century. Signs of anticlericalism or more generally a nonchalant attitude vis-à-vis religion abound in fiction as well as in collections of fetvas, especially in the 18th century (Tuşalp, 2005, pp. 41, 59ff., 70, 72, 74, 77; Kaya, 2009, pp. 130–131); scholars who denied the existence of heaven and hell, or the resurrection of the dead, were executed in numerous cases especially in the second half of the 17th century: Nadajlı Abdürrahman in 1602 and Lari Mehmed Efendi in 1665 were executed for having denied heaven and hell, resurrection of the dead, and religious obligations (Ocak, 1998, pp. 243–248); Patburunzade Mehmed Efendi was accused in 1681 of having considered the Prophet an "Arab astrologer" who had only interpreted the signs of the stars (Sariyannis, 2005–2006); and Derviş Eminî was arrested in 1747 in Manastir (Bitola) for talking of the Holy Qur'an as "an Ottoman defter with no foundation" and for denying heaven and hell (Majer, 2005). A 1715 *fetva* attests to a preacher claiming that man grows and withers like herbs (Tuşalp, 2005, p. 70), a belief we also meet in European descriptions of an alleged heresy among Istanbul erudite scholars repeated in the late 17th and 18th centuries, for instance, by Paul Ricaut[9]:

[they claim that] nature or the intrinsecal principle in every individual thing directs the orderly course which we see and admire; and that the Heavens, Sun, Moon and Stars have thence their original and motion, and that man himself rises and fades like the grass or flower. (Ricaut, 1686, pp. 245–246)

3 | INDIVIDUAL REASONING FOR ALL

This is the one side of the debate, the one relying on the classic definition of Enlightenment as secularist emancipation. However, in the last decades, European historiography has been challenging this definition as one-sided and simplistic, beginning with Jonathan Israel's emphasis on a "radical Enlightenment" based on Spinoza's philosophy; in their turn, Robert Darnton or Roger Chartier preferred to focus on mentalities rather than scholarly production, whereas Wiep van Bunge argued that the Enlightenment did not have an antireligious perspective from the beginning. Furthermore, from the point of view of global historians, a lively debate on the existence of "global Enlightenment" has emerged, mostly discussing the "one-way" character of cultural transfer in modern (i.e., 19th- or even 20th-century) "Enlightenment" movements in, for instance, Japan or India.

If what we have been accustomed to name "Enlightenment" is only the European version of a process shared by a larger segment of the world during the early modern period, what would the main features of this process be? If we go back to the German debate on the "Islamic Enlightenment," Schulze (1990) argued that the elements defining such a process are the emphasis on individual experience, the transition from a God-centered to a man-centered worldview, the positive re-evaluation of the concept of "innovation" (implying the image of history as a course of progress, rather than decline), and of course political emancipation. This is mostly a version of the description of "Neo-Sufism," a tendency in Islamic mysticism allegedly emerging along with the Salafist (i.e., "fundamentalist") movements of the 17th and 18th centuries[10]; in the same vein, Albrecht Hofheinz associated these movements with German pietism, where piety is superior than knowledge and where the importance of individual experience and everybody's ability to reach the truth are emphasized (Hofheinz, 2018).[11] We saw above many of these elements emerging in Ottoman thought already from the late 17th century.

Now, if we define, with an even wider perspective, the "spirit of Enlightenment" as the defense of individual thought *en masse* (i.e., not only the thought of some authorities) as a legitimate way to the truth, we could add several more elements enhancing the possibility to integrate the Ottoman world into a "global Enlightenment."[12] I already mentioned Khaled El-Rouayheb's contribution; El-Rouayheb recognizes in Arab-language 17th-century philosophy features such as the transfer of knowledge through a careful commentary (a "deep reading," to use his own words), rather than oral transmission from teacher to disciple, or the rise of independent verification (*tahqiq*) rather than imitation (*taqlid*) in legal and scientific thought (El-Rouayheb, 2015, pp. 13–231; Mayeur-Jaouen, 2019, p. 323). Ottoman discussions on the nature and source of knowledge, often in the context of Hermeticist or Illuminationist philosophy, are abundant and surely worth of further study (Kurz, 2011, pp. 215–243). In this vein, I argue that the "fundamentalist" or more precisely revivalist Kadızadeli movement, which dominated in public debates in Istanbul throughout the 17th century (and, as it seems, even the next century in the provinces),[13] played the part of a primary agent in a process of a "disenchantment of the world." In the course of their acute debate with some Sufi fraternities, who were in their turn trying to occupy the post of privileged mediators with the supernatural, the Kadızadeli preachers denied them this access by rebutting a series of supernatural apparitions in everyday life, such as the miracles by sheikhs or the visitation of saints' graves.[14] Mehmed Birgivi (d. 1573), the forerunner and mentor of the Kadızadelis, has an imagined Sufi stating that he can "reach God by the resolve of [his] Sufi master, and the sciences will be unveiled .... And if we were wrong, these exalted states would not overcome us, and sublime miracles [would not happen], like seeing [heavenly] lights and having visions of great prophets." To which Birgivi answers vehemently:

> It is the duty of anyone who hears empty prattle like this to tell those who are articulating it that they are wrong .... Most of [these sheikhs] ... do not recite the Quran correctly, and despite these disgraceful acts they claim that they have reached union with God .... But no! .... Yes, they have reached union, but with Satan! ....

> If you encounter a man who can perform miracles—he may even be able to sit in the air—do not be bedazzled by him, until you see how he behaves in terms of commanding [right] and forbidding [wrong], guarding the *hudud* and carrying out the law. (Ivanyi, 2012, pp. 140–142, 144)[15]

Birgivi can be said to have been somewhat lenient toward sheikhs observing the law, but his later followers were more and more adamant in rejecting Sufi claims. This is how Ahmed Akhisari (d. 1632), an early exponent of the movement, attacked such sheikhs:

> [A person claiming to have advanced] to higher levels before perfecting the foundations ... will be deluded by mental fantasies and satanic illusions which he considers to be saintly miracles, though they are in fact traps which increase him in variegated forms of misguidance ... it is probable that there will occur to him what seems to be the unveiling of some things or [that he witnesses] unnatural phenomena (*khāriq al-ʿāda*) by virtue of his spiritual exercise or the deception of Satan .... Thus he may believe that it is [an indication of] sainthood and a miracle, when in fact it is a trap and self-deceit; it is anything but sainthood and a true miracle ....

> It is known assuredly that unnatural events are not exclusively connected with prophetic miracles and saintly ones—it may also be a false miracle (*istidrāc*). Whenever [the unnatural phenomenon] occurs at the hands of a person who is not observant of the Shariʿa then it is judged to be a false miracle .... For indeed the impossible can manifest at the hands of the pious just as it does at the hands of the wretched.[16]

To be sure, this skeptical attitude is not a Kadızadeli innovation, but it seems its degree and extent reached large segments of the urban strata and that it became the subject of public debate rather than a subtlety for theologians and jurists. For the sake of comparison, this is how another scholar, Hasan Kafi al-Akhisari (d. 1615), with no affiliation with such a movement, had talked about miracles in his catechism, written in 1605:

> When the Karama [prophetic miracle] appears to the common Muslim, then it is called Karamat Ma'wan (honoring him/her with assistance), whereas when it appears to an infidel or a rebellious person, then it is called Istidraj (when it fulfill his/her desire) or Ihana (when it goes against his/her desire). Finally if the Karama appears to [a] mad man, then it is ultimately a satanic act. (Hasan Kafi al-Aqhisari, 2010, p. 15)

Thus, the Kadızadelis confined the supernatural element in a specific zone, far away in space and time: namely, God's acts and the times of the prophets (the Wahhabis, later, in a way their ideological descendants, would argue that apart from the divine revelation even the Prophet Muhammad was first and foremost a human being, capable of mistakes: Riexinger, 2013). One of the first issues of debate, in the 1630s, between Kadızade Mehmed himself, the eponymous hero of the movement, and his great opponent, the Halveti sheykh Sivasi, addressed the latter's assertion that objects also praise God by words and that some of the Halveti dervishes actually hear this praise. Kadızade's answer was that

> ... all objects are in praise of God. Yet, you do not understand, nor do you hear them. When Sivasi Efendi says that his dervishes know and hear the *tesbîh* [praise], he denies the incontrovertible proofs in the Quran. His utterance is equal to blasphemy. (Çavuşoğlu, 1990, p. 85)[17]

One may see here a parallel with Protestant ideas, whereas the "other" side, defending the possibility of modern miracles and the presence of the supernatural in the present time, had a parallel in the Jesuits' early phase (Waite, 2003, pp. 78–80).[18] Eventually, it seems that miracle-working and more generally everyday supernatural presence had waned even in Sufi circles by the end of the 18th century (Mayeur-Jaouen, 2017, pp. 125–127). Furthermore, the Kadızadeli plea against the Sufi sheikhs' claim for being privileged mediators with the supernatural world had an egalitarian dimension. If access to divine knowledge is not a privilege of some elect (either through Sufi-styled sanctity or philosophical Hermeticism) but something everybody can reach through reason and knowledge of the theological arguments (*tahqiq*), then collective identity was re-enforced and a "virtual equality" of the faithful enhanced (Tezcan, 2019, pp. 238–241). In the long run, these beliefs gave rise to an emphasis to each and every individual's personal responsibility, in a rather modern combination of morality with politics (Sariyannis, 2019a, pp. 368–369, 424; Shafir, 2019).

The very existence of these debates, which seem to have divided Ottoman society across various social strata, shows also the emergence of a public sphere, claiming the right to individual reasoning on matters such as religion or social behavior: a right I associated above with a more global definition of the Enlightenment phenomenon. A common objection to this argument is the lack of printed books and leaflets; however, a boom of massive manuscript production may compensate for this lack. Recent studies highlighted the systematic production of vernacular manuals of catechism[19]; apart from the by now usual attribution of this production to the process of confessionalization, one may point to the theological philosophy current from the 17th century onwards. As shown by El-Rouayheb, this philosophy argued that faith is founded on the independent "verification" (*tahqiq*) of religious principles through human logic, rather than on the imitation of the ancestors (*taqlid*). Even Sufi sheikhs were eventually led to appeal to audiences greater than the usual small circle of the elect, writing commentaries accessible to the people at large (Mayeur-Jaouen, 2017, p. 121). Emphasis on popularization and understanding of the principles of the faith had also given rise to debates within the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, when the patriarch Cyril Loukaris promoted a translation of the Holy Testament into the vernacular (Olar, 2017, pp. 335, 361).[20] Neither was massive production of

manuscripts confined to catechism: let me point here to the case of the sheikh Abdelgani al-Nabulusi (d. 1731), an opponent of the Kadızadeli movement, who had his numerous treatises and leaflets on a huge variety of subjects copied by himself or his disciples in extraordinarily great numbers (Shafir, 2016, pp. 87–164). Moreover, the recent emphasis on bottom-up literacy ("artisan literacy" according to Nelly Hanna or "nouveau literacy" in Dana Sajdi's work) helps us reconsider the importance of printing for the emergence of a public sphere in pre-modern or early modern societies.[21]

In the same context, I would like to pinpoint the emergence of an "extra-institutional" education, focusing in circles of scholars and disciples (beginning with Kâtib Çelebi in the early 17th century and continued by literati such as Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi toward the end of the century), exchanging information, books, and translations; occasionally, European visitors had access, if not to the circles themselves then surely to individual scholars who participated in these networks (Hagen, 2006, pp. 251–252). Such circles of erudition, parallel with, independent of, or even antagonistic to the traditional model of the *medrese* education, both in Sufi and in "secular" sciences, were enhanced in the early 18th century by the patronage of Ahmed III's court and the first printing house (which seems to have played a significant role in the expansion of Ibn Khaldunist's ideas through Naima's adaptation: Sievert, 2013, pp. 179–180). Still, the ideas I have outlined seem to have remained in such extra-institutional circulation and never filtered into the curricula of the *medrese* institutional education. It was exactly this fact, perhaps, that may have hindered the transformation of these ideological trends to a real movement that could be named "Ottoman Enlightenment" in its own right.[22]

However, I would like to end this paper with a word of caution. The basis of our knowledge concerning Ottoman intellectual and cultural history is still extremely weak, especially for the 18th century, and there are many dangers in importing terms and concepts from other area studies. To quote once again El-Rouayheb (2015), who refuses to talk of "Enlightenment" (as well as of "humanism"), arguing that the use of such terms is misleading,

> To apply with even a minimum of plausibility to the Islamic early modern period, the meanings of such terms have to be stretched on such an extent that they arguably become devoid of historical content and become free-floating "ideas" not associated with any particular region or period …. Once reasonably grounded narratives of the intellectual history of the period have been established, it may be fruitful to go further and ask comparative and "global" questions. (pp. 8–9)

True, it is undeniably meaningful to compare Ottoman realities with those observed in other areas, especially in the context of the now old debate on the character of the Ottoman Empire, currently (and perhaps provisionally) resolved under the umbrella of "early modernity." The fact that there are certain similarities of Ottoman 17th- and 18th-century intellectual life with the period of the European "Enlightenment" may well be misleading, as these developments correspond in fact with a wider range of phenomena and trends, including Renaissance humanism and the 17th-century Scientific Revolution. Furthermore, such comparisons have little meaning unless combined with an interpretation based on social history (cf. Sariyannis, 2017, pp. 231–233, 251–253). Baki Tezcan's association of Kadızadeli "epistemological egalitarianism in a disenchanted world" with "upward mobility and the expansion of the political nation" could be a fruitful path toward this aim (Tezcan, 2019, pp. 238–240). In this context, "disenchantment" (or "individual reasoning for all"), terms that describe a process rather than a historical phenomenon, might be better analytical tools for understanding Ottoman intellectual history than "Enlightenment," "Renaissance," "humanism," and the like. At any rate, it is to be hoped that the discussion I have tried to summarize will help us in highlighting trends and ideas previously rarely visible; whether we name these trends "Enlightenment" or not is, in this respect, a secondary issue.

ORCID

Marinos Sariyannis 🄳 https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3590-9778

ENDNOTES

[1] In my view, the term "Ottoman culture" should comprise Greek and Slavic Orthodox, Jewish, Armenians, and other peoples of the Ottoman Empire. For the scope of this paper, however, the term "Ottoman" will refer here mainly to the Muslim component of the Empire, unless otherwise stated.

[2] See also the surveys of the debate by Hagen and Seidensticker (1998), Hofheinz (2018), and Mayeur-Jaouen (2019, esp. pp. 342–347).

[3] For a less provocative survey of possible ways of integration of Ottoman intellectual history into global trends, see Markiewicz (2018).

[4] See, for example, Hagen (2000, 2003), Emiralioğlu (2014, 2019), and Sariyannis (2015).

[5] As noted by Greene herself (2015, p. 194).

[6] For an overview of the revisionist tendencies in the historiography of "post-classical" Islamic science, see Stearns (2011).

[7] On previous Ottoman views on magnetism, cf. Daşdemir (2014).

[8] As translated by Küçük (2012, p. 164). The quotation comes from Müteferrika's *Vesiletü't-tıb'a* ("The virtues of printing"), the preface to the first book printed by his press (1729).

[9] Cf. Kurz (2011, p. 202), Montagu (1994, p. 61–63), and Habesci (1784, pp. 136–137).

[10] See Rahman (1979), O'Fahey–Radtke (1993), Sheikh (2016, pp. 154–164), Sheikh (2016, pp. 154–164), and Mayeur-Jaouen (2019, pp. 339–342).

[11] See also Yavari (2019), on the background of the creation of a new Sufi piety with distinctly "secular" overtones in connection with the confessionalization process.

[12] On this debate (focusing more in the first, "narrower" definition of the term), see Conrad (2012).

[13] The movement has drawn considerable attention in the recent decades. See Zilfi (1986), Sariyannis (2012), and Evstatiev (2016).

[14] On the other side, that of the Sufi defense of the practice of visiting graves, see Allen (2020, p. 59).

[15] Birgivi was willing to accept miracles in general. Speaking of older saints, he writes that "the miracles of these saints are true, such as traversing a far distance in a short time, the appearance of food, drink and clothes when they are needed, flying in the air, walking on water, inanimate objects speaking, animals, too, and so on" (Ivanyi, 2012, p. 143).

[16] Quoted in Sheikh (2016, pp. 73–76). Kadızade himself also clarified that miraculous acts, when not done by prophets or saints, are forms of *istidrac* (Satanic temptation): see Karaca (2018, p. 159).

[17] On the praise of God by objects, see Lory (2018).

[18] On another parallel with the Protestant and Jesuit debates see Sariyannis (2019a, pp. 300–301). On the other hand, cf. Rubiés (2018) on the complex relation of the Jesuits with the European Enlightenment.

[19] See Krstić (2009), Terzioğlu (2012–2013, 2013), Markiewicz (2018), and Mayeur-Jaouen (2019, pp. 353–356).

[20] On common elements of the intellectual debates in the Greek Orthodox and the Muslim world, see Kermeli (2017).

[21] Faroqhi (2000, pp. 185–191), Hanna (2007, 2012), Sajdi (2013), and Fitzgerald (2015). See also Değirmenci (2011), Aydınlı (2018), and Kökrek (2016).

[22] It would be useful to compare the thoughts expressed by Harun Küçük about the role of the lack of universities (and of scholarly leisure) in the rise of "practical naturalism" rather than abstract science in 17th- and 18th-century Istanbul, as well as Baki Tezcan's views on the role of state-sponsorship (actually connected with the absolutist state) for promoting science (Küçük, 2020; Tezcan, 2010).

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Marinos Sariyannis is Research Director at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies/Foundation of Research and Technology—Hellas in Rethymno, Greece. He studied at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece (PhD 2005) and taught at the Ionian University (Corfu) and the University of Crete (Rethymno), whereas he works as a researcher at the Institute of Mediterranean Studies since 2007. His research interests include Ottoman social, cultural, and intellectual history in the early modern period. He is the author of several books, including *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill 2019) and *Perceptions ottomanes du surnaturel. Aspects de l'histoire intellectuelle d'une culture islamique à l'époque moderne* (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf 2019), and of more than 40 papers and book chapters. He is currently leading a 5-year research project, "GHOST: Geographies and Histories of the Ottoman Supernatural Tradition: Exploring Magic, the Marvelous, and the Strange in Ottoman Mentalities," under the European Research Council funding scheme ERC-CoG 2017.