

INTRODUCTION

POLITICAL THOUGHT AND PRACTICE IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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IN THE WAKE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY EMPHASIS ON ECONOMIC and social history which dominated Ottoman studies during most of the second half of the last century, other aspects of the Ottoman reality were neglected or under-studied.¹ Cultural history, one may say, found its way from the early 1990s on, but political history and the history of ideas (or, as we prefer to say nowadays, intellectual history) were even later to regain the interest they had been attracting in the pre-World War II period.

This was owing to a combination of factors, including source availability and historiographical fashion. Indeed, when the present author was entering the field, in the mid or late 1990s, studying Ottoman history meant mainly studying archives. The *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi* roared with scholars, local judicial registers and private document collections were the word of the day, and tax registers were in their heyday; on the other hand, if one had to consult an eighteenth-century chronicle or a travelogue, one had to spend a disproportionately large amount of time in locating and studying manuscripts, use old faulty editions, or else confine oneself to very few sources. Only the fourteenth or fifteenth century expert had the privilege of a solid corpus of more or less fully studied and analysed literary works, since archival documents for this period are just missing. Even authors who relied heavily on archival material had started to speak of ‘document fetishism’ by the early 1990s, stressing the use of documents at their face value regardless of ideological considerations.² On the other hand, what can be described as ‘narrative (or, in a broader sense, literary) sources’, such as chronicles and historiography, biographies, fiction, diaries, town descriptions, political essays and so forth, had been comparatively

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1 I wish to thank Prof. Efi Avdela for her advice and comments concerning modern European historiography.

2 See H. Berktaş and S. Faroqhi, *New Approaches to State and Peasant in Ottoman History* (London 1992), 109ff. (on Berktaş’s) and 235 (Faroqhi’s) criticism of “document fetishism”. Berktaş notes that “the illusion that historical truth can be seized simply by putting documents together has reduced generations of students to document transcribers” (ibid., 157) – of course, the same can be said about literary sources, although to a lesser degree.

neglected for a long time.³ The relationship of the neglect of narrative sources (the “fear of the text”) with the lack of interest in cultural history is very well expressed in a recent essay by Dana Sajdi on the much-debated notion of ‘Ottoman decline’:⁴

For a long time empirical research was obviated by the fact that the text, which delivered evidence that was anecdotal at best and unreliable at worst, provided the main source for history. The discovery of court records and other official documents was received with relief and excitement, for these sources delivered vast pools of data... and allowed Ottoman history to move from narrative and institutional history to scientifically ‘solid’ studies... Both Orientalist scholarship and the related civilizationalist narrative had enshrined the text as the central piece of scholarship... Thus, the associations between essentialist methods and the text may have resulted in a general distaste for the latter. But it was not only the text that was disposed of; the associated possibilities of discursive methods and cultural analyses were also ignored... Culture, in other words, seems to have had a bad name.

At any rate, during the last 20 years, *grosso modo*, there has been a remarkable turning of attention towards Ottoman narrative sources.⁵ Again, this was a development shared with world historiography, which witnessed (in the words of Cemal Kafadar)⁶

a renewed interest in such sources, which were once seen as inferior to quantifiable records. Turning the tables around, historians now indulge in the application of literary criticism or narratological analysis to archival documents, to even such dry cases as census registers, which have been seen as hardly more than data banks in previous history-writing.

Indeed, a turn towards a new form of historical narratives in European historiography can be detected from the late 1970s onward, and it was natural enough that it was accompanied by a revival of the use of narrative sources. Lawrence Stone attributed this

3 Back in 1989, Cemal Kafadar wrote of “the neglect, I might even say disdain, of narrative and other literary sources, as well as of cultural and intellectual history in general”: C. Kafadar, ‘Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature’, *SI*, 69 (1989), 121-150 at 123.

4 D. Sajdi, ‘Decline, Its Discontents and Ottoman Cultural History: By Way of Introduction’, in D. Sajdi (ed.), *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee. Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York 2007), 1-40 at 28-29.

5 Cf. the introductory remarks by Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein in their *Le Sérail ébranlé. Essai sur les morts, dépositions et avènements des sultans ottomans, XIVe-XIXe siècle* (Paris 2003), 11 : « L’ouverture des archives ottomanes a amené depuis un demi-siècle les spécialistes à accorder une importance de plus en plus exclusive aux sources d’archives. Sans sous-estimer l’apport évidemment irremplaçable de celles-ci, nous voudrions contribuer pour notre part, après d’autres, à redonner toute leur place aux chroniqueurs comme source de premier ordre pour l’histoire de l’Empire ottoman. » Nicolas Vatin had also stressed the importance of narrative sources for Ottoman history in N. Vatin, *Etudes ottomans (XVe-XVIIIe siècle). Conférence d’ouverture, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Section des sciences historiques et philologiques (10 novembre 2000)* (Paris 2001), 58ff. See also C. Kırılı, ‘From Economic History to Cultural History in Ottoman Studies’, *IJMES*, 46 (2014), 376-378.

6 C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds. The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1996), xiii.

trend to “a widespread disillusionment with the economic determinist model of historical explanation”, a new visibility for the role of political power in history, and the apparent shortcomings of the once all-powerful quantification, as well as the “quite sudden growth of interest in feelings, emotions, behaviour patterns, values, and states of mind”, i.e., what is known by the French term *histoire des mentalités*. Back in 1979, Stone was stating that “yet historians... still seem a little embarrassed” when they turn “back to the once despised narrative mode”, even though many now classic books in this vein had already appeared.⁷ More than three decades later, one may say that ‘narrative mode’ belongs steadily to the mainstream of European historiography. Cultural history as well as political history – in a renewed form – both benefited greatly from and contributed to this turn. Political history in particular, after being scorned as “*histoire événementielle*” by the first *Annales* generations, regained its visibility as political anthropology, history of structures of power, legitimisation mechanisms, political movements, and so forth.⁸

If political history began gradually to re-appear with a new sense of interdependence with social developments (especially Janissary rebellions, now studied in the light of more general views on the transformation of Ottoman politics in the *longue durée*),⁹ the same – but perhaps to a lesser degree — happened with the history of ideas. Again, Ottomanists were late in following the trends of Europeanist historiography, which from

7 L. Stone, ‘The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History’, *Past and Present*, 85 (1979), 3-24. In his reply to Stone’s article, Eric Hobsbawm added as another factor in this historiographical shift “the remarkable widening of the field of history” (E.J. Hobsbawm, ‘The Revival of Narrative: Some Comments’, *Past and Present*, 86 (1980), 3-8). For a recapitulation of the new trends in historiography, see the studies collected in P. Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives in Historical Writing* (Cambridge 2001 [2nd ed.]); G. G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century. From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Middletown 2005) and esp. 97ff. on Stone’s article.

8 Cf. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century*, 137-139; J. Le Goff, ‘Is Politics still the backbone of History?’, in F. Gilbert and S. Graubard (eds), *Historical Studies Today* (New York 1972), 337-355 [reprinted in French as « L’histoire politique est-elle toujours l’épine dorsale de l’histoire? » in Le Goff, *L’imaginaire médiéval* (Paris 1985), 333-349].

9 The first specimen would perhaps be R. Abou-El-Haj’s *The 1703 Rebellion and the Structure of Ottoman Politics* (Leiden 1984). Other examples include G. Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 2003) or the relevant part in Baki Tezcan’s *The Second Ottoman Empire. Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge 2010). See also the special issue of the *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, Vol. 8 (2002) and the studies collected in A. Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Political Initiatives from the Bottom-Up in the Ottoman Empire (Halcyon Days VII: A Symposium held in Rethymno, January 9-11, 2009)* (Rethymno 2011), as well as a series of unpublished Ph.D. theses: A. Stremmelaar, ‘Justice and Revenge in the Ottoman Rebellion of 1703’, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Leiden University, 2007; A. Danacı Yıldız, ‘Vaka-yı Selimiyye or The Selimiyye Incident: A Study of May 1807 Rebellion’, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Sabancı University, 2008; S. Karahasanoğlu, ‘A Tulip Age Legend: Consumer Behavior and Material Culture in the Ottoman Empire (1718-1730)’, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Binghamton University, 2009.

the 1960s onwards, with the ‘Cambridge school’ (Quentin Skinner, J.G.A. Pocock, John Dunn, etc.), the French *histoire des mentalités* and Foucault’s critique, as well as the German conceptual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*), began to react to the traditional history of ideas (as represented by, for example, Arthur Lovejoy, focusing on ‘great thinkers’ and public debates) by emphasising the social and intellectual matrix from which individual thinkers emerged.¹⁰ As far as Ottoman studies are concerned, we should take note of the new thrust and approach provided by Walter G. Andrews’ studies of lyric poetry;¹¹ of a very recent emphasis on Ottoman philosophy (especially its Arabic part);¹² of a series of important ‘intellectual biographies’ of Ottoman scholars,¹³ and, last but not least, of studies of the circulation of books and manuscripts and their intellectual context.¹⁴

Thus, both political history and the history of ideas are now beginning to flourish and are considered by Ottomanists an outstanding vantage point for observing social forces at work. In this context, it is perhaps striking that the history of political ideas, which can be described as a combination of those two fields, was never out of the focus of social historians of the Ottoman Empire (suffice it to remember the work by Şerif Mardin and Ni-

10 See P. Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History* (Ithaca 1997); V.E. Bonnell and L. Hunt (eds), *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* (Berkeley 1999); D. McMahon and S. Moyn (eds), *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History for the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford 2014); cf. also K.W. Martin, ‘Middle East Historiography: Did We Miss the Cultural Turn?’, *History Compass*, 12 (2014), 178-186.

11 W. Andrews, *Poetry’s Voice, Society’s Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry* (Seattle 1985); W. Andrews and M. Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham 2005). Ottoman poetry has been the object of important studies in recent decades, e.g., by Edith Gülçin Ambros or Hatice Aynur. See E. G. Ambros, « Les recherches sur la littérature ottomane dans le monde occidental », in F. Emecen, İ. Keskin and A. Ahmetbeyoğlu (ed.), *Osmanlı’nın izinde: Prof. Dr. Mehmet İpşirli Armağanı* (Istanbul 2013), 1:119-139.

12 Kh. El-Rouayheb, ‘The Myth of the Triumph of Fanaticism in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire’, *Die Welt des Islams*, 48 (2008), 196-201; idem, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (Cambridge 2015); L.W.C. van Lit, ‘An Ottoman Commentary Tradition on Ghazālī’s Tahāfut al-falāsifa. Preliminary Observations’, *Oriens*, 43 (2015), 368-413; E.L. Menchinger, ‘Free Will, Predestination, and the Fate of the Ottoman Empire’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 77 (2016), 445-466. Significantly, chapters concerning the Ottoman period have been included in S. Schmidtke (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology* (Oxford 2016).

13 C.H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)* (Princeton 1986); G. Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph bei der Arbeit. Entstehung und Gedankenwelt von Kâtib Çelebis Ğihānnumā* (Berlin 2003); R. Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality. The World of Evliya Çelebi*, rev. edition (Leiden 2006); E.L. Menchinger, *The First of the Modern Ottomans. The Intellectual History of Ahmed Vâsıf* (Cambridge 2017).

14 N. Hanna, *In Praise of Books: A Cultural History of Cairo’s Middle Class, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Syracuse 2003); N. Shafir, ‘The Road from Damascus: Circulation and the Redefinition of Islam in the Ottoman Empire, 1620-1720’, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 2016.

yazi Berkes as early as the 1960s),¹⁵ nor of the few early students of Ottoman intellectual history.¹⁶ After all, political tracts were among the first Ottoman texts translated into European languages.¹⁷ In the 1980s and 1990s, however, the rediscovery of narrative sources and of the importance of political history also brought a wave of pioneering works studying political ideas. Studies of particular works or genealogies of specific ideas went hand-in-hand with attempts at more general surveys of Ottoman political thought, such as Pál Fodor's now classic article (supplemented by Virginia Aksan's on the eighteenth century).¹⁸ With the new millennium, the subject received a remarkable impetus; new approaches and methods of analysis are constantly being applied in this field, as younger and older scholars are turning their attention to this subject, arguably one of the dominant themes of Ottoman studies nowadays.¹⁹ An emphasis on the legitimisation of power has

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- 15 Ş. Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Princeton 1962); N. Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal 1964).
- 16 M. T. Gökbilgin, 'XVII. Asırda Osmanlı devletinde ıslâhat ihtiyacı ve temayülleri ve Kâtip Çelebi', in *Kâtip Çelebi. Hayatı ve eserleri hakkında incelemeler* (Ankara 1991; 1st ed. 1957), 197-218; B. Lewis, 'Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline', *Islamic Studies*, 1 (1962), 71-87.
- 17 W.F.A. Behrner, 'Hâgî Chalfa's *Dustûru'l-'amal*. Ein Beitrag zur osmanischen Finanzgeschichte', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 11 (1857), 111-132; idem, 'Koğabeg's Abhandlung über den Verfall des osmanischen Staatsgebäudes seit Sultan Suleiman dem Grossen', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 15 (1861), 272-332; idem, 'Das Nasihatnâme. Dritter Beitrag zur osmanischen Finanzgeschichte', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 18 (1864), 699-740; R. Tschudi (ed.), *Das Asafname des Lütfi Pascha, nach den Handschriften zu Wien, Dresden und Konstantinopel* (Berlin 1910); I. von Karácson and L. von Thalláczy, 'Eine Staatsschrift des bosnischen Mohammedaners Molla Hassan Elkjáfi "über die Art und Weise des Regierens"', *Archiv für slavische philologie*, 32 (1911), 139-158. Cf. D.A. Howard, 'Genre and Myth in the Ottoman Advice for Kings Literature', in V. Aksan and D. Goffman (eds), *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge 2007), 137-166 at 142-143.
- 18 R. Murphey, 'The Veliyyuddin Telhis: Notes on the Sources and Interrelations between Koçi Bey and Contemporary Writers of Advice to Kings', *Belleter*, 43 (1979), 547-571; H. G. Majer, 'Die Kritik aus den Ulema in den osmanischen politischen Traktaten des 16-18 Jahrhunderts', in O. Okyar – H. Inalcik (eds), *Social and Economic History of Turkey (1071-1920)* (Ankara 1980), 147-155; P. Fodor, 'State and Society, Crisis and Reform, in 15th-17th Century Ottoman Mirror for Princes', *Acta Orientalia*, 40 (1986), 217-240; A.Y. Ocak, 'Osmanlı siyasi düşüncesi', in E. İhsanoğlu (ed.), *Osmanlı devleti ve medeniyeti tarihi*, Vol. 2 (Istanbul 1988), 164-174; C.H. Fleischer, 'From Şeyhzade Korkud to Mustafa Âli: Cultural Origins of the Ottoman *Nasihatname*', in H.W. Lowry and R.S. Hattox (eds), *IIIrd Congress on the Social and Economic History of Turkey. Princeton University, 24-26th August 1983* (Istanbul, Washington and Paris 1990), 67-77; A. C. Schaendlinger, 'Reformtraktate und -vorschläge im Osmanischen Reich im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert', in Ch. Franger and K. Schwarz (eds), *Festgabe an Josef Matuz. Osmanistik – Turkologie – Diplomatiek* (Berlin 1992), 239-253; V. Aksan, 'Ottoman Political Writing, 1768-1808', *IJMES*, 25 (1993), 53-69.
- 19 C. Kafadar, 'Osmanlı siyasal düşüncesinin kaynakları üzerine gözlemler', in M.Ö. Alkan (ed.), *Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce*, Vol. 1, *Cumhuriyet'e devreden düşünce mirası: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in birikimi* (Istanbul 2001), 24-28; B. A. Ergene, 'On Ottoman Justice: Interp-

to some extent prepared for this trend.²⁰ To indicate the present blossoming of the field, suffice it to note that only in the last five years four lengthy monographs appeared on the history of Ottoman political thought in its more or less general aspects.²¹

Still, the features of a 'late starter' and the heavy dependency on earlier questions of socio-economic history are apparent in the disproportionate interest late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century authors have attracted in comparison to earlier or later ones. The real motive behind the rediscovery of such authors as Mustafa Ali, Aziz Efendi, or Koçi Bey was their crucial role in the creation (and the recent demolition) of the 'decline' paradigm, which, as one may say, had been the central question in Ottoman studies throughout the last decade of the twentieth century.²² Thus, issues such the role of the Persian tradition of political philosophy, the 'fundamentalist' or, more correctly, 'Sunna-minded' trends of the seventeenth century, or the re-evaluation of innovation and change from the late seventeenth century onwards have remained relatively unstudied, whereas even those 'declinist' authors mentioned above did not get their proper place in this history, as the one side of a debate which was much more than one-sided. Moreover, even as lesser works and authors are beginning to be studied and edited, the discussion remains centred on the major figures, who thus seem isolated from the ideological conflicts they were participating in and from the tradition they were following or responding to. This lack of intellectual context is largely due to the splendour of pre-Ottoman Islamic political thought and the consequent view of the post-medieval period as one of intellec-

retations in Conflict (1600-1800)', *Islamic Law and Society*, 8 (2001), 52-87; C. Yılmaz, 'Osmanlı siyaset düşüncesi kaynakları ile ilgili yeni bir kavramsallaştırma: Islahatnâmeler', *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, 1 (2003), 299-338; H. Yılmaz, 'Osmanlı tarihçiliğinde Tanzimat öncesi siyaset düşüncesine yaklaşımlar', *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, 1 (2003), 231-298; D. A. Howard, 'From Manual to Literature: Two Texts on the Ottoman Timar System', *ActOrHung*, 61 (2008), 87-99; L.T. Darling, 'Political Change and Political Discourse in the Early Modern Mediterranean World', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 38 (2008), 505-531; H.L. Ferguson, 'Genres of Power: Constructing a Discourse of Decline in Ottoman Nasihatname', *OA*, 35 (2010), 81-116.

20 See H.T. Karateke and M. Reinkowski (eds), *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power* (Leiden and Boston 2005).

21 L.T. Darling, *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East: The Circle of Justice from Mesopotamia to Globalization* (New York 2013); H. Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought* (Princeton 2018); H.L. Ferguson, *The Proper Order of Things: Language, Power, and Law in Ottoman Administrative Discourses* (Stanford 2018); M. Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought Up to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Leiden 2018).

22 This debate may be said to have been inaugurated with Abou-El-Haj's highly influential *Formation of the Modern State. The Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (New York 1991), together with a series of interventions by Suraiya Faroqhi; see e.g. S. Faroqhi, 'Part II: Crisis and Change, 1590-1699', in H. İnalcık with D. Quataert (eds), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (Cambridge 1994), 411-636. For various assessments of the discussion see D. Quataert, 'Ottoman History Writing and Changing Attitudes Towards the Notion of 'Decline'', *History Compass*, 1 (2003), 1-10; Sajdi, 'Decline, Its Discontents'.

tual decline for Islamic culture. On the one hand, students of Islamic political thought more often than not see Ottoman authors as mere imitators, who either engaged in sterile reproduction of Avicenna's, al-Farabi's, or Nasir al-Din Tusi's ideas, or were restricted to very concrete advice on specific problems of their own state without implying any broader view of political society.²³ On the other hand, Ottomanists usually fail to take into account the pre-Ottoman tradition (despite some efforts, such as by Halil İnalçık on Kınalızade Ali Çelebi),²⁴ which leads either to texts being glorified as innovative when they are merely adaptations of earlier models, or to innovative breakthroughs to the older tradition, which scholars cannot locate since they ignore the latter.²⁵

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This volume has the modest ambition of contributing to this renewal of interest in Ottoman political ideas and their function in practice. It mostly reproduces the papers read in the Ninth Halcyon Days international symposium of the Programme of Ottoman History of the Institute for Mediterranean Studies/FORTH, which was held in Rethymno on 9-11 January 2015.²⁶ İbrahim Metin Kunt was invited to be the symposiarch; when he had to decline for health reasons, Linda T. Darling kindly agreed to take his place. Both contributed the introductory texts constituting Part I of the book, which the present short introduction seeks only to supplement with a framework depicting the intellectual genealogy of the history of Ottoman political thought. Metin Kunt, on his part, explores the cosmological origins of Islamic views of political society, namely the theory of the four elements and the way it was applied in fields as different as cosmology, astrology, medicine, psychology, the various arts, as well as political theory. As Kunt shows, the concept of four elements or pillars of society which have to be kept in equilibrium was a constant feature of Ottoman political theories, and one that was combined later on with Ibn Khaldun's concept of historical laws to produce a cyclical view of history. Yet, as he cautiously points out, there were other dominant distinctions in Ottoman worldviews, such

23 See, e.g., E.I.J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam. An Introductory Outline* (Cambridge 1958), 224-233; A. Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought. From the Prophet to the Present* (Edinburgh 2011 [2nd ed.]), 216-222, 259-280 (still, Black is to be credited for having included issues such as the Sharia and Kanun conflict or the 'Sunna-minded' trend into the field of study).

24 See, e.g., H. İnalçık, 'Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire', *The Journal of Economic History*, 19 (1969), 97-140 at 98-99; idem, 'The Ottoman State: Economy and Society, 1300-1600', in H. İnalçık with D. Quataert (eds), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, 44.

25 On various problems in the study of Ottoman political thought see the excellent essay by Yılmaz, 'Osmanlı tarihçiliğinde Tanzimat öncesi siyaset düşüncesine yaklaşımlar'. I have also tackled these issues more extensively than I do here in Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought*, 1-14.

26 The Symposium also included papers by Sia Anagnostopoulou, Vasileios Syros, Ekin Tuşalp Atıyas, and Hüseyin Yılmaz, who did not eventually submit them for publication. On the other hand, Heather L. Ferguson, Katharina Ivanyi, and Eunjeong Yi did not participate in the Symposium but were specially invited to contribute to the volume.

as between *reaya* and *askeri* or between Muslims and infidels, which make the study of political ideas more complex and interdependent with historical realities.

Linda Darling, in her turn, focuses on the study of Ottoman political thought and its pitfalls. After remarking that the field has to extend its subject beyond political literature *per se*, she gives a summary outline of trends in Ottoman political ideas, their genealogies and developments, stressing the socio-political context which made authors support 'declinist' or 'reformist' theories. Furthermore, she puts a question which is at the very centre of this volume, namely how we can combine the study of political theory with political practice, in other words, how to put questions in terms of social and political history – and conversely, how to interpret socio-political behaviour in Ottoman sources in the light of the use of political arguments and mentalities. Still, as she carefully notes, one has always to take into account the very strong tradition within which Ottoman authors and statesmen were writing and acting.

Political ideas are, of course, founded on basic concepts, often peculiar to a specific culture which may or may not be confined to the territorial or even temporal borders of a state. These concepts, as shown by several studies, are not static: they change as society changes, in an interaction with political practice.²⁷ Papers in Part II of this volume examine such concepts, emphasising their semantic shifts according to the political context and the historical circumstances. Heather L. Ferguson takes up the relation (and confusion) between socio-political realities and narratives about them, focusing on the concept of state. She points out that we should study such subjects having always in mind the historical dimension of the Ottoman formation, both in time and in its relationship within the broader Eurasian context. After drawing a chart enumerating and interpreting theories of modern historiography (Europeanist and Ottomanist) on state formation and development, Ferguson explores a series of Ottoman dynastic histories in order to seek the various forms of exceptionalism and universalism prevailing in different stages of Ottoman culture.

In his own contribution, Güneş Işıksel moves into another aspect of the Ottoman world image which is not unrelated to the exceptionalist and universalist claims we have already mentioned: namely, the representation of what we now call the Ottoman realm as constructed by the Sultan's chancellery. Taking as a starting-point the *intitulatio* of international treaties and diplomatic correspondence of the sixteenth century, Işıksel shows that, far from being just a spatial description, this accumulation of titles and places has deep political connotations, since it implies a potential universal dominion, but also that it is liable to changes serving different necessities, which stem either from diplomatic developments or specific needs of the imperial propaganda.

27 See, e.g., G. Hagen, 'Legitimacy and World Order', in Karateke and Reinkowski (eds), *Legitimizing the Order*, 55-83; Ergene, 'On Ottoman Justice'; M. Sariyannis, 'The Princely Virtues as Presented in Ottoman Political and Moral Literature', *Turcica*, 43 (2011), 121-144; idem, 'Ruler and State, State and Society in Ottoman Political Thought', *THR*, 4 (2013), 83-117; idem, 'Ottoman Ideas on Monarchy Before the Tanzimat Reforms: Toward a Conceptual History of Ottoman Political Notions', *Turcica*, 47 (2016), 33-72.

The next two papers deal more particularly with specific terms and the various meanings they acquired in time. Elias Kolovos examines the famous *istimalet*, considered (in the meaning of ‘winning over a population through concessions’) as a major tool of Ottoman diplomacy and conquest as early as the beginnings of the Ottoman state. By conducting a meticulous study of primary sources mentioning this term, Kolovos shows that, contrary to what one would perhaps expect judging from the rich relevant historiography, *istimalet* is rarely mentioned in early chronicles, whereas it has a frequent presence in later sources, where it is used in a wider sense as a policy against Ottoman officials or soldiers as well, far from being applied only to conquered populations. Thus, what was for half a century conceived of as a special policy tool facilitating conquest of infidel populations proves to be a more conceptualised form of what Ottoman historians refer to as *hüsn-i tedbir*, soft measures aimed at winning over an opponent or a potential enemy.

Antonis Hadjikyriacou’s paper deals with another term which commonly forms a subject of heated debate – *millet*. The shifting meanings of this term have attracted the attention of a good many scholars, all the more since (having eventually taken on the meaning of ‘nation’) it is closely connected with the transformation of ethnic identities into national communities during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Hadjikyriacou proposes to explore the issue from the other end, that is, taking ethno-religious communities and their organisation as a starting-point. Focusing on the case of Cyprus, and benefiting from discussions of other ambiguous terms as well (notably *vekil*), he reaches the conclusion that institutional identity (and leadership) remained until late a flexible notion, which was not consistently dependent on either religious or ethnic identities.

Finally, Marc Aymes moves into the late Ottoman Empire and the very notion of politics, which he proposes to study through an examination of forgery and the laws concerning it. After an overview of the two terms relevant to politics, *politika* which came to mean things pertaining to governmental affairs (and as such, something which was not to be discussed freely in public), and *siyaset* meaning eventually what pertains to the general public, Aymes examines the act of faking state documents and laws prohibiting forgery or the circulation of fake news. In this perhaps oblique way, he highlights the limits between the public and the private sphere and explores the ways late Ottoman government tried to delineate the extent of the subjects’ scope for potential interference in state affairs.

The papers presented so far show the flexible and evolving character of Ottoman concepts, especially those present in Ottoman diplomatic or administrative practice and not political theory *per se*. Still, if confined to ideas, a student of Ottoman political thought may get the impression of repetitive loci, commonplaces and tropes without any originality or development. Yet, if we focus in the *use* of arguments, we will see that different socio-political actors use a spectrum of ideas and arguments as an inventory of weapons from which they select those best fitted to their own age in order to defend and promote different political demands. Aspects of this procedure are illuminated in Part III of the book, devoted to authors of political tracts and the ideas they use: how they benefit from earlier tradition, how they adapt to current situations, how they change these ideas in order to render best service to their respective agendas. In her contribution, Linda T. Darling takes as a starting-point one of the most common and well-known *topoi* of po-

litical literature, that of the critique of the Janissaries and more particularly of the intrusion of non-*devşirme* recruits to their ranks. Juxtaposing these *topoi* of advice texts (*na-sihatnames*) with material from administrative documents and registers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, she finds that “strangers” in the corps were not differentiated at all in state paperwork, and, perhaps more importantly, that authors originating from *devşirme* recruitment were much more adamant in their opposition to outsiders, showing an internal factionalism expressed in political literature. As Darling remarks, it is in government orders and actions that we ought to seek true (or, at least, dominant) Ottoman political thought.

The next three papers in this part deal with various aspects of what has been named “Sunna-minded” or, more particularly, “Kadizadeli” thought: a trend which spoke for a re-assessment of the Sunna and which played a major role in political discussion from the early seventeenth century until the last decade of the same century, if not later. It is a commonplace that the ideological predecessor of this trend was Birgivî Mehmed Efendi, a major opponent of Ebussuud back in the mid sixteenth century; yet scholarship debating the landholding experimentation in the late seventeenth century has been puzzled by the absence of the issue in Kadizadeli texts.²⁸ Katharina Ivanyi shows that Birgivî, apart from his insistent opposition to against cash-*vakfs* and his emphasis on strict adherence to the Sharia, had also dealt with this issue; he had denounced the legal stratagem used to legitimise land tax from public land (*mîrî*) and was very sceptical about state ownership of the land and the *tapu* system. Thus, Ivanyi’s study makes Gilles Veinstein’s argument on the role of Kadizadeli thought in the Köprülü reform more convincing, as the main counter-argument was the absence of ‘fundamentalist’ preoccupation with land and tax issues.

After Birgivî, ‘Sunna-minded’ thought re-emerged in the early seventeenth century, yet it was by no means absent in the time-span between the two periods. In her paper, Derin Terzioğlu focuses on İbrahim-i Kırımı, a Halveti sheikh corresponding with Murad III. Terzioğlu examines the corpus of Kırımı’s letters (heretofore attributed to Aziz Mahmud Hüdayî), which contain a variety of political advice; she shows the complex interplay of the author with the palace and *harem* politics, and highlights his possible relations with different factions as regards external policies. Through this careful analysis, Terzioğlu questions both the presence of marked ‘absolutist’ and ‘constitutionalist’ factions at the court²⁹ and the understanding of ‘confessionalisation’ as a clear-cut, top-down procedure.³⁰

28 M. Greene, ‘An Islamic Experiment? Ottoman Land Policy on Crete’, *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 11 (1996), 60-78; G. Veinstein, ‘Le législateur ottoman face à l’insularité: L’enseignement des Kânûnnâme’, in N. Vatin and G. Veinstein (eds), *Insularités ottomanes* (Paris 2004), 101-106; E. Kermeli, ‘Caught in Between Faith and Cash: The Ottoman Land System of Crete, 1645-1670’, in A. Anastasopoulos (ed.), *The Eastern Mediterranean Under Ottoman Rule, Crete, 1645-1840: Halcyon Days in Crete VI: a Symposium Held in Rethymno, 13-15 January 2006* (Rethymno 2008), 17-48.

29 On this concept see B. Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge 2010); H. Yılmaz, ‘Containing Sultanic Authority: Constitutionalism in the Ottoman Empire Before Modernity’, *OA*, 45 (2015), 231-264.

30 On ‘confessionalisation’, a term introduced into Ottoman studies by Tijana Krstić, see D.

Baki Tezcan, in his turn, focuses on Kadızade Mehmed himself, the eponymous hero of the seventeenth-century movement. Like Terzioğlu, he also takes as a point of departure a collection of letters, written by the famous preacher in his youth. Having reconstructed his early life (and also clarifying the authorship of works attributed to a certain Kadızade Mehmed İlmî as probably belonging to his more famous namesake), Tezcan studies the list of books Kadızade records as having deeply influenced his thought, and finds that, contrary to what we could expect, he maintained strong Sufi allegiances and was even sympathetic and respectful towards Ibn Arabi, a major target of Kadızadeli preachers later in the century. Tezcan proceeds to a re-assessment of the movement, interpreting the presence or absence of certain issues in public debates in the light of their own Sufi and palace connections.

Another author whose influence was more and more pronounced in Ottoman political thought from the mid seventeenth century onwards was Ibn Khaldun, the Tunisian scholar who arguably can be credited with the invention of sociology. In my own article, I try to explore the reception of Khaldunist ideas in Ottoman political literature. This influence began earlier than thought, as I argue that it can be detected in parts of Kinalızade Ali Çelebi's mid sixteenth century ethical treatise, but it became really important after Kâtip Çelebi and then Mustafa Naima introduced his theory of stages of rise and decline, through which every dynasty or state must pass. I try to show that, later on, from the mid eighteenth century, it was another part of Ibn Khaldun's perception of history that became more influential, namely the conflict between nomadic and settled life and the association of the former with war and victory.

This third part ends with Gottfried Hagen's contribution, which focuses on a specific episode of Islamic sacred history, the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyya, and its uses in order to legitimise temporary peace with the infidels. Studying a series of prophetic biographies and chronicles, Hagen explores various instances of the Prophet being used as a 'role model' for Ottoman policy-making. Making use of Thomas Bauer's suggestion of ambiguity as a constant feature of pre-modern Islam, he shows that the Prophet's *vita* could be interpreted as an urging for war against the infidels, and Naima's famous treatment of al-Hudaybiyya as an argument for making peace. An argument coming from sacred history, Hagen suggest, has not necessarily the same use when taken up by different authors with different aims and in a different political situation.

The reader may have noticed that up to this point neither the present introduction nor the papers presented have touched upon authors writing outside the imperial capital (Kırımî may be considered an exception, but he was living in Istanbul for a long time and his correspondence is very closely tied to palace politics) or belonging to the non-Muslim part of the imperial subjects.³¹ Indeed, scholars defining themselves as 'Ottomanists'

Terzioğlu, 'How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization: A Historiographical Discussion', *Turcica*, 44 (2012-13), 301-38.

31 On the Greek (and Romanian) Phanariot political (often historical-*cum*-political or moral-*cum*-political) literature, see A. Duğu, *Les livres de sagesse dans la culture roumaine. Introduction à l'histoire des mentalités sud-est européennes* (Bucharest 1971); D. Apostolopoulos, 'Quelques

more often than not tend to ignore the fact that Armenian, Greek, or Jewish populations also formed an integral part of not only the imperial subjects, but also of Ottoman culture. And it may be one of the major challenges for future Ottomanist studies to incorporate these populations into their vision (as the issue of the present day is the incorporation of Arab-speaking literary and scientific production into Ottoman intellectual history). True, as far as politics (in theory more than in practice, of course) is concerned, one may suggest that Ottoman political thought is closely connected to the central government, which was overwhelmingly Turkish-speaking and Muslim; still, every study of Ottoman politics is surely incomplete if it confines itself to these circles. Part IV of the volume is devoted to such 'oblique views' of the Ottoman state, coming from its periphery, be it ethno-religious or geographical. Konstantinos Moustakas' contribution takes up the viewpoint of the upper strata of the Greek Orthodox population, and more particularly of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, in order to examine their views of Ottoman rule during its early centuries. Analysing some texts and chronicles authored by high circles of the Patriarchate (including the first Patriarch, Gennadios Scholarios), Moustakas indicates the ways in which these texts promoted the Sultan's person as a legitimate ruler, characterised by justice and (at least potential) impartiality, while sustaining a distinct identity of the Orthodox flock as against the Ottoman Muslim establishment and population. Through such techniques, one could suggest, the Patriarchate sought to establish its own position both against co-religionists and Muslim antagonists.

Moving away from the Ottoman borders, Denise Klein examines political theory and practice in a neighbouring and closely related state, one whose dynasty was often seen as the only legitimate alternative to the House of Osman,³² namely the Crimean Tatar Khanate. Klein studies a series of historiographical works produced in the Khanate, in order to explore the political ideology emanating from them, in many ways reminiscent of (and influenced by) its Ottoman counterpart - and in other ways distinctly different (as in the emphasis on the steppe tradition). Furthermore, Klein examines how these authors bypass or justify Ottoman suzerainty, and analyses descriptions of specific episodes of Crimean history to highlight the interplay between historiography and factionalist politics at the Khan's court.

Ariel Salzman moves even further, at the same time staying at the very centre of the Ottoman Empire: taking as her point of departure an Ottoman report on Toussaint Louverture's Haitian revolt, she proposes to study a global dimension of Ottoman political culture. Salzman explores the role of the Caribbean revolutions in the geopolitical considerations early nineteenth century Ottoman administrators had concerning their Eu-

hypothèses pour l'étude des origines de la pensée politique grecque post-byzantine (1453-1484). Le processus de transformation du concept de «Bien Commun» en rapport avec l'idéologie née après la prise de Constantinople', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Sorbonne University, 1976; Ş. Costache, 'Loyalty and Political Legitimacy in the Phanariots' Historical Writing in the Eighteenth Century', *SF* 69/70 (2010/2011), 25-50; H.R. Shapiro, 'Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate in Early Modern Greek', *JTS*, 42 (2014), 285-316.

32 F. Emecen, 'Osmanlı hanedanına alternatif arayışlar üzerine bazı örnekler ve mülahazalar', *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi* 6 (2001), 63-76.

ropean alliances, showing that their view of the world might be broader than we tend to think. She also highlights similarities and analogies between the two hemispheres, calling for a contextualisation of Ottoman realities within the entangled histories of a global dimension.

The papers presented so far study more or less varied aspects of political theory, whatever meaning we choose to give the term (political ideas might be a more appropriate term, since not all Ottoman works imply a coherent set of ideas with a descriptive and interpretative function for society). However, political practice is not only supplementary to theory and vice versa; in fact, in order to fully grasp political imaginary and argumentation we have to *include* political behaviour in it. Rituals, symbols, stories, and ‘scripts’, or mental blueprints shaping social behaviour,³³ should be seen as parts of a ‘political language’ or ‘political discourse’; and such discourses may be co-existing and in conflict with other discourses at a given moment.³⁴ Moreover, such conflicting discourses may draw ideas, arguments, and non-textual elements from a common inventory, ascribing different contents and using them for different aims. Furthermore, we should not think of political thought as a privilege of literate, educated scholars or informed Sufis. The very existence of ‘bottom-up’ political action, culminating in military revolts, is an eloquent witness to the diffusion of political ideas, i.e., visions for the Ottoman polity, to broader strata of the society.³⁵ As a concrete example, one could cite the argument condemning reforms as innovations (*bid’at*) and its appropriation by the Janissaries, against whom it was first used – a process that must have begun by the end of the seventeenth century and which is fully attested one century later.³⁶

Such issues, connecting theory and practice, are studied in Part V, the last of this volume. In his contribution, Nicolas Vatin examines the narrative of the Barbaros brothers’ rise to power in Algiers, as contained in a folk text intended as political propaganda. Vatin focuses in the period before Hayreddin Barbarossa joined the Ottoman forces, and shows the various levels on which one can read this narrative, which seeks to conceal Algiers’ independent actions under an *ex post facto* superimposed imperial legitimacy. As

33 Such an array of sources (in a non-political context) is used by D. Ze’evi, *Producing Desire. Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 2006). On the ‘scripts’ concept, Ze’evi quotes J. Gagnon, *Human Sexualities* (Glenview 1977), 6; J. Weeks, *Sexuality* (London 1986), 57-58.

34 The concept of ‘political language/discourse’ is that of J.G.A. Pocock: J.G.A. Pocock, ‘The Concept of a Language and The *Métier d’historien*: Some Considerations on Practice’, in A. Pagden (ed.), *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge 1987), 21-25; idem, ‘Concepts and Discourses: A Difference in Culture? Comment on a Paper by Melvin Richter’, in H. Lehmann and M. Richter (eds), *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts. New Studies on Begriffsgeschichte* (Washington 1996), 47-58. Cf. also Kafadar, ‘Osmanlı siyasal düşüncesinin kaynakları’, 27-28.

35 On the broad array of such initiatives see E. Gara, M.E.Kabadayı, C. Neumann (eds), *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire: Studies in Honor of Suraiya Faroqhi* (Istanbul 2011); Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Political Initiatives from the Bottom-Up*.

36 See Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought*, 422-24 and 444-46.

highlighted by this analysis, the virtues and charisma legitimising Hayreddin's rule are very similar to those used by the Ottoman Sultans in their own legitimising discourse: victorious battles, piety, justice, and so forth. In addition, Vatin delves into the administration of pre-Ottoman Algiers by Hayreddin and illustrates the fine interplay of individual virtues and geopolitical identities which eventually led to both the establishment of the Ottomans in the Maghrib and the subsequent glorious career of Hayreddin as an Ottoman admiral.

Eunjeong Yi brings us to one of the instances where we can see in a certain detail 'bottom-up' action, and a non-military one to boot: the uprising of large segments of the inhabitants of Istanbul against the military regime which had followed Mehmed IV's deposition in 1688. Yi focuses on the biography of Seyyid Osman Atpazarî, a prominent Sufi figure who played a major role in this uprising. She thus highlights the role played by such figures as a sort of natural leadership for the urban crowd; furthermore, the vivid description of the events in Atpazarî's *vita* brings to the forefront the discourse and political aims of this crowd, which seldom find their way into more official chronicles.

The rest of the papers deal with the army, the constant protagonist both of political practice (as an actor, and a rebellious one to boot) and theory (as the usual object of criticism and potential reform). Virginia Aksan addresses a subject which was underlying all reformist efforts of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century: the apparent inadequacy of the existing army to wage a successful war and, more specifically, the difficulties of mobilising military manpower at this period. She discusses the various forms this mobilisation took since the beginning of the Ottoman state, always examining them in the context of the political structure of the Empire. Aksan shows the close intermingling of military affairs and warfare with the development of the central state and with its changing relations with the periphery, not only in actual networks of power and interdependence but also in ideological representations.

The last two contributions in the volume focus on the same, late period of the pre-Tanzimat era and on the military corps which played the most prominent role in Ottoman politics: the Janissaries. Earlier on, in her own paper, Linda Darling had shown that the transformation of the corps in the late sixteenth century had come in a swifter way than we thought; Yiannis Spyropoulos, in his turn, studies the final stage of this transformation into a military-*cum*-social-*cum*-economic-*cum*-political organisation. Taking the province of Crete as a case study, he shows through a detailed study of judicial archives and registers that this process was equally, if not more, visible on the periphery as in Istanbul, both in terms of political participation and of economic and social role. Furthermore, Spyropoulos suggests that the networks connecting Janissary units of the various port-cities of the Eastern Mediterranean constituted a means for conducting trade and credit activities. His image of the Janissaries as an overwhelmingly provincial institution by the early nineteenth century calls also for a new interpretation of provincial politics and a re-assessment of socio-cultural exchanges within the Empire.

Finally, H. Şükrü Ilıcak's paper deals with the abolition of the Janissary corps, the (in) famous 'Auspicious Event' of 1826. The angle from which he proposes to view this landmark of Ottoman history is rather unusual, as he sees it as an implication, or at any rate as

partially a result, of the Greek War of Independence, which had erupted in 1821. Taking as his main source British Ambassador Lord Strangford's correspondence, Ilıcak shows that the events in Istanbul following the beginning of the war were at the same time the climax of Janissary power and its destruction: whereas the Janissary leaders took extreme measures in the capital against those viewed as Greek conspirators, the eventual failure of all actions against the insurgency (including Janissary regiments sent to suppress it) undermined the status and the prestige of the corps and prepared the ground for a radical reconfiguration of the Ottoman political and military structure.