Halcyon Days XI international symposium "Enchantments and disenchantments: early modern Ottoman visions of the world" (Rethymno, January 14–17, 2022): a report

The Halcyon Days in Crete XI Symposium "Enchantments and disenchantments: early modern Ottoman visions of the world", the second of a series[1] organised in the context of the research project "GHOST: Geographies and Histories of the Ottoman Supernatural Tradition: Exploring Magic, the Marvelous, and the Strange in Ottoman Mentalities" (funded by the European Research Council, CoGr2017 no. 771766), was to take place in Rethymno, Crete, on January 2021. However, the pandemic forced us to postpone it for one year, eventually taking place (on Zoom, unfortunately) on January 14–17, 2022.

The rationale behind the selection of the symposium topic was published in the previous issue of the present journal as its editorial.[2] In short, the symposium aspired to provide insights into the varying and shifting Ottoman images

1 For our first symposium see M. Sariyannis, "International workshop "Nature and the supernatural in Ottoman culture" (Istanbul, December 14–15, 2019): a report". *Aca'ib: Occasional papers on the Ottoman perceptions of the supernatural* 1 (2020), 105–116.

2 M. Sariyannis, "Enchantments and Disenchantments in Ottoman World Visions: Preliminary Remarks", *Aca'ib: Occasional papers on the Ottoman perceptions of the supernatural* 2 (2021), 5–8.

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of nature and the supernatural, searching for the sociocultural configurations of parallel paths that modified world visions of Ottoman individuals and communities. By studying the emergence and development of different regimes of truth from the early fourteenth to the late eighteenth centuries, it sought to investigate whether, and how, Ottoman perceptions of nature and science transformed toward a more "enchanted" or a more "disenchanted" world in the early modern period. Twenty-three scholars from across the world, representing Ottomanists, Arabists, and Neohellenists, explored topics related to this problématique, from miracle-working to medicine and from engineering to philosophy.

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The first day of the symposium was commenced by **Zeynep Aydoğan (Rethymno)** with her paper on "Antinomian dervishes and anti-*kerāmet* polemics before the 'Age of confessionalisation'". Focusing on the social reactions in the face of the miraculous deeds of certain Muslim holy men in the early hagiographies, Aydoğan discussed how the question of sainthood and the resulting polemics can be reflective of the competition and tensions between different religious segments of the society before the establishment of the subsequent *tariqa*s. In his paper, "La vie du Prophète et l'ordre des choses : les *Siyer-i Nebi* de Veysī (m. 1037/1628) et Nābī (m. 1124/1712)", **Renaud Soler (Paris)** analysed a couple of Ottoman *Siyer-i nebi* (*sīra* in Arabic), one from the early seventeenth and another from the early eighteenth centuries. Showing how poetic conventions, or what we would call today anachronisms, served to make present the prophetic past and to give it a meaning beyond holy history, Soler argued that the literary writing of the life of the Prophet could serve both as a vehicle for a cosmology, as well as to pave the way for its secularisation. The paper by **Nikolas Pissis (Berlin)** was entitled "Paisios Ligaridis on magic and divination". Paisios (Pantaleon) Ligaridis (1610–1678), a Jesuit from Chios, agent of the Propaganda Fide in the Christian East, Orthodox metropolitan of Gaza, counselor of Tsar Aleksei in Moscow, has been described by historians as an "intellectual adventurer" or "resourceful villain". Pissis focused on his voluminous Book of Prophecies, composed in 1655, analysing the author's reflections on the issue of public/permitted and secret/forbidden knowledge and the justification he provides for his exegetical efforts in revealing divine secrets or delving into pa-

gan divination practices. **Marinos Sariyannis (Rethymno)** spoke on "Sources and traditions of knowledge: revelation, hermeticism, reasoning in an Ottoman context". He delved into the different Ottoman approaches to the possible sources of knowledge, from divine revelation and inspiration to the power of individual reason and experience. The crucial question, he argued, is whether anybody is capable to reach truth and permitted access to knowledge: in this vein, he suggested, the role of Ottoman Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) thought and its connection to Hermeticism is crucial. Finally, **Güneş Işıksel's (Istanbul)** paper on "Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi's art of describing: narrative of wonders and details of precision" presented a report by Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi, ambassador to Louis XV's France in 1720 about the "wondrous arts and crafts" displayed in his presence. Particularly Mehmed Çelebi's descriptions of the opera and of the *Canal royal en Languedoc* highlight the new meanings of terms like "wonder" or "strange" and the technical precision he uses in describing human-made "marvels".

The second day began with **Aslı Niyazioğlu's (Oxford)** paper with the title "An enchanted Kostantiniyye? Talismanic antiquities of Ottoman *acaib*s (15th-17th centuries)". Niyazioğlu discussed Istanbul as a locus of ancient monuments, viewed as talismanic constructions of a marvelous past. She showed that the Ottomans' engagement with these antiquities implied a complex relationship with the past and the present of the city, as monuments like the obelisks were taken to contain prognostications through the occult science of *cifr*. Next, **Harun B. Küçük (Philadelphia)** presented his paper on "Weberian categories and models of Ottoman modernity". Küçük highlighted the importance of Max Weber's work and of his concepts of rationalism and bureaucratic domination for the debates concerning disenchantment (itself a Weberian term); moreover, he discussed a number of other approaches and models, with varying emphasis on science, secularism and religion. In a similar vein, **Baki Tezcan (Davis)** presented his paper on "Birgivi vs. Ghazali: disenchanting an enchanted scholar". Using in his turn Weber's concepts, he sought to situate the work of Birgivi Mehmed (d. 1573) in a larger context that includes works by al-Ghazali. Tezcan proposed to treat the early modern transformation of Ottoman Sunni Islam as a disenchantment and define it as the gradual disassociation of moral and ontological questions from one's faith in and submission to God, which were in the process of being articulated in increasingly more rationalist and technical and less emotive terms, and thus

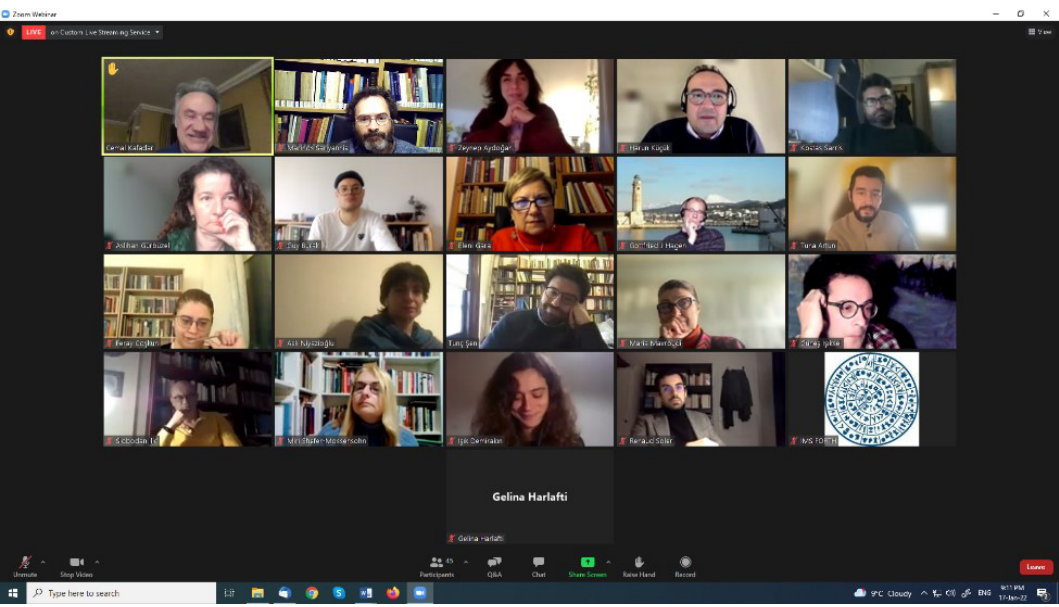
could no longer accommodate the enchanted world of medieval Sufis. **Kostas Sarris (Thessaloniki)** discussed the "Dialectics of enchantment and disenchantment in the intellectual world of Meletios of Athens". Michail Mitros/Meletios Metropolitan of Athens (1661–1714), author of geographical, historical and astronomical works, also wrote two medical treatises that lie in the grey area between natural and preternatural knowledge, drawing from the Paracelsian tradition and European "books of secrets". Sarris reflected on the cognitive presuppositions and delineated the modes through which the enchanted alternates with the disenchanted nature and occultism converses with science in Meletios' intellectual world. **Slobodan Ilić's (Nicosia)** paper had the title "Underground life of a Sufi saint: The hidden Idris (İdrîs-i Muhtefî, d. 1615) and the secret history of the Melâmî-Hamzevî order in the 17th Century". Ilić focused on the efforts of the Melâmî branch of the Bayrâmî dervish order to be reconciled with the state authorities and the orthodox ulema and try to regain its prestige, seriously imperiled by a chain of trials and eventual persecutions of its heterodox protagonists during the previous century. Using the corpus of the available Melâmî hagiographic works and some previously unused manuscript sources, he proposed a novel and dissenting history of Melâmism, challenging the generally accepted spiritual lineage of the order. The next paper, by **Tuna Artun (New Jersey)**, was titled "Warfare, re-enchanted? An occult history of the Ottoman military". Artun opened with the hypothesis that premodern battlefields were as much sites of the unseen as they were of the readily perceptible, as commanders and soldiers harnessed amulets, talismans, and various divinatory practices in order to foresee developments, take decisions and protect their lives. He then suggested a conceptual framework for studying Ottoman warfare as a social and cultural practice in relationship with disenchantment/re-enchantment processes, and offered a periodisation of certain practices and the involvement of specialists like alchemists and lettrists within the Ottoman war machine. Finally, **Gottfried Hagen (Michigan)**, "Miracles in the age of disenchantment", sought to explore how societies got from an enchanted world, where acts of power that disrupt or transcend the boundaries of normalcy or regularity of the human experience were ubiquitous, to a disenchanted one, where miracles are either discounted or relegated to a symbolic or spiritual plane outside of physical reality. Drawing on a broad range of 'early modern' Ottoman hagiography, Hagen argued that disenchantment manifests itself not in a critique of the concept of miracle per se, but, driven by shifts

from immanentist to transcendentalist religiosity (in Alan Strathern's terms), in the narrative framing, scale, and social function.

On the third day, **Maria Mavroudi (Berkeley)** and **Cornell H. Fleischer (Chicago)** presented a joint paper on "Ottoman and Byzantine classifications of knowledge in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries". They focused on the classifications of knowledge conveyed in the earliest surviving Ottoman version of the Life of Alexander and the position of the "science of letters" among them, arguing that Ottoman classifications of knowledge around this period closely parallel their Byzantine equivalents. Furthermore, addressing Byzantine and Ottoman discussions of miracles that took place in the fifteenth century, Mavroudi and Fleischer suggested that Byzantine texts and interpretative approaches to ancient Greek thought informed both Ottoman and European thought into the early seventeenth century. **Guy Burak**'s **(New York)** paper, with the title "'Sound transmission and sincere unveiling': 'Abd al-Rahman al-Bistami's epistemology and Islamic universalism", analysed 'Abd al-Rahman al-Bistami (d. 1455)'s works focusing on his methods and epistemological premises concerning the acquisition and transmission of knowledge. Both *naql* (transmission) and *kashf* (unveiling) are highly charged epistemological concepts in the Islamic tradition, the former is rooted in the transmitted sciences and the latter in *tasawwuf* and related sciences. Bistami does not devote much attention to the method of transmission of revelation, but, as illustrated by Burak, seems to imply the existence of one. **Aslıhan Gürbüzel (Montreal)** presented a paper entitled "Starting with enchantment: understanding charismatic authority". She focused on the Peripatetic (*meşşaî*) vs. Illuminationist (*işrâkî*) distinction of two types of wisdom or philosophy (*hikma*), as presented in Ottoman Illuminationist writings such as those by Karakaşzade Ömer Efendi or İsma'il Ankaravî. Gürbüzel traced the influences of Illuminationism in major intellectual currents and debates of the seventeenth century and highlighted the repercussions these debates had in early modern Ottoman efforts to regulate spiritual authority by defining rationality and claim various exclusive ways to access knowledge. **Cemal Kafadar (Cambridge MA)** ended the third day with a paper on "The enchanted çelebis of the seventeenth century and their disenchantments". Kafadar focused on the traditions and arguments regarding Khidr/Hızır, a key figure in Islamic lore who seems to have played a special role in the "long seventeenth century", the age of çelebis as he named it, i.e. of a social type that felt enchanted by a new cosmopolitan body of knowledge, re-

gardless ethnoreligious origin. He shed light on the complexities of the debates around Khidr's life and characteristics, part of the Kadızadeli debates discussed by Kâtib Çelebi and others, and suggested that the age of çelebis gave rise to a different kind of enchantment and wonder, more mundane than otherworldly.

The fourth and final day opened with **A. Tunç Şen (New York)**, with the title "Mystics vs. *munajjim*s: competing experts of esoteric knowledge in the early modern Ottoman world". Şen first examined the concepts related to knowledge and expertise as a window into looking at competing claims of authority and prestige, and then moved to the specific example of astrologers/*munajjim*s. He delved on anti-astrology polemics, studying whether these attacked the fundamental cosmological premises of astrology or its practitioners; Şen concluded with an analysis of how did the munajjims themselves define their own craft and expertise vis-à-vis those externalist views. **Feray Coşkun (Istanbul)** talked about "Wondrous and strange in Ottoman geographical texts". She explored the scope of wondrous and strange phenomena (*'ajā'ib wa gharā'ib*) in Ottoman geographical texts and their functions of invoking astonishment, fear and admiration and expanding people's perspectives on diversity of existence in heavenly and terrestrial realms or far and close geographies. Coşkun analysed how the sources play with religious symbolism and creative imagination, and how they instrumentalise *'ajā'ib wa gharā'ib* to convey theological or moralistic messages for the Ottoman audience. In a more cosmological level, **Side Emre (College Station)** presented a paper on "A diagram of the cosmos: mystical cosmologies and diagramming in the early modern Ottoman Empire". Emre surveyed a series of diagrams drawn by Sufi authors and representing the components of various mystical understandings of the cosmos in their interrelation through complex visual arrangements. After presenting some impressive 3D video renditions of such diagrams, Emre focused on such a diagram by Muhyi, centering in the five "presences" or "worlds" of Akbarian philosophy, highlighting the innovative points in which he departs from the traditional commentaries on Ibn Arabi. **Nir Shafir (San Diego)** contributed with a paper on "The Disenchanted Door: al-Jazari's mechanical contraptions and their Ottoman reception". Starting from the diffusion of fake or recreated images showcasing Islamic science, Shafir pondered on the role of illustrations in Islamic scientific manuscripts. As a case study, he analysed the Ottoman reception of al-Jazari's (d. 1206) work on mechanics and automata, highlighting the role of the work in the context of the twelfth-fourteenth century artisanal work, as well as the "disenchanting"



functions of the Ottoman translation. In her paper, **Miri Shefer-Mossensohn** (**Tel Aviv**) showed how "17th century Ottomans think about European medicine and rethink their world". Focusing on Tobias HaCohen (d. 1729), a doctor of Jewish-Polish descent who studied in Padua and eventually became physician to five successive Ottoman sultans, Shefer-Mossensohn analysed his social profile and emphasised his awareness of the innovative dimension of European medicine. HaCohen adopted new knowledge without rejecting the old, while believing in the human ability to reach all the secrets of the human body and, arguably, of the universe. The final paper of the symposium, "On the same page: convergence and divergence of natural and supernatural in the early 19th-century Ottoman Empire", was presented by **N. Işık Demirakın** (**Rethymno**). Concentrating on the earlier part of the 19th century, when reform efforts gained momentum and natural sciences became a part of the newly established schools' curricula in the Ottoman Empire, she analysed how the relationship with "supernatural" and "natural" was reshaped in line with the state policies based on the first official newspaper of the Ottoman Empire, *Takvim-i Vekayi*. Demirakın perused the news articles printed under the headings "*garaib*" and "*fünun*," and contended that despite offering different perspectives for making sense of and explaining the world, they were very much in unison in terms of their function: legitimising Mahmud II's rule.

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In lieu of a general assessment of the proceedings, we are happy to present here a transcript of the general discussion that ended the last day of the symposium:[3]

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Marinos Sariyannis: This is the end, we are missing Baki [Tezcan], who had some unpredicted administrative circumstances and Side [Emre], who also had to go. Cornell [Fleischer], I don't know if he's coming to join us later. Anyway, it's a pity we cannot discuss our papers and our views over a glass or two, as it has been usually in the long Halcyon Days tradition, but as I promised yesterday, I will try to live up to this tradition in private, so here's to you dear friends, I'll drink my beer and encourage you all to do so. And now I give the floor to Eleni Gara who kindly accepted to chair our concluding discussion.

Eleni Gara (Chair): Thank you very much Marinos, thank you all, it's a great pleasure and honor to have been here with you all this time, and to hear your work. I learned a lot and actually it has been four very stimulating evenings with thought-provoking papers and rich discussions. We have been introduced to different facets of the broad theme of enchantment and disenchantment in the Ottoman world, and to the work of intellectuals, mostly but not only of Turkish-speaking Muslims, and a lot of them Sufis, we have heard about miracles and wonders, reason, revelation, mystical and temporal knowledge, the nature of knowledge, and the modes of its classification, how to know God and to understand the world, etc. What I see, and it's not really a conclusion, but what I have taken out of these four evenings is that it's not really productive to understand the issue of enchantment/disenchantment in terms of irrationality and rationality, in terms of this dichotomy, but perhaps rather to associate it with different regimes of knowledge. If we agree that enchantment was the default position in the urban world throughout its history, to the extent that it was shamelessly manipulated for imperial propaganda as we just heard, what about the emergence and the inclusion of disenchantment? I feel that we have not really talked about this, and I'll take advantage of my chairing this last discussion session to bring up the issue. I will introduce it with the story that, in my mind, gives food for thought. In June 1797, the ambassador Seyyid Ali Efendi arrives

3 The discussion was transcribed by Sofia Kane, MA student and member of the GHOST team.

in Lyon on his way to Paris. His official program included a visit to the library where a demonstration of electricity took place. His report makes a brief note of the matter without any comment. "Besides books, there was also a demonstration of some sort of electric instruments relating to thunder and lightning." His Greek dragoman. however, Panagiotakis Kodrikas, notes the following in his diary: "Experiments in physics and electricity, which Efendi saw for the first time, he anathematized and compelled me to say that they deceived themselves, because the sound of thunder and the flash of lightning results from the wings of Archangel Gabriel, as God said in the Quran." I would like to open the discussion by asking you, who work with all these things, what do you make of this? The floor is yours.

Marinos Sariyannis: All right, I will summarise my two cents on the topic of enchantment and disenchantment again, and it will be, I think, what one might make of the example you so nicely brought up. As it was highlighted in so many of the excellent papers presented, there are plenty of definitions and theorisation about enchantment or disenchantment and they all have something to contribute to the discussion. In my view, one of the most fruitful is the distinction between transcendence and immanence brought up by Gottfried [Hagen]. So, is the supernatural, i.e. is God present in every action and phenomenon, from human actions to the thunder, as in Eleni's example, or does He inhabit a distant sphere above us all, leaving us the maximum possible freedom to decide and act? In this vein, I would propose that we should see enchantment and disenchantment as a process rather than a phenomenon: a process from transcendence to immanence and vice versa, all the way until the possibility of materialism and atheism appears. A process that can be repeated, inversed, but also coexist with its opposite, as different groups or individuals come to terms with the world and surrounding intellectual climate.

So this brings me to the second point that I think is relevant to the example, which is that it seems to me the major methodological problem (also highlighted by several papers) is that we really know only texts. Eleni's example was not exactly text, it's a behavior, which is different, and it's quite rarer. Texts, which copy other texts, all of which make claims that complement others and less often criticise them... but we don't know how these texts were read, with what degree of deepness or fidelity or skepticism. How much were people really thinking independently? The examples of the ambassador (who actually should

have known better, if he was educated, an *efendi* or a çelebi), or of Katip Çelebi's illuminationism (brought up in several moments of our symposium) are telling. French historians of the occult sciences have talked of *la croyance clignotante,* a blinking, a winking, a flashing belief, a partial belief, so to speak, where practices may sometimes be considered a game, a pastime, or a hobby of sorts. It's about occult practices and science, but it can also be applied to other aspects. What I would suggest is that we should perhaps investigate heresy, rather than orthodoxy; look for the singular cases, for the exceptions, for instance the materialist thinkers for whom we know next to nothing for the moment. If this proves impossible, we could explore and turn again to French historiography. What Lucien Febvre called *l'outillage mental,* the mental equipment or toolbox that frames conceptions of time, nature, causality, and allows for trespassing the borders of established thought.

Another last point (I know, Eleni, that I'm not really answering what I make of the Pasha's example, but perhaps I will help to highlight it): You know I always insist, and have been taught, that the intellectual historian should ultimately put questions in terms of social history. Identifying intellectual trends and traditions is one thing; we also need to move beyond, to understand how they function in society: which social groups favored which trends and why, in what cultural context they did so, what is the role of vernacular culture and what is the role of social status. Now, of course, an even cursory review of our sources, will show that they rarely mention the name of the author. In some cases, in the case of occult sources for instance, it's even rarer to find any kind of information on who the author is, or the author is not even named. So one path I would propose is to give emphasis to the Sufi affiliations of our sources. Because, firstly, identifying the Sufi attachments of an author from even an anonymous treatise is much easier than their social background. When they do not list Sufi fraternities, showing a more or less clear preference for one among them, they almost always will take sides on debates heavily colored by intra-Sufi conflict. Secondly, Ottoman society was deeply integrated through Sufi culture, which means that these affiliations also play the role of social statement, and, although we know very well the differentiation within the fraternity or brotherhood was extremely important, we perhaps can identify some major fraternities and brotherhoods with specific, albeit fluid, social groups.

I know I hijacked Eleni's question in the last intervention...

Eleni Gara (Chair): The idea was to introduce the discussion.

Marinos Sariyannis: Yes, exactly, I would say again my first point, that the disenchantment or re-enchantment is a process, so it's not a general, unilinear process for all. Kodrikas's ambassador obviously lived or thought he lived or wanted to show that he lived—

Eleni Gara (Chair): The interesting thing in this incident is that in the *Sefaretname* he says that he attended an experiment on electricity, that's all: nothing. He or, anyway, whoever wrote the *Sefaretname,* anyway, there is a point there, that there was an experiment—

Marinos Sariyannis: There is an example that shows exactly that—

Eleni Gara (Chair): Okay.

Marinos Sariyannis: We have the texts, and texts show us that at least in the late 18th century, there had been an impact of the Scientific Revolution, a kind of disenchantment, a kind of enlightenment perhaps. The example of the ambassador shows that there is also history behind and beyond texts, like the Pasha mentioned by Lady Montague who may have had dissident thoughts, or promoted this inverse kind of hermeticism: we can practice something that is not permitted to everybody, because we are the select, so it also works inversely.

Gottfried Hagen: I want to throw in one other pair of terms that might not solve anything, but that might enrich the debate in some form, I hope. One is Thomas Bauer's "culture of ambiguity," which I thought, back when it came out ten years ago, was a very thought-provoking approach, and to some degree what Bauer is describing is a process of a decreasing tolerance for ambiguity, and so it's very tempting to correlate this in one way or another to the problem of disenchantment. The disappointment with Bauer's book is that he describes this complex, colorful medieval world full of ambiguities, and then he jumps to contrast it with modernity, and I always felt that we as the Ottomanists are sort of caught in the middle, where that path, some way, goes through, and Bauer never even attempts to explain to us how we get from A to B, other than the

various forms of blanket blame on colonialism. But the notion as such I think is worth exploring.

And the other thing that I wanted to pose here is something, which I hope at some point I'll have the leisure in my life to think through a little bit more; it is to what degree Ottoman culture is a culture of performance, in the sense that being Ottoman, and participating in Ottoman culture, is always in one way or another a performative act of stepping into a particular frame, and acting according to a certain set of rules, and being able to step out of it again. So this is a very rough idea, but again, it might account for some of the simultaneity, then the inherent contradictions that we seem to be dealing with. This is, as I said, a very raw and rough and premature idea, but I thought this might be sort of a forum where it might help some.

Eleni Gara (Chair): It certainly resonates well with a theme that has come up in various papers about this state of diglossia or, if I may put it in this in this way, a public and a private persona, that behave in different ways, as you said.

Harun Küçük: One thing that I wonder about, and this is a very general question, is the limits of intellectual history. We talk about texts, and we access a reality through texts, but I think one question is, well, is that what reality is? In my view, what is most commonly shared, or what people most commonly have, is not access to texts, it's access to personal experience. In that sense, are we not using the text to access this experience, rather than the other way around? Is there not a world beyond text, and is there not a history beyond intellectual history, when we are talking about even intellectual objects? That's one thing I wonder about. Since I've got the floor, I want to say something: Gottfried Hagen, when he talks about Katip Çelebi, it's so hard to just—he said, well, it's your problem, Katip Çelebi is pretty [unintelligible] the way I see it, and he's absolutely right. And in a way, Katip Çelebi also is an indication of what's possible in the Ottoman setting.

I have my own views about Thomas Bauer because I personally think that we don't really have a good language to talk about people really not caring about some things, and we may see that as a kind of tolerance, or love of tolerance, or ambiguity, whereas... I don't know. I think about a lot of things in my scholarship, and in life, as somebody who has seen both Donald Trump and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and I think about that, what does that mean about

people, maybe I have been imagining people wrong all my life. This is maybe the case, that people maybe don't care all that much about all the things that I care about, or all the things that we in this room may care about, and we don't really have a good way to talk about that. That's my view on Thomas Bauer's "culture of ambiguity." Maybe it's not a culture of ambiguity, it's just an absence of an entire register of culture, full stop. That's my random musings based on what Gottfried said.

Cemal Kafadar: I have my own problems with the "culture of ambiguity," but it's a long story, and I won't go there, it's not directly related to what we've been speaking about in the last few days, though obviously there is a good reason that Gottfried brought it up, and we could discuss it. But about intellectual history and the rest of the world, let me just tell you an anecdote which I've already told in an interview that was published and some of you may have read it. Anyway, I was giving an interview on some TV channel at some point a few years ago, and a carpenter I admire very much, a true master of carpentry, my model of a good craftsman, was evidently watching it. A few days later, I met him, I had no idea. He said, "Oh, I saw you on TV speaking to this journalist." I said, "Wow, that's nice, what did you make of what I said, what do you think?" and he said, "You know, I watch many shows like this, I never really listen to what people say, I look at the bookshelves behind them. That's why I watch professors speak. I want to figure out the kind of wood they used, or other material, see if the shelf is bent, figure out if the dimensions are optimal, etc." Just the way I'm looking at Marinos and Eleni right now with bookshelves behind them, and I might be focused merely on that aspect of my encounter with the screen. He was engaged not with my discourse, but with something that's immediately relevant to him, and that too is extremely meaningful, probably much more meaningful than whatever I had been saying. And to me, that's like a lesson about the larger reception and relevance of the many books I read and love to read in manuscript libraries, which I still think are extremely resonant and relevant and meaningful, but the way they touch people's lives, the way they figure in people's lives, is something different. People have very different associations with those books, as we all know, and it is not only on the level of what we consider ideas worthy of intellectual history. Or one reads for those as well but has other priorities. My carpenter friend, I imagine, cares about the program enough to look at it for his own reasons, and I'm sure he listens to some of it. I've never considered

myself an intellectual historian, I read intellectual history avidly and love it, but the world beyond is always of much greater interest to me, though I cannot do one without the other, of course, and hence find myself regularly reading the work of intellectual historians with great admiration while trying to be aware of the limits of this kind of exercise.

As for enchantment and disenchantment, I think these two are very meaningful categories, but there are a couple of aspects we did not discuss, and as this project moves on, it may be worth bringing them up. One of them has to do with considering what lies beyond enchantment and disenchantment, or in the space between them? Do these binaries truly encompass the whole spectrum of positions one wants to be able to understand? Can one be indifferent? What's the position of indifference between enchantment and disenchantment? I don't think this is a huge problem, but speaking only of enchantment and disenchantment, one may be missing that there is a huge world of, "Oh, whatever. I'm neither enchanted nor disenchanted." That means this is—

Eleni Gara (Chair): If I could introduce a word, agnosticism, sort of; is that what you describe, an agnostic stance on the supernatural?

Cemal Kafadar: To some degree, but I am thinking mostly of something like the space between *haram* and *farz*, between what you must do and what you must avoid. It is the larger part of life and comprises all sorts of deeds and thoughts, which can even be reprehensible or commendable, but the largest area is the part in the middle, which is just neutral, indifferent, *mübāh*, like me gently scratching my nose, etc. So that's one conceptual aspect about binaries like enchantment and disenchantment, that one may wish to work on a bit in the future of the project. And the other—I think it came through indirectly at certain points —is the relationship between enchantment and the supernatural. It wasn't tackled directly in this conference, and, as I tried to argue, one can be just as enchanted in the natural as in the supernatural, and I don't think any of you would disagree with this. But we did not consider the diverse kinds of enchantment that take place with the supernatural, or the natural, or with preternatural, or other kinds of categories, and that's another element that calls for some conceptualisation and elaboration. Thank you. I look at bookshelves behind you, and both of you have sturdy shelves, good carpentry.

Guy Burak: I also don't really see—and that goes back to a comment that Maria [Mavroudi] made in the first day—I cannot see how we avoid the mega-narrative that we are post the enlightenment, and the post-enlightenment narrative. And I actually think that even the best attempts to translate it to the fifteenth century inevitably carries this and the flavor of this narrative. I actually don't think that this is very fruitful. I'm all for grand narratives, but I'm not sure that the enchantment and disenchantment helps us get away or come up with a better explanation of the wide range of epistemologies that we are seeing. For many of the people we study, these are not even major questions. Even if they are, they are questions that can be explained after the first second, they can be explained in different ways. I think that when we set out with this question in mind, we will be looking for snippets and moments that help us reinforce the narrative that we have been debunking and debating for, more or less, 80 years now, or maybe even 200. So maybe this is not the right framing.

Maria Mavroudi: I would like to emphasise that this is a comment by an outsider to the Ottoman field who is very grateful for the opportunity to observe it! Every time I discuss with Ottomanists, I am impressed by how central the question of modernity is. Of course, this has to do with the perception of the Ottoman Empire as a failed empire, which failed because it didn't catch up with modernity on time. Of course I come from a field that also studies a historical period and geography perceived as essentially anti-modern. So the problem of modernity is a problem for me as well. But, given that Byzantium is pre-modern, the problem of modernity is not as centrally located for Byzantinists. And it seems to me, if I may be permitted as an outsider, that the centrality of this question in the Ottoman field sometimes side-tracks the discussions. I hope this does not sound like harsh criticism, it is only the thought of an outsider, but I think I heard a number of times today, as a passing observation in a number of papers, "Let's leave modernity aside for a little bit and let's approach things in a different way." So it seems to me that there is a broader desideratum to dislodge modernity from its central position. Maybe we are witnessing the birth pains of a shift in the field—perhaps because our times are post-modern? To me, such a shift is desirable, because it will change the discussion, and this will be productive.

Aslı Niyazioğlu: I will follow up on Guy's remark. As early modern Ottomanists interested in the study of the occult knowledge, where are we now and where do we want to go? Guy mentioned the wide range of epistemologies that his material presents. Do we try to understand this knowledge thoroughly? I think we have not even begun yet. When we look at the material and problems our GHOST project brings out, we realise how little we know our source material. I personally would like to see much more attention to our sources. Rather than trying to come up with big theories, at this point, we do need to carry out the meticulous groundwork. I would like to see much more admission of what we do not understand about our material and more exploration of the ways in which they surprise us. We need to explore our texts more closely.

Eleni Gara (Chair): Thank you, Aslı. Of course you're right, this is a great project, and looking at it from the outside—because although I'm an Ottomanist this is a field that I am totally outside—I think this is wonderful, what you're doing: new material, and in the papers, things that I had no idea existed. So it was a great opportunity to see this panorama, and I'm sure that by the end of the project, a lot more things will come up. So what you say is that we are at the beginning, and you probably know best, a for lot of these texts, you are just trying to figure out how to read them, and how to understand them, and what to make of them. So of course this is important to point out.

Harun Küçük: I take Maria Mavroudi's comments very seriously. This is a question that I myself have questions about: what are we doing with modernity, why should we care about modernity, but I'm also curious about why, for example, I am more easily able to associate with someone like Katip Çelebi than I am with someone like Abdurrahman al-Bistami. What is the affinity there? Let's not call it modernity, but let's talk about—and this might not be just Katip Çelebi, it might not be a period-specific thing. I also associate more easily with Aristotle than I do with some other thinkers, but that's that kind of affinity, and I think modernity is also a question of people like us: how are they like us, and how are they not like us. I'm wondering what an alternative method of dealing with this affinity might be.

Guy Burak: As someone who actually finds much closer affinity to Abdurrahman al-Bistami than to Katip Çelebi, I actually think that these are people—I

was working on the alphabets, and his work on the alphabet, and when you start reading the work you suddenly realise that what he's saying is something that every graphic designer that understands semiotics of typology would say. It's really about what kind of genealogies we want to reconstruct. I think that many of these people have many things to tell us, and I'm not just saying that. I came to the study of these talismans sort of accidentally and in the midst of the pandemic, a period that I think we all agree was a year of talismanic thinking in many ways, and I actually find that many of the things that these people are trying to do are extremely meaningful and resonate with questions beyond the first layer of the discourse. They are reading texts that we may value more, but as for the kind of questions that they are trying to solve, and the kind of logic that they are trying to find, I don't find al-Bistami that distant.

Maria Mavroudi: I think that, in the larger scheme of things, what allows us to discuss enchantment, disenchantment, etc. in the terms that we did is the fact that postmodernism has deconstructed some of these earlier categories. I think the problem for the Ottoman field, as well as for my field, is that we are not really entirely buying into the model of postmodernism, because we cannot: if we do, we are done in. On the one hand, we are benefiting from the post-modern freedom to discuss things like faith and reason, rationality, etc. in new ways. On the other hand, we are still using instruments that were developed under the influence of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century intellectual universe (e.g. paleography, codicology, numismatics, in their form as modern scholarly disciplines). I was struck—and I want to insist that this was part of our punchline in our paper with Cornell—by how much enchanted thinking there is in Vico's work. In many ways one can construe Vico as an Italian provincial who hasn't caught up with what's happening in Central Europe, and who didn't have a very large reception during his lifetime, but then was discovered by postmodernism and became a key figure. We read him and are at ease with the fact that he talks about many things similar to the *aca'ib* discussed at our conference. There may be something in postmodernism that we (Byzantinists and Ottomanists) can capitalise on and apply in fruitful ways, at the same time knowing that we cannot completely buy into the post-modern model.

Güneş Işıksel: As party boomer, as always, I have some other remarks from my own experience, in 2004 or '05 it was, I have just seen a very strange parallel

between the 1650s in France and in the Ottoman cases. So in France, it was the Jansenists and Jesuits in a fierce fight on the nature of miracles. And from there it was obvious, of course, what it meant to me on the Ottoman case. Then I read Lucien Goldmann's *The Hidden God.* At the time, I was much more astonished at reading Pascal, etc., then I started to read more on the French theological-political controversies. Okay, what should I do for the Ottoman case, thence? I just wanted to read some—we have talked about a lot of *Ishrakî* texts. Hopefully, I had at hand all these editions of Henri Corbin and many other excellent translations as well all the apparatus necessary. Then I said, "Well, I have to enter on these." All right, it was not my minor, but I was at the time much more keen on philosophy, so I tried to read all the texts that I could find, at least in the absence of Ottoman critical editions, trying to read especially the seventeenth century Iranian ones, on which especially Henry Corbin had written a lot as well. But to sum up, reading these texts is extremely difficult. All the Arabists or specialists of Islamic philosophy on the one hand; no need to say—it's the same case for the Byzantines: all the major critical editions are done, all the necessary dictionaries and lexicons are quite ready. So while approaching the texts, what I feel while listening at all the papers—there were very meticulous presentations, such as Guy's or Tunç's excellent ones, but on the other hand, mine for instance, it was rather shaky. I was trying to understand the changes in the Ottoman syntax at the turn of the eighteenth century, but even for this, we have only a little here. You have to assess the changes in syntax, you have to study the terminology in the very basic texts—I'm not only talking about the *Sefaretname*—for all the texts of Ottoman philosophy, theosophy, I think we have to first make the initial editions, and then start to discuss the hermeneutical cycles, etc. Okay, that's my point: we are perhaps discussing a bit of many things as if we had achieved a lot of things. That's just what I would like to remind us, sorry.

Eleni Gara (Chair): No, okay, I think you're very harsh with yourself and the others. I don't know if we can really wait for the corpus to be prepared and edited before going on. This was in the nineteenth century or in the early twentieth century, and they were—I don't see it happening anytime soon, so it's great that you're doing it the way that you are.

Aslı Niyazioğlu: Why not be harsh? Of course, we have to communicate with

our colleagues in other fields, like those who work on European cases, but at what cost? I agree with Güneş. I do think that we have to complete initial steps first, such as working on critical editions and defining our terminology more clearly. This work is not "fashionable" anymore. But without it, I do not think we can really move forward.

Maria Mavroudi: About critical editions (again, talking as an outsider): in the Ottoman field, relatively few critical editions of texts are available. Scholars frequently have to resort to manuscripts. This is both a curse and a blessing. Part of the curse, until recently, was the difficulty of accessing manuscripts. This is beginning to change because digital reproductions of manuscripts freely available online are increasing in number. Comparatively speaking, the study and digital accessibility of Latin and Greek manuscripts is more advanced, simply because the study of the Graeco-Roman world is an older discipline. In the course of these longer developments, things are already beginning to change in fundamental ways. Before the free digital access to manuscripts, the modern critical edition as conceived in the nineteenth century imposed a tyranny of the printed text. The modern critical edition necessarily represents the text in a fixed way. With free digital access to manuscripts, as well as the possibilities offered by digital humanities, we are in many ways returning to the manuscript age, because multiple ways of representing the text are now possible electronically. In Byzantine studies, scholars increasingly try to approach manuscripts not just as carriers of text, but as representations of concrete moments in intellectual history. They pay attention to how and why a manuscript was created and how it was received. Efforts in the same direction (e.g. attention to notes that inform us on readership) have been made since the nineteenth century, but now they increase. This means that the need for critical editions is less acute. We can more readily approach the texts as they are, as they are found in the manuscripts. To my mind, a greater challenge is to understand what the texts say in their own terms. I have a great affinity for the difficulty of understanding philosophy written in Arabic. I felt for Side Emre earlier, when she said, "It literally took me a year to understand the diagram." I've had similar experiences. The editions and the dictionaries are not going to solve this problem. This problem is going to persist, because diagrams and other ways of expressing philosophical ideas are part of an intellectual universe that is effectively foreign to us, and that we need to resurrect and understand in its own terms.

Harun Küçük: Maria Mavroudi already made the point very clearly, the alienness of the intellectual culture. And Güneş is talking about how we don't have sufficient physical and intellectual access to this material to really be talking about them all that freely. I agree. One thing that I do wonder, and this maybe has a place in our thinking, it's not the case that they were much more accessible to people who lived in the past, either. That is, some of these were secret texts, some of them were advanced texts, and there are also many texts that you're simply not supposed to venture into without a teacher. So that's one other thing that I'm wondering about. We don't have this access, but nor did most people back then. What do we make of those people who didn't, or maybe they misunderstood it, just like it happens today?

Eleni Gara (Chair): Does this mean—sorry to intervene—but now you raise a very important point. Does this mean that perhaps by focusing on these texts, we are getting a very skewed impression of the social importance, or of the general importance, perhaps not the right word, but for the social meaning of these texts, of this kind of thought that these texts represent.

Tuna Artun: I had a very minor point, just to agree with Harun, and to bring up one of my favorite texts from the mid-seventeenth century. It's anonymous, but it's a commentary on the Ali Çelebi corpus and there there's an extensive quote from al-Jildaki, who's a 14th-century Mamluk alchemist. In the quote he says, well, I read this and the source that he's quoting, but these are great men with great minds and they've been blessed by God with an understanding which is beyond us, and I don't get it. This is basically what he says. This is not long after the composition of the Ali Çelebi corpus.

Eleni Gara (Chair): About my question, so how should we then understand, from a social history perspective, not for an intellectual history?

Güneş Işıksel: To add something else, we have also another difficulty about the exposed denominations of everything. So let's think about *Mesha'i*'s. I have this difficulty: how to attribute this qualification to someone in the seventeenth or sixteenth century. I think Slobodan Ilić has showed it very well in his communication. All these qualificative aspects are still, for each and every individual in that intellectual universe, so shaky, albeit I had done that as well because of its

usefulness, and qualified someone as, I don't know, not exactly a Halveti, but an *Işhrakî*-type Halveti. For these denominations, the main problem is that, most probably, as an outsider or quasi-outsider, I may say that these are based on some consensus which is very rarely put into criticism and question, which I think hinder a larger context of interpretation, criticism, etc. For many major intellectual figures elsewhere in the period, we have very good bibliographies. In order to constitute, for instance, the *champ intellectuel*, as Pierre Bourdieu had suggested, we don't have actually sufficient elements. So jumping up from there to seek —I don't know— if there was enchantment, or not, seems to me, at this stage, a bit shaky to say the least.

Renaud Soler: I would like to emphasise two very practical points. The first is the matter of languages. The Ottoman culture is not only an Ottoman Turkish-speaking culture. The intellectuals, poets, ulama where writing in Arabic and Turkish and Persian. So my question to my colleagues would be: to which point our understanding of this culture is biased by our linguistic limitations? So just one example: we've talked about the *Mizanu'l-hakk* by Katip Çelebi, and the chapter about the parents of the Prophet, and in fact in this chapter he is answering to Kemalpaşazade, who wrote an epistle in Arabic about the resurrection of the parents of the Prophet. So when we take the Turkish part of the problem, we may reach different conclusions than a researcher who would read only the Arabic epistle of Kemalpaşazade, at the first point.

And the second is, I think in intellectual history we mainly deal with individual thinkers. We took al-Bistami, or Katip Çelebi, or whatsoever. But I think the Islamic culture, especially after 12th or the 13th century, is a culture of quotation. So the individuality of authors is very well bound with their abilities with combining quotations from different thinkers, and in scientific culture, or in poetry. So I think we have to think about and understand this logic of quotation. I think a key for understanding intellectual debates or aesthetic changes has to do with the logic of quotation. That's important, because as Güneş said, we are in dire need of editions and new texts and new sources. But we shouldn't edit or think about editing these sources in the same way as we did in the nineteenth century and until today. We have to edit texts with this understanding of the logic of quotation, and it's very clear in Arabic editions. You read a text from the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and the author makes a quotation of a classic, but he makes it this quotation through one or two intermediaries. And

when you read the edited book, you have a reference to Bukhari or Tirmizi, without the path of the quotation. The path is the most important in order to understand the intellectual and social history of knowledge. So those were the two points. Thank you.

Tunç Şen: I'm not sure if anyone really needs to hear what I'm going to say, because Harun and Tuna already referred to that. Sometimes I feel that we attribute more authority and intellectual strength and, you know, power to the agents that we study in the past. Let's talk about Ibn Arabi, for instance, and all the readers and all the authors who refer to Ibn Arabi at some point in their texts. I sometimes think that Ibn Arabi is like the Foucault of medieval and early modern times. They refer to him without necessarily engaging with what he wrote, or what he said. There are ways that past agents, actors, authors, and readers did, and we can explore those moments, or those misreadings, or lack of readings, or lack of real engagements, and I think there could be a history of this to be written at some point. Just my two cents on this.

Eleni Gara (Chair): Perhaps even finding out the manipulation of quotations. I would expect that there is a lot of manipulation of quotations and authorships going around.

Slobodan Ilić: With what Aslı said, actually that we first need to translate, we first need to understand, actually. We are digging channels with the spoon. We are using the wrong tools for our task. Our problem is not to understand. Of course, to understand means to translate this into words and thoughts we are used to. Somebody mentioned—I think Renaud mentioned—Ibn Arabi. People generally say that Ibn Arabi developed his own language. It is wrong. Ibn Arabi speaks Arabic language, and we think that we know Arabic language, starting from, what is *wajada* in Arabic? It means 'to find,' not 'to exist,' something exists only if it is found. Or *'ayn*?—*'ayn* means 'eye', *'ayn* means spring or source of water, so this is the origin of something. Have you ever thought, it the modern English language, why there is one sole word, 'intelligence,' used both for espionage and for reasoning? Because when we are listening, we are doing the same thing as Secret Service, we are discerning important from unimportant. But if we are trying to understand hermetical texts, and somebody mentioned that those texts are not written for reading, not written for the general

public, the guy wrote this for himself, trying to think more clearly if he puts this on paper. And if you want to understand this, you should first exclude rules of reasoning we are using to read Aristotle or whatever. We should try to catch the feeling of the guy who wrote the text. So probably we should not think of how to translate, everybody translated Ibn Arabi in completely different language. Even William Chittick himself, probably the biggest Ibn Arabi scholar in the world, used different terms for the same of Ibn Arabi's words. In every book, he changed this. In the end, he was not satisfied with what he found, there are some things we cannot translate. Science scholarship is to translate everything in a words of reason, but we are dealing with things that have not too much to do with reason. So trying to translate this is actually an abyss we've reached. Sorry for your time.

Eleni Gara (Chair): To say it in a different way, translating is interpreting. If I understand correctly, you advocate for a kind of empathy in order to be able to understand.

Slobodan Ilić: After all translations and commentaries of Ibn Arabi, I still better understand the original Arabic text. This is the problem in all esoteric texts we are dealing with.

Marinos Sariyannis: Dimitris [Giagtzoglou] posted the message in the chat earlier, just about this. Al-Bistami's Ottoman translator, Şerif Mehmed Efendi, makes more or less the same point about the complexities he encountered, trying to understand what al-Bistami was trying to argue about. What I wanted to say when I raised my hand, I wanted to comment on Tunç's very insightful point, the similarity with Foucault. I think it was Colin Imber who had made this point, that everybody in American academia feels compelled to quote Foucault, because the people who will evaluate him or her will have written theories on Foucault, and so on and so forth. Yes, everybody talks about Foucault, and a few of us really have—I mean, I have not read Foucault, and I'm not really into Foucault. But again, the fact that everybody talks about Foucault means something. It means something both about our history of ideas, or intellectual history if you prefer, about which authors have this kind of influence or this kind of prestige rather, that have to be constantly quoted, and on the other hand, one may like Foucault or not, or like his writings more or less, but that

he's constantly quoted means also something about what he wrote, that matters such as the ones Foucault talked about are relevant in our era. So yes, I talked in the beginning about the need to show some skepticism against texts, but on the other hand, it is the great texts that build—not our world really, but our mental world, so to speak. The thing is to remember that we are just a small and very self-centered elite in that matter.

Harun Küçük: To build on both what Güneş was saying and what Marinos is saying, there is of course the question of, well, some people actually do care, right? There are people like that. On the example of Foucault, when they treat Foucault, they treat him differently than the people who just do an obligatory kind of footnote or whatever, and it just seems to me like we should have a way of talking about, well you know, öz *hakiki*, genuine Foucaultians, and pretend Foucaultians, right. This is part of the problem I'm having, one thing that we talk about is epistemology, and we talked about it a lot, which is fine. We see an epistemology there, but then there are actual people in the past who wrote about epistemology, and that's not the people we're talking about. So how do we distinguish those two types of people? Who may have a tacit epistemology, or maybe some very vague and very superficial gesture towards what kind of thing knowledge is, versus somebody like devotes an entire lifetime to understanding the problem of knowledge. It seems to me that there are different sorts of people. I don't know how we deal with those separate registers. It goes with language, too. Some people are kind of like, "Man, you know what? The poem that you just recited, it sounds so beautiful, I don't understand a word of it, but it sounds like fine poetry," whereas there are other people who are in the business of mastering language. My confusion is about how to deal with these matters.

Tuna Artun: I don't really have a strong opinion on Foucault, but I love this Foucaultian theme, and I'd like to just consider the flip side of this. If you absolutely hate Foucault, how likely would you be to talk about your hatred during a departmental meeting, or publish about it? I'm just wondering, there must have been people who absolutely hated Ibn Arabi, but never really raised the point maybe, until much later in the sixteenth century when the cultural norms began to shift.

Marinos Sariyannis: May I in this matter note—Baki Tezcan is not here, but he has written about Mehmed Kadızade's autobiography. Kadızade had been reading Ibn Arabi, and I think he initially liked him, but then he just turned the other way around. He was really outspoken against him, perhaps. But of course on the other hand, this is the early seventeenth century, it's somehow different there.

Eleni Gara (Chair): This is a great discussion and well I asked Marinos earlier how long it should go, and he said, "Whatever. Let's go and discuss as long as we want," so feel free to continue with sharing your thoughts, or posing questions, or ...

Kostas Sarris: I think that it was a great discussion, and thank you very much for all this exotic (for me) things. This is a question: how can we talk about the Ottoman intellectual world together with the Greek Orthodox, the Slav Orthodox—

Eleni Gara (Chair): The Jewish—

Kostas Sarris: What Renaud said: the question about the Arab-speaking Ottomans, the Jews, and I'm wondering, how could the Armenians be inscribed —we don't know about the Armenians. We had a workshop some years ago in Berlin with Tijana Krstić about the OTTOCONFESSION project, and all this discussion, and we were looking for some connections between the confessional developments in the Greek Orthodox world, and the Muslim Ottoman world. We were waiting for Krstić to tell us something about it, and finally she told us, "Oh my God, I was waiting for someone from among you to tell me something about the connection of the Greeks with the group of Ottomans." I think that this is an open question. For example, I think that Cornell did it yesterday, when he asked me about the lettrism and whether Meletios uses, or has some citation to the science of letters. I was thinking about it, and Meletios doesn't have anything about it. The question is that we have the example, and it's Panagiotis Nicoussios, he uses lettrism for several things. But after Nicoussios, we don't have this kind of knowledge in the Greek Orthodox intellectual world—

Eleni Gara (Chair): Or we don't know about it.

Kostas Sarris: Or we don't know. We don't have specific articles or archives or manuscripts. We don't have any reference, at least, any record about it. And this is quite interesting, how some parts of common supernatural knowledge or—for example, Maria told about the interconnection in the late Byzantine, early Ottoman period of this knowledge. I feel, at least with my colleagues in Berlin and later, that after the mid-seventeenth century, we can't find many common places, apart from some parts Harun has spoken about, in some archives, with Alexandros Mavrokordatos etc. But after that, it's quite strange.

Eleni Gara (Chair): If I may say something, and then I'll give the floor to Marinos. I think that we have not been looking closely enough, because actually, given the interconnections and that there are a lot more people (intellectuals, primarily among the Phanariot circle, but also in other environments) who study, who are getting educated in Ottoman Turkish and languages, who engage, have friendships, and have correspondence with Muslim intellectuals—Esad Efendi is a known case from the work of Penelope Stathi. So there must be something, maybe it's there, and we have not found it yet.

Marinos Sariyannis: I would very much like it to be so, that's what my initial idea was. But then again, Nicoussios really is not into the science of letters, he's into Kabbalah. We have in the GHOST project a doctoral student, he was also a student of Tunç's in Leiden, Marcos Litinas, he's writing his thesis on the Phanariot occult. The impression we have until now is that contrary to what I would expect, perhaps to what all of us would expect, there are these few Phanariot scholars who have written about occult sciences, but there seems to be nothing Ottoman or "oriental" about it. There is, you know, Aristotelian occultism, or Pico della Mirandola's Renaissance occultism, they are not looking—they may read Ottoman, and I am less confident about this than I had been some years ago, but it's like they don't want to. On the contrary, if I may judge from the very few known texts of vernacular occultism in Greek, there we do have this influence, and I like very much this text, the Vernardakis Codex, which is a late nineteenth-century copy of a grimoire of mainly demonic magic, where there is a very strong influence of Islamic magic. There are the *vefk*, the magic squares, the names of God, and all referred to with the Turkish or Islamic

names: *vefk*, *esma* and so on. And then these coexist with patterns and elements from the Western magic, like the *sator arepo* square and so on. I didn't expect this, but it seems that the scholarly Greek culture was very reluctant in this aspect, except for perhaps this small group of Esad Efendi, and Notaras, and his pals. I don't know, it's still to be explored, but the impression I get is very different from the one I expected.

Eleni Gara (Chair): Maybe they didn't write about it. Which is another thing, what to commit in writing and—

Marinos Sariyannis: There are works about esotericism, but this is Renaissance esotericism, Italian Renaissance.

Maria Mavroudi: I'm wondering whether what Marinos brings up, that there is less expressed communication with the Islamic occultism on the part of the Phanariots, is the result of a very old concept, all the way back to antiquity. The concept is that following a particular religion obliges one to accept its attendant cosmology. The phenomena and techniques that we are talking about (I'll call them Neoplatonic) are based on a cosmology. It is difficult to readily use the "Neoplatonic" tools because it is not as easy to borrow somebody else's cosmology. This occurred to me as Marinos was talking, because I also, like Eleni, have the expectation that there is more than meets the eye. I do not know if Markos Litinas is already pursuing this, but I think that many answers will come from simply following who owns what manuscript, and not who is writing what. In other words, we need to pay attention to what they were reading. We must try to reconstitute the libraries of the Phanariots in languages other than Greek. I cannot, right now, say what I think the Phanariots were reading in these languages, but I have really wondered about it, and maybe that's a line of inquiry that can be pursued.

Tuna Artun: Thank you. Just to say a little more on Kostas's point, sometimes these links are extremely difficult to establish, even if you, like Professor Mavroudi was just saying, you sense that there's something deeper. I was working on an earlier period, late fifteenth century, on the immediate precursor to the Safed circle of Jewish occultists who arrived from Spain in the Ottoman Empire, and they lived in the very same places, like Edirne, Thessaloniki, Nicopolis, that

some of my Muslim (Rumi and otherwise) occultists were residing in precisely in the same period, so looking at people like Rabbi Yosef Karo etc. Clearly they're dealing with similar kinds of material, they're engaged in remarkably similar practices. Whether or not they were talking to one another is something we can't really find from the sources. Now in the Greek tradition, there's something probably different. There's less seeing eye to eye in terms of the intellectual tradition, and that's kind of beyond my realm of expertise.

Marinos Sariyannis: Obviously we could talk about these things forever and ever. I just want to draw attention to a comment in the chat by Harun about his student. After a seminar on Neoplatonism he was thinking all the way that all the fuss was about somebody named Neil Plato, Neo Plato, or whatever.

These are things that might also be intriguing in our study of texts, audiences, and the people behind them. Obviously, we could go on and on forever. I do hope we will have an opportunity very soon to repeat, and all the more to repeat face to face in a real conference. This is something we greatly missed these days. On the other hand, many colleagues had the opportunity to converse with us, and I think this is a win-win situation for both sides, panelists and attendees. I really implore you to send your texts for the proceedings. If not until the summer, at least until the end of the year. I mean this will make a really great volume, and we could proceed really quick. I'm so much looking forward to having this volume proceeding, even though—

Eleni Gara (Chair): If I may add that this will be an important volume for us that do not work on intellectual history, so please do it. Send it.

Marinos Sariyannis: For many of us it's a cultural history, why not. I prefer cultural history as well. I'm immensely happy we have had this, it was so fascinating, I hope and I think that it was the same for all of us, and I just have to wish many happy returns. So thank you all—and Happy New Year, with health and joy and creativeness as well.

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