Natural Philosophy and Politics in the Eighteenth Century: Esad of Ioannina and Greek Aristotelianism at the Ottoman Court*

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XVIII. Yüzyılda Fizik ve Politika: Yanyalı Esad Efendi ve Rum Aristoculuğunun Osmanlı Sarayındaki Yeri

Öz ■ Yanyalı Esad Efendi'nin *El-Tā'līmü's-Sālis* isimli ve Johannes Cottunius'un *Commentarii...de physico auditu*'nun Arapça çevirisi olan risalesi, III. Ahmet devrinin en önemli çalışmalarından biridir. Çeviri, Padova Aristoculuğunu dönemin Müslüman yazınına sokmuştur. İbn Sinacılık, işrâkilik ve kelam gibi Osmanlı İstanbul'unda popüler olan fikir akımlarının aksine, Aristocu düşünceyi materyalist açıdan irdeleyen bu eser, felsefenin ana hatlarını yeniden çizerek fiziği ön plana çıkarmakta ve de felsefeyi dünyevi bir teselli kaynağı olarak takdim etmektedir. Çeviriye arka plan oluşturan ana dinamikler ise Yunan kimliğinin Rum Ortodoks kimliğinden ayrılmaya başlaması, felsefenin bir uğraşı olarak Osmanlı yönetici eliti arasında yaygınlık kazanması, ve de Müslüman ve Rum Ortodoks patronaj ağlarının girişik hale gelmesidir. İslâm felsefesi dinamikleri içinde okunagelmiş olan bu eser, daha önce Rum Aydınlanması olarak bilinen hareketin Osmanlı'nın geneline mahsus daha geniş bir akımın bir parçası olduğuna işaret etmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Yanyalı Esad, III. Ahmet, Aristoculuk, Padova Üniversitesi, Rum Aydınlanması, Osmanlı patronaj ağları, Rum Ortodoks Kilisesi

The reign of Ahmed III was a time of cultural and scholarly revitalization for Istanbul. The court spearheaded a massive translation and vernacularization

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program, where a number of Arabic and Latin works were rendered into Turkish.[1] Many scholarly products of the era were innovative, but the vast majority of the court's projects involved enhancing access to familiar texts, both physically and linguistically. The editions of the first sultanic printing press blended old knowledge with new, and targeted amateurs and students as well as professional scholars. This period also stands out for its good poetry and ambitious architectural initiatives.[2] Without doubt, all of these developments had to do with the return of the sultan to Istanbul and the relative affluence of both the palace and the city. Nevertheless, the full scope and nature of the scholarly movements in Ahmedian Istanbul still remain shrouded in mystery.

Esad of Ioannina's (d.173?) Arabic rendition of Johannes Cottunius's (1577-1658) *Commentarii lucidissimi in octo libros Aristotelis de physico auditu* is one of the most enigmatic artefacts of the Ahmedian intellectual life.[3] The translation, titled al-Tā'līmü's-Sālis (A Study of Aristotle's *Physics* in Three Books) treated Aristotelian natural philosophy, which was presumably a structural component of Ottoman thought. Esad preferred to translate the Latin work not into the Turkish vernacular but into Arabic, that is, into the learned language that was home to the existing Aristotelian literature in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, Esad's efforts seem redundant and arguably retrogressive in comparison to the contemporary Turkish translations of innovative European works. We do not currently know the true motivation behind Esad's work, which had been prepared at considerable expense to the court.[4] My goal in this article is to elucidate the cultural meaning of *El-Tā'līmü's-Sālis*, since this translation becomes appreciable only within the

1 For a survey of the translations, see Salim Aydüz, "Lale Devri'nde Yapılan İlmi Faaliyetler," *Divan: İlmi Araştırmalar*, 3/1, *1997*: 143-70.

2 Tülay Artan. "Forms and Forums of Expression: Istanbul and Beyond, 1600-1800," in *The Ottoman World.* ed. Christine Woodhead. London: Routledge, 2012; pp. 378-405. Shirine Hamadeh. "Ottoman Expressions of Early Modernity and the Inevitable Question of 'Westernization'," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 63/1, *2004*: 32- 51.

3 Esad of Ioannina is commonly called Yanyalı Esad Efendi in Turkish. Johannes Cottunius. *Commentarii lucidissimi in octo libros Aristotelis de physico auditu; una cum quaestionibus*. Venice: Pauli Frambotti, 1648. Two clean copies of Esad of Ioannina's *El-Tā'līmü's-Sālis* (A Study of the Three [Books of Aristotle's Physics]) are housed in Süleymaniye MS Ragıppaşa 824-5 and MS Hacı Beşir Ağa 414-5.

4 Mahmut Kaya, "Some Findings on Translations Made in The eighteenth Century From Greek and Es'ad Efendi's Translation of The Physica" in *Transfer of Modern Science & Technology to The Muslim World*. ed. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu. Istanbul: IRCICA, 1992; pp. 385-392.

context of the eighteenth-century integration of Muslim and Greek Orthodox intellectual worlds.

El-Tā'līmü's-Sālis does not neatly fall into any of the early modern categories of Muslim peripateticism. The fact that this translation is about natural philosophy already makes it an exceptional specimen of Ottoman scholarship. According to Aristotle, natural philosophy or physics, metaphysics and mathematics constituted the totality of theoretical philosophy. As the speculative treatment of moving bodies, physics had been an important part of classical Arabic thought. Yet, prior to the eighteenth century, there had never been a separate course of study in natural philosophy at the Ottoman *medreses*.[5] The writings of the influential theologian Fahreddin el-Razi (1149-1209) had decisively subalternated the discipline to *kelām* (systematic theology).[6] While natural philosophy had independent representation at the arts faculties in medieval and early modern European universities, Muslim students' exposure to theories of nature was often limited to broad cosmological issues that were included comprehensive manuals of systematic theology, such as Tusi's *Tecrīdü'l-Aḳā'id*.[7]

Natural philosophy (*ḥikmet-i tabī'iyye*) was not an autonomous discipline in the Ottoman Empire until the eighteenth century. While a pious version of Avicennism had been part of kelām manuals, and illuminationist (*'işrāḳī*) philosophy had a certain foothold during the seventeenth century, a comprehensive system of physics was not a dynamic issue in either intellectual tradition. Ottoman speculative thought primarily focused on metaphysics and religion.[8] The theologians were

5 On medrese curricula, see Cevat Izgi. *Osmanlı Medreselerinde İlim*. 2 vols. İstanbul: İz, 1997.

6 Oliver Leaman and Sajjad Rizvi, "The Developed Kalām Tradition," in *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*. ed. Tim Winter. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008 pp.77-96.

7 See Taşköprüzade. *Mevzū'ātü'l-'Ulūm*. 2 vols. Istanbul: Asitane, 2000; vol.1, p.629. Tusi's astronomical works were important to his legacy in the Islamic world, yet his theology was more important still. His *Tecrīdü'l-Aḳā'id* (The Elucidation of the Articles of Faith) was one of the best examples of Avicennian systematic theology and constituted the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Islamic liberal arts curriculum. It also served as the model for subsequent manuals of systematic theology, such as those of Beyzavi and İci, and was the learned catechism in Mughal India, Safavid Iran and the Ottoman Empire. See Francis Robinson. "Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals: Shared Knowledge and Connective Systems," *Journal of Islamic Studies,* 8/2, *1997*: 151-184.

8 See Izgi, *İlim*, vol.2 for a broad overview of the branches of natural philosophy. Also see Abdelhamid I. Sabra, "Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islamic Theology," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften*, 9, *1994*: 1-42; F. Jamil

responsible for the logical as well as dialectical treatment of nature, whereas most empirical pursuits did not bear on the sensitive doctrinal issues over which the *'ulemā'* exercised virtual monopoly.[9] Thus, as early as the mid-sixteenth century Taşköprüzade could confidently remark that the most important and the most relevant work on natural philosophy was still Aristotle's *Physics* and, more importantly, went on to identify Avicenna as the last "theoretician" (*nāẓīr*) of nature.[10]

Even though there were no Ottoman naturalists who engaged in philosophical speculation, natural philosophy existed in name. As scholastic manuals subalternated physics and metaphysics to *kelām*, *ḥikmet-i tabī'iyye* came to denote a range of naturalistic disciplines and included alchemy, magic, judicial astrology, ornithomancy, geomancy, the science of talismans and medicine.[11] Consequently, if we were to provide a description of speculative natural philosophy to an Ottoman reader before the Ahmedian developments in the early eighteenth century, he would conclude that we were speaking of theology, but if we were to use the expression natural philosophy, it would bring to mind medicine or the occult disciplines. There was, in short, no independent discipline in the Ottoman Empire that engaged with nature theoretically and as a whole.

In 1640, Katip Çelebi diagnosed a similar problem as he finished his bibliographical lexicon, an extensive survey of every Arabic, Turkish and Persian manuscript that was known to him:

> The majority of the books dealing with natural philosophy, metaphysics and mathematics, are not Islamic but Greek and Latin, for the bulk of these have remained in the lands of the Christians and have not been translated into Arabic, with very rare exceptions. Nor have those that have been translated retained their original meaning, because of the abundant distortions that occur through defective translation: this is an established fact in rendering books from one language to

Ragep. "Freeing Astronomy from Philosophy: An Aspect of Islamic Influence of Science," *Osiris*, 16, *2001*:49-64, 66-72. Regarding Kushji's lasting influence, see Ihsan Fazlıoğlu, "The Samarqand Mathematical-Astronomical School: A Basis for Ottoman Philosophy and Science," *Journal for the History of Arabic Science*, 14/3, *2008*: 3-68.

9 The foundations of this separation between naturalistic practices and theories of nature goes back to Avicenna himself, who believed that physicians could not engage in philosophical speculation.

10 Taşköprüzade. *Mevẓū'āt*, vol.1, p. 349.

11 Physicians and alchemical practitioners repeatedly attempted to bring speculative natural philosophy under their domain in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. I hope to treat this issue in a subsequent publication.

> another. I have personal experience of this, having observed it when I was engaged in translating the Atlas and other works from Latin into Turkish.[12]

The Ahmedian era (1703-1730) resounded with similar sentiments. Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi, an aspiring bureaucrat and future diplomat opened his Turkish translation (171?) of the physics section of Şehrezuri's (d.1288) *Şeceretü'l-İlāḥiyye* by saying:

> After having studied the art of philosophizing in its partial, worldly forms, and after having digested the art of logic lesson by lesson, I desired to apply myself to the discussion of the opinions of the illuminationists and the peripatetic natural philosophers...Philosophy as a demonstrative discipline is the legacy of Aristotle. Yet, the Muslim thinkers who came after Aristotle had no taste for exploration and no passion in their faith. Thus, they took what was immediately intelligible, and abandoned what only became clear after reflection and demonstration.[13]

In an edict of 1715, Grand Vizier Şehid Ali Paşa chastised the *'ulemā'* for turning scholarship into an unfashionable occupation.[14] A decade later, both Ahmed III and Ibrahim Müteferrika, the Socinian printer to the Sultan, observed that "non-shari" scholarship was rare and that books in such disciplines were hard to find.[15] In his translation, Esad of Ioannina ventured that most Abbasid translations of Aristotle's works were flawed. Yet, he had no sound means to assess these early manuscripts, as many of them had not survived the intervening centuries.[16]

These eighteenth-century attempts to reform and revalorize "non-shari" scholarship in general and natural philosophy in particular were in all likelihood a

12 Cited in Katip Çelebi. *The Balance of Truth.*trans. and ed. Geoffrey L. Lewis. London: Allen and Unwin, 1957; p.13

13 Mehmed b. Süleyman Ağa. *Semeretü'ş-şecere*. Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa MS 526, 1v-3r

14 İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı has reproduced the edict, which is part of Raşid's history, in Osmanlı Devletinin İlmiye Teşkilatı. Ankara: TTK, 1998 [1965]; pp.49-51.

15 See the prefatory material in *Tercemetü's-Ṣıḥāḥü'l-Cevherī*. 2 vols. Istanbul: Royal Printing Press, 1729; n.p.

16 The most notable examples of non-extant works, of course, are the Abbasid translations of Aristotle's *Physics*. According to Paul Lettinck, many of these works simply have not survived in the East, while Western Muslims such as İbn Bacce and Averroës had access to them. See Paul Lettinck. *Aristotle's Physics and Its Reception in the Arabic World: with an edition of the unpublished parts of Ibn Bajja's Commentary on the Physics*. Leiden: Brill, 1994; pp. 1-33.

reaction to prior developments. Over the seventeenth century, philosophy lost its relevance to kelām as Kadızadeli authors came to prefer positive theology over systematic theology. Thus, Nesefi's *Aḳā'id* became the chief kelām text and was supplemented by a separate course of study in logic.[17] This new creed lacked the logical, physical and metaphysical apparatuses that were integral to other canonical works by Tusi, Beyzavi and İci. Nesefi's chief commentator Teftazani had remarked that the reader would not find the "tautologies and wearisomeness" of speculative thought in Nesefi's text.[18] The already meager amount of natural philosophy that had crept into the kelām manuals had been the target of Birgili Mehmed's polemical attacks on innovation (*bid'at*) in the sixteenth century -- attacks that seem to have been influential.[19] Consequently, Esad's translation, like several other works penned during the same period, sought to rehabilitate a weak discipline that faced oblivion in the seventeenth century. Unlike seventeenth-century *'ulemā'*, Ahmedian authors often celebrated both natural philosophy and *bid'at*.[20]

17 Mustafa Sait Yazıcıoğlu, "XV. ve XVI. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlı Medreselerinde İlm-i Kelam Öğretimi ve Genel Eğitim İçindeki Yeri," *İslam İlimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 4, *1980*: 273-283. For examples of individual courses of study in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see İzgi, *İlim*, pp. 99-102. See Michael Nizri, "The Memoirs of Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi," in *Many Ways of Speaking about the Self: Middle Eastern Ego-Documents in Arabic, Persian and Turkish (14th-20th Century).* eds. Ralf Elger and Yavuz Köse. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010; pp. 27-37. Many seventeenth century Europeans translated sections of this book as *the* theology book that the Turkish scholars used. André du Ryer's *L'Alcoran de Mahomet* (Paris: Antoine de Sommaville, 1647) included a summary of the book in the introduction. Heinrich Hottinger, the Calvinist theologian, excerpted parts of the books for his *Historia orientalis*. A full Latin rendition came out in 1665: Andreas Müller. *Excerpta manuscripti cujusdam Turcici, quod de cognitione DEI & hominis ipsum, à quodam Azizo Nesephaeo Tataro scriptum est.* Cologne: Georg Schulz, 1665.

18 Masud ibn Umar al-Taftazani.*A Commentary on the Creed of Islam: Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani on the Creed of Najm al-Din al-Nasafi.* trans. Earl Edgar Elder. New York: Columbia University Press, 1950; pp.4, 6.

19 Whether logic, physics and metaphysics belongs with theology is a question that has a long history in Islam. For example, Al-Ghazali condoned logic, but preferred to see a limited amount of physics in theology manuals. Fakhr al-Din Razi, the medieval founder of early modern Asharite theology, believed that philosophical speculation, especially of the metaphysical kind, was key to perfecting the soul. Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* partly followed Ghazali, but also added that treating philosophy in theological texts was mutually harmful. Philosophical theology was both poor theology and poor philosophy.

20 On Birgili and natural philosophy, see Khaled El-Rouayheb, "The Myth of The Triumph of Fanaticism' in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *Die Welt des*

The Translation and Its Uses

The cultural setting of both Cottunius's work and Esad's translation remain obscure because of the existing historiographical traditions. Currently, there is a very short published monograph on Esad, and three articles dealing with certain aspects of Esad's translations.[21] Aside from several footnote references that blur Cottunius into the undifferentiated body of European textbook writers of the seventeenth century, there are only three articles that engage with his life and work -- two that present him as a scholastic thinker who did not sufficiently emphasize the superiority of philosophy over theology and one that portrays him as a Macedonian national hero.[22] The process or processes that tied the two works together have hitherto remained completely unknown.

Cottunius was the professor of philosophy *primo loco* at the University of Padua from 1632 until his death in 1657. Historians of philosophy have generally grouped him together with other seventeenth century manual writers.[23]

Islams, 48, *2008*: 196-221. On the Kadızadelis, see Madeline Zilfi's various articles as well as her *Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Post-Classical Age*. Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988. Natural philosophical works from the Ahmedian era are many, but certain examples explicitly celebrate natural philosophy and innovation, such as Ali Münşi's *Innovation for the Beginner* (*Bid'atü'l-Mübtedī [Ragıppaşa 939]*) that identified *ehlü'l-fenn* with *ehlü'l-bid'at*, while the various *Ṭıbb-ı Cedīd* tracts sought to subalternate natural philosophy to medicine.

21 Mahmut Kaya, "Some Findings". Kazım Sarıkavak. *XVIII Yüzyılda Bir Osmanlı Düşünürü: Yanyalı Es'ad Efendi*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1998. Ihsan Fazlıoğlu, "As'ad al-Yanyawi (d.1142/1730)," in *Mawsuat A'lam al-Ulama wa al-Udaba al-Arab wa al-Muslimin*. Beirut: Dar al-Jil, 2004; vol. I, 604-677. http://www.ihsanfazlioglu.net/EN/publication/articles/1.php?id=108. M. Sait Özervarlı, "Yanyalı Esad Efendi's Works on Philosophical Texts as Part of the Ottoman Translation Movement in the Early Eighteenth Century," in *Europe und die Türkei im 18. Jahrhundert*. ed. Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp. Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2011; pp.457-72.

22 Ioannis Vasdravellis, "Ioannis Kottounios: Ho Ek Veroias Sophos," *Makedonike Bibliotheke*, 4, *1943*: 7-31. Antonis Fyrigos, "Joannes Cottunius di Verria e il neoaristotelismo padovano," in *Renaissance Readings of the Corpus Aristotelicum*. ed. Marianne Pade. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2001; pp.225-240. George Karamanolis, "Was There a Stream of Greek Humanists in the Late Renaissance?" *Hellenika*, 53, *2003*: 19-46. For further references to Cottunius, see Leen Spruit. *Species Intelligibilis: Renaissance Controversies, Later Scholasticism and the Elimination of the Intelligible Species in Modern Philosophy*. Leiden: Brill, 1995. Heinrich C. Kuhn. *Venetischer Aristotelismus im Ende der aristotelischen Welt: Aspekte der Welt und des Denkens des Cesare Cremonini (1550-1631)*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996.

23 Fyrigos, "Cottunius."

Cottunius's emphasis was on the careful philological reading of Aristotelian texts. In this regard, he was following his predecessors at Padua, Cesare Cremonini (1550-1631) and Jacopo Zabarella (1533-1589). True to his Paduan origins, Cottunius also believed that a philosopher engaged in all that could be known by "unaided reason alone," namely, logic and physics, but not metaphysics or theology.[24] Cremonini had enjoyed extraordinary publicity during the Venetian Interdict in 1606. He had engaged in verbal skirmishes with Galileo, was steadfast in his adherence to Aristotelian philosophy and had bravely defied an injunction from the Inquisition.[25] Among other things, he was the most famous

24 Heikki Mikkeli, "The Foundation of an Autonomous Natural Philosophy: Zabarella on the Classification of Arts and Sciences," in *Method and Order in Renaissance Philosophy of Nature: The Aristotle Commentary Tradition.* eds. Daniel Di Liscia, Eckhard Kessler and Charlotte Methuens. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997; pp. 211-228.

25 Besides Heinrich Kuhn's book, the only monographic study of Cremonini's philosophy is Leopold Mabilleau. *Étude historique sur la philosophie de la Renaissance en Italie (Cesare Cremonini)*. Paris: Hachette, 1881. Mabilleau dedicated his work to Ernest Renan, whose influential analysis of the connection between Averroism, Paduan Aristotelianism and European radicalism constitutes the beginning of modern scholarly interest in the University of Padua. His analysis was by and large celebratory, and presented Cremonini as an atheist. René Pintard, the famous historian of French libertinism identified the philosopher as the fountainhead of early modern radical thought. *Le libertinage érudit dans la premièr moitié du XVIIe siècle: La Mothe Le Vayer, Gassendi, Guy Patin*. Paris: Boivin, 1943. For an early reassessment of the hubris of the Renanites, see Paul Oskar Kristeller. *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic and Humanist Strains*. New York: Harper, 1961; pp. 115-6. Schmitt continued in Kristeller's footsteps in his analysis of Paduan Aristotelianism: Charles B. Schmitt, "Aristotelianism in the Veneto and the Origins of Modern Science," *in The Aristotelian Tradition and Renaissance Universities*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1984; *idem*. *Aristotle and the Renaissance*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1983. Charles Schmitt, who has done extensive research on Aristotelianism in the Renaissance, seems to have avoided Cremonini, perhaps partly because most of the sources remained in manuscript form. His only publication dealing with the Italian thinker is a short lecture published as a booklet: *Cesare Cremonini: un Aristotelico al tempo di Galilei*. Venice: Centro Tedesco di Studi Veneziani, 1980. On how Averroism stopped being an epithet even as Averroës's commentaries became fashionable in the sixteenth century, see Craig Martin, "Rethinking Renaissance Averroism," *Intellectual History Review*, 17/1, *2007*: 3-19. For another account of Padua, see John H. Randall. *The School of Padua and the Emergence of Modern Science*. Padua: Antenore, 1961. Also see Schmitt's and Eckhard Kessler's other works. Eugenio Garin says the following regarding Cremonini: "He was surely not a revolutionary but a scholar tied to an already consumed tradition and disposed, for its defense, to refuse not only the testimony of experience, but also to unite himself, this time not in a heroic guise, to those who denounced the work of Telesio to the

and best-paid academic in his lifetime and he had left a legacy that was compatible with the radical tendencies of late seventeenth century Spinozism.[26] Cottunius's fame did not precede himself, and his scholarly aura, at least in terms of the citations or praise he received in other parts of Europe, was dim. While Cremonini was content to endorse a mortal Aristotelian soul, Cottunius was a proponent of a more pious philosophy that teetered on the edge of Thomism. Cottunius also believed that physics was prior to and separate from theology both in the epistemic and the curricular sense, but these claims were not new in the mid-seventeenth century. Consequently, placing him side by side with his predecessors from the perspective historians of philosophy have followed in studying Paduan Aristotelianism makes him "less than Cremonini," but still does not help us individuate him.

Scholarship on Esad casts a positive light on his life and work, but fails to address the relevant context of the translation. Since the framework that İhsan Fazlıoğlu, Kazım Sarıkaya and Sait Özervarlı have adopted was the history of Arabic thought from Avicenna onwards, they had identified Esad falsely as a product of medieval Islamic traditions.[27] Since Esad wrote in Arabic, he seemed to belong, almost by default, to the history of Arabic thought.[28] Turkish scholars who wrote on his work considered him to be a figure in Muslim revitalization, one who was interested in Aristotle, whom they presumed was the foundation of Ottoman philosophy. Since Aristotle was at the foundation of medieval Arabic philosophy, the Islamic tradition by itself seemed to warrant Esad's interest in translating an Aristotelian commentary. In the existing accounts, Esad's translation was not an indication of the new Ottoman interest in the new European thought; it was an attempt to revitalize the old Arabic philosophy.

Inquisition." *History of Italian Philosophy*. 2 vols. trans. and ed. Giorgio Pinton. Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2008 [Italian, 1947]; vol. 1, p.377.

26 Pierre Bayle's entry on Cremonini: "He was accounted a Freethinker, who did not believe the immortality of the Soul, and whose Opinions about other Matters were not in the least consonant with Christianity." *The Dictionary Historical and Critical of Mr. Peter Bayle*. 2nd ed. 5 vols. London: Printed for J.J. and P. Knapton, 1735; vol.2, pp.566-7.

27 No scholar who studied Esad's translation to date has looked at Cottunius's own work. Consequently, the prevailing claim is that Esad was responsible for summarizing parts of the commentary. In fact, Cottunius himself spent more than two thirds of the manual treating the first three books of Aristotle. Cottunius's focus seems to be defining the scope and method of natural philosophy, which was the subject of the first three books of *Physics*.

28 See Sarıkavak, *Es'ad*, *in passim*. M. Sait Özervarlı, "Yanyalı Esad."

Part of the historiographical confusion surrounding Esad has to do with the sources themselves. Esad's European acquaintances wrote about him variously as "a follower of Aristotle," "soaked in Democritean philosophy," "the most erudite man in the Ottoman Empire" and a cosmopolitan socialite. On the other hand, Salim, a court intellectual and a contemporary of Esad spoke of him as a pious and well-educated Muslim scholar with an exemplary career and an extraordinary command of Arabic who frequented Greek circles.[29] Esad was a Greek-speaking member of the *'ulemā'* and also a client of Chrisanthos Notaras, the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem.[30] When he began working on the translation, Ahmed had just appointed him the palace librarian. Consequently, Esad's life and career has been difficult to capture by using established historical categories. He was not a traditional *'ālim* but rather a self-fashioned courtier and a philosopher.

Contrary to the claims of previous scholarship on Esad, *El-Tā'līmü's-Sālis* was a fairly literal translation of Cottunius, not an interpretive rendition of Aristotle. Esad's main contribution, aside from the difficult task of working through a 700-page commentary, was the short dedication addressed to Sultan Ahmed III, his Grand Vizier Ibrahim Paşa and and to the Sheik al-Islam Abdullah Efendi. There was no translator's introduction in the final copy.

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29 In addition to Dimitri Cantemir's identification of *doctissimus Isaad Efendi* (Esad) as the person "to whom [he was] indebted for [his] Turkish learning," he also noted, in his *Historia incrementorum atque decrementorum aulae othomanicae*, that Esad was entrenched in Democritan philosophy (*democratea philosophia imbutus*), was a most excellent astronomer (*astronomus perfectissimus*),. See Ion Matei, "Le maître de langue turque de Dimitri Cantemir: Esad Efendi," *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes*, 2, *1972*: 281-288. Abbé Sevin, who visited Istanbul in 1729, called Esad "un adorateur d'Aristote," in his *Lettres sur Constantinople* (publ. 1802). Johann Friedrich Bachstrom, another visitor in 1729, related an episode where he engaged Esad on the issue of gravity, where Esad takes an Aristotelian stance, in his *Nova aestus marini theoria*. Lugduni Batavorum: Wishoff, 1734; pp.63-4. Regarding Esad's connections with Istanbul's Greek circles, see Mirzazade Mehmed Emin Salim. *Tezkire-i Sālim*. Istanbul: Ikdam, 1310 [1892]; pp.76-8.

30 *Documente privitoare la istoria romanilor: volumul XIV al colectiei Hurmuzaki*. Bucharest: Romanian Academy, 1917; pp.824-6 includes a letter that Esad wrote regarding his old student Nicholas Mavrocordato. In this letter, Esad addresses Notaras as a patron and a friend.

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1.2.6 Expenditur tertium argumentum eiusdem tertiae sect. depromptum ex Aristotelis balbutie, oculis, cruribus, habitu et progressu in philosophia	p.20	summarized under previous section
2. Utrum de rebus naturalibus scientia habeatur; Et qualis sit	p.25	7r
2.1 Varia veterum philosophorum placita de scientia naturali. Et argumenta, quod philosophia naturalis non sit scientia	p.25	7r
2.2 De rebus naturalibus vere habetur scientia, ac proinde Philosophia naturalis syncere, ac proprie est scientia.	p.26	7v
2.3 Philosophia naturalis est scientia speculativa et non practica	p.27	8r
2.4 Diluuntur argumenta initio quaestioni proposita	p.29	9r
3. De objecto philosophiae naturalis	p.30	9v
3.1 Nomina et conditiones obiecti	p.30	9v
3.2 Referuntur octo diversa sententiae de obiecto philosophiae naturalis et confutantus tres minus probabiles	p.31	10r

3.3 Expenduntur quinquie priores sententiae et eliguntur duae, veluti caeteris probabiliores	p.34	11v
3.4 Propria auctoris opinio de subiecto naturalis philosophiae et dubia aliqua depulsa	p.36	13r
4. Cur octo libri phisicorum inscribantur de phisico auditu, seu de phisica auscultatione	p.38	14r
Consuetudo Aristotelis in exordiendo et Textura omnium octo librorum de physico auditu	p.41	15v
COMMENTARY BEGINS	p.44	17r

Esad's goal was to unite medieval Islamic and modern Greek learning. The broader significance he attributed to the work was that, at different moments in the past and at various geographies, Aristotle had been exceptionally well received by rulers and had proven to be very serviceable as the imperial philosophy of Sassanid Iran, Ancient Rome and Abbasid Baghdad. (1v). (Hacı Beşir Ağa, 414, 1r) He later reinforced this statement with further praises for Aristotle, whom Cottunius represented as the best philosopher of the greatest empire in the world. (4v) Cottunius's book was a contemporary and comprehensive commentary on the natural philosophy of Aristotle, while most books and commentaries that dealt with this science were based on Avicenna's and Alfarabi's understandings of Aristotle and focused almost exclusively on minutiae, which such commentators engaged in out of piety and in expectation of a spiritual reward. (2r)

According to Esad, it was the worldly utility of natural philosophy and not the authority of medieval commentators that made his undertaking worthwhile. Midway into the introduction, Esad translated Cottunius as saying that natural philosophy was not a practical but a theoretical science that produced certain knowledge about nature. (2r) However, the certainty of natural philosophy was a direct result of its disciplinary purity: philosophy was not about knowing fate (astrology) or the essences of objects (alchemy) -- disciplines that previously formed the core of Ottoman *ḥikmet-i ṭabī'iyye*. Natural philosophy was the pious science of bodily motions and was beneficial both to religion and to the ruler. Esad presented Aristotelian natural philosophy as conterminous with philosophy itself and, hence, in clear conflict with the theologians' metaphysical reading of Aristotelian thought. It created a space where philosophy could be pursued as a limited but independent discipline.

Figure 1: The Title Page of Cottunius's *Commentarii*. The iconography suggests that natural philosophy fortified the individual against both worldly temptations and imparted justice and other virtues. The juxtaposition of the philosopher on the island with the mathematician on the lower right also suggests that speculative philosophy is superior to mathematics.

Most importantly, Esad used Cottunius's work to argue that natural philosophy was key to cultivating virtue.[31] Philosophy as a purely rational and speculative activity also provided a unique type of worldly solace, namely, the understanding that the universe at large was calm and orderly. Dimitri Cantemir, one of Esad's pupils, expounded the same view in his *Salvation of the Wise Man and the Ruin of the Sinful World*, which was circulated in the Ottoman Empire after Athanasios III Dabbas, the Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, had it translated into Arabic.[32]

The commentary helped the Ottoman cognoscenti to bound off legitimate natural philosophy from illegitimate naturalistic practices. While alchemical and astrological agendas were central to many of the seventeenth-century translations of European naturalistic works, translations of the eighteenth century focused more on natural philosophy in the Aristotelian sense, namely on the study of motion. The early signs of this shift surely include the introduction to the Müteferrika edition of Katip Çelebi's *Cihānnümā* (1732), where Edmond Pourchot's *Institutiones philosophicae* figured prominently, and *Füyūẓāt-ı Mıḳnatısiyye* (1732), the anonymous translation of Christoph Eberhard's *Specimen theoriae magneticae*.

From Avicennism to Aristotelianism

Esad showed that there were fundamental disagreements between Aristotle's own writings and the prevailing Ottoman interpretations of peripatetic thought. The translation was truly innovative, as it was not continuous with any Muslim author that Ottoman readers would customarily encounter at the *medrese*. The *Commentarii* was Aristotelian, but the particular type of Aristotelianism it expounded -- a mixture of humanism and Averroism - was alien to the Ottoman Empire.[33] In order to appreciate the innovative quality of that Esad's translation, one may turn to Charles Schmitt's characterization of European Aristotelianism as many, not one.[34] The humanists' Aristotle was not the same as that of

31 According to Cottunius, the orderly operation of nature imparted "justice, fortitude, temperance, prudence, liberality, munificence and every conceivable virtue" to its students. Cottunius, *Commentarii,* p.2

32 Dimitrie Cantemir. *The Salvation of the Wise Man and the Ruin of the Sinful World*. trans. and ed. Ioana Fedorov. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Romane, 2006

33 For example, Katip Çelebi's *Keşfü'ẓ-ẓünūn* shows that Averroës's commentaries on Aristotle, and even those of İbn Bacce were not known to Ottoman readers.

34 This is a persistent theme throughout Schmitt's work, but see especially Charles B. Schmitt. *Aristotle and the Renaissance*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983.

the scholastics. Scholastic Aristotelianism itself came in several different varieties, such as Scotism or Thomism. In the Islamic tradition there had also been different interpretations of Aristotle. Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroës, who were the chief representatives of Muslim peripateticism, all had quite different philosophical views. For example, Averroës was the least influenced by Alexandrian neo-Platonism whereas Alfarabi's Avicenna's philosophical projects were a direct continuation of the Late Antique project of reconciling Plato with Aristotle.[35]

Thus, even as Esad's translation was Aristotelian, it also constituted a double break both with Avicenna's philosophy, which had dominated Eastern Islam, and with the kelām of the Ottoman *medrese*. Not only was the Neo-Platonic theory of emanation completely absent from the *Commentarii*, but certain signature concepts, such as the giver of forms (*vāhibü'ṣ-ṣuvar*), also had no place in the text. The translation eschewed a well-established dictum of post-Avicennian *kelām*, namely that Aristotelian causes were secondary to the primary cause of everything, i.e., divine will. Another idea that was characteristic of both Islamic peripateticism and kelām, that the final causes of natural events could be moral rather than purely natural, was likewise absent from the *Commentarii*.[36] Cottunius himself preferred Averroës rather than Avicenna, whereas Esad bore the epithet "the third teacher," which placed him beside Aristotle (first teacher) and Alfarabi (second teacher), not Avicenna. Even so, the fact remains that the translation was in fundamental disagreement with Alfarabi's philosophy, which, at any rate, was buried deep in Islamic history and did not have a textual legacy at the Ottoman *medrese*.

The popular sources of Avicennist thought in the Ottoman Empire were the manuals of systematic theology. Many scholars agree that mature *kelām* was little more than the Islamization and domestication of Avicenna's philosophical views.[37]

35 Herbert A. Davidson. *Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroës on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect and Theories of Human Intellect.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992.

36 Severing the connection between natural occurences and morality also undermined the Ottoman culture of prognostication, which helped clear natural philosophy from the taint of the "science of judgments". For example, several years before Esad finished the translation, the historian Naima could confidently relate major natural events to significant political events on the authority of Aristotle, such as the earthquake that took place in Istanbul just as Köprülü Mehmed was entering Baghdad to suppress Abaza Hasan's forces. According to both Cottunius and Esad, the natural world was not a messenger that delivered God's messages to mankind but was rather a self-enclosed and orderly whole.

37 Leaman and Rizvi, "The Developed Kalām Tradition."

Just as Christian scholasticism developed as a reaction to Averroism, Muslim scholasticism was a response to Avicennism. Asharite theology had shed its commitment to atomism in the thirteenth century and sought intellectual legitimation in the neo-Platonic interpretation of Aristotle.[38] Medieval Muslim thinkers themselves expressed this rupture by calling theologians who lived before Avicenna the ancients (*müteḳaddimīn*) and those who came after, the moderns (*müteaḫḫirīn*). With the exception of a few essentially metaphysical issues, the natural philosophy expounded by the *müteaḫḫirīn* was Aristotelian. The most remarkable aspect of this transformation was the unification of theology and philosophy under a single intellectual system.[39]

Esad was neither the first nor the only anti-Avicennist Ottoman Aristotelian of the Ahmedian era. Committed Galenists of the early eighteenth century, like Ömer b. İzniki (fl.1700) transgressed against Avicenna's disciplinary boundaries when he discussed the generation of life, the purposes of bodily organs as well as astrology in his *Ḳunūẓ-ı Ḥayāt-i İnsān ve Ḳavānīn-i Eṭıbbā-i Feyleṣofān* (Treasures of Human Life and the Canons of the Philosopher-Physicians).[40] Naima also opposed Avicennism when he advocated the use of the science of judgments (*'ilm-i aḥkām*) in historical scholarship.[41] Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi's earlier work took an inimical attitude against Islamic peripateticism at large. Of course, none of these authors even begin to cover the non-Aristotelian philosophical views, such as Parisian Cartesianism and chemical medicine, which proliferated in the Ottoman capital even as Esad was preparing his translation.

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38 Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor, "Introduction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*. eds. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005; pp. pp.1-9; p.5. Robert Wisnovsky, "One Aspect of the Avicennian Turn in Sunni Theology," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 14/1, *2004*: 65-100.

39 Avicenna used Aristotle's*reductio* argument against atomism and claimed that it was impossible for atoms to give rise to an aggregate without being divisible (e.g., the right and the left of the atom have to be different if the atoms form a line). He also posed a Pythagorean problem, where the hypothenuse of a right triangle with unit-long sides are not all commensurable, and the same indivisible quantities cannot compose both a unit-length line and the line the size of which is the square root of two units. See McGinnis, *Avicenna*, 75-79.

40 Şehid Ali Paşa MS 2085, see 1r-12r for Ömer's discussion of the origins of life. For judicial astrology, see 154v-157v. Also see Nil Sarı and M. Bedizel Zülfikar, "The Paracelsian Influence on Ottoman Medicine in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Transfer of Modern Science and Technology to the Muslim World*. ed. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, ed. Istanbul: IRCICA, 1992; pp. 157-79; pp.158-9.

41 Naima, *Tārīḫ-i Na'īmā*. 6 vols. ed. Mehmed İpşirli. Ankara: TTK, 2007; vol. 1, p.5.

The most prominent alternative to Avicennian philosophy in the seventeenth century Ottoman Empire was the illuminationist thought of Sühreverdi and Molla Sadra.[42] And, a notable feature of the intellectual activity of the early eighteenth century Ottoman court was the complete absence of illuminationism. While Ahmed III and Grand Vizier Damad Ibrahim patronized numerous translations from Arabic and Persian into Turkish, the writings of Sühreverdi and Molla Sadra received no attention among court philosophers. Furthermore, although metaphysics formed the core of illuminationist thought and of the philosophy of *kelām*, the Ahmedian elite also did not commission or patronize a single volume on metaphysics.

Consequently, while Esad's peripateticism might seem like the continuation of an existing tradition, it in fact broke with every Islamic intellectual tradition known to contemporary Ottoman authors. Although Esad translated what seemed like a European scholastic manual, the translation weakened rather than strengthened Muslim scholasticism.

The New Aristotelianism: Greek or Ottoman?

Esad probably acquired the taste for and a knowledge of Paduan Aristotelianism through fellow Greek scholars. He could observe his hometown, Ioannina, turn into an important town of Greek learning as he was growing up. Two wealthy patrons had established grammar schools for Greek boys, and the faculty had strong connections with the Glikis press in Venice. Some of the Ioannitan professors were graduates of Padua, whereas others had received a Padua-style education in Istanbul.[43] Esad's interaction with Greek learning as a youth remains a mystery, but we know that he spoke the language, that he advocated Aristotelianism and that he was part of the Empire's Greek patronage networks later in his life.

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42 See Şeşen, Ramazan et al., eds. *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Koprulu Library*. 3 vols. Istanbul: Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture, 1986. The philosophical books housed in the library are predominantly on illuminationist philosophy.

43 Ariadna Camariano-Cioran, *Les Academies princières de Bucarest et de Jassy et leurs professeurs.* Thessaloniki : Institute for Balkan Studies, 1974; esp. pp. 7, 125, 191. On the Greek press in Venice, which Chrisanthos Notaras later ran, see Georg Veloudis. *Das griechische Druck- und Verlagshaus Glikis in Venedig (1670-1854): das griechische Buch zur Zeit der Türkenherrschaft*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1974

Figure 2: Johannes Cottunius, Knight of St. George and First Professor of Philosophy at Padua. The Epigram reads: "Verria, which gave birth to you lies miles away from Stagira/Whereas there is not even a single mile between your mind and that of Aristotle." The portrait is printed in the *Commentarii*.

Cottunius was an intellectual descendant Paduan Aristotelianism, just as his contemporary Theophilos Korydaleos (1570-1646) was. While Korydalleos was primarily preoccupied with defending the Orthodox Church against Catholicism, Cottunius's project was of a completely different sort.[44] Cottunius sought to formulate an idea of Greekness that was separate from confessional identity. As he had converted to Catholicism at a young age, he sought his identity in the ancient Greek language and philosophy. In the *Commentarii,* he often drew attention to the fact that he was practically from the same city as Aristotle.[45] While he harbored milder Catholic sympathies than his friend and colleague Leo Allatius did, he was nevertheless invested in severing the identity of the Greek *nazione* from the Orthodox Church.[46]

Cottunius worked to cultivate a modern Hellenistic identity in more than one way. In 1648, he patronized a handsome book that served as a catalog of ancient Greek busts in the city of Venice, which was an center of the post-Byzantine Greek diaspora.[47] He also established a Greek college in Venice that admitted only poor students from the East and that provided a very intense cultural experience. The students, eight to ten in number, had to wear clothing that reflected their home region. They dined together with the professors, presumably on regional dishes, and were expected to act "in a Greek manner" at all times. Needless to say, the students observed Greek holidays and received a rigorous education in classical literature. Before his death in 1657, Cottunius had become the official protector of all overseas Greek students (*nazione oltramarina*) at the University of Padua.[48]

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44 On Korydaleos see, Cléobule Tsourkas. *Les débuts de l'enseignement philosophique et de la libre pensée dans les Balkans: La vie et l'oeuvre de Théophile Corydalée (1563-1646)*. Bucharest: Institut d'Études et de Recherches Balkaniques, 1948

45 For example, see Cottunius, *Commentarii*, p.6: "Aristoteles,..., fuit natione Graecus, provincia Macedo, patria Stagirites, meus conterraneus, ac penè concivis"

46 On Allatius, see Karen Hartnup. *'On the Beliefs of the Greeks': Leo Allatios and Popular Orthodoxy.* Leiden: Brill, 2004; pp.17-21. Also see Thomas Jean-Marie Cerbu, "Leone Allacci (1587-1669): The Fortunes of an Early Byzantinist," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1986; pp. 16-8. Cerbu's analysis is based on Gabriel Naudé's *Syntagma de studio liberali*. Urbino: Apud Mazzantinum & Aloysium Ghisonum, 1632.

47 *Icones graecorum sapientium amplissimo et excellentissimo D.D. Ioanni Cottunio Equiti dicatae*. Padua: apud Mattheum Bolzettam de Cadorinis, 1648

48 Niccolo Comneno-Papadopoli. *Historia gymnasii patavini post ea, quae hactenus de illo scripta sunt, ad haec nostra tempora plenius,* & *emendatius deducta.Cum actuario de claris professoribus tum alumnis eiusdem.* Venice: Apud Sebastianum Coleti, 1726; pp.37-8.

Cottunius's influence remained limited to the Venetian territories before the Ottoman conquest of Crete in 1669. Many of these students could find lodging and patronage at the Cottunian College. The fall of Crete was in all likelihood responsible for carrying Cottunius's Hellenistic sensibilities to the Ottoman Empire. In the few years preceding 1669, the gates of Italy were slowly shutting to Ottoman Greeks. In 1666, Alexander Mavrocordato, a student of Cottunius and the head of the Patriarchal Academy in Istanbul, hastily dispatched a letter to Leo Allatios asking to purchase a philosophical library for the Patriarchal Academy.[49] In 1668, the rector of the College of St. Athanasius in Rome, which trained Orthodox clergy, declared that the school would no longer admit Ottoman students.[50] Around the same time, the Venetian Senate took over the administration of the Cottunian College from the Greek community.[51] By 1670, Ottoman Greeks families who could not pay for Paduan education had very few options to get their sons educated in Italy. It fell to the Patriarchal Academy to play a central role in Greek education. In the late seventeenth century, many satellite Greek schools began to appear in Athens, Ioannina and Bucharest. Since Padua continued to be a model for Greek education, these schools offered training in classical Greek and helped students associate with the classical heritage. Cottunius's opinions might have been attractive to innumerable Orthodox Greek intellectuals who had converted to Catholicism or to Islam over the seventeenth century.[52] Esad himself came from a Muslim family, but his philosophical views brought him within the orbit of the Cottunianism. Thus, when he voiced his desire to unite Muslim and Greek learning in the translation of the *Commentarii*, he was probably seeking to reconcile his intellectual identity with his confessional belonging.

The Ottoman conquest of Crete had brought the Papal and Venetian interest in cultivating good relations with the Greeks to an abrupt end.[53] Of course, Padua continued to receive students from Ottoman lands, but the new generation were either patronized by Greek princes such as Constantin Brancoveanu, himself a

49 Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie*, p.263

50 Fyrigos, *Collegio greco*, p.158.

51 Comneno-Papadopoli, *Historia gymnasii Patavini*, p.38.

52 On Greek conversions in Crete, see Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000. On seventeenth-century conversions to Catholicism in Venetian territories, also see E. Natalie Rothmann. "Becoming Venetian: Conversion and Transformation in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean," *Mediterranean Historical Review,* 21/1, *2006:* 39-75.

53 Greene, *Shared World*, p.205

graduate of Padua, or came from prominent families.[54] While Ottoman Greek students in the early part of the seventeenth century came from poor families and sought to elevate their social status with the help of an education, the new generations of students after 1669 were either already wealthy or they were attached to a wealthy Greek household. Hence, receiving a degree from Padua after the Ottoman conquest of Crete had quite a different meaning than it did during Cottunius's lifetime. Now, the students who graduated from Padua were already integrated into Greek commercial networks, and thus, indirectly to Ottoman power.

By the early eighteenth century, a degree from Padua was indicative of social privilege and Cottunian's association between ancient and modern Greeks took on a different meaning in its new, gentrified setting. It is perhaps not surprising that Nicholas Mavrocordato (1670-1730), who was Alexander's son, a student of Esad, and the Prince of Wallachia and Moldavia, made a distinction between his religion and his Greek ethnicity, and Ottoman court intellectuals such as the physician Hafız Hasan (fl.1720), Esad of Ioannina and the biographer Salim referred to modern Greeks as *Yunani* rather than *Rumi*.[55]

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54 For a partial list of Greek graduates of Padua, see Giorgio Plumidis, "Gli scolari 'oltramarini' a Padova nei secoli XVI e XVII," *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, X/2, *1972*; pp.257-70. Note the prevalence of sons of noblemen (*filius domini* or *filius quondam domini*) after 1669.

55 See Hafiz Hasan, *Ṭıbb-ı Cedīd*. MS Ragıppaşa 674, 5v-6r. On Salim, see note 31 above. Cf. Victor Roudometof, "From Rum Millet to Greek Nation: Enlightenment, Secularization, and National Identity in Ottoman Balkan Society, 1453–1821," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 16, *1998*: 11-48; p.19: "The conflation of Greek ethnic identity with Rum millet identity was an indispensable component of the Ottoman social system. This conflation is revealed in the ethnic Greeks' view of their ancient Greek ancestors, the Hellenes, whom they considered mythical beings of extraordinary stature and power, capable of superhuman tasks. Popular folk tales dated the Hellenes' existence to the dawn of time. In sharp contrast to this ancient race, the contemporary Greeks called themselves Rumioi (Romans) or Christianoi (Christians) (Kakridis 1989). Autobiographical writings of eighteenth-century secular and religious figures testify to the deployment of religious categories as a road map for a person's existence, suggesting a shared religious mental- ity among the Orthodox Christians (Kitromilides 1996). In the late 1790s, Balkan Orthodox Christians routinely referred to themselves as 'Christians' and referred to Catholics as either 'Latins' or, more commonly, 'Franks' (Arnakis 1963:131). Within the Ottoman Empire, these Greek Orthodox (or "Greek") urban and mercantile strata were referred to by the Ottomans, the Church, and themselves as reaya, Christians, or "Romans" (Rumioi)–that is, members of the Rum millet."

Philosophy also served to legitimize political authority. One of the first Greek noblemen to capitalize on this new union of elevated social status and Paduan education was Constantin Brancoveanu, the voivode of Wallachia, who fashioned himself as a philosopher king, and not simply as a patron of learning.[56] Alexander Mavrocordato himself penned his *Peri kathekonton* with similar sentiments and Dimitri Cantemir was a prolific writer in moral and political philosophy.[57] Indeed, first-person accounts of cosmopolitan gatherings from 1700s and 1710s suggest that philosophy was the centerpiece of polite conversation.[58]

Early eighteenth century Ottoman administrators also considered the mastery of *ḥikmet* to be an essential part of vizierial identity. It was no longer sufficient simply to be a good patron of learning, but one also needed to have mastered philosophy. Most encomiastic poems (*ḳaṣīde*) praised Damad Ibrahim as being wise like Aristotle, while Osmanzade Ta'ib's *Hadīkatü'l-Vüzerā* and its addenda (*zeyl*) made special note of the intellectual prowess of Grand Viziers. Hekimoğlu Ali had a philosophical bent of mind "like Plato," and Mehmed Said was inducted into the bureaucratic corps (*hācegān*) because of his competence in natural philosophy.[59] A question that requires further research is whether the later Köprülü viziers also could have served as parallel precursors to these developments. Fazıl Ahmed himself was a scholar and the main patron of Brancoveanu, while Can-

56 Athanasia Glycofrydi-Leontsini, "Teaching Princes: A Vehicle of Modern and Political Education during the Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment," *Classical Russia*, 3-5, *2008-2010*: 71-90.

57 Nicholas Mavrocordato. *Peri kathekonton biblos ... Liber de officiis, conscriptus a piissimo, celsissimo atque sapientissimo principe ac duce totius ungrovalachiae domino, domino Joanne Nicolao Alexandri Maurocordato, voivoda*. London: Typis Samuelis Palmer, 1726. Alongside his *Salvation of the Wise Man* and his other well-known works, Cantemir also wrote *The Physical Examination of Monarchies*, which essentially reproduced the Ibn Khaldunian idea that monarchies were living bodies that went through certain ages or stages. Dimitrie Cantemir. *Monarchiarum physica examinatio*.Introduction by Eugène Lozovan. Copenhagen: Romansk Institut, 1983.

58 Paul Lucas. *Voyage du Sieur Paul Lucas, fait par ordre du Roi, dans La Grece, L'Asie Mineure, Macedonie et l'Afrique*. 2 vols. Amsterdam: aux dépens de la Compagnie, 1724; vol. 1, [Preface] and *in passim*.

59 For a comprehensive transliteration of the encomiastic poems, see Metin Hakverdioğlu. "Edebiyatımızda Lale Devri ve Nevşehirli Damat Ibrahim Paşa'ya Sunulan Kasideler: Inceleme-Metin." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Selçuk University, Konya, 2007. Also see Osmanzade Ta'ib et al. *Hadīkatü'l-Vüzerā*. Istanbul: Ceride-i Havadis, 1854; pp. 34, 41, 43, 84.

temir portrayed Numan as paying more attention to his books than to his public duties.[60]

Ottoman Power and Aristotelian Scholarly Networks

Orthodox students turned to local patrons and institutions for education either in the Ottoman Empire or in Padua. An important figure who mobilized the Ottoman Greeks to create these patronage networks and local educational institutions was Alexander Mavrocordato (1636-1709). He was the son of a wealthy merchant from the island of Chios. Like many of his contemporaries seeking a university education, he first enrolled at St. Athanasius, and soon after left that college to spend a year at the University of Bologna. After several years, he moved to Padua. He was probably one of the last Greek students to hear Cottunius lecture.[61] In 1663, he travelled from Venice to Istanbul to teach at the Patriarchal Academy.[62] We do not know the texts that he taught, but it is almost certain that Cottunius's works were involved.

In 1673, Fazıl Ahmed offered Mavrocordato the position of Chief Dragoman (a variant of *tercüman*, the Turkish word for translator). Panagiotis Nicousios (1613-1673), the former interpreter, was also a graduate of Padua, and was an important patron for Greek-speaking Ottoman scholars such as Hezarfen Hüseyin Çelebi. His death had left the position vacant, and Mavrocordato's appointment

60 On Fazıl Ahmed, see Ismail E. Erünsal. *Osmanlı Vakıf Kütüphaneleri: Tarihi Gelişimi ve Organizasyonu*. Ankara: TTK, 2008; p. 172. On Köprülü Numan and Köprülü family as a whole, Cantemir says: "Kioprili Nuuman] A man very famous among the Turks for his justice, learning and piety; but of no experience in political or military affairs: for his father, the great and so often commended Kioprili Mustapha Pasha, had brought up all his sons more to learning, than to the knowledge of state affairs: to the end that they should slight court honours and preferments, which he knew to be attended with great danger, and devoting themselves to n ecclesiastical life, might quietly spend their days free from the fear of the Ax, or other violent death... Nuuman Pasha being grown up before Husein Pasha came to the Vizirship, and having been initiated into into the profound learning of the Arabians, he always maintained, even in the midst of his public employments, a love for reading, and the study of the laws..." Dimitrie Cantemir. *History of the Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire.* trans. N. Tindal. London: Knapton, 1734; p.449.

61 Demetrius Procopius, "Succincta eruditorum graecorum superioris & praesentis saeculi recensio," in Johannes Albertus Fabricius. *Bibliothecae Graecae*. vol. 11. Hamburg: Theodorus Felginer, 1722; pp. 774-6.

62 Camariano-Cioran, *Academies*, p. 152.

marked the beginning of the palace tradition of appointing Greek dragomans that would last more than a century.[63]

The Chief Dragoman functioned more like the Ottoman secretary of state rather than an ordinary translator. Throughout the eighteenth century, university-trained Greeks occupied this office. As they knew Turkish as well as Italian, Latin and French, from a certain point onwards, they could easily mediate between the sultan and the European missions. As the European ambassadors required similar services, they also tended to employ Ottoman Greeks as their interpreters. Consequently, much seventeenth- and early eighteenth century diplomatic negotiation in Istanbul was a dialogue between Greeks and other Greeks speaking on behalf of different monarchs.[64]

Mavrocordato's influence grew over the four decades that he served as the Chief Dragoman. He headed the Ottoman diplomatic corps during the tough negotiations at the Treaty of Carlowitz (1699), which cost the Ottomans Podolia, much of Hungary as well as Morea. During his years in sultanic service, he also became an important figurehead for Ottoman Christians. He represented the interests of his fellow Greek merchants, who for the most part resided in the Phanar district of Istanbul. He was central in the politics of the Orthodox Church and exerted considerable influence in the election of patriarchs.[65]

However, Mavrocordato was not the only Greek dignitary at the top echelons of Ottoman power. Ahmed III's mother, Gülnuş Sultan, was from Crete. She was enslaved as a young girl and was sent to the imperial Harem at the age of 25, where she converted to Islam and received a palace education.[66] Another important palace official with Paduan credentials was Nuh b. Abdülmennan (d.1715). A Cretan by birth, he had served as the Chief Physician to Mustafa II and Ahmed III.[67] He was also responsible for the edicts of 1703 and 1704 that defended Galenic medicine, which was based on Aristotle's philosophy, against chemical medicine, which was emphatically anti-Aristotelian.[68] While his rank in Ottoman protocol

63 Christine Philliou. *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011: pp. 10-1.

64 Bedrettin Tuncel, "L'âge des drogmans," *Revue des études sud-est européennes*, XII/2, *1974*: 221-242.

65 See for a critical view of the "secularization" of the Orthodox Church under the Mavrocordato family: Theodore H. Papadopoullos. *Greek Church and People Under Turkish Domination*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1990.

66 Lucienne Thys-Şenocak. *Ottoman Women Builders*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007; p.46.

67 Bayat, *Hekimbaşılık*, pp.34-8.

68 Markus Köhbach. "Europäische Äerzte im Osmanischen Reich am Beginn des 18.Jahrhunderts - der Fall Şinasi," *Sudhoffs Archiv*, 64/1, *1980*: 79-85.

placed him just one step below the Sheik al-Islam, he also had exclusive access to the Sultan. Abdullah (?-1743), the incumbent Sheik al-Islam between 1718 and 1730, was the highest religious and judicial authority in the Empire and hailed from the Greek town of Larissa. Esad himself was born and raised in the town of Ioannina, which had become a center of Orthodox education.

The Greek merchants of Phanar served as financiers to the sultan and to other elite Muslim households, which brought them within close proximity of Ottoman political power. Because Crete occupied a central role in Venetian trade in the eastern Mediterranean, the change in political custody meant a cultural and economic readjustment for the Cretans. Following the island's conquest in 1669, many of the wealthier Greek inhabitants of the island converted to Islam.[69] Conversion saved their land and property from confiscation, and lightened their tax burdens. Furthermore, because political power now lay in the hands of the Ottoman Sultan rather than the Doge of Venice, it was simply prudent for families to find a way into the palace in Istanbul. One sure way to achieve this standing was to secure positions for their Padua-educated sons as palace physicians or interpreters.[70] Thus, it is no accident that over the last decades of the seventeenth century, Greek physicians from Crete flocked to the Ottoman medical marketplace.[71]

Consequently, there were many neo-Aristotelians who were associated the Ottoman court during Ahmed III's reign. Alexander Mavrocordato was both the most senior and most famous of the group, but Chrisanthos Notaras, the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem; court physicians Nuh b. Abdülmennan and Ömer el-İzniki; the historian Naima; Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi, who would serve as the Ottoman ambassador to the Versailles in 1721, were all committed Aristotelians.[72] While Esad was a singularly successful scholar, his aspirations

69 Bruce Masters, "Christians in a Changing World," in The *Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol 3: *The Later Ottoman Empire*. Suraiya Faroqhi, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006: pp.272-280.

70 For an overview of the literature on Padua, see Cynthia Klestinec, "Medical Education in Padua: Students, Faculty and Facilities," *Medical Excellence? Medical Travel and Education in Europe, 1500-1789*. Ole Peter Grell, Andrew Cunningham and Jon Arrizabalaga, eds. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010; pp. 193-220. For Greek students at Padua, see Kostantaras, *Infamy and Revolt*, pp. 40-1. For detailed biographies of illustrious Greek graduates of the university, see Comneno-Papadopoli, *Historia gymnasii Patavini*, vol.1, pp. 317-40.

71 S. Marketos, J. Lascataros and A. Diamandopoulos, "The Links between the Medical School of Padua and the Hellenic Medical World," *Medicina nei Secoli*, 4, *1992*: 45-58.

72 I have briefly treated many of these individuals above. On Notaras see, Germaine Aujac, "Chrysanthos Notaras et les systèmes du monde," *Pallas*, 59, *2002*: 75-88.

were not unique, at least when we place him in the cosmopolitan setting of Istanbul's intellectual life.

During the early 1700s, intellectual exchange between the Orthodox and the Muslims had reached such a level of maturity that many Greek scholars associated with the court had a command of Arabic, Persian, and Latin.[73] Hezarfen Hüseyin, a Greek-speaking Muslim from Chios, was the first Ottoman scholar to use Byzantine sources in his history of Istanbul. Mahmud Efendi, who had served as the Judge of Athens for over twenty years until he wrote a history of the city, *The History of the City of Philosophers*. He used Thucydides, Plutarch, Polybius alongside modern Greek sources.[74] Nicholas Mavrocordato, Esad's student, penned a dialogue called *Parerga Philotheou* (Leisure Hours of Philotheos), where he praised this new culture of learning:

> Greece is no longer completely dispossessed of learned men and books; she at least guard the relics of her ancient grandeur. Over the years, excellent scholars in all fields have returned from the illustrious academies of Rome and Padua. They enrich their nation in both foreign knowledge and Greek philosophy. Especially now, some among them read the writings of Ancient Greeks (Hellenes), and all that is worth reading in Latin, Arabic, Persian, Italian and French. They apply themselves to their studies and ceaselessly read day and night.75

Yet, until 1718, this specifically Ottoman Greek culture of erudition had remained a private pursuit and did not crystallize into a policy of patronage that might have integrated, consolidated or perpetuated the Greaco-Turkish intellectual engagement at the court. The fact that Ahmed patronized the translation of Cottunius's commentaries marked a turning point and reflected the parallel political developments. The war that ended with the Treaty of Passarowitz (1718) was as important for Ottoman learning as it was for the power dynamics of the eastern Mediterranean. Between 1714 and 1716, the Ottoman navy fought successfully against the Venetians and recovered Morea, which they had recently lost, and conquered practically every Venetian stronghold in the Aegean. After 1718, being Greek practically meant living under Ottoman rule. Thus, modern Greek Aristotelianism became a species of Ottoman Aristotelianism.

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73 Demetrius Procopius, "Succincta eruditorum graecorum," *in passim*.

74 Gülçin Tunalı-Koç, "Osmanli Atinası ve düşünce tarihi ekseninde Kadı Mahmud Efendi'nin *Tarih-i Medinetü'l-Hukemā* adlı eseri," *Divan*, 20/1, *2006*: 169-184. Cumhur Bekar, "A New Perception of Rome, Byzantium and Constantinople in Hezarfen Hüseyin's Universal History," Unpublished MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, 2011.

75 Mavrocordato, *Loisirs*, pp. 116-7.

Soon after the Treaty, the Ottoman court moved to consolidate its power over the Greek populations. The best way to do this was through the Patriarchate. The Sultan helped Patriarch Jeremias III seize control over the various independent Orthodox communities and to suppress the Patriarchate of Muscovy. In 1721, he handed control of the Holy Sepulcher to Chrisanthos Notaras, who was all too happy to oust the Dominicans not only from the church but from the city of Jerusalem as well. In 1722, Ahmed III issued another edict that prevented Jesuit missionary activity among Greeks and Armenians.[76] By 1724, the Greeks were a part of the Ottoman intellectual and political mainstream.

Far from being redundant or retrogressive, Esad's *El-Tā'līmü's-Sālis* was at the vanguard of the new scholarly culture of the eighteenth century. The translation served to deepen the intellectual interaction between Orthodox Greek and Muslim scholars, but it was only a small part of Istanbul's cosmopolitan philosophical culture. While I have broadly traced the career of Paduan Aristotelianism in the Ottoman Empire, peripateticism was not the only movement that these two groups shared. Chemical medicine and Cartesianism, both of which were emphatically anti-Aristotelian, were also common to both Orthodox and Muslim scholars.[77] A comprehensive assessment of the intellectual life of Istanbul, one that looks beyond linguistic, ethnic and confessional boundaries, may suggest that what has so far been presented as the Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment was part of a broader Ottoman movement.

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76 Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans*, p. 156.

77 Raphael Demos. "Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment, 1750-1821," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 19/4, *1958*: 523-541. Dimitris Dialetis, Kostas Gavroglu and Manolis Patiniotis. "The Sciences in the Greek- Speaking Regions during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", in *The Sciences in the European Periphery during the Enlightenment.*2 vols. Kostas Gavroglu, ed. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999; vol. 2, pp.41-71. Efthymios P. Boukaris and Vangelis Koutalis, "The 'System of Chymists' and the 'Newtonian Dream' in Greek-Speaking Communities in the Seventeenth-Eighteenth Centuries" *Science and Education*, 15, *2006*: 780-800. Manolis Patiniotis, "Textbooks at the Crossroads: Scientific and Philosophical Textbooks in Eighteenth-Century Greek Education," *Science and Education*, 15, *2006*: 801-822. Manolis Patiniotis, "Eclecticism and Appropriation of the New Scientific Methods by the Greek-Speaking Scholars in the Ottoman Empire," in *Science between Europe and Asia.*ed. Feza Günergun. New York: Springer, 2011; pp. 193-206. Cf. Nil Sarı and M. Bedizel Zülfikar. "The Paracelsian Influence on Ottoman Medicine." I have briefly alluded to Parisian Cartesianism in Ottoman Istanbul above, but it is well-known that Ibrahim Müteferrika used Pourchot's *Institutiones philosophiae* extensively in his naturalistic works. I hope to treat this issue in greater detail in a future publication.

Natural Philosophy and Politics in the Eighteenth Century: Esad of Ioannina and Greek Aristotelianism at the Ottoman Court

Abstract ■ Esad of Ioannina's *El-Tā'līmü's-Sālis*, an Arabic translation of Johannes Cottunius's *Commentarii...octo libros de physico auditu*, is one of the most important artefacts of Ahmedian scholarship. The translation introduced Muslim readers to Paduan Aristotelianism. Esad's work featured a materialistic treatment of Aristotelianism, which was at odds with popular intellectual movements in Istanbul, such as Avicennism, illuminationism and philosophical theology. *El-Tā'līmü's-Sālis* recast the meaning of philosophy in a way that placed greater emphasis on physics and that presented philosophy as a source of worldly solace. The dynamics that led to the translation include the emergence of a Greek identity that was separate from the Orthodox Church, the gentrification of philosophical discourse, and the intervolution of Muslim and Orthodox patronage networks. While Esad's work has often been treated as part and parcel of Islamic thought, the content and the context of his work suggests that the Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment of the early eighteenth century might be part of a broader Ottoman intellectual movement.

Keywords: Yanyalı Esad, Ahmed III, Aristotelianism, University of Padua, Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment, Ottoman patronage networks, Greek Orthodox Church

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