The Political Language of *Takvîm-i vekayi*: the Discourse and Temporality of Ottoman ‘Reform’ (1831-1834)

Özgür Türesay

Translator: Naomi Cohen

Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/ejts/6874>

DOI: 10.4000/ejts.6874

ISSN: 1773-0546

Publisher

EJTS

Electronic reference

Özgür Türesay, "The Political Language of *Takvîm-i vekayi*: the Discourse and Temporality of Ottoman ‘Reform’ (1831-1834)", *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [Online], 31 | 2020, Online since 04 May 2021, connection on 19 May 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/ejts/6874> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejts.6874>

This text was automatically generated on 19 May 2021.

© Some rights reserved / Creative Commons license

The Political Language of *Takvîm-i vekayi*: the Discourse and Temporality of Ottoman ‘Reform’ (1831-1834)

Özgür Türesay

Translation : Naomi Cohen

I would like to thank Nathalie Clayer, İsmail Esiner, Erdal Kaynar, Emmanuel Szurek, Murat Şiviloğlu, Alp Eren Topal and both reviewers for their help, criticisms, and suggestions as well as the participants of my teaching at the EPHE.

Introduction

- 1 This study aims to shed light on the Ottoman political language and the rhetoric of the political authority in the early 1830s, which is a significant lacuna in Ottoman historiography. The few studies that examine Ottoman political vocabulary (rather than language) in the nineteenth century focus on the period after the proclamation of the Imperial Rescript of Gülhane (1839) (Aymes 2010: 13-57; Doganalp-Votzi 2002; Doganalp-Votzi, Römer 2009; Reinkowski 2005 and 2012 [2005]; Römer 2002; Strauss 2006; Turan 2007: 169-170, 180). While the three studies published by the Center for Turkish, Ottoman, Balkan and Central Asian Studies (CETOBAC) have made a significant contribution to our knowledge of Turkish and Ottoman political vocabulary, none of them deals with the political language of the pre-Tanzimat period (Georgeon 1999; 2012a and 2012b). Among the two precursor studies on Muslim political vocabulary, Bernard Lewis’ book rather focuses on earlier eras and a few semantic fields. Although interesting in itself, it is not of much help for the period under scrutiny here (Lewis 1988). That of Ami Ayalon provides a stimulating analysis of modern political vocabulary in Arabic, however it does not deal with Ottoman Turkish (Ayalon 1987).

- 2 I will begin with a historiographical overview of the official gazette and continue with observations on the political context within which it appeared and the “public” targeted by this new endeavor. I will draw on the theoretical contributions of various approaches such as historical semantics (Koselleck 1997; 2005; Escudier 2009), historical philosophy (Binoche 2012), semiology (Barthes 1978; 1984), the history of political thought (Skinner 1999; 2018), the history of discourse (Guilhaumou 2017), the socio-history of language (Noiriel 1995) and the linguistic history of conceptual usages (Guilhaumou 2006; 2000), as well as engaging with the first attempts at theoretical debate on the scope and limits of these different approaches to Ottoman studies (Karabıçak 2020; Topal, Wigen 2019; Zemmin 2019; Sariyannis 2016). Throughout the article, I will examine the gazette’s terminology to show that the concept of the “public” existed under various terms at the time in the Ottoman political thought. After a brief presentation of the content of the official gazette, I will zoom in on one of the semantic fields that shapes political language: the vocabulary of the reform. More concretely, I will reflect on how we could better formulate the transformations in the 1830s from the perspective of their lexical, rhetorical and temporal features. Finally, I will conclude with five methodological observations drawn from this ongoing investigation based on the first 86 issues of *Takvîm-i vekayi* and *Le Moniteur Ottoman* (October 1831 to August 1834).

State of the art on the official Ottoman gazette

- 3 The Ottoman official gazette, *Takvîm-i vekayi* (the Calendar of Events) which began to appear in October 1831¹ has not been studied truly yet². Three short books in Turkish were devoted to its Ottoman edition in the early 1980s celebrating the 150th anniversary of its launch. More recently, a few master’s theses have broached the subject by transcribing the text or indexing a few dozen issues of the official gazette (Yapıcı 1999; Çolak 2011; Benzer 2013; Gebece 2014; Çatalkaya 2017; Aslan 2017).
- 4 The first comprehensive book-length study was conducted by Orhan Koloğlu, a specialist in the history of the Ottoman press. He analyzes the emergence of *Takvîm-i vekayi* by putting it in its political context and looks at its materiality (dimensions, price, periodicity, circulation, typography), its managers (director, editors, translators, those in charge of publishing in languages other than Turkish) and its content. The study, which is essentially based on the official gazette itself, is pioneering and teeming with information. However, Koloğlu remains largely descriptive and lacks critical distance from the political discourse relayed by the official gazette (Koloğlu [1981]). In another book, Koloğlu compares *Takvîm-i vekayi* with its Egyptian counterpart, a bilingual Turkish-Arabic organ, *Vekayi-i misriyye* [*The Events of Egypt*] (Koloğlu 1989). He focuses on a polemic between the two gazettes between 1831 and 1833, a polemic which takes place in the context of the first Ottoman-Egyptian war, dealing with the political legitimacy and efficiency of the Ottoman sultan and the governor of Egypt. As one of the rare works devoted to the *Vekayi-i misriyye*, it provides a good comparative perspective for the analysis of these two official newspapers. The third book, which is entirely devoted to *Takvîm-i vekayi*, transcribes a number of archival documents and very briefly evokes the political context in which this new institution appears (Yazıcı 1983). However, the contents of the official gazette are hardly touched upon.

- 5 Three articles should also be mentioned to conclude this historiographical overview. The most recent study devoted to the official gazette is by Hakan T. Karateke, who classifies *Takvîm-i vekayi* as a “contemporary chronicle.” He argues that the gazette is in continuity with the tradition of writing official history, while also being novel since it recounts events that are contemporaneous (Karateke 2015). The second article is devoted — in part — to the stylistic aspects of the gazette’s journalistic language; an important contribution to the historiography (Römer 2002) and one of the sources that inspired my study. The last article is authored again by Orhan Koloğlu and deals with the Western concepts and terms that are introduced into the Ottoman language through the official gazette and other Turkish-language newspapers (Koloğlu 1994).
- 6 This relative lack of historiographical interest is even more pronounced with *Le Moniteur Ottoman*. To date, only three studies exist, all by Orhan Koloğlu (1986, 1991, 1992) on this French edition of the gazette, which has 106 issues published over almost five years (November 1831 - June 1836). Worse still, the Greek, Armenian, Arabic and Persian versions have not been studied to date, except for a few notes by an amateur historian published in a short daily newspaper article in the early 1940s (Gerçek [1941-1945]: 110-121).
- 7 To sum up, despite some works published for the most part several decades ago, the *Takvîm-i vekayi* and its French version *Le Moniteur Ottoman* remain mostly neglected historical sources. Likely considered by historians as a mere official bulletin, a bulletin of laws — which it is not at all in reality — it is hardly analyzed and rarely exploited in works on the intellectual history of the nineteenth century. Even in recent serious studies on the period, it is possible to find passing remarks such as, “*Takvîm-i vekayi* mainly delivered state-related news in the most mundane manner and it is certainly not the most interesting read for Ottoman historians” (Şimşek 2015: 51). While the example may seem anecdotal, it is, unfortunately, a *topos* of contemporary Ottoman historiography. Even today, few historians use the official gazette as a source, whereas its study is, on the contrary, of the greatest importance for historians interested in the real and discursive construction of the Ottoman New Order, which crystallized in 1839 with the proclamation of the Imperial Rescript of Gülhâne.
- 8 In fact, it is a written corpus containing a large number of texts that express a collective political thought in the making, through conceptual and terminological fumbling. Spanning several tumultuous episodes, from the turn of the 19th century to the 1830s, this new political thought and language, which can be traced back to the reformism of the time of Selim III (r. 1789-1807), matured over more or less forty years (Karal 1988 [1946]; Beydilli 1999; Şakul 2005; Kenan 2010; Çağman 2010; Yayıcıoğlu 2018). It is the linguistic expression of a new paradigm of the relationship between political authority and the people over whom it wields power. It is a political thought that, beginning in 1826 when the Janissary Corps was abolished, gradually bore a new configuration of power and, inevitably, a new discourse that framed it.

What does the official gazette aim to do?

- 9 Islam had a central place in this new configuration. Or rather, Islam was vested with a new mission by the authority in the process of building a new socio-political order (Varol 2013; Yıldız 2009). This process is documented by the gazette, which was created precisely to establish a textual field that elaborates and disseminates this collective

political thought in motion. The sultan and his entourage deployed an Islamic rhetoric in the service of a vast reform project that aimed to atomize and disintegrate the various elements that make up the society in order to discipline, standardize, and unify them. There was, so to speak, no liberal aim or perspective at play, contrary to Orhan Koloğlu's interpretation (Koloğlu [1981]). It was rather an attempt at "self-colonization for self-empowerment" (şiviloğlu 2018: 60). The conception of the state that is inherent in the centralizing reforms as described in the official gazette was indeed close to that of Prussian cameralism and far from that of Humboldt's liberalism. In other words, it involved a police state, not a state of law (Laborier 1999: 25-27).

- 10 Concretely speaking, since the early 1820s, Mahmud II's rule had been going through a crisis of political legitimacy linked to three concomitant and partially connected factors. The first was nationalist ideas, chiefly that of equality, which emerged from political modernity in Europe and which shook the paradigm of relations between state and population by crystallizing in the Ottoman Empire through the Greek revolution (İlcak 2011; Erdem 2005 and 2011). The second was the centralizing policies launched by Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839), which upset the foundations of the Ottoman Ancien Régime, of which the abolition of the Janissaries was the most decisive part. The final factor was the threat posed by Mehmed Ali, the Ottoman governor of Egypt (Abu-Manneh 2010).
- 11 *Takvîm-i vekayi* was thus primarily a propaganda instrument at the service of political authority. It was intended for the production and dissemination of a discourse framing and legitimizing the centralizing reforms undertaken since 1826. The editor of the gazette says so himself, openly and from the outset, in a way that may seem a bit naive. In the preamble (*mukaddime*)³ published a week before the first issue appeared, he explains the *raison d'être* of the gazette as follows:

lâkin vekayi'-i kevnîye vuku'u zamânında neşr ü ilân olunmayub da esbâb-ı hakikiyesi mektûm kaldığı sûrette insânın tabîatı el-mer'ü adüvvün limâ cehilehü kaidesince hakikat ve aslını bilmediği şey'e dahl ü itirâz etmek üzere mecbûl olmağla zuhûr bulan mesâlih-i dâhiliye ve hâriciye-i devlet-i 'âliyeye ve tebdîlât-ı menâsıba ve sâir hall ü akde erkân-ı devletin hayâl ü hâtırına gelmemiş muammâ beyti gibi dürlü dürlü ma'nâlar verirler [...] devlet-i 'âliyede vuku' bulan mesâlih-i dâhiliye ve hâriciye vekayi'i birikdirilmeyüb esbâb-ı hakikiye ve icâbât-ı zarûriyesini beyân sûretiyle fî-l-hâl neşr birle halka tefhîm olundukda umûr-ı vâkıya herkes hakikati üzere kesb-i ittîlâ edüb evvelki gibi ba'zıları vehmince birer ma'nâ vererek vâkı'in hilâfı havâdis şüyûyla düşdükleri ızdırâbdan kurtılacakları bedîh olduğundan...⁴

And yet, when world events are not published at the time they occur, and their true causes remain unknown, in accordance with the saying that man's nature is to deal with things he does not know and to oppose them, people interpret the internal and external affairs of the sublime state, as well as changes in appointments and promotions and the management of other affairs, attributing to them various meanings as if they were cryptic poems, with enigmatic meanings that the great dignitaries of the state could not have imagined [...] *instead of amassing them, if the internal and external affairs of the sublime state were published immediately, explaining to the people their true causes, circumstances and necessities behind them, it is clear that everyone would be able to learn about past events in a proper way, and thus, it would be possible to avoid that everyone, as was the case before, could interpret them as they wished, thus succumbing to the confusion of making news that does not correspond with the facts.*⁵

- 12 The language of the preamble, which was written by the editor Esad Efendi (1789-1848) and read and edited by the sultan himself (Yazıcı 1983: 83), is relatively simple for its time. If one adopts the tripartite division proposed by the eminent Ottoman and Turkish literary historian Fahir İz to classify pre-Tanzimat Ottoman prose according to the stylistic complexity of a text, it can be classified as intermediate or medium prose, situated between simple and ornate prose (Flemming 2018 [1973]: 62-63). The skillful use of argumentative connectors (*lâkin*: “yet”), of a mediating marker like “in accordance with the saying” (*kaidesince*, literally “according to the rule”), or impersonal enunciation by using the present tense for a general truth (*bedîhî olduğundan*: “it is clear that”) reminds us that the text bears the mark of a centuries-old scribal writing tradition. Also noteworthy is the use of a temporal marker (*evvelki gibi*: “as was the case before”), which at first glance is trivial but marks a break with past usage. I will come back to this last point concerning temporality below.
- 13 This preamble thus clearly announces the purpose of the official gazette: to assume a monopoly over the formation of public opinion, a concept to which I will return below. The fact that the term *hakikat* (truth) repeats itself three times in this short passage is significant. The political authority was thus preparing to manufacture *one* official truth to promote, no longer leaving everyone the liberty of commenting on public affairs. In other words, it was not a question of “public opinion that must enlighten the despot” nor of “public opinion as emanating reason” but of public opinion as orthodoxy, as public doctrine (Binoche 2012: 101, 136 and 139). To speak like Bourdieu, the palace aims to “state the truth of particular truths which is simply the truth” (Bourdieu 2012: 71). In this sense, it would be useful to recall that before the launch of the official gazette, among the titles proposed by the sultan’s entourage were *islâh-ı zünûn* (the rectification of conjectures) and *def-i şübehât* (the elimination of doubts) (Yazıcı 1983: 41-44, 69). The palace thus had a very particular function in mind for this new institution, the official gazette. Among the bureaucratic correspondence prior to the launch of this periodical, one even speaks of the “new advantages of easily exciting public opinion about blessed affairs” (*mâdde-i hayriye üzerine kolaylıkla i’tikad-ı ‘âmmenin tehlûkû fevâid-i cedîdesi*) to “win the hearts” (*isticlâb-ı kulûblerini mûcib*) of the population (*ahâlî*) (Yazıcı 1983: 73-74).
- 14 In the third issue, which includes a political manifesto that proposes a general analysis of the recent revolts put down by the new army⁶, the editors declare without inhibition the function of the official gazette, speaking, in a way, like Bourdieu⁷:

fi-l-hakika mültezem-i pâdişâhî olan nizâmât-ı hasenenin lüzûmu ve hayriyeti memâlik-i mahrûse-i vâsiasında mevcûd mecmû’ *ahâlînin ukulüne te’sîr ve tavâif-i halkın efkârını iknâ ve tevfiğ ve te’lif edinceye kadar* ba’zı eşhâsın agrâz-ı mahsûsalarına dokunmamak ve irâde-i katia ve gayret-i salâbet-i nâfia-i pâdişâhî karşısında aceze makulesinden ba’zı muhâlîfin zuhûr etmemek mümkün değil idi (*Takvîm-i vekayî* 3, 1831: 2-3, emphasis mine).

It is true, until the necessity and the soundness of the advantageous regulations desired by the sultan are *inculcated in the minds of all the populations* of his vast and well-protected domains, *until the opinions of all parties of the people are convinced, harmonized, and reconciled*, it was impossible not to disrupt the particular interests of some; and in the face of the soundness of the beneficent efforts and the unshakeable will of the sultan, it was impossible that a few ignorant opponents would not manifest themselves (Türesay 2020: 273)⁸.

- 15 This passage shows that a concept can indeed exist and be expressed in the absence of a specific term that describes it exclusively. There was not yet a fixed term for “public opinion” in the Ottoman language, but the idea could be expressed in various ways. This challenges the general agreement in the literature, which traces the emergence of this notion to 1860s. Moreover, these references to the idea of public opinion are not the first of their kind in Ottoman history. The author of the said preamble, Esad Efendi, who was none other than the official chronicler of the empire since 1825, had already mentioned the idea in 1828 in his work *Üss-i Zafer* (the Foundations of Victory). In this work, he celebrates the abolition of the Janissaries by claiming that the decision “had been taken based on the unity of hearts and by reaching a consensus of opinion” (*ittihâd-ı kulûb ve ittifâk-ı ârâ-i hulûs-ı mashûba makrûn*). In 1833, when the orientalist Armand-Pierre Caussin de Perceval (1795-1871) translated this work into French, he naturally chose to interpret this sentence as “public opinion” (Şiviloğlu 2018: 10). It is worth digressing here to see whether, beyond the idea of public opinion, the concept of the “public” is present in the official gazette. To do this, we must begin with a review of a very contemporary testimony.

The “public” of the official gazette: a chimera?

- 16 In Paris on November 4, 1831, a few days after the publication of the first issue of *Takvîm-i vekayi*, Pierre-Amédée Jaubert (1779-1847) captured his reflections on the progress of education in Istanbul in a memoir he would read to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. He had joined the academy one year before and would later become a professor at the Collège de France and the École des langues orientales. His observations evoke the still nascent print culture in the imperial capital in the following terms:
- Of all the means likely to achieve the proposed goal, the printing press would undoubtedly be the most powerful; but the public (*if one can use this expression, which has no exact equivalent in the oriental languages*) does not grasp its importance, and the government rejects its use (Jaubert 1835: 147-148, emphasis added).
- 17 Coming from a scholar of his stature, this unequivocal assertion certainly deserves to be taken seriously: the expression “public” would thus have no equivalent, in 1831, in oriental languages. After all, why would it? The “public” is not a universal or timeless category, but a social and political construct that must be understood in its historicity. Nevertheless, consulting the dictionaries of the time does not quite prove him right.
- 18 Respecting a chronological framework, we begin with Artin Hindoglu’s *Dictionnaire abrégé français-turc*. The author was an Armenian born in Kütahya in 1780 who, after living in Istanbul for ten years, moved to Vienna in 1813 where he worked as an interpreter for the imperial court. Since he lived in Vienna when he published his Turkish dictionary in 1831, we could deduce that the dictionary more or less reflects the state of the Turkish language as it was practiced in daily life in Istanbul in the years 1800-1810. Conversely, we could also assume that his dictionary reflects the ideas that Hindoglu picked up in Vienna and tried to translate into Turkish. In any case, I underline the fact that this dictionary reflects the vernacular and it must be distinguished from other dictionaries cited below that deal with a rather sustained and bookish Turkish. Hindoglu has two entries for the term “public”, the first for the adjectival form, the second for the noun and adverb (Hindoglu 1831: 444):

Public, que, a. ach-(éch)kiaré; belli.
Public, m. qhalk; en —, ad. ach-(éch)kiaré.

Public, a. ach-(éch)kiaré; belli.
Public, m. qhalk; in —, ad. ach-(éch)kiaré.

- 19 Note that the two terms *aşikâre* and *belli* mean “obvious” and refer directly to the idea of “publicity” (as opposed to secrecy) in the dictionary entry. Also note, more importantly, that according to this lexicographer, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, one could therefore think of translating the concept of “public” into Turkish by *halk*, which today means “people.” Naturally, we find this term a few years later, in 1835, in the first volume of the *Dictionnaire turc-français* by J.D. Kieffer and T. X. Bianchi (Kieffer, Bianchi, I, 1835: 483):

khalq, s. a. 1. Créatures. 2. Hommes. 3. Nation, peuple. 4. Populace. *khalquñ dilindè*.
Dans le langage du peuple.

khalq, s. a. 1. Beings. 2. Men. 3. Nation, people. 4. Populace. *khalquñ dilindè*. In the language of the people.

- 20 It should be noted that the term *halk* has a social connotation; namely populace, which is illustrated by its fourth meaning and the example given. Handjéri’s dictionary joins its predecessors when it reads, “Public, au substantif, se prend pour tout le peuple en général: *halk* [...] Il fut défrayé aux dépens du public: *filânın masârifi halkın sırtından çıkdı* Que dit-on dans le public? *nâs beyninde ne söyleniyor* Se sacrifier pour le public: *halk uğruna fedâ-i nefis etmek*” or, “Public, in the noun form, is understood as the people in general: *halk* [...] It was paid at the expense of the public: *filânın masârifi halkın sırtından çıkdı* What is said in public? *nâs beyninde ne söyleniyor* Sacrificing oneself for the public: *halk uğruna fedâ-i nefis etmek*” (Handjéri, III, 1841: 248-249).
- 21 In the official gazette, we also find another expression for this fourth meaning with a social connotation, namely *elsine-i nâs*, which means “popular saying” with an Arabic syntagm composed with a Persian grammatical combination. This last connotation is also found in another Arabic root, that of *‘âmm*, which was rendered as “commun, universel, vulgaire” as opposed to *hâss*, “particulier, de distinction” (Kieffer, Bianchi, II, 1837: 225). This is not particular to Ottoman Turkish: in Arabic, this word and its derivations (*‘âmmiyya*) as well as another term (*cumhûr*, to which I will return below) were used in the 1820s to qualify the anti-fiscal peasant revolts in Syria and Lebanon, thus accentuating the social connotation of the term (Hill 2020: 5-8, 16-17; Ayalon 1985, 1987, 1989), a connotation that is hardly new. We also find it in 1680 in Meninski’s dictionary (“communis, universalis, publicus, popularis, popularis, vulgaris, trivialis”), which specifies that the opposite of *‘âmm* is *hâss* (elite) and proposes for *‘âmm* “vulgus hominum, plebs” (Meninski, II, 2000 [1680]: 3199)⁹.
- 22 In the 1810s, the root *‘âmm* was commonly used in Ottoman in its adjectival form in expressions such as *menâfi‘-i ‘âmm* (versus *menâfi‘-i mahsûsa*) or *menfaat-i ‘âmm* which can be translated as general/public benefit or general/public interest. These expressions can be found in the historical writings of the official chronicler *şânîzâde* (circa 1770-1826) (*şânî-zâde* 2008 [1819-1825]: 38, 144; *şiviloğlu* 2018: 124) as well as in the examples provided in the “Public” entry of the Handjéri dictionary (Handjéri, III, 1841: 248-249).
- 23 This sense of the general/public interest is captured by the reformer Keçecizâde İzzet Molla (1786-1829), a renowned poet and father of Mehmed Fuad Pasha (1814-1869), an

emblematic figure of the Tanzimat. In an 1827 memorandum on the administrative reorganization of the Ottoman Empire, Keçecizâde makes a clear distinction between state interest and general/public interest by opposing one another: *hem menfaat-i mîrî mütâlaa olunub hem menâfi-i ‘âmme düşünülererek*, in other words, “taking into consideration both state interest and general/public interest” (Doğan 2000: 48). I will return to this distinction when I discuss the terms *mîrî* and *mülk(i)*.

- 24 For now, let us elaborate on this distinction between the sphere of the “state” and that of the “public.” I argue that there was a specific distinction in the Ottoman Empire during the 1830s, where the “public” domain is the domain of the administration and the state, or rather of the “governors,” as opposed to that of “society” — “civil” or not — in other words that of the “governed.” In trying to understand the origin of “public,” we can take the word here as a conceptual construction by the ruling elite, and precisely as an amorphous, ambiguous, abstract entity, different from the people. This is a reflection based on the intuitive remarks by the şerif Mardin, an authority on the nineteenth-century Ottoman intellectual history, in the early 2000s:

Both the complaints of Sultan Selim III and the protests of his successor, Mahmud II, show an unfocused search for a unifying principle among officials to provide more permanence than a contract of allegiance to the sultan. I claim that this new focus — as a stand-in for the corporate personality of the state — was built gradually and closely involved changes in language policies that had created a succession of new discourses. These changes also amounted to the elaboration of a “public sphere,” an ideological field still missing at the beginning of the Ottoman nineteenth century. Each step in this progression had the tacit implication of a minute change in the conceptualization of society. Across decades, the accumulation of these discourses brought out more clearly new conceptions of an Ottoman public (Mardin 2006: 127-128).

- 25 This explains the process of how, so to speak, “the state” encroaches on “the non-state”¹⁰. It is the process by which a central state that intervenes more and more in society is constructed. To put it differently, the state strengthens its hold on society, the state increasingly controls and supervises its population, and integrates long-existing institutions that had remained outside of the state by transforming them into “public” institutions. This is the attempt to create a more integrated society. This is where the discursive construction of a “public” plays a fundamental role. In lexical terms, this is the story of how the term *‘âmme* became state.
- 26 There is an adjectival use of this term in constructions like *‘âmme-i halk*, *‘âmme-i nâs*, *‘âmme-i ulemâ*, *‘âmme-i havâss ü avâm*; that is, respectively, ‘the whole of the people,’ ‘the whole of the people/the common people,’ ‘the whole of the ulemas,’ and ‘the whole of the elites and the populace.’ When it refers to the subject in a sentence, it can often be translated as “everyone:” *‘âmmenin ma’lûmudur*; that is, “everyone knows it” (Kieffer, Bianchi, II, 1837: 225) or, as the official chronicler Esad Efendi writes, *‘âmmenin meşhûdudur*, or “everyone attests to it” (Sahhâflar 2000 [1826-?]: 73). In brief, in its substantive form, the word *‘âmme* has a meaning that is not very far from that of ‘public,’ which Kieffer and Bianchi define as ‘People, universality, community’ in their dictionary (Kieffer, Bianchi, II, 1837: 225). This term is also frequently referenced in the entry “Public” in the Handjêri dictionary cited above.
- 27 Moreover, this usage seems to be quite old, since it is found in the history of Naîmâ (1655-1716), which dates from the beginning of the eighteenth century. In addition to the adjectival usage *nef-i ‘âmme*; that is, “public utility” (Naîmâ 2007: 2), we also see

that the term *‘âmme* is used here in advising public decision-makers (*müdebbirîn*) to maintain the secrecy of state affairs “by hiding political problems and financial concerns from the public” (*müşkilât-ı umûr-ı mülk ve zarûret-i mâliyyeyi ‘âmmeye duyurmayıp*) (Naîmâ 2007: 40). Here, the noun *‘âmme* refers to a public from which certain state affairs should be hidden, an *‘âmme* that seems to carry the social connotation of the term. Leaving aside the thorny yet central issue of the relationship between secrecy and politics from a political anthropology perspective¹¹, I would like to stress here that this sentence deserves to be examined more closely for another term as well. While I have opted for a rather conservative and faithful translation of *umûr-ı mülk* by rendering it as “political problems,” as will be seen below, this interpretation hardly exhausts other possible translations of the term *mülk*.

- 28 Let us now return to our primary subject, the official gazette. Contrary to what Amédée Jaubert asserted, the text contains several mentions of the concept “public.” At the end of 1831, during the beginning of the armed conflict between Mehmed Ali of Egypt and Sultan Mahmud II, the director of *Le Moniteur Ottoman* Alexandre Blacque (1794-1836)¹² published his first article of pro-Ottoman propaganda, the translation of which appeared in the issue 8 of *Takvîm-i vekayi*. His passage, “la clé de cette énigme que beaucoup de gens même à la tête des affaires publiques semblent n’avoir pas devinée” or, “the key to this enigma that many people even at the head of public affairs seem not to have guessed” (*Le Moniteur Ottoman* 8, 1831, my emphasis) is translated as “*umûr-ı mülkiyeye* hasr-ı endîşe ve efkâr ede gelen nice ukelânın feth ve teferrüs edemedikleri tilsımın” (*Takvîm-i vekayi* 8, 1831, my emphasis). A week later, *Le Moniteur Ottoman* publishes this time the French translation of the czar’s ukase from early November about the conditions of the amnesty granted to insurgents in Poland:

Ceux des membres de la diète qui, par faiblesse ou par peur, sans avoir proposé ni appuyé l’acte de déchéance du 13-25 janvier, l’ont cependant accepté et signé, jouiront des effets généraux de l’amnistie, en s’engageant toutefois par écrit à ne se charger à l’avenir d’aucun *emploi public*, à moins que leur conduite ultérieure ne leur ait mérité de nouveau la confiance du gouvernement.

Those members of the Diet who, out of weakness or fear, without having proposed or supported the act of deposition of January 13-25¹³, have nevertheless accepted and signed it, will enjoy the amnesty, while committing themselves in writing not to take up any *public sector employment* in the future, unless their subsequent conduct has again earned them the confidence of the government (*Le Moniteur Ottoman* 9, 1831, emphasis added).

- 29 This expression “public sector employment” is translated by the *Takvîm-i vekayi* as “*mansab ve hizmet-i mîriye tâlib olmayacaklarını*” (*Takvîm-i vekayi* 9, 1832, emphasis added). Kieffer and Bianchi underline in their dictionary that is contemporary to our sources that *mîrî* means “1. adj. p. Appartenant au prince, au chef de l’état (*sic*), ou au fisc. 2. Subs. Fisc, trésor public” or, “1. adj. p. Belonging to the prince, to the head of the state, or to the tax authority. 2. Subs. Tax authority, public treasury” (Kieffer, Bianchi, II, 1837: 1066). Handjéri defines “public sector employment” as *hidemât-ı devlet* but also “public buildings” as *ebniye-i mîriye* / *‘âmmeye mütehasis imâretler* and “public revenues” as *vâridât-ı mîriye* / *vâridât-ı ‘âmme* (Handjéri, III, 1841: 248). Kieffer and Bianchi also note that *mîriye kabz etmek* means “to confiscate.” Today, in our political configurations of nation-states, we would say “nationalize.” Contrary to French, modern Turkish clearly preserves the trace of this semantic overlap between “state” and “public” that emerged in the 1830s. In modern Turkish, we say *devletleştirme* for the nationalization

of a company, of an institution providing services of a “public” nature, and *kamulaştırma* for the confiscation that transforms a private good into a public good. In other words, while today a nuance still exists in modern Turkish to distinguish what is “state” from what is “public,” the term *mîrî* can cover, depending on the case, these two distinct but also fairly close concepts. Semantically, we are certainly not far from “public,” given that the context is a patrimonial political configuration where the country is, in principle and as a last resort, the property of the sultan.

30 Moreover, *mîrî* is originally a legal category of land ownership. It designates land whose ownership and use can be transferred — under very restrictive conditions — by the sultan, who remains the exclusive owner (Barkan 1980: 30, 55-56, 127, 335, 371-372, 404, 510 and 598)¹⁴. In this specific sense, it is a legal category that is distinct but very close to that of *mülkî*. Now, as we have seen, the latter term, which notably in its adjectival form can refer to all that is administrative/political, also means the country (the *ülke* of modern Turkish) when it is a noun. The contemporary memorandum by Keçecizâde (Doğan 2000: 4, 11, 16-17, 22, 30, 31, 35) contains many examples of its use in the latter sense. It is significant that the two terms *mîrî* and *mülkî* (and *mülkiye* from the same root), which belonged to the domain of the state and the administration, tend to refer to the same thing as the term *âmm*, which denotes a process of conceptual osmosis, or an intertwining between state and society — a process that took place in the early 1830s.

31 Here, we must digress to a term that is conspicuous in its virtual absence in the official gazette. Besides *âmm*, there is another term that one would expect to find more often in the pages of *Takvîm-i vekayi* to designate the “public:” *cumhûr*. In 1835, Kieffer and Bianchi defined it as follows:

1. Majorité. 2. Tous. 3. République, états. — *umouri djumhour*. Affaires publiques. — *tâtâr djumhuri*. Les états généraux des Tatars, qui se tenaient en Crimée, même du temps des khans.

1. Majority. 2. All. 3. Republic, states. — *umouri djumhour*. Public affairs. — *tâtâr djumhuri*. The general states of the Tatars, which were held in the Crimea, even during the time of the khans. (Kieffer, Bianchi, I, 1835: 392).

32 While this term is found a dozen times in the pages of *Takvîm-i vekayi*, it refers to, with two exceptions, the “republic” (*cumhûr* and *cumhûriyet*) and its partisans (*cumhûr taraftarları* or *cânibdârân-ı cumhûriyet*) in the contemporary political context of Europe. The two times it is used in the sense of “public,” it is simply part of a prefabricated linguistic construction. This long and preformed title of the sultan appears in the preamble of two of his orders addressed to the commander of the Ottoman armies in the middle of a military campaign against the Egyptian armies (*Takvîm-i vekayi* 20 and 36, 1832). This multi-line title reads that the sultan, among others, is the one who makes decisions (*müdîr* and *müdebbir*) concerning *umûr-ı cumhûr*, which can be translated as “public affairs” (for a similar usage in a late eighteenth-century reform treaty, see Karateke 2019: 430). Meninski’s dictionary, first published in 1680, translates *umûr-ı cumhûr* as “Affari publici, di stato, ò della Repubblica” (Meninski 2000 [1680], I: 1655). This is a *lato sensu* use of the term that is rather exceptional given that its restricted meaning is more often used in Ottoman chronicles and treatises. The seventeenth-century polymath Kâtib Çelebi (1609-1657), for example, sometimes uses it in the sense of a “body established by the pillars of the state and other notables [that] claims to represent the general will” (Vatin, Veinstein 2003: 197-199, 208).

- 33 One could try to explain the relative absence of this term in relation to the widespread use of the word *‘âmme* in the official gazette by pointing to the predominance of its restricted meaning, which refers to an intermediate authority between the sovereign and the masses that represents the latter. Such a hypothesis is certainly tempting. However, elsewhere, the same Kâtib Çelebi uses *umûr-ı cumhûr* and *umûr-ı devlet* interchangeably. Thus, we see once again that the concepts of public and state can be intertwined in Ottoman political thought. Beyond this observation, we should recall here the warning of Marinos Sariyannis, who notes that the term *cumhûr* is indeed polysemic and therefore difficult to translate into a single term (Sariyannis 2013: 102-103).
- 34 Returning to the “public” in *Takvîm-i vekayî*, we find another translation of this concept in a speech that the British king had addressed to parliament in October 1831:
- I have the satisfaction of reflecting that these demands have been provided for without any material addition to the *public* burthens (*The Journals* [1832]: 935, emphasis added).
- 35 Here is the translation:
- işbu masârif-i zarûriyenin tedârîki *fukarâ ve zuafâya* pek ağır bir yük olmayarak görülegeldiğinden gayet memnûn oldum (*Takvîm-i vekayî* 4, 1831, emphasis added).
- 36 Let us first note the simplicity of the syntactic construction of the sentence, which reminds us that the official gazette is indeed intended to disseminate a discourse that is supposed to be understood by the “public.” Secondly, let us not forget that the act of translation often gives rise to an interpretation that serves to explain the original meaning. The translations of the official gazette are thus often written in a simpler language than the Ottoman’s intermediate prose. Then, there is also the choice of a hendiadys, a common practice in Ottoman prose (Aymes 2020), to translate a concept that is referred to in English by a single word. Finally, the hendiadys chosen in Ottoman is a good translation of the spirit of the original speech in English since it refers to the popular origin of the social category (*fukarâ ve zuafâ* literally means “poor and miserable”)¹⁵ by substantiating the English adjective.
- 37 Ottoman phraseology readily indulges in the excessive use of hendiadys, which is often difficult to translate into English in a precise manner. The composition of these word pairings, and of other syntagmatic groups, is more concerned with sound aesthetics, as a practice of rhyming prose (*secî*), than with semantic acribia, especially since these texts are intended to be read aloud in front of a limited audience in various public spaces (Römer 2002: 54). In a culture where learning and oral transmission of knowledge predominate, rhyming prose that helps to memorize sentences or syntagmatic groups assumes important social and communicative functions that are difficult to fathom today. It should also be noted that certain types of *secî* are based on the principle of repetition of meaning, and this Ottoman-style figure of speech willingly sacrifices meaning for form (Uzun 2009: 275-276; Çögenli, Şafak, Toparlı 1991)¹⁶.
- 38 To conclude on the concept of “public” in the official gazette, below are a few more examples:
- Takvîm-i vekayî* 11: *menâfi’-i ‘âmme maksâdına mebnî* which is translated in *Le Moniteur Ottoman* 11 as “un projet d’utilité publique” or “a project of public utility”
- Takvîm-i vekayî* 11: *fâide-i ‘âmme* which is rendered in *Le Moniteur Ottoman* 12 as “but d’utilité publique” or “a purpose of public utility”
- Takvîm-i vekayî* 20: *alenen kırâat olunması* which *Le Moniteur Ottoman* 20 translates as “La lecture de ces documens (*sic*) devant avoir lieu dans une audience publique...”

or “The reading of these documents which must have a public hearing...”

Takvîm-i vekayi 54: *mütâlaa-i ‘âmme* and *i’tikad-ı ‘âmme*, two expressions translated by Alexandre Blacque in *Le Moniteur Ottoman* 62 respectively as “l’opinion européenne” and “mœurs publiques” or “European opinion” and “public morals”

Takvîm-i vekayi 59: *selâmet-i ‘âmme* to translate the expression “public salvation” regarding the Frankfurt revolts;

Takvîm-i vekayi 85: *Gizo nâm ta’lîm ve terbiye-i ‘âmme umûrunun vekili* corresponding to “the appointed Guizot who is the minister of public education.”

- 39 While the editors and translators of the official gazette use several terms in substantive and adjectival form to describe the concept of the “public,” that of *‘âmme* clearly predominates. It is also clear that this concept is an integral part of their political thought. The existence of the official gazette is the result of such a situation. In his thesis, Cengiz Kırılı underlines what is at stake:

the discovery of public opinion was neither a simple recognition of the existence of the populace, nor was the public visibility of the Sultan, as an important instance in the discovery of public, an inconsequential ceremonial activity. The discovery of public opinion was in fact the redefinition of the public sphere: it was no longer merely a normatively defined moral sphere in which the populace should be kept aloof from politics and submit their loyalty to their rulers. It was redefined as an actual political sphere where the populace and their opinions emerged as legitimate forces in the business of governance (Kırılı 2000: 272).

- 40 The official gazette was launched precisely in order to shape popular opinion (see my comments on *elsine-i nâs* above) and to render it favorable to the reforms launched. While the gazette was originally intended to consolidate the ability of the central political authority to act and mobilize, a few decades later it would paradoxically contribute to the reverse. The new social and discursive category that it helped construct – the public – would be manipulated skillfully by the first Ottoman journalists, most notably İbrahim Şinasi (1826-1871) and Namık Kemal (1840-1888), and would quickly escape political control as early as the mid-1860s (Şiviloğlu 2018). In other words, the 1860s witnessed a historical phenomenon that considerably affected how the political system would evolve: “the ‘public’ dissociated itself from the state and invented itself as a subject” (Binoche 2012: 8). However, we are still only at the beginning of the 1830s. The official gazette contained numerous texts on political pedagogy that reflected the ruling class’s conviction of the need to publicize ongoing reforms and desire to explain them to the public. Besides these texts, it also includes short conclusions, sometimes called “lessons” (*tenbîh*), which follow certain accounts and synthesize in a very concise and pedagogical manner the lessons to be learned from what has just been recounted.
- 41 This willingness to advertise the reforms by explaining them pedagogically resembles Necker’s policy during the twilight years of the Ancien Régime (Minard 2009: 9). To be clear, I am not implying here a Western influence in Ottoman political thought: the similarity in the practices likely results from isomorphism. Just as Necker reacted to Turgot’s failed experiment, Mahmud II also drew lessons from the crushing defeat of his predecessor Selim III’s *nizâm-ı cedîd* in order to avoid losing the battle of public opinion. Hence, he packed his punch with a new instrument that would resist manipulation by any protean opposition – the official gazette – at the same time a pedagogical tool under palace control.
- 42 There remains no doubt that the central political authority wanted to publicize its discourse as widely as possible, according to a translated report written by Alexandre

Blacque as the empire was preparing to decide to launch the official gazette: “Regarding the diffusion of the contents of the gazette among the common people, it must be attempted, as much as possible, to recite and explain it in each neighborhood and in places where people gather by men belonging to the scholar class, for example by the neighborhood imam” (Yazıcı 1983: 79)¹⁷. Furthermore, recently published transliterated spy reports from 1840 covering Istanbul show that the *Takvîm-i vekayi*’ was systematically pasted on walls and that the news it relayed was the topic of conversation in cafés and other public spaces (Kırlı 2008: 52-53, 131, 198-199, 231). Moreover, public readings were a widespread practice in Ottoman society until the end of the empire (Hitzel 1999).

- 43 This, however, does not mean that the political authority was able to achieve its goal of forming *one* well-controlled public opinion within the well-protected domains of the sultan. While it seems, according to current research on Mahmud’s rule, that this achievement leaves something to be desired, it is nevertheless clear that the intention existed. Such an intention in itself signals an important paradigm shift, the nature of which is eloquently summarized by the quote from Cengiz Kırlı’s thesis given above.

The content of the official gazette: form and substance

- 44 Let us now present the contents of the official gazette for a holistic view. While it might seem like a digression that strays from the main purpose of the article, we must remind ourselves that the topic examined here is in fact part of a much broader textual field. In order to offer a reflection that pays attention to detail and subtle variation, I choose to investigate here not only micro-diachronics over a few years (1831-1834), but also a single semantic field — the vocabulary of reform — which assumes its full meaning within the more overarching political language of the gazette.
- 45 First, a few words on form. What are the headings in the gazette? How do these headings appear in the layout? The headings of the official gazette gradually develop over the first few issues. The first issue has only three headings: internal affairs (*umûr-ı dâhiliye*), military topics (*mevâdd-ı askeriye*) and external affairs (*umûr-ı hâriciye*). Besides these three fixed headings, the second issue occasionally adds the science and arts (*fünûn*), but few new publications are announced. Another occasional rubric appears as of the fifth issue: appointments in religious careers (*tevcîhât-ı ilmiye*). Commerce and production (*ticâret ve es’âr*) appear for the first time in the same issue and soon becomes a fixed heading under the title of “productions.” These headings, which thus appear in the first five issues, are printed in much larger typeface from the sixth issue onwards, distinguishing themselves in the layout from the rest of the body text.
- 46 While these headings provide some idea of the formal and emic classification of the topics covered by the gazette, they do not say much about its content. In the first 86 issues of the official gazette, two topics predominate: the sultan and the conflict with Mehmed Ali of Egypt. The first issues are presented as Mahmud II’s “public” journal; the official gazette essentially does his promotion. He is evoked at length through his travels, visits, administrative and military inspections, ceremonies, activities during Ramadan, feasts, exploits as an archer, and miraculous powers (*kerâmet*). These texts constitute an invaluable source for analyzing the construction of Mahmud II’s public

image as a modern, modest and omnipresent sovereign, a topic that deserves treatment in more detail in another study.

- 47 In Ottoman historiography there is a tendency to assume that official texts relating to civil administration (appointments and dismissals; granting of imperial orders and decorations; decrees and orders of the sultan; promotions; degradations; decisions of exile, amnesty, and retirement), military affairs (promotions and appointments; movement of troops; logistics and supply; authorization, expulsion, and amnesty; military exercises) or ulema affairs (promotions and appointments) are less interesting sources for research in intellectual history or the history of concepts. However, it must be noted that even such types of text are likely to contain passages that are discursively revealing. Indeed, these texts often contain short didactic digressions on recent or ongoing reforms and reorganizations. When they do not contain such digressions, they occasionally end with a short conclusion in an overtly didactic tone. These use inductive reasoning by going from the particular to the general to state precisely what lesson should be drawn from the recounted anecdote. It is here that one can find the most captivating discursive snippets.
- 48 As for the accounts relating to non-Muslim communities (permission for the repair of places of worship; restitution of confiscated real estate; appreciation of the sultan by the communities) or to the numerous revolts (in Van, Baghdad, Shkodër, Damascus, Bosnia) and notably to the preparation for war against Mehmed Ali, they contain long passages that are instructive for the questions of concern here. These texts mobilize the entire lexico-conceptual arsenal of a semantic field. Maurus Reinkowski partly analyzed this semantic field in a short chapter of his book on a bureaucratic correspondence from 1840-1860 about North Albania and Mount Lebanon (Reinkowski 2012 [2005]: 228-242); as did Marc Aymes in his book on the application of the Tanzimat in Cyprus from 1840-1850 (Aymes 2010: 3-57). Reinkowski and Aymes's examinations of syntagmatic groups, when compared with these texts of the *Takvîm-i vekayî*, reveal variations that indicate a certain evolution in the matter, a topic which I will deal with in another article. Other texts that deal with public works, the restoration of public monuments, pious foundations and fires may also occasionally contain interesting elements. The concept of public health, which was just beginning to emerge at the time, also appears in a few texts (the foundation of a school for surgery and the translation of a French treatise on cholera). Finally, the numerous translations by European newspapers on European current events are particularly interesting, primarily from the angle of the lexicon of political modernity and reform.

Talking about reform

- 49 Reading *Takvîm-i vekayî*, one feels that the editors are incessantly trying to explain how the state apparatus had been reorganized since 1826. Their hesitation and fumbling — more terminological than conceptual — must be underlined, as well as the resulting lexical multiplicity manifested in these texts. What are these terms? As we shall see, they are not just individual words but, above all, syntagmatic groups of varying size. Even though translating them into English may not make much sense, I will give here a literal translation for those who are not familiar with the political language of the second half of the Mahmud II's reign:

nizâm: order, discipline

nizâmât: regulations

nizâmât-ı müstahsene: the great/good regulations

nizâmât-ı behiye: the great/good regulations

nizâmât-ı hayriye: the blessed regulations

islâh-ı umûr-ı mülk ve ibâd: the improvement of the administration of the country and the conditions of the people

nizâmât-ı seniyye ve islâhât-ı mülkiye: imperial regulations and administrative reforms

mesâlih-i mülkiye-i cihândârîlerinin vech-i hüsn ve nesak-ı müstahsen üzere tanzîmi: the proper organization of administrative affairs according to the proper methods

nizâmât-ı müstahsene-i mülkdârî-raiyyet-perverî: the great regulations by the sultan generous to his subjects

hüsn-i nizâm ve usûl-i tedâbîr-i hasene-i mülkiye: good order and good administrative policies

el-yevm cârî olan usûl-i adâlet ve nizâm: the procedures of justice and organization that are currently in force

ân-be-ân icrâsına muvâfık oldukları usûl-i hayriye: the beneficent rules that His Highness is currently implementing

nev-be-nev icrâ buyurmakta oldukları usûl-i hayriye ve niyyât-ı müşfikâne: the beneficent rules and benevolent intentions that His Highness is once again enacting

usûl-i müstahsene-i nizâmiye: orderly good procedures

usûl-i nizâm-ı dâhilî: the rules of internal organization

usûl-i müstahsene-i adl ü dâd: the proper and fair procedures

usûl-i nizâmiye: orderly procedures

nizâm-ı müstahsene-i seniye: the good imperial order

50 After a few years, and more precisely at the end of the 1830s, this lexical multiplicity can be summarized in a single word: Tanzimat. It is the plural of the action noun of the verb *nazzama* in Arabic, which is of the same trilateral root as *nizâm*, the term that indisputably dominates, at the beginning of the 1830s, this semantic field of “reform.” I will call this a terminological fixation resulting from a conceptual distillation, resembling the hypothesis put forward by Koselleck on the retrospective freezing of the *Bündnisse* (alliances) into a singular collective in the German language, the *Bund* (confederation) (Koselleck 1997). This “summarized an experience and conceptualized it in a single term. It is therefore — to put it more bluntly — a concept that register experience, nourished by a past reality which, in the aftermath of policymaking, could be transposed into the future where it continued to be inscribed” (Koselleck 2005: 324-325).

51 In our case study, temporally, we are at the final stage of the experience. The Tanzimat as a concept that register experience is in the process of being born, its birth likely heralded by the terminological muddling of the reformist elite and the resulting lexical multiplicity.¹⁸ Once born, as we know, this concept that register the historical experience between 1826 and 1839 will become so firmly inscribed that since 1839 it has shaped our perception of the history of both the long process that preceded and succeeded it. The concept, however, implies a linearity and retrospective coherence that does not correspond exactly to what in reality happened (Aymes 2010, 2015). This also reminds us, in due proportion, of the fixing of the concept of public opinion that occurred in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century: “archaic meanings aggregated around the modern concept, which retroactively conferred on them an overall coherence that they were originally lacking” (Binoche 2012: 165). My hypothesis is that the official gazette facilitates and accelerates this conceptual genesis by

providing a textual support for this process, which had begun a few decades earlier, and which is conducive to the philosophical-political formation that underlies it. If the origin of the term *nizâm-ı cedîd* goes back to the end of the seventeenth century (Beydilli 2007, Sariyannis 2019: 443-444), the real history of this genesis begins a bit before Selim III's *nizâm-ı cedîd*, or during the last two decades of the eighteenth century.

- 52 Two words predominate the semantic field in question: *nizâm* with a few of its grammatical derivations (*nizâmât*, *nizâmiye*, *tanzîm*) and *usûl* (manner, method, procedure, principle). These two terms often appear in the context of an associative relationship with a few positive qualifiers (*hüsn*, *müstahsen*, *hasene* / *hayriye* / *behiye*). It should be noted that the first three terms have the same Arabic root as the term *istihsân*, “juristic preference” in Islamic law, which is also an important concept in Ottoman political philosophy, whose translation into English would be “public well-being” (Sariyannis 2019: 445). The *istihsân* can be seen also as a “major avenue for a quiet introduction of socially desirable innovations” (Gerber 1999: 93). Another qualifier of the regulations/reforms, *mülk* and its adjectival form *mülkiye*, refers to administrative and political domains that are entirely linked at that epoch (Aymes 2019: 99-100 and 103). Note that a few decades later, the Imperial School of Public Administration, opened in 1859, would be called *Mekteb-i fûnûn-ı mülkiye-i şâhâne*.
- 53 The prevailance of *nizâm* is unrivaled by any other term. Another term that will be widely used in Ottoman in the second half of the nineteenth century, that of *islâh* (Topal 2017: 147-148, 182), is rarely found in the pages of *Takvîm-i vekayi*. One encounters this term to describe the Mahmudian reforms twice in the same text (*Takvîm-i vekayi* 3, 1831; on this text see Türesay 2020). The term appears above all in European press translations of speeches by the British king on the constitutional reform process of 1832 that was then underway in England (*Takvîm-i vekayi* 13, 46, 56). It also appears more often in the common sense of the word; that is, the correction of deviations from the norm (*Takvîm-i vekayi* 3, 4, 5, 12, 25, 56, 67).
- 54 I have translated the term *usûl* in various ways because it is difficult to capture it in a single term in English. In fact, it is a term that has seen its meaning shift over the centuries, undergoing a kind of semantic debasement. This polysemic term had once meant “fundamental, essential principles” but also “method/procedure” and opposed the term *tavr* (form, structure) in reformist literature from previous centuries in order to defend the argument that one can change the form while remaining loyal to the principle and spirit of an old institution. However, once the reformist discourse finished of *tavr*, it took on *usûl* in the 1820s (Topal 2017: 122, 135). Keçecizâde provides an eloquent example of this in his memorandum quoted above — written in 1827: *ta’n olunacak usûldür, yohsa eşhâs değildir*, or “what should be criticized are principles/methods and not persons.” Such is why he believes that any measure other than *terk-i usûl* (the abandonment of principles) would be a mistake (Doğan 2000: 51). Note that in this usage, the terme *usûl* could mean also “institution”.
- 55 In other words, for the reformist elite who gathered around Sultan Mahmud II, the principles/institutions were changing by the late 1820s. The term *usûl* thus appears in the official gazette with a meaning far removed from its former grandeur and inviolability, increasingly degraded to simply mean the new procedures and practices introduced by Mahmud II. Or, perhaps, could this interpretation be reversed, with the notion that Mahmud's new administrative procedures and practices aspire to attain the status of immutable principles and institutions that must not be touched? In my view,

the two interpretations are hardly mutually exclusive. Marc Aymes' analyses of the uses of the term *usûl* in the bureaucratic correspondence of the 1840s (Aymes 2010: 33-34, 40, 45) argue rather in favor of the latter.

- 56 Let us return to the first term, *nizâm*, because terminological continuity can sometimes conceal semantic change. The concept of order had long been central to Islamic political philosophy. Among the Ottomans, it is found notably in the expression *nizâm-ı âlem*, whose origin likely dates back to Persian political theory (Hagen 2005: 61). It can be translated as “(mankind’s) socio-political order” by emphasizing the social hierarchy that constituted one of the intellectual pillars of political philosophy and imperial cosmology (Görgün 2000; Ocak 2003: 84-85; Kara 2003a: 15, 34-35). In this sense, the concept also holds striking similarities with the Byzantine notion of *taxiarchia* (Sariyannis 2019: 448; Ragia 2016: 320). Following Gottfried Hagen, we should emphasize that behind a terminological continuity lies a strong semantic ambivalence that spans centuries. This observation must not be overlooked by contemporary historians, who often use retrospective intellectual construction to maintain an illusion of semantic continuity (Hagen 2005).
- 57 Still, this word and its derivations were used in the context of *nizâm-ı cedîd* (the new order) of Sultan Selim III and the post-1826 reforms, or Tanzimat, as well as the new courts established at the time, known as *mahkeme-i nizâmiye*. The thought behind *nizâm-ı cedîd* carries the ideas of discipline, good order, regularity, and instruction. Examples can be easily multiplied (Yeşil 2010: 163; Findley 1995a and 1995b). According to Marc Aymes, who refers to Redhouse’s dictionary, it can mean:
- In the nineteenth-century usage: an alignment, a row; regularity; the very foundation of order; a system, a method; a law, a regulation, or a set of laws; and finally — recollecting the ‘new order’ (*nizâm-ı cedîd*) established in the Ottoman army at the time of Selim III — a corps of regular troops, or a soldier from such troops (Aymes 2010: 31).
- 58 Moreover, following the Ottoman example, the term was also used in the field of military reorganization and the founding of modern armies in several countries such as Morocco, Tunisia, and Iran (Cronin 2008; El-Tahir El-Mesawi 2008; Bennison 2004; Rollman 2004).
- 59 *Nizâm* is thus an ancestral term in Ottoman political language (Topal 2020) and dominated the semantic field of reformist thought until the last third of the nineteenth century. Omnipresent in the terminology of administrative reforms from the 1830s to the 1870s (Reinkowski 2005; Aymes 2010), it was also associated, for decades, with another word-concept that emerged in the official gazette in the early 1830s: “civilization.” By the mid-nineteenth century, the word *medeniyet* would be established as the standard translation of civilization. Let us return to *nizâm*: at first glance, then, does it qualify as a nice and long linear history of the terminological continuity of an elementary concept? As Quentin Skinner warns, “there cannot be a history of unit ideas as such, but only a history of the various uses to which they have been put by different agents at different times” (Skinner 1999: 62). To hammer this in: while there may be continuity in terminology, there is not necessarily a semantic essence that does not evolve.
- 60 Thus, the *nizâm* of the *nizâm-ı âlem* certainly does not have the same meaning as the *nizâm* of *nizâm-ı cedîd*. To borrow Minard’s distinction (Minard 2009: 8), while the former was used to invoke a “reform-reestablishment” calling for a return to a golden

age, the latter refers rather to a future-oriented “reform-improvement.” Admittedly, this sense of improvement also derives from the use of the qualifier *cedīd*, which highlights and emphasizes novelty as much as order. Nevertheless, the tension between these two reformist ways of thinking about change runs through the whole spectrum of Ottoman intellectual history in the eighteenth century. The great defeat against Russia in the war of 1768-1774 marked a turning point that led a good part of the ruling elite to lean towards the second way (Menchinger 2017; Aksan 1995). While stressing that the term had long had a vague and wide-reaching content, Sariyannis suggests that *nizâm* was in the eighteenth century increasingly desacralized and its meaning restricted. During the time of Selim III, it would thus mean merely “military reorganization” (Sariyannis 2019: 448-449).

- 61 From a terminological point of view, *nizâm* and its derivations only lost their central place in Ottoman political discourse in the final decade of the nineteenth century, by which time two terms, *terakki* (progress) and *ittihâd* (union), were dominating this particular semantic field. It is significant, in this respect, that when the positivist Young Turk leader Ahmed Rıza proposed in 1894 to rename the Istanbul branch of the Committee of Ottoman Union (*İttihâd-ı osmânî*) founded in 1889 (Hanioglu [1986]: 174-180) to Order and Progress (*Nizâm ve Terakki*), the former did not give in and preserved its name (Sohrabi 2011: 54) by privileging the concept of “union” and not that of “order.” Moreover, the idea of *nizâm* put forward by Ahmed Rıza was likely as much inspired by Comtean positivism as it was by the Ottoman tradition. This resembles how the uses and reappropriations of the term *tamaddun* evolved in the Arabic-speaking world during the nineteenth century. While at first glance, it leaves the impression of a continuity with classical Arab-Muslim thought, in reality it testifies to the profound impact of the modern idea of progress on contemporary Arab thought (Abu-‘Uksa 2019).
- 62 This anecdote reveals, in my opinion, an important turning point in the evolution of reformist political thought: over the nineteenth century, we observe a gradual shift from the aspiration to build a more integrated society, which begins with the *nizâm-ı cedīd* of Selim III, to the desire to build a society that is not only more integrated but also more unified, even if it means being homogenized. In other words, as the process of building a more integrated society is more or less achieved by these real but also imagined reforms that extend from 1826 to the 1870s, it gives way to a project of building a more homogeneous society, an even more integrative social organization. This reformist thought is increasingly emphasizing the human agency (*irâde-i cüziye*) to the detriment of the divine will (*irâde-i külliye*), the predominant factor until the 1790s in historical causality (Menchinger 2017: 56-58, 74-75, 195-196, 226-232, 238-239).
- 63 That said, the old meaning, while gradually being marginalized, persisted for a long time in a new semantic configuration, as we have just seen, in the 1830s. It is thus hardly surprising to find recurrent recourse to the word-concept of *nizâm* in the Ottoman intellectual field even after the Young Turk revolution (Türesay 2011). This means that terminological continuity and the absence of an absolute semantic continuity do not necessarily imply a radical semantic break. This type of situation leads to a multi-layered continuity: a term can thus have several meanings synchronously, the oldest coexisting in the same temporal space with the more recent meanings.

- 64 The semantic evolution of the term *reâyâ* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is a good illustration of this kind of process (Fotic 2017). For centuries, the term referred to the sultan's taxable Muslim and non-Muslim subjects, as opposed to the ruling class (*askerî*) who did not pay taxes but served the state in the person of the sultan. By the eighteenth century, it began to acquire a second meaning, which would encroach on the original meaning over half a century: the sultan's non-Muslim subjects, as opposed to his Muslim subjects. That said, the term would continue to carry the old meaning for a long time, making it for decades a bisemic term whose meaning could only be determined in each case by analyzing the context in which it was used. A similar process, although a bit more complicated, has been convincingly described by a recent paper for the term *millet* (Sigalas 2021).

Reforming and innovating within the Islamic reference

- 65 It should be emphasized here that these terms that make up the vocabulary of what is today called the “reforms,” or the Tanzimat — which from 1838 onwards began to be called *Tanzîmât-ı hayriye* (Eldem 2021), or the “blessed regulations” — are doubly rooted in a lexical and semantic field that is strongly Islamic (Abu-Manneh 1994). I will offer a few examples of *Takvîm-i vekayî* to illustrate my point. If we adopt the terminology of the editors, then at the turn of 1830 in the Ottoman Empire, *tecdîd-i usûl-i devlet* was taking place; that is, a renewal of the state's foundations, rather than a “bad or illicit innovation.” The terms *bid'at* or *hâdis* (see Sariyannis 2019: 238, 262 and 444) are not used to describe the process of political reorganization then underway. The term *bid'at* appears only once to denigrate Mehmed Ali of Egypt. The reference is then to *ihtirâât ve bid'at-ı misriyye*, meaning illicit innovations against the sharia:

Mısır iklimine fakr-ı hâl-i ahâlîye müstetbi' olmuş bunca *ihtirâât ve bid'at-ı misriyye* için ahâlî-yi Mısır kendisinden taleb-i hesâba fırsât-bîn oldukları müşârinileyhin mütebâdir-i hâtır olamaz mı bunca mezâlimden mütehayyir ve mükedder olan Arab tâifesi etrâfta medet-gâh ve âh edib âdât ve temettuat-ı kadîmesinden bir eser kalmadığını ve vâlileri pâdişâhlarına ve imâm-ı muazzamlarına sadâkat unvânından ve şerefinden dahi mahrûm ve hâlî kaldığını göricek kime mürâcaat ve kimden istimdâd edecekleri cây-ı mütâlâa değil midir (*Takvîm-i vekayî* 8, 1831, emphasis added).

- 66 The translation in *Le Moniteur Ottoman* (no. 8, 1831) cannot express the exact meaning of the accusation against Mehmed Ali:

Quel appui pourrait-on prêter aux innovations qu'il a introduites? Qui pourrait le soutenir au milieu de cette population turque et arabe étonnée de tant de changemens (*sic*), lorsqu'autour de lui il ne resterait plus rien des anciennes mœurs, pas même le titre de fidèle d'Osmanli?.

What support could be given to the innovations he introduced? Who could support him among the Turkish and Arab population astonished by so many changes, when around him nothing remains of the old customs, not even the title of loyal to Osmanlis?

- 67 Here is my translation, which is meant to be literal:

Doesn't Mehmed Ali think that the illicit innovations that have impoverished the inhabitants of the country will make them turn against him as soon as an opportunity presents itself? These Arabs, who plead everywhere against all of these oppressions and see that their old customs and earnings have disappeared, where

will they turn to for help when they realize that their governor has furthermore renounced honor and loyalty to their sultan and supreme imam?

68 The reforms introduced by Mehmed Ali are thus illicit innovations against sharia law. As for the sultan, he is *müceddid* or renewer, or rather *müceddid-i kavânî-i devlet*, or renewer of the fundamental laws of the state. The *müceddid* sultan undertakes *teceddüdât*, or renewals, such as *teceddüdât-ı usûl-i dâhiliye ve nizâmât-ı askeriye*, “renewal of the foundations of the [government] of the country and of the military organization.”

69 These “renewals” are embedded in an Islamic reformist discourse whose linearity, continuity and coherence are increasingly called into question by a new critical historiography (Mayeur-Jaouen 2019). In reality, these “renewals” consist of administrative centralization and of the gradual construction of a more integrated political system. The editors of the official gazette occasionally put it more clearly:

enderûn ü birûnda olan her bir umûru teşettût dağdağasından kurtarıb kaide-i vahdete ırcâ' buyurmakta olmalarıyla (*Takvîm-i vekayi* 2, 1831, emphasis added).

This is translated by *Le Moniteur Ottoman* as

dont le but constant est de ramener toutes les branches de l'administration à un système de simplicité (*Le Moniteur Ottoman* 2, 1831).

whose constant goal is to bring all branches of administration back to a system of simplicity (*Le Moniteur Ottoman* 2, 1831).

70 Here is my more literal translation of this passage: “who wanted to put an end to the dissipation of the government by unifying all affairs.” This passage shows us, once again, that an idea, a concept may well exist before a specific term appears to reference to it. If at the beginning of the 1830s, the Ottoman language does not have a word to express the concept of administrative centralization in an exclusive way, it is clear that the editors of the official gazette were able to come up with an idea.

71 Let us take a closer look at the *teceddüdât*. We must not be deceived by this particular and insistent use of a religious reference; or rather, this attempt to recompose the Muslim religious reference. We must also consider the range of possibilities at the hands of historical actors. They draw their words from the lexical field that is then at their disposal. While we must attribute to them a capacity for action, we must not forget either that their action is to some extent conditioned by the social and political language of their time and their world:

If there are indeed causal linkages between social language and social reality, to speak of the one as mirroring the others may be to envisage the causal arrows pointing in the wrong direction [...] to recover the nature of the normative vocabulary available to us for the description and appraisal of our conduct is at the same time to indicate one of the constraints on our conduct itself. This in turn suggests that, if we wish to explain why social agents chose to concentrate on certain courses of action while avoiding others, we are bound to make some reference to the prevailing moral language of the society in which they were acting. For this, it now appears, must have figured not as an epiphenomenon of their projects, but as one of the determinants of their actions (Skinner 2018: 225).

72 This lies at the heart of the question of the intentionality of actors/authors, a complex methodological problem that we could not address here without losing sight of the purpose of this article (Guilhaumou 2006: 85-88). In any case, a historian should not take the discourse of historical actors at its face value. Let us remain cautious rather than putting forward the idea that the use of this term is a sign of the impact of a

certain idea of Islamic reform. The fact is that, regardless of the words used to describe the situation, there is a real innovation: the will to make these discourses public. Another significant innovation is the eminently political discursive act of writing them down once and for all on a textual medium, reproduced at regular intervals, intended to be widely disseminated. The sultan, who held political power until then by divine will, explains and defends himself, and is justified by modern reformulations of the religious reference before an amorphous public whose contours remain — I believe deliberately — blurred and ambiguous. This fact is in itself very notable of the new times.

Marking time

- 73 Let us return to the emic categories. The sultan is addressed as *müceddid-i kavânîn-i tedâbîr-i rehîn-i saltanat*, or “he who is the promoter of laws, protective measures and the guarantor of the sultanate” as well as *müceddid-i nizâm-ı mülk ü devlet*, or “the reviver of the order of the state and the realms.” Additionally, the administrative reorganization is *cedîd*, or new, as opposed to the previous practices, *usûl-i sâbık*. One occasionally reads, for example, an announcement that refers to a change as replacing what was “customary until then.”
- 74 The official gazette contains many temporal markers¹⁹: *öteden beri* (since always), *şimdiye kadar* (until now); *usûlden olmuş idi* (as was customary), *eski usûllerinin tebdîliyle* (by changing their former procedures); *usûl-i sâbıklarının tebdîliyle müceddeden tanzîm* (they were organized anew following the change of their previous procedures); *usûl ve nizâmât-ı atîkasının dahi tecdîdi* (the renewal of their old principles and regulations) or *icrâsı mu’tâd olan* (as was customary to implement). The novelties introduced are described as “never seen or heard of” (*bir vakitte görölüp işidilmemiş olmağla*).
- 75 These temporal markers, which at first glance seem quite banal, in fact have a fundamental rhetorical function in forming the political discourse of *Takvîm-i vekayi*. Certainly, every language has temporal markers and every tradition of bureaucratic phraseology makes abundant use of them. But precisely because they are so insignificant, we often forget to pay attention to them in studies of historical semantics. In our case study, however, this choice to mark and underline novelty and change reflects a new relationship to time. The present is detached more and more from what precedes it. It stands out from it. To borrow from Koselleck, is this a sign of the new times “where expectations become more and more distant from all experiences until now” (Koselleck 2005: 315)? Should this be seen as the horizon of expectations gradually emancipating itself from the field of experience? In fact, matters are probably much more complex. The horizon of expectations, in any case, incorporates multiple layers of historical experience. The dynamic relationship between the field of experience and history is therefore hardly reducible to the opposition past/future or break/continuity (Escudier 2009: 1275, 1280-1282). I will return to these temporal markers below when I discuss the term *kadîm*.
- 76 Emphasizing novelty by contrasting it with the old does not necessarily involve the use of time markers either. In its first issue, *Takvîm-i vekayi* includes two narratives that denote two new practices introduced by Mahmud II. The first is about the granting of imperial orders instead of robes of honor (Eldem 2004); the second is the opening of the

ceremony, given to a wider audience, at the start of Crown Prince Abdülmecid's religious instruction. Here are two passages from these two accounts:

taraf-ı saltanattan hi'lât giydirmek zamân-ı kadîmden kalma tırâz ta'bîr olunur kaide-i muteberedir ki ser-â-ser üst hi'lâti ve kürk ve teşrîf kaftanı dedikleri man'a ve tedbîr-i mülkiye muktezâsından olarak hikmete evfâk bir resm-i zîbâ ise de padişahımız azze nasrûhü hazretlerinin mücerred devr-i mergubi't-tavr-ı şâhâneleri muhassânât-ı bedîasından olmak üzere arûz makulesinden olan kürk yerine cevâhir ihsân buyurmaları el-hak resm-i kadîmden bin kat berter bir lutf-ı evferdir (*Takvîm-i vekayî* 1, 1831, emphasis added).

Offering robes of honor as a sovereign is a decorative custom, inherited from ancient times and followed with respect; *even though* it was a decoration ceremony faithful to a philosophy that stems from a particular political meaning and practice of offering fur and a robe of honor, the fact that our master the sultan, may his aid be abundant, orders to give, as a part of his sublime and lovely beautiful novelties, a jewel instead of fur is a thousand times better as a gift as well as a thousand times more reasonable than the old ceremony (emphasis added)²⁰.

şehzâdegân hazarâtının kur'âna bed'lerinde ulemâdan yalnız şeyhülislâm efendi hazretleri bi-l-fi'l Rumeli ve Anadolu kazaskerleriyle nakîb-ül-eşrâf efendiler bulunub sâirleri bulunmamak resm-i kadîm *iken* padişahımız efendimiz hazretleri mahzâ şîme-i celîle-i cihân-pesend-i bahtiyârî ve şinşine-i dâi-nevâz-i şehriyârânelerinden nâşî bil-cümle sudûru ve îslâmbol rütbesinde olan duâcılarını taltîf-i da'vet ile şân-ı şer'e bu yüzden dahi hürmet buyurmuşlardır (*Takvîm-i vekayî* 1, 1831, emphasis added).

While according to the ancient ceremony, the prince, his excellence, begins the reading of the Koran in the presence of the only şeyhülislâm, the two kazaskers of Rumeli and Anatolia and nakîb-ül-eşrâf, our sultan his excellence, our master, by the mere fact of his exalted nature adored by the whole world and his majestic character which draws all prayers, invited all the judges of higher rank as well as the members of the ulema who have the rank of Istanbul, which venerated the interpreters of the holy law (emphasis added).

A translation of this second account appears in *Le Moniteur Ottoman*:

Cette fête religieuse, à laquelle on ne voyait autrefois que le grand mufti, accompagné de deux kazaskiers, a reçu une solennité toute nouvelle de l'heureuse pensée d'associer les troupes et le peuple au premier acte du prince héritier.

This religious festivity, at which *previously* only the Grand Mufti had been seen, accompanied by two kazaskiers, acquired a *brand new* solemnity due to the joyous thought to involve the troops and the people at the first act of the Crown Prince (*Le Moniteur Ottoman* 1, 1831, emphasis added).

- 77 This text still refers, in a sense, to the “public:” it is in fact one of the expressions of a discursive phenomenon (likely just as real) which is the diffusion of the symbolic representation of political authority to a wider audience²¹. This theme is hardly marginal in the early issues of *Takvîm-i vekayî*. Many texts that I will not deal with here are about Sultan Mahmud II's travels across the country or about his walks and visits around Istanbul, a specific and recurrent theme in the official gazette. The narratives of these journeys are an integral part of the new political configuration, the construction of which also takes place across the official gazette. It is a theme on which some works already exist, although they are not exhaustive (Özcan 1991; Mutlu 1994; Stephanov 2014; Eldem 2008).

- 78 In the above two passages in Ottoman Turkish, there are no temporal markers to emphasize the novelty of the practice introduced, but rather anodyne discourse markers²². To be precise, these are the argumentative connectors *ise* (even though) and *iken* (while) which serve to stress the contrast with previous practices and consequently to articulate and accentuate the novelty of the introduced practice. Alexandre Blacque, on the other hand, opts in the French version for a temporal marker (“previously”) while adding the qualifying adjective “brand new” to pound in the novelty of the ceremony.
- 79 These examples show that a methodological approach that focuses only on a few specific terms that designate the key socio-political concepts of a political language could not be entirely satisfactory for the reflection of concern here. In other words, here we see the limits of a conceptual history approach that focuses only on word-concepts more or less isolated from their textual context, on their recurrences and on their semantic evolution in a diachronic perspective. A political discourse is formed, reformed, and articulated not only by changes in and through conceptual terminology, but also by the more usual lexical elements, the most ordinary grammatical combinations, and the commonly, consciously, and unconsciously used stylistic figures. Lexico-metric approaches that privilege the quantitative to the detriment of the qualitative therefore also have their limits.
- 80 Returning to temporal markers, this should not be seen as a clear and definitive discursive break either. The official gazette does not only contain the lexicon of the reform projects of the time of Sultan Selim III; the editors also take care to place the reform in the wake of an older tradition of reform, namely the New Order of the late eighteenth century. They do so by referencing it periodically, particularly in texts about actors who had played a certain role in the reform and who, at the end of their lives, are this time witnessing the establishment of a *new* New Order. This is the case, for example, of the texts announcing the retirement of the officers, specifying that they had served the army “since the previous reorganization” (*mukaddemki nizâmında dahi; evvel ve âhir asâkir-i nizâmiyede*) in issues 2 and 10, 11 of the official gazette. Although I cannot elaborate much on the topic here without straying from my point, I should stress that the temporality of the reform in the official gazette in the early 1830s is clearly more focused on the present and distanced from “the old/tradition” than that of the bureaucratic correspondence of the 1840s. These correspondences, examined by Marc Aymes, more readily integrate the past through almost systematic references to the old and to tradition (Aymes 2010: 40-49). All things considered, this recalls the tension between the discursive upheavals of the early French Revolution and the Napoleonic national reconciliation, which tempered the revolutionary impetus of the 1790s while consolidating many of its achievements and consequences in the early 1800s. This idea is reinforced by the fact that the essentially non-confrontational and negotiating mode characterizes the reconfiguration of the relationship between local notables and the central authority through the reorganization of provincial administration from the 1840s onwards (Hanssen 2002).

Using religion or thinking within the tradition?

- 81 Returning to *cedîd*, which refers to the new, I must nevertheless stress that the concept and its derivatives (*müceddid*, *tecdîd*, *teceddüdât*) are important concepts of Islamic

political thought and also had a certain impact on Ottoman reformist thought of the eighteenth century (Topal 2017; Pagani 2007; Landau-Tasseron 1989). In Islamic reform literature, the concept of renewal expressed by the term *müceddid* is often linked to that of *müctehid*, or the one who practices *ictihâd* (Hallaq 1984), which means reasoning on texts to elaborate laws, or an individual capacity to interpret sacred texts. It should also be recalled that the *ictihâd* evokes, in an associative relationship, the concept of *taklîd* (Peters 1980). This important concept can mean both the acceptance of doctrine established within the framework of a school of law or, more generally, the notion of following an established and traditional intellectual authority (Frank 1989; Spannau 2012: 119-151).

- 82 Within the Ottoman political context of centralizing reforms, the use of the concept of *müceddid* and its derivations as well as the concept of *ictihâd* (Gerber 1999: 78-91), which maintains an associative relationship with *müceddid*, expresses how the political authority was determined to emancipate itself from any possible tutelage of the Muslim clergy in the discursive construction of a new political order. The historical origin of this process, which privileges the *ictihâd* to the detriment of the *taklîd*, dates back to certain evolutions in eighteenth century South Asian Muslim reformist thought (Malik 2003: 231, 233-235, 242-243)²³. The intellectual impact of this thought was considerable, expanding, and lasting in the Ottoman capital (Abu-Manneh 2001; Yaycıoğlu 2018: 1584-1603).

- 83 Let us return to the official gazette where we read, regarding the sultan:

Gelir her yüz yıl içre dîni bir tecdîd eden dehre
bunun gibi müceddid binde bir kez olmadı peydâ (*Takvîm-i vekayî* 5, 1831).

I translate freely:

At the beginning of each century, one who will renew religion arrives in the world
But a reviver like this one has not been around for a thousand years.

- 84 The first line is the Ottoman translation of a hadith. Both lines are by Esad Efendi. In fact, a slightly different version of this stanza can be found in the book he wrote after the abolition of the Janissaries to legitimize it post-facto:

Gelir her yüz yıl içre dîni bir tecdîd ider nâsir
bunun gibi müceddid binde bin ancak gelür nâdir (Es'ad 2005 [1828]: 146)

I again translate freely:

Every century, Allah²⁴ renews religion
But rare is a renewer like this one, who arrives one time in a thousand

- 85 In his book printed in 1828 (on this book, see Heinzelmänn 2009: 44-53), Esad Efendi refers to Mahmud II as *müceddid* several times (Es'ad 2005 [1828]: 2, 8, 86, 108, 138) and devotes several pages to explain why it is legitimate to qualify him as *müceddid*, using hadiths and other sources as support (Es'ad 2005 [1828]: 138-145). Esad Efendi had previously used this term to qualify Mahmud II in his official chronicle (which he began writing in 1825) on several occasions (*Sahhâflar* 2000 [1825-?]: 429, 464, 507, 625, 628, 639).

- 86 A few years later, he suggests in the official gazette that Sultan Mahmud II is not only a *müceddid*, but also superior to all the other *müceddid* who preceded him. He seems to be a *müctehid-i mutlâk* — a completely independent *müctehid*, a founder of a school of law in Islam — even though this term does not appear in the *Takvîm-i vekayî*. It should also be noted that Mahmud II was born in 1199 of the Hegira. His date of birth according to the Muslim historical era therefore adds to the claim that he is a *müceddid*, thus a “secular”²⁵

renewer of Islam.” It should be noted here that the term *müceddid* was used at the time in other propaganda materials written to legitimize the Mahmudian reforms (Erşahin 2005). Moreover, Mahmud II is not the first sultan to be called *müceddid*. Esad Efendi also uses it in his book to refer to the sultans Osman, Mehmed II, and Suleiman, calling them *müceddid* of the 7th, 8th and 9th centuries of the Hegira respectively (Es’ad 2005 [1828]: 142). This epithet was also often used for Selim III, his predecessor as reformer, by şeyh Galib (1757-1799), the mevlevi sheikh who is known as one of the last great representatives of classical Ottoman poetry (Usluer 2002: 64-65, 169, 176, 189; Gawrych 1987).

- 87 Thus, by calling oneself *müceddid* one claims the right to renew the laws by which the Muslim community is governed. In 1828, Esad Efendi expressed this idea very clearly: *müceddidiyet yalnız fukahâya mahsûriyet iktizâ’ etmeyip ulû’l-emr ve sâire şâmil olur* (Es’ad 2005 [1828]: 141), or “*müceddidity* is not necessarily the prerogative of specialists in Islamic jurisprudence but also that of those in power and others.” In the Ottoman case of the 1830s, this recurrent use of the term *müceddid* thus places the discourse of the official gazette in the wake of Muslim reformism. It also anticipates, as it were, the vast codification activity that the political authorities launched from the 1840s onwards (Rubin 2016: especially 840-841), whose hybrid character — qualified neither as secularization nor westernization — has recently been emphasized (Rubin 2008). In other words, the use of the term claims the right to act freely in radically reconfiguring the administrative and political system, prematurely brushing aside the criticisms of opponents who resort to the *kanûn-ı kadîm* argument²⁶.
- 88 In *Takvîm-i vekayî*, *cedîd* is not opposed to *kadîm*, the old or tradition, but only to *usûl-i sâbık*, the “previous practices.” *Cedîd* is then the renewal of what is old, *kadîm* (Topal 2017). This term is also a semantically very loaded word. It is found in the expression *kanûn-ı kadîm*, meaning “ancient law” or “law whose origin no one remembers,” an expression omnipresent in Ottoman political treaties of earlier centuries (Öz 2017). Nevertheless, it should be noted that while *kanûn-ı kadîm* was generally used there to defer to intellectual positions that are, after all, quite conservative (Çakır 2015), the term is hardly sacred or immutable. Treaties were written long before Selim III’s *nizâm-ı cedîd* in which the author criticizes *kanûn-ı kadîm* and defends the idea of elaborating new rules, laws, methods, and principles. The criticisms of *kanûn-ı kadîm* increase in reformist literature during the reign of Selim III (Sariyannis 2019: 442-443); however, at the same time, we also see *kanûn-ı kadîm* occasionally used to legitimize new reforms and to conceal the new by embedding it in the old (Öz 2010). It is interesting to note that Mahmud’s reformist discourse is in this respect more cautious than that of the time of Selim III, as does not use the expressions *nizâm-ı cedîd* and *kanûn-ı kadîm* at all.
- 89 The official gazette provides many examples: to renovate *kadîm*, *cedîd* suppresses, sweeps away, and liquidates the degeneration, bastardization, and corruption of the ancient, traditional, and venerated order. In this cautious discourse on reform, on the advent of the new, on the imposition of the New Order by the progressive eradication of the Ancien Régime, the degeneration of the old order²⁷ is attributed to previous practices: *sâbık*. Thus, one often reads in the official gazette that these “previous practices” deformed the old (*kadîm*) by “the effect of the passage of time” (*mürûr-i zamân*). The change, presented in this way, uses rhetoric of religious renewal²⁸ and generally avoids attacking, targeting, and directly questioning the *kadîm*²⁹, the ancient or traditional. Incidentally, this is hardly an Ottoman exception, which becomes

obvious when reading the historiography of the idea and concept of “reform” in Europe or elsewhere (Innes 2003; Minard 2009).

90 I risk straying from my main point if I elaborate on the concept of religious rhetoric, but it must be stressed that it was partly a reaction to the socio-political tensions inherent in the process of creating a central conscription army, a process that was triggered again in 1826 (Aksan 2007; Yıldız 2009; Dilbaz 2014; Yeşil 2016). Here too, there is little question of an Ottoman exception: the history of the founding of central armies in Prussia, the Habsburg Empire and the Russian Empire is characterized by similar developments that were, moreover, underlined in reform treaties and embassy reports written by Ottoman scribes at the end of the eighteenth century (Yeşil 2010; Findley 1995a and 1995b). A similar discourse of reform was used by Emir Abdelkader in Algeria in the 1830s and in Morocco in the 1850s (Cronin 2008; El-Tahir El-Mesawi 2008; Bennison 2004; Rollman 2004). This being said, let us recall that this is only one of the reasons behind this deployment of an Islamic discourse of reform in the service of political authority. The palace had previously resorted to similar Islamic discourse in its power struggle against regional potentates from the end of the eighteenth century onwards (Anscombe 2010; Yeşil 2016: 273).

91 We will now close this section by engaging with a question. Is this Islamic rhetoric a sincere interpretation of the radical change taking place in the Ottoman Empire at the time, a change that consisted in constructing a central administration accompanied by a conscription army and the disciplinarization of the population? In other words, did the members of the ruling class really believe that they were undertaking a religious renewal? This is the hypothesis that underlies much of the recent and rich historiography on the Mahmudian period since Butrus Abu-Manneh’s thought-provoking article on the Islamic origins of the Gülhâne rescript in 1839 (Abu-Manneh 1994)³⁰. I don’t think that it is an appropriate question. The political authority is recomposing and reordering the Muslim religious reference, seizing it by inscribing it in the political registry. What the sultan and his reformist entourage did in the early 1830s in the official gazette was to deploy an Islamic discourse to combat possible resistance against the reforms under way. They used the Islamic reference to produce unconditional obedience, as they openly put it:

padişâhlara itâat edib tebaiyetinden dönmek ve niçün şu böyle oldu ve böyle oluyor deyu itirâz olunmamak vacîbe-i uhde-i diyânet ve lâzime-i zimmet-i ubûdiyet olduğuna nice ahâdis-i şerîfe vâride olub (*Takvîm-i vekayî* 4, 1831).

To obey the rulers, to never renounce one’s subjection, and to never act in opposition by saying that such and such thing is an obligation of faith as well as a requirement of the tacit contract on protection and subjection; this is evoked by many sacred traditions.

92 What else could they use other than the Islamic reference? They were certainly moved by a “sense of universal belonging to Islam as universal community” (Ahmed 2016: 140-143). They also reflected and expressed their political action within the limits of the political language of the time. They were obliged to use the conceptual vocabulary of Islamic philosophy. After all, they thought and spoke within the Islamic tradition. Was this a “manipulation” of Islamic reference? Not necessarily. As put it Talal Asad:

It is too often forgotten that the process of determining orthodoxy in conditions of change and contest includes attempts at achieving discursive coherence, at presenting the present within an authoritative narrative that includes positive evaluations of past events and persons. Because such authority is a collaborative

achievement between narrator and audience, the former cannot speak in total freedom: there are conceptual and institutional conditions that must be attended to if discourses are to be persuasive. That is why attempts by social scientists at rendering such discourses as instances of local leaders manipulating religious symbols to legitimize their social power should be viewed skeptically. This is not simply because ‘manipulation’ carries a strong sense of cynical motivation, even in cases where evidence for such an imputation is not forthcoming, but more broadly because it introduces the notion of a deliberative, rationalistic stance into descriptions of relationships where the notion is not appropriate (Asad 1993: 210-211)

- 93 To better evaluate their intellectual position, one needs to adopt a more comprehensive approach in order to be able to embrace the human and historical phenomenon of Islam in all its complexity. In this perspective, the separation between religious, moral, cultural and secular spheres is almost meaningless and thus constitutes a methodological obstacle to a better understanding of “being Islamic” (Ahmed 2016). Yet, this is not to say that their Islamic reference was an age-old immutable nebula of ideas and principles, as put it Cornelius Castoriadis: “Through its virtually unlimited natural and historical connections, the signifier always goes beyond the rigid attachment to a precise signified and can lead to totally unexpected places” (Castoriadis 1975: 181).
- 94 From the 1790s to the 1820s, the ways of linking Islam and political sovereignty changed in the Ottoman Empire. In the early 1830s, the official gazette established a new discursive linkage, which continued coherently and without much change until the abolition of the caliphate in 1924. It was an attempt by political actors to exploit religious reference; these actors had successfully eliminated the tutelage of certain intermediary bodies such as the Janissaries, the regional potentates, and Bektashism, as well as subjugated or assimilated others — to differing degrees according to place and time — such as the ulema, brotherhoods, and local notables. Besides the sultan and his entourage, these political actors include high-ranking civil servants and major ulema (Heyd 1961). This monopolization is rendered possible by two factors: the state’s stranglehold on the management of pious foundations and brotherhoods (Varol 2013) and, more importantly, the emergence and rise of a class of lay clerics, or public officials, whose numbers are growing exponentially with the expanding bureaucratic apparatus (Findley 1980). Both factors accelerate and intensify over the course of the century. Officials frequently transitioned from an *ilmiyye* post to a *kalemiyye* one, creating a brain drain from the ulema class to the bureaucracy which began in the eighteenth century but exacerbated in the nineteenth century (Clayer 2000). Taking the emblematic and well-studied case of Ahmed Cevdet Pasha (1822-1895) (Chambers 1973), this phenomenon provides the backdrop to an important evolution that could be seen as a new relationship between the religious and the political. New historical studies today are more attentive to the continuity of this hybrid political reconfiguration. Even in fields chronologically different from this one, recent research is nuancing the account of how the Turkish Republic controlled Islam, a process long described as a unilateral and firm grasp by the political authority on the religious field. Instead, the stress is on their intertwined relationship, far more complex than the metanarrative of secularism imposed from above (Clayer 2013; Lord 2018).

Conclusion: from empirical inquiry to method

- 95 To conclude, I will begin by pointing out that my approach here to the official gazette takes a very specific angle – its political language – from a well-delineated perspective: the discourse on reform, which is characterized by a future-oriented temporality in which the present is increasingly detached from the past. In other words, the official gazette highlights the novelty, the *cedîd*'s present, while the recent past appears as a degenerate form of ancient times, of *kadîm*. At first glance, thus, the new is presented as a renewal of the old. However, beneath the surface, the political discourse of the official gazette is deeply innovative in its temporality as well as by the fact that it is a discourse intended to be publicized as widely as possible and is therefore intended to be pedagogical. The emphasis on novelty also concerns the sovereign, who is repeatedly defined as the secular renewer (*müceddid*) of the Islamic religion. The editors of the official gazette repeatedly refer to the centuries-old Muslim reformist tradition as part of a repertoire of rhetorical tools to consolidate the political legitimacy of the sultan. It is not only aimed at strengthening the legitimacy of the politico-administrative measures launched by Mahmud II; in this way, the official discourse also appropriates the word-concepts of potential opponents of the reforms.
- 96 Thus, it must be noted that the remarkably varied lexical arsenal that was mobilized in the official gazette to describe the process of political-administrative reconfiguration would be distilled a decade later into a much more monolithic lexical field of reform in the early 1840s. Did this process of conceptual fixing and terminological concentration result from administrative centralization and socio-political levelling? In other words, did this change in language result only from transformations in social reality? Or does the new political language contribute, to a certain extent, to disrupting the socio-political order and participate in constructing a new order that is no longer called *nizâm-ı cedîd* but Tanzimat? This is the question that underlies my investigation in this article.
- 97 As mentioned at the beginning, I hardly intend to exhaust all possible perspectives for the study of the political language of the official gazette. I chose to capture its political language as the expression of a collective political thought that has been forming since the 1790s. This initial decision to espouse a holistic approach certainly deprived me of possible input from other approaches. Thus, I did not adopt a socio-historical approach that investigates by focusing on the various actors who appear in my paper only by name (Mahmud II, Esad Efendi, Alexandre Blacque, Amédée Jaubert, Artin Hindoglu, Alexandre Handjéri, Jean Daniel Kieffer, Thomas-Xavier Bianchi) or worse – like the translators of the official gazette – without even mentioning their names. To be fair, a socio-historical approach bordering on micro-history and aimed at analyzing the semantic evolution of certain key terms on a biographical scale could have allowed me to deepen certain points. However, this approach would have required numerous biographical digressions, hindering the development of the argumentation as well as the clarity of the presentation. Many of these actors also refer to a subtext that underlies my remarks: translation as an intellectual activity that generates new meanings for words. Although I have provided a few examples and made a few specific remarks on the role of translation in the evolution of Ottoman political language, I have made little attempt to go further, leaving this important topic to another study that

will focus precisely and exclusively on the translation of European political modernity into the official gazette.

98 Before moving on to my methodological remarks, I would also like to note some research prospects for future work on the political language of the official Ottoman gazette. The framework of an article does not permit to address this vast topic in all of its aspects. Hence, I chose to leave aside all of the texts referring to the actions, postures and gestures of the sultan as well as the rarer ones which evoke his miraculous powers. Also, I decided not to treat two semantic fields that are nonetheless informative on the political language of the official gazette in order to avoid the trap of remaining superficial. The first field involves terms relating to the body politic: the lexicon of those who govern and those who are governed, of authority, obedience, and revolt. The second looks at terms relating to translation work in the broadest sense: how is it possible to describe in Ottoman Turkish the political and social realities of European countries in the 1830s? These are the topics that I will include in the remainder of this article in order to continue drawing the contours of the political discourse of *Takvîm-i vekayi*.

99 This is therefore a preliminary study that lays the groundwork for further research on Ottoman political language of the 1830s. Nevertheless, five general methodological remarks emerge from this empirical research, focusing on only one semantic field.

100 The first concerns the question of lexical, conceptual, and semantic continuity and rupture. A distinction between new and old words in politics often proves to be ineffective within the frame of the intended research. Old terms and words drawn from the traditional lexical repertoire are frequently used in to designate new institutions during Mahmud's reign. The case of the name of the new European-style army that Mahmud II founded in 1826 can be a perfect illustration of this: "The Victorious Soldiers [by the divine favor] of Islam" (*Asâkir-i mansûre-i muhammediye*). Like Şiviloğlu (2018: 48), I cannot help deferring to an eloquent passage from the beginning of 18 *Brumaire de Louis Bonaparte*:

Man makes his own history, but he does not make it out of the whole cloth; he does not make it out of conditions chosen by himself, but out of such as he finds close at hand. The tradition of all past generations weighs like an alp upon the brain of the living. At the very time when men appear engaged in revolutionizing things and themselves, in bringing about what never was before, at such very epochs of revolutionary crisis do they anxiously conjure up into their service the spirits of the past, assume their names, their battle cries, their costumes to enact a new historic scene in such time-honored disguise and with such borrowed language. Thus did Luther masquerade as the Apostle Paul; thus did the revolution of 1789-1814 drape itself alternately as Roman Republic and as Roman Empire; nor did the revolution of 1848 know what better to do than to parody at one time the year 1789, at another the revolutionary traditions of 1793-95. Thus does the beginner, who has acquired a new language, keep on translating it back into his own mother tongue; only then has he grasped the spirit of the new language and is able freely to express himself therewith when he moves in it without recollections of the old, and has forgotten in its use his own hereditary tongue (Marx 1969 [1852]: 15-16).

101 The fact that there is lexical continuity in an intellectual and textual tradition does not mean that there is necessarily also conceptual and semantic continuity. This latter continuity can certainly exist, but we must not forget the fact that intellectual history is also a history of oblivion, misunderstanding, resemanticization, redefinition, a process of reinterpretation, and terminological and conceptual rearrangement.

Moreover, in some cases, terminological continuity can also aim to conceal a semantic change or even a discursive rupture because “perception related to language tends to persist, as do mentalities, and often lags behind innovation” (Koselleck 1997: 123). And again, as Bertrand Binoche notes in his excellent study on the history of the concept of public opinion in Europe, “a word can retain the same meaning while assuming a new discursive function; it can, on the contrary, occupy the same function and change meaning. It is not an easy task to identify and distinguish these positions, but it is nevertheless an imperative for all philosophical philology. We must therefore try to do so, as a concerned amateur rather than as a convinced scholar” (Binoche 2012: 109). Such is the importance of working on the slippery and ambiguous research terrain of historical semantics, where the old and new often coexist, sometimes intertwined: it would be a shame to erase the inherent equivocity of certain semantic fields by allowing oneself to be consumed by questions of continuity and rupture.

- 102 The second remark concerns the need for a holistic approach to the textual corpus in question. One cannot elucidate the texts published in the official gazette by, on the one hand, examining them in isolation from each other and, on the other hand, focusing solely on the use of such and such a term, word, or concept. In a way, this is what I have done here in order to argue clearly within the restricted framework of an article. With regard to the first point, one must consider all of the different texts as a single textual field under construction. As I point out below, it is quite possible to find discursive inconsistencies in all of the texts. Still, an approach that isolates words, groups, or fields of words may not provide a total view of the political discourse developed in the official gazette. As for the second point, apart from the words used, one must be attentive to discursive uses, to the stylistic figures mobilized, and to metaphors associated with the words, but also to the linguistic determinants; that is to say, to the “syntagmatic and associative relations,” as Saussure said (Saussure 1971 [1916]: 171 ff.). A passage from Roland Barthes’ inaugural lecture at the Collège de France eloquently summarizes my position on this point:

a linguistic object cannot stand, cannot be contained within the limits of a sentence. It is not only phonemes, words, and syntactic articulations that are subject to a semi-liberty regime, because they cannot be combined in any way; it is the whole layer of discourse that is fixed by a network of rules, constraints, oppressions, repressions; massive and blurry at the rhetorical level, subtle and acute at the grammatical level: the language flows into the discourse, the discourse flows back into the language, they persist one under the other, as in the game of the warm hand. The distinction between language and discourse then no longer appears as a transitory operation — something, in short, to be ‘abjured’ (Barthes, 1978: 30-31).

- 103 Concretely speaking, a careful reading of all the texts of several dozen issues of *Takvîm-i vekayî* leads to the conclusion that, in addition to key word-concepts, the grammatical and discursive markers used by the editors of the official gazette to establish their argumentative strategy must certainly also be considered when analyzing political language. Moreover, in the case of Ottoman Turkish, the common use of hendiadys and lexical collocations of various forms is not an anecdotal detail but, on the contrary, constitutes the methodological starting point for a historian interested in the meaning of the texts he or she studies. For this reason, the historian must interpret these texts constantly guided by an acute knowledge of prefabricated expressions and must be vigilant regarding their pragmatic anchoring; that is, their function in a specific context of usage (Schmale 2013). A historian cannot have all the skills of a researcher in

literary or linguistic studies. However, this situation must nevertheless lead him or her to be attentive to the rhetorical and linguistic aspects of the discursive construction of the texts he or she analyses. Above all, the historian must be prudent and humble in his or her conclusions so as not to over- or misinterpret the semantics of the corpus.

104 The third remark concerns the relationship of the study of texts to the history. One can work on language in several ways; I argue here for a historical approach to these texts. It is necessary to constantly place these narratives, these texts, in their political context in order to understand the function assigned to them in the new emerging political order. In other words, when one undertakes this type of research inspired by the history of concepts or historical semantics, one must inscribe his/her reflection in the overall political and intellectual history. One must also take care to put into relation and into perspective the concepts, words, and terms detected in the texts with the events, people, and history of the period concerned. Concretely speaking, the terminology on the current reforms cannot be analyzed without considering the recent and immediate history of the tensions caused by the military reorganization. The texts against Mehmed Ali of Egypt, which promoted a plethora of *ad hominem* arguments in a polemical registry, must be resituated in the context of the then-imminent war between Istanbul and Cairo. The numerous texts on the revolts in Anatolia, Iraq, and the Balkans can only be studied if there are monographs on each of these protests against centralization. The translations in the European press or the *Moniteur Ottoman* can only take on their full meaning within the context of the monarchist and conservative reaction against the first disruption of the Metternichian diplomatic system. While the conservative European order established by Metternich after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 was immediately challenged by student and political movements across Europe, the Holy Alliance held up, as best it could, until the second half of the 1820s. The first Metternichian system would be greatly weakened by the aftermath of the Greek revolt that broke out in 1821. France and Great Britain had considered it preferable, from a geopolitical standpoint, to intervene in favor of the Greek insurgents in 1827 to prevent a future Greece from falling under the exclusive domination of the Russian Empire. The Russian tsar had decided beforehand in 1825, after many hesitations, to support diplomatically and militarily the insurrection against the Ottoman power, thus leaving aside the Metternichian spirit. While Belgian nationalists took full advantage of the ambivalent political climate to create Belgium at the end of 1830 by splitting their territory from the United Kingdom of the Netherlands (1815-1830), the Russian army would restore the territory created by the conservative order of the Congress of Vienna by crushing in 1831 the Polish insurrection unleashed in November 1830. The revolts in the Ottoman Empire, which are often treated in the historiography as resistance against Mahmud II's centralizing measures, also fit into this overall context.

105 The fourth remark concerns the historical role and performativity of the corpus under study. The official gazette, which is the main textual platform for propaganda of the political authority, also constitutes — at this crucial moment when change is accelerating and intensifying — a kind of reflective surface. It holds a mirror to the ruling class so that, apart from making political and ideological propaganda in order to consolidate their symbolic power, they can contemplate their actions and themselves and thus give meaning to what they are doing; or rather, try to monopolize the meaning and interpretation ascribed to it. This intellectual and editorial operation,

which is reflexive by its very nature, likely contributes to the sedimentation of all Ottoman reformist thought. Until then, reformist thought had consisted of a nebula of problem diagnoses and proposals for solutions that had been piling up, without accruing, as of the last quarter of the eighteenth century. By merely concentrating and assembling it in a single textual corpus in a regular and immediate temporality, a synthesis gradually appears. In other words, this political thought came to fruition by inscribing and narrating reformist literature in the official gazette in the early 1830s. It is this process of conceptual and terminological distillation that lies at the origin of Gülhâne rescript, which marks the beginning of a new period of administrative reorganization with a much more global scope and a much more coherent discourse framing it. That is, the Gülhâne turning point of 1839 – which has until now been conceived as the beginning of the age of reforms, as a starting point (of modernization, secularization, westernization, Tanzimat, modern Turkey, semi-colonization etc.) – is in fact also a point of culmination in the history of Ottoman reformist thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

- 106 To be clear: I am not adopting a teleological approach that attributes an exaggerated intentionality to the historical actors (the ruling class) and a considerable capacity for action to the texts (the official gazette) on their own, independently of any socio-historical condition. This would contradict my previous remark. The causal links between these various elements are multilateral and multidirectional. But it is also necessary to underline the significant role language configuration can play in the evolution of social and political realities, particularly during certain specific historical junctures. For my part, I subscribe here to the “common will of the various currents of conceptual history, including the linguistic history of conceptual usages, to work on the empirical link between concrete action and discourse, not to dissociate them artificially in the search of strategies swiftly described as illusory,” to quote Jacques Guilhaumou (Guilhaumou 2006: 82). In other words, not only am I following Humboldt in his insistence on the linguistic nature of thought (Guilhaumou 2006: 213-215), but I am also of the opinion that language and discourse must be ascribed a certain performativity in the advent of some historical events (Guilhaumou 2006: 123, 138-139, 217, 224).
- 107 In this respect, the 1830s were a pivotal period in Ottoman history. I do not place the turning point in 1839, therefore in Gülhâne rescript, but at the very start of the decade. It was at this time that, to quote the eloquent words of şiviloğlu, “the heteroglossia of political language disappeared in favor of unified discourse(s)” (şiviloğlu 2018: 42). The importance of this phenomenon cannot be overstated. I wonder whether we should not rethink the whole history of the Tanzimat also as one of “imagined reforms,” as “a great progress – on paper,” to use Marc Aymes’ well-put and evocative formulation (Aymes 2010). Progress perhaps remains on paper and does not translate precisely into social reality. Perhaps. Nevertheless, it is also true that the linearity of the writing and formatting necessarily gives a certain linearity and discursive coherence to the narrative of the Tanzimat. Let me here establish what I have just written above about the performativity of discourse: the Tanzimat could not exist, in any case, without being narrated on paper.
- 108 For the fifth and final remark, let me return to the preamble, which is interesting in several respects. There, Esad Efendi points out the difference between writing history (*târîh tahrîri*) and journalism (*beher gün kalem ile tahrîr edib ‘âmmeye neşr itmek*, “writing daily to disseminate to the public”). Beginning by evoking the writing of history, he

inscribes the new enterprise in a tradition of legitimate and useful writing, even while trying to distance himself from it (Karateke 2015). For him, the gazette is, in a way, a history in the making, a history not only being written but also being made; in short, a history of the present time.

- 109 The regular, nearly daily practice of recounting events that have just taken place or are taking place has likely affected the writers in how they conceive of a storytelling of the present. The writers, by referencing previous evocations of an “event,” a fact, or a story in previous issues, must have contributed to the emergence and elaboration of a new style of writing, that of journalism. Journalism essentially implies a different relationship to time than that of writing history, which requires a temporal distance between the facts and the time of writing³¹. It is therefore neither the same relationship to time nor the same rhythm of writing. Journalism relates to time with a temporal proximity, in which the event may not have yet occurred, applicable both for those narrating it and for those reading or listening to it. Esad Efendi, who was then both the official chronicler of the Ottoman Empire and the editor of its official gazette, likely saw this situation in a schizophrenic way. In order to write a good part of the texts of *Takvîm-i vekayî*, he had to relinquish the “predictive function of the historian” every day and assume the role of chronicler of the present and future times:

It is to the extent that he *knows* what has not yet been told that the historian, like the actor of a myth, must accompany the chronic unfolding of events with references to the particular time of his speech (Barthes 1984 [1967]: 167, emphasis by Barthes).

- 110 Yet while Esad Efendi, as a historian or a journalist, knows what has (or has not) been told, he does not know what has not been told about events that have not yet occurred. But what is a journalist if not a historian of unfinished times? What we see emerging in the pages of the official gazette, then, is a hybrid form of writing influenced by a finer layer of historical memory, as opposed to the writing of history. Moreover, it is a narrative that is intended to be immediately disseminated. It is therefore a narrative that is constructed in the present, for the present, by the present, and with a steadiness that must match the periodicity of the issues of the official gazette. It is likely this momentary, transitory, and above all indelible character of journalistic writing (even if it is weekly), as well as the particular, immediate, narrow, non-predictive temporality of the journalistic narrative, partly accounts for the tensions and inconsistencies of the political discourse of the official gazette.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

Aslan, Meryem (2017). *Mısır Sorunu’nun Takvim-i Vekayî’ye yansımaları (1831-1841)*, Master’s thesis, Bitlis, Bitlis Eren Üniversitesi.

Benzer, Ebru (2013). *Takvim-i Vekayî’nin 1831-1834 Yılları Arası Transkripsiyonu*, Master’s thesis, Kilis, Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi.

Çatalkaya, Metin (2017). *Bir kaynak çalışması olarak Takvim-i Vekayî (1840-1849)*, Master's thesis, Eskişehir, Anadolu Üniversitesi.

Çolak, Güldane (2011). *Osmanlı Matbaacılığında Takvimhane-i Amire'nin Yeri ve Önemi*, Master's thesis, İstanbul, İstanbul Üniversitesi.

Doğan, Lütfi (2000). *Keçecizâde İzzet Molla'nın Islah-ı Nizâm-ı Devlete Dâir Risâle Adlı Eserinin Transkripsiyonu ve Edisyon Kritiği*, Master's thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi.

Es'ad Efendi (2005 [1828]). *Üss-i Zafer*, Arslan, Mehmet ed., İstanbul, Kitabevi.

Gebece, Emre (2014). *Tarih araştırmalarına bir kaynak olarak Takvim-i Vekayî (1831-1840)*, Master's thesis, Eskişehir, Anadolu Üniversitesi.

Handjéri, Alexandre (1840-1841). *Dictionnaire français-arabe-persan et turc, enrichi d'exemples en langue turque avec des variantes, et de beaucoup de mots d'arts et de sciences*, 3 vol., Moscou, Imprimerie de l'université impériale.

Hindoglu, Artin (1831). *Dictionnaire abrégé français-turc*, Vienne.

Jaubert, Amédée (1836). "Extrait du moniteur ottoman du 21 zilcadi 1851 de l'hégire," *Journal Asiatique* III (II), pp. 78-83.

Jaubert, Amédée (1835). "Constantinople en 1830," *Journal Asiatique* II (XV), pp. 137-151.

Jaubert, Amédée (1833). "Extrait de la Gazette turque de Constantinople," *Journal Asiatique* II (X), pp. 472-476.

Kieffer, J. D.; de Bianchi, T. X. (1835-1837). *Dictionnaire turc-français à l'usage des agents diplomatiques et consulaires, des commerçants, des navigateurs et autres voyageurs dans le Levant*, 2 vol., Paris, l'Imprimerie royale.

Le Moniteur Ottoman 1831-1836, 1-106.

Meninski, Franciscus Mesgnien (2000 [1680]). *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium. Turcicae. Arabicae. Persicae*, 3 vol., İstanbul, Simurg.

Naîmâ Mustafa Efendi (2007). *Târih-i Na'îmâ (Ravzatü'l-Hüseyn fî Hulâsati Ahbârî'l-hâfikayn)*, Mehmet İpşirli ed., I, Ankara, Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu.

Purgstall, Hammer (1848). "Remarques sur l'usage impropre de quelques mots dans le moniteur ottoman," *Journal Asiatique* IV (XII), pp. 494-498.

Reinaud, Joseph (1831). "De la gazette arabe et turque imprimée en Égypte," *Journal Asiatique* II (VIII), pp. 238-249.

Sahhâflar şeyhi-zâde Seyyid Mehmed Es'ad Efendi (2000 [1825-?]). *Vak'a-Nüvis Es'ad Efendi Tarihi (Bahir Efendi'nin Zeyl ve İlaveleriyle)*, Ziya Yılmaz ed., İstanbul, Osmanlı Araştırmaları Vakfı.

şânî-zâde Mehmed 'Atâ'ullah Efendi (2008 [1819-1825]). *şânî-zâde Târîhi*, Ziya Yılmaz ed., 2 vol., İstanbul, Çamlıca.

Takvîm-i vekayî 1831-1834, 1-86.

The Journals of the House of Commons 86 (Part the Second) [1832], From June the 14th to November the 22d 1831.

Yapıcı, Hakkı (1999). *Takvim-i Vekayî'de Kırım Harbi (1853-1856)*, Master's thesis, Erzurum, Atatürk Üniversitesi.

Secondary Sources

- Abu-Manneh, Butrus (2010). "Mehmed Ali Paşa and Sultan Mahmud II: the genesis of a conflict," *Turkish Historical Review* 1(1), pp. 1-24.
- Abu-Manneh, Butrus (2001). "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya and the Khalidiyya in Istanbul in the Early 19th century," in Id., *Studies on Islam and the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century (1826-1876)*, Istanbul, İsis Press, pp. 41-57.
- Abu-Manneh, Butrus (1994). "The Islamic Roots of The Gülhane Rescript," *Die Welt des Islams* 34, pp. 173-203.
- Abu-'Uksa, Wael (2019). "Imagining Modernity: The Language and Genealogy of Modernity in Nineteenth-Century Arabic," *Middle Eastern Studies* 55(5), pp. 671-682.
- Ahmed, Shahab (2016). *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*, Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press.
- Akarlı, Engin Deniz (2014). "İstanbul Esnafı Örneğinde 'Kamu Yararından' 'Devlet Çıkarına' Maslaha, 1730-1840," in Zorlu Durukan, Akile; Durukan, Kaan; Zens, Robert W. eds., *Kemal Karpat'a Armağan. Karpat. Koca Bir Çınar*, Istanbul, Alfa Yayınları, pp. 78-99.
- Aksan, Virginia (2007). "The Ottoman Military and State Transformation in a Globalizing World," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27(2), pp. 259-272.
- Aksan, Virginia (1995). *An Ottoman Statesman in War and Peace: Ahmed Resmi Efendi 1700-1783*, Leiden, E. J. Brill.
- Akyıldız, Ali (2012). "Osmanlı'da İdarî Sorumluluğun Paylaşımı ve Meşruiyet Zemini Olarak Meclis-i Meşveret," in Id., *Osmanlı Bürokrasisi ve Modernleşme*, Istanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 4th ed., pp. 31-44.
- Anscombe, Frederick F. (2010). "Islam and the Age of Ottoman Reform," *Past & Present* 209, pp. 159-189.
- Asad, Talal (1993). "The Limits of Religious Criticism in the Middle East. Notes on Islamic Public Argument," in Id., *Genealogies of Religion. Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins University Press, pp. 200-236.
- Ayalon, Ami (1999). "Language as a Barrier to Political Reform in the Middle East," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 137, pp. 67-80.
- Ayalon, Ami (1989). "Dimukratiyya, Hurriyya, Jumhuriyya: The Modernization of the Arabic Political Vocabulary," *Asian and African Studies* 23, pp. 23-42.
- Ayalon, Ami (1987). *Language and Change in the Arab Middle East. The Evolution of Modern Political Discourse*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- Ayalon, Ami (1985). "Semantics and the Modern History of Non-European Societies: Arab 'Republics' as a Case Study," *The Historical Journal* 28(4), pp. 821-834.
- Aymes, Marc (2020). "How Language Change Actually Took Place. 'Altering' in Late Ottoman Legal and Bureaucratic Practice," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 31.
- Aymes, Marc (2019). "What's in a Fake? Utterances of Late Ottoman Politicalness," in Sariyannis, Marinos ed., *Halcyon Days in Crete IX: Political Thought and Practice in the Ottoman Empire*, Rethymno, Crete University Press, pp. 97-114.
- Aymes, Marc (2015). "Tanzimat," in Georgeon, F.; Vatin, N.; Veinstein, G. eds., *Dictionnaire de l'Empire ottoman*, Paris, Fayard, p. 1125-1128.

- Aymes, Marc (2010). "Un grand progrès – sur le papier". *Histoire provinciale des réformes ottomanes à Chypre au XIX^e siècle*, Louvain, Peeters.
- Bacot, Jean-François (2016). "L'idéologie de la régénération: ce legs délétère de la Révolution," *Le Philosophoire* 1 (45), pp. 143-168.
- Barkan, Ömer Lütfi (1980). *Türkiye'de Toprak Meselesi. Toplu Eserler 1*, Istanbul, Gözlem.
- Barthes, Roland (1984 [1967]). "Le discours de l'histoire," in Id., *Le Bruissement de la langue. Essais critiques IV*, Paris, Le Seuil, pp. 163-177.
- Barthes, Roland (1978). *Leçon. Leçon inaugurale de la chaire de sémiologie littéraire du Collège de France prononcée le 7 janvier 1977*, Paris, Le Seuil.
- Bennison, Amira K. (2004). "The 'New Order' and Islamic Order: The Introduction of the Nizami Army in the Western Maghrib and Its Legitimation, 1830-73," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36(4), pp. 591-612.
- Beydilli, Kemal (2007). "Nizâm-ı Cedid," *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* 33, Istanbul, Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, pp. 175-178.
- Beydilli, Kemal (1999). "Küçük Kaynarca'dan Tanzimât'a Islâhât Düşünceleri," *İlmî Araştırmalar* 8, 1999, pp. 25-64.
- Binoche, Bertrand (2012). *Religion privée, opinion publique*, Paris, Vrin.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (2012). *Sur l'État. Cours au Collège de France 1989-1992*, Paris, Seuil.
- Castoriadis, Cornelius (1975). *L'Institution imaginaire de la société*, Paris, Le Seuil.
- Chambers, Richard L. (1973). "The Education of a Nineteenth Century Ottoman Alim: Ahmed Cevdet Pasha," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4(4), pp. 440-464.
- Clayer, Nathalie (2013). "Un laiklik imposé ou négocié? L'administration de l'enseignement de l'islam dans la Turquie du parti unique," in Aymes, Marc; Gourisse, Benjamin; Massicard, Élise eds., *L'art de l'État en Turquie. Arrangements de l'action publique de la fin de l'Empire ottoman à nos jours*, Paris, Karthala, pp. 103-125.
- Clayer, Nathalie (2000). "Les cadis de l'après Tanzimat: l'exemple des cadis originaires d'Ergiri et Libohova," *Turcica* 32, pp. 33-58.
- Cronin, Stephanie (2008). "Importing Modernity: European Military Missions to Iran," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50(1), pp. 197-226.
- Çağman, Ergin (2010). *III. Selim'e Sunulan Islahat Layihaları*, Istanbul, Kitabevi.
- Çakır, Coşkun (2015). "Osmanlı Siyasi Düşüncesinde Kânûn-ı Kadîm," in *XI. Millî Türkoloji Kongresi Bildirileri*, Istanbul, IBB, pp. 102-117.
- Çöğenli, Sadi; Şafak, Yakub; Toparlı, Recep (1991). *Arapça Farsça Türkçe Örnekleriyle Edebî Sanatlar (Bedî)*, Erzurum, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi.
- Dilbaz, Mahmut (2014). *Askerî Modernleşmenin Dinî Müdafaası. Es'ad Efendi'nin şerhli es-Sa'yû'l-Mahmûd Tercümesi*, Istanbul, Dergâh Yayınları.
- Doganalp-Votzi, Heidemarie (2002). "The State and its Subjects according to the 1876 Ottoman Constitution. Some Lexicographic Aspects," in Kieser, Hans-Lukas ed., *Aspects of Political Language in Turkey (19th-20th Centuries)*, Istanbul, İsis Press, pp. 61-69.

Doganalp-Votzi, Heidemarie; Römer, Claudia (2009). *Herrschaft und Staat: Politische Terminologie des Osmanischen Reiches der Tanzimatzeit*, Vienna, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Eldem, Edhem (2021). "L'édit imperial des *Tanzimat*: une relecture," *Turcica* 52, forthcoming.

Eldem, Edhem (2008). "Pouvoir, modernité et visibilité: l'évolution de l'iconographie sultanienne à l'époque moderne," in Carlier, Omar; Nollez-Goldbach, Raphaëlle eds., *Le Corps du leader. Construction et représentation dans les pays du Sud*, Paris, L'Harmattan, pp. 171-202.

Eldem, Edhem (2004). *Pride and Privilege. A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations*, Istanbul, Osmanlı Bankası.

El-Tahir El-Mesawi, Mohamed (2008). "Muslim Reformist Action in Nineteenth-Century Tunisia," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 25(2), pp. 49-82.

Erdem, Hakan (2011). "The Greek Revolt and the End of the Old Ottoman Order," in Pizanas, Petros ed., *The Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event*, Istanbul, İsis Press, pp. 257-264.

Erdem, Hakan (2005). "'Do not Think of the Greeks as Agricultural Labourers': Ottoman Responses to the Greek War of Independence," in Birtek, Faruk; Dragonas, Thalia ed., *Citizenship and the Nation-State in Greece and Turkey*, London, Routledge, pp. 67-84.

Erşahin, Seyfettin (2005). "Islamic Support on the Westernization Policy in the Ottoman Empire: Making Mahmud II a Reformer Caliph-Sultan by Islamic Virtue Tradition," *Journal of Religious Culture* 78, pp. 1-17.

Escudier, Alexandre (2009). "'Temporalisation' et modernité politique: penser avec Koselleck," *Annales HSS* 64/6, pp. 1269-1301.

Ferrard, Christopher (1984). "The Development of an Ottoman Rhetoric up to 1882. Part II: Contributions from Outside the *Medrese*," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 4, pp. 19-34.

Ferrard, Christopher (1982). "The Development of an Ottoman Rhetoric Up to 1882. Part I: The *Medrese* Tradition," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 3, pp. 165-188.

Findley, Carter Vaughn (1995a). "La relation d'ambassade d'Ebu Bekir Ratib: découverte de l'Autriche ou polémique sur les réformes ottomanes?," *Études Turques et Ottomanes. Documents de Travail* 4, pp. 25-38.

Findley, Carter Vaughn (1995b), "État et droit dans la pensée politique ottomane: droits de l'homme ou *Rechtsstaat*? À propos de deux relations d'ambassade," *Études Turques et Ottomanes. Documents de Travail* 4, pp. 39-50.

Findley, Carter Vaughn (1980). *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire. The Sublime Porte (1789-1922)*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Flemming, Barbara (2018 [1973]). "Some Remarks on Turkish Prose before the Tanzimat Period," in Ead., *Essays on Turkish Literature and History*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, pp. 60-72.

Fotic, Aleksandar (2017). "Tracing the Origin of a New Meaning of the Term *Re'âyâ* in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Balkans," *Balkanica* XLVIII, pp. 55-66.

Frank, Richard M. (1989). "Knowledge and *Taqlîd*: The Foundations of Religious Belief in Classical Ash'arism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109(1), pp. 37-62.

Gawrych, Georges W. (1987). "Şeyh Galib and Selim III: Mevlevism and the Nizam-ı Cedid," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 4(1), pp. 91-114.

- Georgeon, François ed. (2012a). "Les mots du politique – fascicule 1. L'Empire ottoman," *Documents de Travail du CETOBAC* 2, 30 p.
- Georgeon, François ed. (2012b). "Les mots du politique – fascicule 2. En Turquie et dans les Balkans," *Documents de Travail du CETOBAC* 2, 41 p.
- Georgeon, François ed. (1999). "Les mots du politique de l'Empire ottoman à la Turquie kémaliste," *Études Turques et Ottomanes. Documents de Travail* 8, 64 p.
- Gerber, Haim (1999). *Islamic Law and Culture, 1600-1840*, Leiden-Boston-Köln, Brill.
- Gerçek, Selim Nüzhet ([1941-1945]). *Türk Matbuatı*, Birinci, Ali ed., Istanbul, Gezin Kitabevi.
- Görgün, Tahsin (2000). "Osmanlı'da Nizâm-ı Alem Fikri ve Kaynakları Üzerine Bazı Notlar," *İslâmî Araştırmalar Dergisi* 13(2), pp. 180-188.
- Guilhaumou, Jacques (2017). "La langue comme institution sociale: pour une grammaire discursive des concepts. Entretien par Alexandre Escudier et Chloé Gaboriaux avec Jacques Guilhaumou," in Gaboriaux, Chloé; Skornicki, Arnault eds, *Vers une Histoire sociale des idées politiques*, Villeneuve d'Ascq, Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, pp. 219-236.
- Guilhaumou, Jacques (2006). *Discours et événement. L'histoire langagière des concepts*, Besançon, Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté.
- Guilhaumou, Jacques (2000). "De l'histoire des concepts à l'histoire linguistique des usages conceptuels," *Genèses* 38, pp. 105-118.
- Hagen, Gottfried (2005). "Legitimacy and World Order," in Karateke, Hakan T.; Reinkowski, Maurus eds, *Legitimizing the Order. The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, Leiden, Brill, pp. 55-83.
- Hallaq, Wael B. (1984). "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16, pp. 3-41.
- Hanioglu, M. Şükrü [1986]. *Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük, 1889-1902*, Istanbul, İletişim Yayınları.
- Hanssen, Jens (2002). "Practices of Integration – Center-Periphery Relations in the Ottoman Empire," in Hanssen, Jens; Philipp, Thomas; Weber, Stefan eds., *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Beyrouth, Ergon Verlag, pp. 49-74.
- Heinzelmann, Tobias (2009). *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Genel Askerlik Yükümlülüğü 1826-1856*, Noyan, Türkis transl., Istanbul, Kitap Yayınevi.
- Heyd, Uriel (1961). "The Ottoman Ulema and Westernization in the Time of Selim III and Mahmud II," in Heyd, Uriel ed., *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization*, Jerusalem, Publications of the Hebrew University, pp. 63-96.
- Hill, Peter (2020). "How Global was the Age of Revolutions? The Case of Mount Lebanon, 1821," *Journal of Global History*, pp. 1-20.
- Hitzel, Frédéric (1999). "Manuscrits, livres et culture livresque à Istanbul," *Revue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 87-88, pp. 19-38.
- İlcak, Hüseyin Şükrü (2011). *A Radical Rethinking of Empire: Ottoman State and Society during the Greek War of Independence (1821-1826)*, PhD, Harvard University.
- Innes, Joanna (2003). "'Reform' in English public life: fortunes of a word," in Burns, Arthur; Innes, Joanna eds., *Rethinking the Age of Reform: Britain 1780-1850*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 71-97.

- Kara, İsmail (2003a). "Çağdaş Türk Düşüncesi Nasıl Ele Alınabilir?," in Id., *Din İle Modernleşme Arasında Çağdaş Türk Düşüncesinin Meseleleri*, İstanbul, Dergâh Yayınları, pp. 11-71.
- Kara, İsmail (2003b). "Yeni Zamanların İki Muhataralı Kavramı: Islah ve Taklit," in Id., *Din İle Modernleşme Arasında Çağdaş Türk Düşüncesinin Meseleleri*, İstanbul, Dergâh Yayınları, pp. 212-218.
- Karabıçak, Yusuf Ziya (2020). "Ottoman Attempts to Define the Rebels During the Greek War of Independence," *Studia Islamica* 114(3), pp. 316-354.
- Karal, Enver Ziya (1988) [1946]. *Selim III'ün Hat-tı Hümayunları. Nizam-ı Cedit. 1789-1807*, Ankara, TTK.
- Karateke, Hakan (2019). "The Vocabulary of Disorder in a Late Eighteenth Century Ottoman Reform Treatise: Nihâlî's *Mirror of the State*," *Turcica* 50, pp. 417-448.
- Karateke, Hakan (2015). "The Ottoman Official Gazette Taqvim-i Veqayi, 1831: An Ottoman Annal in its Own Right," in Hickmann, Bill; Leiser, Gary eds., *Turkish Language, Literature, and History: Travelers' Tales, Sultans, and Scholars Since the Eighth Century*, London, Routledge, pp. 191-207.
- Kenan, Seyfi ed. (2010). *Nizâm-ı Kadîm'den Nizâm-ı Cedîd'e III. Selim ve Dönemi*, İstanbul, İsam.
- Kırlı, Cengiz (2008). *Sultan ve Kamuoyu. Osmanlı Modernleşme Sürecinde "Havadis Jurnalleri" (1840-1844)*, İstanbul, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
- Kırlı, Cengiz (2000). *The Struggle Over Space: Coffehouses of Ottoman Istanbul, 1780-1845*, PhD, Binghampton University.
- Koloğlu, Orhan (1994). "İlk Gazetelerimiz Aracılığıyla (1828-1867) Dilimize Giren Batı Kavram ve Sözcükleri," in XI. *Türk Tarih Kongresi*, Ankara, 5-9 Eylül 1990, *Kongre'ye Sunulan Bildiriler*, IV, Ankara, TTK, pp. 1645-1664.
- Koloğlu, Orhan (1992). "Le premier journal officiel en français à Istanbul et ses répercussions en Europe," in Clayer, Nathalie; Popovic, Alexander; Zarcone, Thierry eds., *Presse turque et presse de la Turquie*, İstanbul, İsis Press, pp. 3-13.
- Koloğlu, Orhan (1991). "Blak Bey, précurseur du Tanzimat. Une famille française au service de la Sublime Porte (1820-1923)," *Anatolia Moderna* 1, pp. 47-114.
- Koloğlu, Orhan (1989). *İlk Gazete İlk Polemik. Vekayi-i Mısıriye'nin Öyküsü ve Takvimi Vekayi İle Tartışması*, Ankara, Çağdaş Gazeteciler Derneği Yayınları.
- Koloğlu, Orhan (1986). "Alexandre Blacque. Défenseur de l'État ottoman par amour des libertés," in Batu, Hâmit; Bacqué-Grammont, Jean-Louis eds., *L'Empire ottoman, la République de Turquie et la France*, İstanbul, İsis Press, pp. 179-195.
- Koloğlu, Orhan [1981]. *Takvimi Vekayi. Türk Basınında 150 Yıl, 1831-1981*, Ankara, Çağdaş Gazeteciler Derneği Yayınları.
- Koselleck, Reinhart (2005). "'Champ d'expérience' et 'horizon d'attente': deux catégories historiques," in Id., *Le Futur passé. Contribution à la sémantique des temps historiques*, Hoock, Jochen; Hoock, Marie-Claire transl., Paris, Éditions de l'EHESS, pp. 307-329.
- Koselleck, Reinhart (1997). "Structures fédérales de l'histoire allemande," in Id., *L'Expérience de l'histoire*, Escudier, Alexandre and alii transl., Paris, Gallimard- Le Seuil, pp. 121-134.
- Laborier, Pascale (1999). "La 'bonne police'. Sciences camérales et pouvoir absolutiste dans les États allemands," *Politix* 12(48), pp. 7-35.
- Landau-Tasseran, Ella (1989). "The 'Cyclical Reform': A Study of the *Mujaddid* Tradition," *Studia Islamica* 70, pp. 79-117.

- Lewis, Bernard (1988). *Le Langage politique de l'Islam*, Guitard, Odette transl., Paris, Gallimard.
- Lord, Ceren (2018). *Religious Politics in Turkey. From the Birth of Republic to the AKP*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Malik, Jamal (2003). "Muslim Culture and Reform in 18th Century South Asia," *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* 13(2), pp. 227-243.
- Mardin, Şerif (2006). "Some Consideration on the Building of an Ottoman Public Identity in the Nineteenth Century," in Id., *Religion, Society, and Modernity in Turkey*, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, pp. 124-134.
- Marx, Karl (1969 [1852]). *Le 18 Brumaire de Louis Bonaparte*, Paris, Éditions Sociales.
- Mayeur-Jaouen, Catherine (2019). "'À la poursuite de la réforme'. Renouveaux et débats historiographiques de l'histoire religieuse et intellectuelle de l'islam, XV^e-XXI^e siècle," *Annales HSS* 73(2), pp. 317-358.
- Menchinger, Ethan L. (2017). *The First of the Modern Ottomans. The Intellectual History of Ahmed Vasi*, Cambridge.
- Minard, Philippe (2009). "La 'Réforme' en France et en Angleterre au XVIII^e siècle: sens et fortunes d'un mot," *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 56(5), pp. 5-13.
- Mutlu, Şamil (1994). *Yeniçeri Ocağının Kaldırılışı ve II. Mahmud'un Edirne Seyahati: Mehmed Daniş Bey ve Eserleri*, İstanbul, İstanbul Üniversitesi.
- Noiriel, Gérard (1995). "Socio-histoire d'un concept. Les usages du mot 'nationalité' au XIX^e siècle," *Genèses. Sciences sociales et histoire* 20, pp. 4-23.
- Ocak, Ahmet Yaşar (2003). *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler Yahut Dairenin Dışına Çıkanlar (15.-17. Yüzyıllar)*, İstanbul, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.
- Öz, Mehmet (2017). *Kanun-ı Kadîm'in Peşinde. Osmanlı'da Çözülme ve Gelenekçi Yorumları (XVI. Yüzyıldan XVIII. Yüzyıl Başlarına)*, İstanbul, Dergâh.
- Öz, Mehmet (2010). "Kanûn-ı Kadîm: Osmanlı Gelenekçi Söyleminin Dayanağı mı, Islahat Girişimlerinin Meşrulaştırma Aracı mı?," in Kenan, Seyfi ed., *Nizâm-ı Kadîm'den Nizâm-ı Cedîd'e III. Selim ve Dönemi*, İstanbul, İsam, 2010, pp. 59-77.
- Özcan, Abdülkadir (1991). "II. Mahmud'un Memleket Gezileri," in Prof. Dr. Bekir Kütükoğlu'na Armağan, İstanbul, İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, pp. 362-378.
- Pagani, Samuela (2007). "Renowals before Reformism. 'Abd el-Ghanî al-Nâbulusî's Reading of Ahmad Sirhindî's Ideas on *Tajdid*," *Journal of the History of Sufism* 5, pp. 291-317.
- Peters, Rudolph (1980). "Idjtihâd and Taqlîd in 18th and 19th Century Islam", *Die Welt des Islams* 20(3-4), pp. 131-145.
- Ragia, Efi (2016). "Social Group Profiles in Byzantium: Some Considerations on Byzantine Perceptions About Social Class Distinctions," *Byzantina Symmeikta* 26, pp. 309-372.
- Reinkowski, Maurus (2012 [2005]). *Düzenin şeyleri, Tanzimat'ın Kelimeleri. 19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Reform Politikasının Karşılaştırmalı Bir Araştırması*, Dikmen, Çiğdem Canan transl., İstanbul, Yapı Kredi Yayınları.
- Reinkowski, Maurus (2005). "The State's Security and the Subjects' Prosperity: Notions of Order in Ottoman Bureaucratic Correspondence (19th Century)," in Karateke, Hakan T.; Reinkowski, Maurus (éds.), *Legitimizing the Order. The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, Leiden, Brill, pp. 195-212.

- Rodríguez Somolinos, Amalia (2011). "Présentation: les marqueurs du discours – approches contrastives," *Langages* 184, pp. 3-12.
- Rollman, Wilfrid J. (2004). "Military Officers and the 'Nizam al-Gadid' in Morocco. Social and Political Transformation," *Oriente Moderno* 23(5), pp. 205-225.
- Römer, Claudia (2002). "Quelques remarques sur la langue journalistique ottomane d'avant 1876 selon des textes tirés des journaux *Takvim-i vakayî*, *Ceride-i havadis*, *Ruzname-i ceride-i havadis* et *Tasvir-i efkâr*," in Kieser, Hans-Lukas ed., *Aspects of Political Language in Turkey (19th-20th Centuries)*, Istanbul, İsis Press, pp. 53-60.
- Rubin, Avi (2016). "Modernity as a Code: The Ottoman Empire and the Global Movement of Codification," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 59, pp. 828-856.
- Rubin, Avi (2008). "Ottoman Judicial Change in the Age of Modernity: A Reappraisal," *History Compass* 6, pp. 1-22.
- Sariyannis, Marinos (2019). *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century*, Leiden-Boston, Brill.
- Sariyannis, Marinos (2016). "Ottoman Ideas on Monarchy before the Tanzimat Reforms: Toward a Conceptual History of Ottoman Political Notions," *Turcica* 47, pp. 33-72.
- Sariyannis, Marinos (2013). "Ruler and State, State and Society in Ottoman Political Thought," *Turkish Historical Review* 4, pp. 92-126.
- Saussure, Ferdinand de (1971 [1916]). *Cours de linguistique générale*, Paris, Payot.
- Schmale, Günter (2013). "Qu'est-ce qui est préfabriqué dans la langue? – Réflexions au sujet d'une définition élargie de la préformation langagière," *Langages* 189, pp. 27-45.
- Sigalas, Nikos (2021). "'And Every Language that Has Been Voiced Became a millet'. A Genealogy of the Late Ottoman millet," *Die Welt des Islams* 61(2), forthcoming.
- Skinner, Quentin (2018). "L'idée d'un lexique culturel," in Id., *Visions politiques. 1. Sur la méthode*, Hamel, Christopher transl., Paris, Droz, pp. 205-225.
- Skinner, Quentin (1999). "Rhetoric and Conceptual Change," *Redescriptions. Political Thought Conceptual History and Feminist Theory* 3(1), pp. 60-73.
- Sohrabi, Nader (2011). *Revolution and Constitutionalism in the Ottoman Empire and Iran*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Sönmez, Erdem (2016). "From *kanun-ı kadim* (ancient law) to *umumun kuvveti* (force of people): Historical Context of the Ottoman Constitutionalism," *Middle Eastern Studies* 52(1), pp. 116-134.
- Spannau, Nathan (2012). *Islamic Thought and Revivalism in the Russian Empire: An Intellectual Biography of Abu Nasr Qursawi (1776-1812)*, PhD, Montréal, McGill University.
- Stephanov, Darin (2014). "Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) and the First Shift in Modern Ruler Visibility in the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 1(1-2), pp. 129-148.
- Strauss, Johann (2006). "Mouvements de convergence et de divergence dans le développement d'un vocabulaire de civilisation des langues islamiques (turc-arabe-persan)," in Bozdémir, Michel; Bosnalı, Sonel eds., *Contact des langues II. Les mots voyageurs et l'Orient*, Istanbul, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, pp. 87-127.
- şakul, Kahraman (2005). "Nizâm-ı Cedid düşüncesinde batılılaşma ve İslami modernleşme," *Dîvân İlmi Araştırmalar* 19(2), pp. 117-150.

- şimşek, Veysel (2015). *The Grand Strategy of the Ottoman Empire, 1826-1841*, PhD, McMaster University.
- şiviloğlu, Murat Remzi (2018). *The Emergence of Public Opinion. State and Society in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Tezcan, Baki (2011). "The New Order and the Fate of the Old – The Historiographical Construction of an Ottoman Ancien Régime in the Nineteenth Century," in Fibiger Bang, Peter; Bayly, C. A. eds., *Tributary Empires in Global History*, New York, Palgrave, p. 74-95.
- Topal, Alp Eren (2020). "Order as a chronotope of Ottoman political writing," *Contemporary Levant*, pp. 1-9.
- Topal, Alp Eren (2017). *From Decline to Progress. Ottoman Concepts of Reform from 1600 to 1876*, PhD, Ankara, Bilkent University.
- Topal, Alp Eren; Wigen, Einar (2019). "Ottoman Conceptual History. Challenges and Prospects," *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 14(1), pp. 93-114.
- Turan, Fikret (2007). "Forming the Modern Lexicon of Tanzimat Turkish: Words and Expressions of Modernity in *Seyâhatnâme-i Londra*," *Turkic Languages* 11, pp. 159-181.
- Türesay, Özgür (2020). "Être ottoman, c'est obéir au sultan. Un manifeste de pédagogie politique extrait du *Takvim-i vekayî* (20 novembre 1831)," in Borromeo, Elisabetta; Vatin, Nicolas eds., *Les Ottomans par eux-mêmes*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, pp. 267-274.
- Türesay, Özgür (2011). "L'Istanbul du début du xx^e siècle au prisme eurocentrique. L'urbanisme et la Civilisation selon Ebüzziya Tevfik (1849-1913)," *Anthropology of the Middle East* 6(1), pp. 1-17.
- Usluer, Fatih (2002). *La Sublime Porte vue de la Mevlevihane de Galata. şeyh Galip (1757-1799), l'histoire et la littérature dans l'Empire ottoman du XVIII^e siècle*, Master's thesis, EHESS, Paris.
- Uzun, Mustafa (2009). "Seci. Türk edebiyatı," *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* 36, Istanbul, Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, pp. 275-276.
- Varol, Muharrem (2013). *Islahat Siyaset Tarikat. Bektaşiliğin İlgası Sonrasında Osmanlı Devleti'nin Tarikat Politikaları (1826-1866)*. Yanya, Edirne ve Selanik Tatbikatı, Istanbul, Dergâh.
- Vatin, Nicolas; Veinstein, Gilles (2003). *Le Sérail ébranlé. Essai sur les morts, dépositions et avènements des sultans ottomans XIV^e-XIX^e siècle*, Paris, Fayard.
- Veinstein, Gilles (2003). "Pauvres et riches sous le regard du sultan ottoman," in Pascual, Jean-Paul ed., *Pauvreté et richesse dans le monde musulman méditerranéen*, Paris, Maisonneuve & Larose, pp. 199-216.
- Yaycıoğlu, Ali (2018). "Guarding Traditions and Laws — Disciplining Bodies and Souls: Tradition, Science and Religion in the Age of Ottoman Reform," *Modern Asian Studies* 52(5), pp. 1542-1603.
- Yazıcı, Nesimi (1983). *Takvim-i Vekayî. Belgeler*, Ankara, Gazi Üniversitesi.
- Yeşil, Fatih (2016). *İhtilâller Çağında Osmanlı Ordusu. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Sosyoekonomik ve Sosyopolitik Değişim Üzerine Bir İnceleme (1793-1826)*, Istanbul, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.
- Yeşil, Fatih (2010). *Aydınlanma Çağında Bir Osmanlı Kâtibi. Ebubekir Râtîb Efendi (1750-1799)*, Istanbul, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.
- Yıldız, Gültekin (2009). *Neferin Adı Yok. Zorunlu Askerliğe Geçiş Sürecinde Osmanlı Devleti'nde Siyaset, Ordu ve Toplum (1826-1839)*, Istanbul, Kitabevi.

Yılmaz, Hüseyin (2015). "Containing Sultanlic Authority: Constitutionalism in the Ottoman Empire before Modernity," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* XLV, pp. 231-264.

Zemmin, Florian (2019). "The Janus Face of Kâtib Çelebi: Reflecting on the Ottoman Saddle Period," *Turcica* 50, pp. 327-354.

NOTES

1. A French version, *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, is launched at almost the same time. Within three months, the Greek and Armenian versions start to appear, followed shortly by versions in Arabic and Persian.
2. It should be noted that at the time of its appearance, the official Ottoman gazette inspired notes and studies published in the *Journal asiatique* (Jaubert 1833, 1836; Reinaud 1831, Purgstall 1848).
3. For the translation of this preamble into English, see the article by Hakan Karateke (2015: 202-204).
4. The transliteration of this text is provided by Nesim Yazıcı (1983: 162-164). The emphasis is mine.
5. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.
6. These were revolts by regional potentates who challenged the administrative and military centralization measures imposed by Istanbul. The revolts, which broke out in the early 1830s in the Balkans (Bosnia, Albania), Kurdistan (Van) or Iraq (Baghdad, Damascus), were repressed — sometimes with great difficulty — by the new army founded by Mahmud II after the disbandment of the Janissary corps.
7. "There is thus a central perspective: on the one hand, perspective; on the other, an absolutism, a point of view on which there is no point of view and against which all points of view can be measured. This central perspective cannot be established without disqualifying, discrediting, or subordinating all partial perspectives, whatever their pretensions" (Bourdieu 2012: 115).
8. To make it easier to read, I added punctuation that does not appear in the original.
9. Note that while modern Turkish uses *kamu hukuku* — a terminological invention from the 1930s to replace *âmme hukuku*, a term likely dating from the turn of the twentieth century by the Ottomans to designate public law — it still preserves a social connotation that can be found in the pejorative sense in the terms *âmiyâne* (commonly) and *âvâm* (populace) which is the plural of *âmm*.
10. Compare with Akarlı (2014).
11. Bertrand Binoche's remark about the term "public opinion" deserves to be noted here: "It should be added that 'public' brings into play useful ambiguity. For while it is opposed to 'private' and refers to the general as well as 'national' interest, it is also opposed to 'hidden' and refers to 'publicity,' that is to say, to the great desire of a power that ceases to function in the murky shadows of the chambers" (Binoche 2012: 180).
12. A French lawyer who settled in Smyrna in the 1820s and quickly ventured into journalism. His pro-Ottoman stance during the Greek revolt, which created considerable tensions with the Smyrna consular agents, made him stand out in the palace. In 1831, he was invited to Istanbul to prepare the launch of the official gazette and to create its French-language version (Koloğlu 1986, 1991, 1992).
13. This refers to the proclamation of Polish independence and the deposition of Tsar Nicholas I by the Polish Diet on January 25, 1831, following the Warsaw Uprising that begun in November 1830 against Russian domination. The date of January 13, which appears in the text before January 25, refers to the difference between the Julian calendar (then in use in Orthodox

countries) and the Gregorian calendar. After the repression of the insurrection in September 1831 and the suppression of all institutional autonomy previously enjoyed by the Poles, a partial amnesty was granted by the Tsar to some of his Polish subjects.

14. Note that Ömer Lüfti Barkan himself uses the term *nasyonalize* to explain the term *mîrî* (Barkan 1980: 127).

15. On this hendiadys, see the commentaries of Gilles Veinstein (2003: 202).

16. On the Ottomanization of Arab rhetoric over a *longue durée*, see Ferrard (1982 and 1984).

17. [...] *mazmûn-ı gazetenin mümkün mertebe âhâd-ı nâs beyninde şüyû' ve intişârı için her bir mahallede erbâb-ı ilmden bir kimesne meselâ mahalle imâmları mâ'rifetiyle mecmâ'-i nâs olan mahallerde kırâat ve tefhîm etdirilmesi esbâbına himmet buyrulur ise...*

18. While the editors of *Takvîm-i vekayî* constantly struggle to name the process under way, this is not the case for Alexandre Blacque, the editor of the *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, who repeatedly qualifies the sultan as a “reformer:” “the reformer who thus safely places himself at the center of his people” (no. 18); “His Highness the Sultan, reformer of the old organization and founder of the new one” (no. 20); “to fight against their reformer and be crushed by him” (no. 24); “in order to overthrow the reformer” (no. 42-43). My emphasis.

19. Since these temporal markers recur in the official gazette, I will not specify the reference in each case.

20. This passage does not appear in *Le Moniteur Ottoman*.

21. The broadening of the public sphere is heralded by the increasing use of consultative councils in making important political decisions from the last quarter of the eighteenth century onwards (Akyıldız 2012).

22. On the concept of “discourse markers,” see Rodríguez Somolinos 2011.

23. For a diametrically opposed approach to the concept of *taklîd*, see Kara (2003b).

24. *Nâsir* is one of the names of Allah in Arabic.

25. Here, I’m using the word « secular » in its marginal meaning, i.e. “occurring or appearing once in an age or century.”

26. I would like to make it clear that I am not following here the theses of a historiographic current that has become fashionable in recent years, which consists in tracing the origins of Ottoman constitutional ideas or constitutionalism to the centuries-long defense of *kanûn-ı kadîm* (Sönmez 2016; Yılmaz 2015).

27. It is worth noting here that an expression which can be translated as Ancien Régime, namely *nizâm-ı atîk*, was used as early as 1806 in a reform treatise of the time of Selim III (Tezcan 2011: 77).

28. To be clear, I am only talking about “renewal” and not “regeneration.” This is another religious idea that is very present in the history of revolutions (Bacot 2016) but completely non-existent in the Ottoman political thought that I am dealing with here.

29. There are rare exceptions. In *Takvîm-i vekayî* no. 62, we read: *devlet-i ‘âliyelerinin kavânîn-i kadîmesini usûl-i cedîde-i mergûbe-i müstahseneye tebdîl*, or “the change from the old laws of the sublime state to the new good principles that are much appreciated.” Note also the two quotations above that evoked the modification of the “old ceremonies” (*resm-i kadîm*).

30. An insightful critique of this important article by Butrus Abu-Manneh — which for nearly three decades inspired an entire new historiography of the reigns of Selim III and Mahmud II — would only come in 2013 in the book form of Muharrem Varol’s thesis on growing state control over the brotherhoods (Varol 2013: notably 220-221).

31. In the Ottoman archives, one comes across correspondences (short notes) that evoke drafts of certain articles or issues of *Takvîm-i vekayî*. Unfortunately, I could not find any such drafts that would have permitted an examination of the diachronic layers of writing in the official gazette.

ABSTRACTS

Based on the first years of *Takvîm-i vekayi* and *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, this study aims to shed light on the Ottoman political language and the rhetoric of the political authority in the early 1830s, focusing on one of the semantic fields that shapes it: the vocabulary of the reform. The official gazette is a corpus containing a large number of texts that express a collective political thought in the making that, beginning in 1826 when the Janissary Corps was abolished, gradually bore a new configuration of power and, inevitably, a new discourse that framed it. This discourse on reform is characterized by a future-oriented temporality in which the present is increasingly detached from the past. It is also deeply innovative by the fact that it is a discourse intended to be publicized as widely as possible and is therefore intended to be pedagogical.

INDEX

Keywords: official gazette, political language, reform, Ottoman Empire, Mahmud II, historical semantics

AUTHORS

ÖZGÜR TÜRESAY

Maître de conférences EPHE
ozgur.turesay@ephe.psl.eu