M. Alper Yalçınkaya, *Learned Patriots: Debating Science, State, and Society in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015. vii+314 pages. ISBN: 978-0-226-18420-3.

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When the Ottomans of the nineteenth century debated the new European sciences, they did not debate science *per se*, for these discussions always involved questions of social order and communal identity. In this regard, what they discussed was more about the *character of the man of science* than the *characteristics of science*. The Ottoman man of science not only had to learn and disseminate the new sciences, but also to be morally responsible and prove his loyalty to the state, the sultan, and Islam. His loyalty to the state and religion was especially demanded in such public discursive practices as teaching science in the classroom or propagating it in newspaper columns. The ideal Ottoman citizen had to be *both* "learned" in the knowledge associated with Europe *and* "patriotic" toward his own community. Hence, the title: *Learned Patriots*.

Alper Yalçınkaya's work, which is a considerably improved version of his PhD dissertation submitted to the Department of Sociology and Science Studies at the University of California, San Diego, is an outstanding contribution to the cultural and social studies of science in the Ottoman Empire. Thanks to the studies of such scholars as Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu and Şükrü Hanioğlu, this field has slowly been improving and overcoming its religious and/or nationalist historiographic predispositions.[1] The dissertations of younger scholars, such as Berrak Burçak and Serdar Poyraz, are promising in this respect as well.[2] However, so far Yalçınkaya's work is the single most thorough account and cultural study of science in the nineteenth century Ottoman history. Hopefully it is a harbinger of more studies to come.

1 See Berna Kılınç, "Ottoman Science Studies-A Review," *Turkish Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*, ed. G. Irzık and G. Güzeldere (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005), 251-64, for her drawing attention to the religious and/or nationalist predispositions in writing histories of science.

2 Serdar Poyraz, "Science versus Religion: The Influence of European Materialism on Turkish Thought, 1860-1960" (doctoral thesis, Ohio State University, 2010); Berrak Burçak, "Science, A Remedy for All Ills. Healing 'The Sick Man of Europe': A Case for Ottoman Scientism" (doctoral thesis, Princeton University, 2005).

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This well-written and well-organized book draws upon a variety of sources ranging from Turkish and European monographs to novels, from periodicals and newspapers to archival sources. It also compares these debates to their European, Arab, and Iranian counterparts. Although the author subscribes to the well-known political periodization of late Ottoman modernization, he does challenge the official and still prevailing interpretation of the history of secularization and the role played by science and religion in this context. Therefore, the following review will omit the well-known political history in order to highlight what is new or improved in Yalçınkaya's own interpretation.

The Introduction's multiple parts discuss critical concepts that theoretically inform the book, such as "cultural map," "boundary work," "world capitalism," "cultural capital," and "discourse." It is crucial to underline here that Yalçınkaya conceptualizes his subject matter (i.e., Ottoman debates on science) not as debates on an atemporal category (i.e., science as such), but as debates of a concept that receives its specific meaning only in specific historical and cultural contexts. In this view, the meaning of science changed over the course of its negotiation throughout the nineteenth century as various social groups attempted to define and appropriate it to bolster their own social power. The Conclusion neatly summarizes this long and complex process.

One particular sociological perspective, that of "boundary-work," informs the entire study. Elaborated by sociologist Thomas Gieryn[3] and inspired by cartographic metaphors, this approach pictures the social as a map upon which social groups and institutions struggle to attribute selected characteristics to each other in order to construct boundaries among themselves, thereby establishing, expanding, or protecting their authority and autonomy (pp. 5-6). Of particular importance in the Introduction, in this regard, is his discussion of the famous concept of *'ilm* as a "boundary object." Yalçınkaya argues that the debate around this term was mostly one of domination, inasmuch as possessing it justified social prestige and contributed to the "statist capital" needed to exercise power (pp. 13-14). Contrary to Niyazi Berkes' argument,[4] Yalçınkaya demonstrates that *'ilm*, with all of its religious and ethical connotations, rather than *fen*, was the concept repeatedly employed to denote the new European sciences by anchoring them within the empire's existing moral and institutional structures.

3 Thomas Gieryn, *Cultural Boundaries of Science: Credibility on the Line* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

4 Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1998), 100.

The first chapter focuses on the pre-Tanzimat era and documents the advent of a consciousness of the "new" knowledge and sciences, which functioned as markers for the new social group of engineers and bureaucrats who started to consider themselves more privileged because they possessed this new knowledge. Yet, Yalçınkaya cautions, one should not assume that the new and the old knowledge were cast as two exclusive and conflicting categories. Through the works of such *ulema* as Şanizade Ataullah Efendi (1769?-1826), the author documents that these religious scholars confidently borrowed the new sciences and integrated them into their own traditional framework. While a consciousness of the "new" was on the rise, its possessors were far from being perceived as superior in the social hierarchy. This situation would be transformed during the Tanzimat era.

The second chapter traces the official endorsement of these new sciences during the Tanzimat era, when they were cast as equal to religious knowledge in generating "productive *and* deferential subjects" (p. 58). However, a division of labor was assigned to these two types of knowledge: While the new sciences ensured prosperity in this world, the old knowledge was praised to ensure happiness in the hereafter. Critical voices were also heard: The old knowledge was criticized for its closed nature and for being isolated from the public. In contrast, the new knowledge was open and meant to serve all. Consequently, possessors of the former were criticized for "arrogance," while possessors of the latter styled themselves as "humble" servants of the state and the people. Claims of moral superiority dealt a blow to the traditionalist identity, which fed the bifurcation among lower-level Muslim bureaucrats into Westernized and traditionalist camps. Thus, "science was not simply related to economic and military might; it was a moral issue" (p. 48).

The third chapter, which moves to the 1860s, underlines the Ottoman state's continuing endeavors to enhance education quantitatively and qualitatively. Both in Europe and the empire, building the image of the man of science involved a considerable dose of social and cultural construction. An important difference between the two, however, lay in the following: While the image of the European man of science was constructed as a trustworthy gentleman and a "modest witness," the role of the Ottoman "man of science" was merged with that of the "benevolent statesmen," inasmuch as these people were simultaneously statesmen and men of science. This reality blurred the source of authority (p. 76), which helped reinforce the metaphor that science was a "gift" of the state rather than the "right" of the people.

During this period, knowledge and the sciences became more dissociated from religion in the official discourse, a development that was in harmony with the contemporaneous supra-religious civic nationalist Ottomanist policies. The

official discourse also endorsed this new knowledge as "useful": "useful for the development of arts and crafts, for the progress of civilization, for social order and moral purification," thus maintaining a strong sense of its social and moral importance in addition to its technical benefit (p. 94).

Chapters 4 and 5, which constitute a thematic continuum, deal with the responses of the Young Ottomans to official discourses of science. These people critically reformulated the Tanzimat era's ideals by adding a strong communalist and "democratic" twist. Yalçınkaya underlines two aspects of these critiques. First, the Young Ottoman movement, comprising "educated young bureaucrats joined by lower-*ulema*" and representing the disillusioned Muslim middle-class bourgeoisie, challenged the reforming elites, who denied the prestige and power of modernization to the lower levels.[5] Similar to Burçak, Yalçınkaya conceives the *litterateur*, bureaucrat and/or journalist, as the late Tanzimat era's dominant figure. This figure represented the demand that this new knowledge and its prestige be disseminated into the lower strata of the literate Muslim middle classes.

The second aspect pertains to the religion- and identity-related aspects of the discourses on science. The Tanzimat elite depicted science as a body of inherently amoral universal facts that were supposed to produce moral citizens. The Young Ottomans, who rejected the idea that science mechanically produced moral citizens, demanded the man of science be "authentic" by demonstrating his allegiance to his coreligionists, be well-informed about the Islamic tradition, have patriotic feelings, and live in the proper fashion (p. 100). The Young Ottomans, notes Yalçınkaya, reintegrated some religious sciences, most notably *fıkıh* and *kelam*, into the category of beneficial sciences (p. 149) and condemned Tanzimat policies for discriminating against *medrese*s, a policy that left these institutions and the religious sciences underdeveloped (p. 134).

Connected to the struggle within the reformist leadership over boundaries, Yalçınkaya also provides a lively account of the debates in the short-lived Parliament of 1877-78 on the category of "useful sciences." Last but not least, during the 1860s and 1870s the "usefulness" of the typical bureaucrat was questioned as civil service started to be demeaned as "unproductive," as compared to trade and industry (pp. 145-49).

The Young Ottomans largely subscribed to a Eurocentric account of the history of science and civilization, starting with ancient Greece and developing into its

5 I believe that the concept of "split-up modernization" best explains the Young Ottomans' emergence as a rival reformist leadership. This concept was originally used by S. N. Eisenstadt. Carter Findley applied it to Ottoman modernization in his renowned *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 149-50.

modern Western phase. But unlike the Tanzimat men, they articulated their concern for communal identity by firmly establishing "the Golden Age of Islam" discourse, namely, a historical and communal consciousness that modern science and civilization owed a lot to Islam. Those who lacked this consciousness were rejected as not being authentic members of Muslim society and stereotyped as *şık* (the fop), "the symbol of 'wrong Westernization', a Muslim who learned to look, talk, and consume like a European, without any respect for the traditions and religion of Muslim Ottomans or any real knowledge about the topics he discussed," including science (p. 101).

Chapters 6 and 7 examine the Hamidian era up until 1900, which witnessed the integration of the Tanzimat perception of "science as useful knowledge" with the Young Ottoman emphasis on morality and communal identity. The author analyzes three important issues in chapter 6: (1) the association of the Turkish language with the new sciences, (2) problems concerning the argument of Islamic-Arab services to civilization, and (3) the ongoing debate of "useful knowledge and useless groups" through such subject matters as *medrese* sciences and poetry. A new binary contrast, that of Turkishness versus Arabness, was added to the Tanzimat contrast between Europeanness and Ottomanness and complicated the question of identity even further. Probably because of his desire not to fall into nationalist historiographic traps, however, Yalçınkaya surprisingly avoids any references to this era's rising ethno-nationalist discourses, which may mislead the lay reader into believing that the whole discussion around language was related solely to the debate on science.

At this point in time, the man of science kept trying to prove his moral superiority even as his communal and political loyalty came under increasing suspicion. This led to the construction of a new stereotype, which Yalçınkaya calls "the confused materialist." The stereotype sought to ensure students' loyalty to the state and demanded that they be morally informed and disciplined. It also served as yet another proxy for contemporary social and political debates. In my opinion, however, more examples should have been given so that the reader could fully judge its effectiveness. What is important, however, is Yalçınkaya's emphasis on the fact that the confused materialist was a marginal figure who reflected a sense of danger for the "confused youth," a danger heightened, partly, by increasing missionary activities in the empire (p. 179). In fact, his observation of the confused materialist's marginality is of historiographic importance and should be scrutinized further.[6]

6 For instance, Hanioğlu's analysis of Ottoman materialists in the "Blueprints for a Future Society" has mostly been read as representing them to be emblematic of a whole generation of Young Turks. His unsurpassed studies on the Young Turks and identification with studies on them might play a role in this misperception. Yalçınkaya's account, however, suggests that we should take the contemporary construct of this confused materialist stereotype with more caution. See Şükrü Hanioğlu, "Blueprints

Yalçınkaya agrees with Benjamin Fortna[7] that Islamic morality constituted a major component of the makeup of the men of science during the Hamidian era. In this sense, the official discourse resonated with the public one. The author contends that even at this time it is very difficult to talk about two differentiated camps of pro-religion and anti-science versus pro-science and anti-religion (p. 184). On the contrary, one of the key contemporaneous arguments held that science and Islam, unlike science and Christianity, were not enemies. This new emphasis involved concerns stemming from intensifying Christian missionary activities as well.[8]

The broader implications of Yalçınkaya's study for the history and sociology of science field confirm that debates around science and opposition to it were basically ethico-political instead of epistemological: What really mattered were the moral and political implications of introducing science, as opposed to what science actually was (p. 220). In this broader perspective, throughout his book Yalçınkaya avoids nationalist historiographic readings, skillfully bypasses the "science versus religion" or "modernity versus tradition" narratives, and neatly documents that "expressions of hesitation and doubt [against the new knowledge] ... indicate[d] social, rather than epistemological, conflicts" (p. 40), thereby encouraging studies that link intellectual history with its socio-economic context.

A major deficiency, however, is his omission of the early twentieth-century debates for the purposes of limitation. Still, the post-Constitutional era was clearly the most productive era of intellectual debates in the late Ottoman Empire. One hopes that Yalçınkaya will discuss the later debates in a future study. But this is a minor weakness when compared to the book's overall contribution to this field. No doubt *Learned Patriots* will stimulate many other studies on the social and cultural history of science and will be included in every graduate-level syllabus on Middle Eastern, and especially Ottoman, modernization.

for a Future Society," in *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*, ed. Elisabeth Özdalga (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 28-116.

7 Benjamin C. Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman 'Secular' Schools," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32, no. 3 (August 2000): 369-93.

8 Yalçınkaya also authored a noteworthy article on Ahmet Midhat Efendi's famous defense of Islam (*Niza-yı İlm-u-Din*), which further explored the conflict between science and religion. See M. Alper Yalçınkaya, "Science as an Ally of Religion: A Muslim Appropriation of the 'Conflict Thesis,'" *The British Journal for the History of Science* 44, no. 2 (2011): 161-81. The defense is a translation of William Draper's *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (New York: Appleton, 1874), in which Midhat's commentaries constitute an apology for Islam.