

Publishing Ottoman Texts in Modern Times: Denial, Distortion and Censorship

Abstract

The 20th-century re-publications of early modern Ottoman texts have not always been free of challenges. These modern editions have undergone ideological filtering—sometimes converging, sometimes diverging—reflecting religious sensitivities, nationalist reflexes, republican ideals, or shifting moral norms. As a result, many works have been overlooked or, in some cases, deliberately ignored. Even among those that were published, their content was at times altered, distorted, or directly censored.

The defining characteristic of these works is their content, which does not conform to religious, nationalist, or modern moral norms. Such elements include eroticism, pornography, abusive language, intoxicants, and more.

From this perspective, this study will examine narratives that challenge heteronormative gender roles, forms of entertainment deemed indecent, historical testimonies that rigid ideologies refuse to acknowledge, and texts that conflict with imagined nationalist narratives. Building on this, it will explore the ways in which early modern Ottoman texts have been denied, distorted, and censored in both popular and academic publications throughout the 20th century

Bio

Ercan Akyol is a senior lecturer in Turkish Studies at the University of Vienna. His main research interests lie in the area of early modern Ottoman cultural history. In his Ph.D. thesis, he focuses on Ottoman literary culture in the early 17th century. In the scope of his research area, he is particularly interested in literary historiography, Ottoman paleography, manuscript culture, and letter-writing practices (content, form, and folding techniques). He has published various articles and encyclopedic entries on Ottoman history, literature, and culture.