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## **GHOST: Geographies and Histories of the Ottoman Supernatural Tradition: Exploring Magic, the Marvellous, and the Strange in Ottoman Mentalities - ERC Consolidator Grant 2017**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The major aims of the project are: to explore the meaning and content of what different social and cultural groups in Ottoman society meant by “marvelous”, “strange” or “extraordinary”, and, vice versa, the correspondent notions that covered what we now describe as “supernatural/preternatural”; to specify the Ottoman attitude(s) against beliefs in such phenomena or practice of such methods, both holy (e.g. miracles of dervishes) and suspect (magic, witchcraft); to localize these beliefs in the various Ottoman systems of thought; to analyze the various ways changes took place from the mid-seventeenth century onwards. Last but not least, the project aims to associate these changes with emerging or declining layers of culture and specific social groups, in connection with the social changes throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. To this aim, the project will trace the semantic shifts in terms denoting nature, miracles, magic and so forth; it will examine miracles, dreams and their configuration, and the various world visions: of the science of letters, of the role of stars, of the homologies and hierarchies of the microcosm and the macrocosm. A second direction of research studies efforts and techniques designed in order to establish human control over such phenomena: in other words, Ottoman occult sciences, such as divination, magic, astrology, alchemy and so forth; their epistemology, their place in the taxonomy of knowledge and the rationale beyond their foundation and use: the limits of possible human influence, the relationship with vernacular practices and so forth. Debates on the illicitness or the reliability of occult sciences (for instance, critics of astrology) are of course highly relevant to the subject.

The research team includes the PI (M. Sariyannis), two post-doctoral researchers (Z. Aydoğan, I. Demirakin), three doctoral and several MA students and support staff, as well as a team of researchers collaborating as Third Parties: E. Menchinger (University of Manchester), A. Niyazioğlu (Oxford University), B. H. Küçük (University of Pennsylvania), A. T. Şen (Columbia University), G. Işıksel (Medeniyet University), and F. Coşkun (Özyegin University). It is hosted by the Institute for Mediterranean Studies of the Foundation of Research and Technology – Hellas, in Rethymno, Greece. The project maintains a web portal (<https://ghost.ims.forth.gr/>) which will host all the deliverables of the research. A bio-bibliographical dictionary and a bibliographie raisonnée of Ottoman sources pertaining to the subject is being compiled, and three international conferences are to be held (the first two already took place in December 2019 and January 2022). An online open access journal contains papers, source presentations and other material pertaining to the project: <https://ghost.ims.forth.gr/acaib/>

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