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The Road from Damascus:

Circulation and the Redefinition of Islam in the Ottoman Empire,

1620-1720

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in History

by

Nir Shafir

2016

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Road from Damascus:  
Circulation and the Redefinition of Islam in the Ottoman Empire,  
1620-1720

by

Nir Shafir

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Nile Spencer Green, Co-Chair

Professor Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Co-Chair

In the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Empire was marked by constant polemical disputes over Islamic religious practices. By the end of the century, these debates, which covered topics as varied as the permissibility of smoking tobacco or saint worship, had become so heated the many Muslims in the empire were willing to declare their co-religionists heretics. I use these polemical disputes as a setting in which to explore theories and approaches of religious transformation in the Islamic world. Rather than emphasize religious change driven by socio-economic forces or the disciplinary mechanisms of the state, I focus instead on how Islamic religiosity changed as it became increasingly entangled in the material world of the Eastern Mediterranean. I argue that intensified regimes of circulation of objects and people, especially between the Arabic and



Turkish-speaking (Rumi) segments of the empire, were generative of key developments of Ottoman religiosity such as novel forms of reading and writing, a culture of pilgrimage centered on the hajj, and, indeed, the bitter polemicism itself. I do this through four detailed case studies of heresy, manuscript “pamphlets,” pilgrimage, and travelogues. The dissertation thus makes two contributions. The first is to integrate discussions of materiality and circulation into our understanding of the transformation of Islamic religiosity in the early modern Ottoman Empire. This is reflected not only in my analysis but also in my research method, in which the materiality of the manuscripts themselves helps me uncover unknown writers and topics and connect a myriad of unrelated works. The second contribution is to highlight how the sustained encounter, exchange, and connectivity between Rumis and Arabs became an important motor of religious and cultural change in the empire.

The dissertation of Nir Shafir is approved.

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2016

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## A Note on Transliteration

I have transliterated foreign words according to the IJMES Transliteration System for Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. On occasion, I have also placed an Arabic transcription when I felt it would aid the reader. Greek, Armenian, and Hebrew words are transliterated according to the common standards. Commonly used words like Rumi, Ibn Arabi, Sultan Selim, Ahmed/Ahmad, Mamluk, etc. are not transliterated.

A small bit of confusion, however, might arise from the fact that this dissertation tackles a series of encounters and exchanges between the Turkish and Arabic-speaking regions of the Ottoman Empire. I have decided to transliterate Arabic works, words, and names according to their Arabic transliteration and Ottoman Turkish works and words according to Ottoman standards, rather than adhere to one transliteration system. If a person was primarily Rumi, that is Turkish-speaking, then I referred to him according to his Ottoman Turkish title and vice versa. For example, I transliterate the name (زين العابدين) as Zayn al-‘Ābidīn for an Arab and Zeynel‘abidīn for a Rumi. I wrote Mūneccimbaşı rather than Munajjim bashi or Aḥmad al-Mawlawī, even though he wrote primarily in Arabic. Conversely I used, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Khafājī rather than Şihāb Efendi even though he spent most of his life in Istanbul. If a work was written in Ottoman Turkish but had an Arabic title, I used Turkish title transliteration system rather than Arabic for the title (e.g. *Mīzānū’l-Haqq* rather than *Mīzān al-Haqq*).

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History of Science Society panel in San Francisco; and the Renaissance Studies Association panel in Boston.

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“The international congress as scientific and diplomatic technology: global intellectual exchange in the International Prison Congress, 1860–90”, *Journal of Global History*, 9:1 (March 2014), pp. 72-93

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Over the course of the seventeenth century, a series of deeply polemical debates about the proper practices and beliefs of Muslims smoldered and burned in the Ottoman Empire. Some of these arguments dealt with seemingly minor topics such as the permissibility of smoking tobacco or bizarre medical procedures. Others revolved around questions such as whether the parents of the Prophet Muhammad were burning in hellfire or not. Still others threw basic Muslim belief and rituals into question. Practices like *zīkr* (séances) and *semā* (auditions) were cast outside the scope of Islam. People argued that the dead had no capacity to affect our material world and therefore that major pillar of Muslim practice—worship at the grave of saints—was invalid. By the late seventeenth century, these debates had become so heated that partisans of each side were calling the other heretics. What was the significance of these fights? Why did they come about? These polemical disputes over proper Islamic practice not only invite us to investigate the religious history of Ottoman Empire but are also an opportunity to explore social scientific explanations of religious transformation and revival in the Islamic world. Was this just a flash of Islamic fundamentalism, an irruption of conservatism in response to the novelties of the seventeenth century? Or was it part of a broader and long-term process of the realignment of religious norms over the early modern period, perhaps initiated by greater state intervention in defining religious boundaries? Or are these fights subject to a modern misinterpretation caused by the projection of false categories of “religion” onto the past? The polemical debates and religious battles of the seventeenth century are the events through which I explore these questions.

I argue in this dissertation that these heated debates were a symptom of a much more fundamental and longstanding shift in intellectual and religious practices than has been suspected. The motor of these changes was an intensification of the circulation of objects and people, in particular between the Turkish-speaking central lands of the empire and the Arabic-speaking provinces. Drawing from work on early modern circulation and the framework of material entanglement, I argue that key developments of Ottoman religiosity—such as novel forms of reading and writing, a culture of pilgrimage centered on the hajj, and, indeed, the bitter polemicism itself—were the products of new material dependencies and connections. I demonstrate this through two case studies. The first examines how the circulation of cheap polemical treatises, what I call manuscript pamphlets, polarized Ottoman society and brought in response new techniques of reading and writing. The second case study examines how new pilgrimage practices emerged out of the entanglement between the Ottoman government, Turkish-speaking pilgrims, and the material landscape of a Syrian holy land. I use these case studies to highlight how shifts in Islamic religiosity emerged from new material interactions, a method that complements and challenges the approaches of social and cultural historians to religious change in the early modern Middle East. Moreover, rather than prioritize more distant connections, I argue that an intra-imperial regime of circulation, one between Arabic and Turkish-speaking parts of the empire, united politically for the first time in a millennium in 1516, was particularly generative of this change. To better understand these circuits and the types of texts that represented them, I devote a third case study to the largest corpus of early modern Arabic travelogues, nearly all of which detail journeys between Damascus, Cairo, and Istanbul. By examining the travelogues as mobile objects themselves, I demonstrate that as the travelogues



circulated more widely in Ottoman society, the circuits and social world described within subsequent works likewise expanded.

The dissertation is as much an argument for a new, and necessary, method for studying the intellectual and religious life of the early modern Ottoman Empire—a method in which material entanglement and circulation are constitutive of change—as it is a detailed study of the transformation of Islamic religiosity in the seventeenth century. This methodology is in turn reflected in my research practice and use of sources, which builds upon documentary and material evidence embedded in the thousands of Arabic and Turkish manuscripts uncovered in the course of my research to supplement interpretations built on textual representation. The dissertation centers geographically on the major Ottoman cities of the Eastern Mediterranean. By focusing on regimes of circulation, however, it not only incorporates the Balkans and the Hijaz into its purview, but also claims a middle ground between close studies of one particular cultural site and generic observations of the empire as a whole. For this reason, I present the argument not as a comprehensive and chronological narrative, such as a biography of a person or a text, but as a set of thematic essays that draw from the same cast of characters in the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire.

### **Approaching Islam in Middle Eastern History**

This dissertation makes a modest methodological contribution by analyzing the role of circulation and materiality in the development of the intellectual and cultural life of the early modern Middle East, especially those aspects that we now group under the category of religion. The place of Islam within the historiography of the Middle East, however, has been fraught since the 1980s when the field was buffeted by the twin blows of Edward Said's critiques and the

Iranian Revolution. The former made the notion of Islam as a unifying force in the field no longer viable while the latter raised the question of how Islam could continue to be a vital entity in modern society rather than fading into the obscurity of tradition.<sup>1</sup> Scholars who tackled the topic of religious revivalism or movements initially focused on socio-economic explanations, in which disaffected classes of the population championed an orthodox imposition of Islamic norms.<sup>2</sup> Cultural historians have complicated and challenged this initial interpretation in the decades since by demonstrating how orthodoxy itself was historically constructed and how different representations of tradition found resonance and expression over time.<sup>3</sup>

In a similar vein, many anthropologists and historians have responded to the notion of Islamic fundamentalism by arguing that Islamic revival was not an attempt to bring back a classical Islamic orthodoxy, but rather an attempt to break down the very separation between the secular and the religious. According to this argument, European thought imposed a category of religion derived from Christianity onto Islam, falsely separating the religious from the non-religious and forcing a multi-dimensional intellectual and social system into the restrictive category of “religion.”<sup>4</sup> The actions of Islamists and revivalists are a challenge to the categorical and ontological separation created by Western modernity. The notion that “religion” is a Western

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<sup>1</sup> Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> For period and area of this dissertation, this is most commonly found in Madeline Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis, MN: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988).

<sup>3</sup> For the period in question some of the best examples of this are Derin Terzioğlu, “Sufi and Dissident in the Ottoman Empire : Niyazi-i Misri, 1618-1694” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1999); Much of this approach stems from the groundbreaking essay of Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*, Occasional Papers Series (Georgetown University. Center for Contemporary Arab Studies) (Washington, DC: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1986).

<sup>4</sup> e.g. Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

category of thought is a valuable and salient point, but it usually renders the period before the nineteenth century into an ahistorical and essentialized foil of a classical Islamic practice. Even the recent posthumous magnum opus by Shahab Ahmed, which is the most thorough and thoughtful assessment (and assertion) of the analytical concept of Islam in well over a generation, is an elaboration of this framework. Unlike earlier iterations of this approach, he places the key phase of Muslim identity in the late medieval and early modern periods, situated in an Islamic space he calls the Balkans-to-Bengal complex.<sup>5</sup> He declares that “the Balkans-to-Bengal is a complex of societies in a post-formative stage of *being Muslim*, a productive human condition ... disposed to strike out in new constructions, trajectories, tenors and expressions of *what it means to be Muslim*. Unlike many Muslims of today, the Muslims of the Balkans-to-Bengal complex did not feel the need to articulate or legitimate their Muslim-ness/their Islam by mimesis of a pristine time of the earliest generations of the community (the *salaf*).”<sup>6</sup> Ahmed’s book is a strong blow against the notion that there are essential Islamic norms that define the “Muslim-ness” and he tries to show that his capacious definition of Islam can contain nearly all aspects and contradictions of human life.<sup>7</sup> The implicit, and often explicit, charge is that this all-encompassing form of Islam collapsed when it was forced into the mold of religion based on Christian models in the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> He attempts, through his vociferous critiques of the

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<sup>5</sup> Ahmed shies away from the overly ethnic term Persianate for this area, claiming that the Balkans-to-Bengal complex was a “common paradigm of Islamic life and thought.” However, many of his canonical examples, like the Gulistan, are from a Persian cultural world. Shahab Ahmed, *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 73–85.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 81 (*italics in the original*).

<sup>7</sup> A fitting eulogy of Ahmed himself and an insightful critique of his book can be found in Elias Muhanna’s review of the book that appeared shortly after its publication. “How Has Islamic Orthodoxy Changed over Time?,” *The Nation*, no. January 11-18, 2016 (December 23, 2015), [thenation.com](http://thenation.com).

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter three of Ahmed, *What Is Islam?*, 180–97 especially.

different humanistic and social scientific frameworks used to interpret and reify Islam, to break it out of these shackles.

### **Connections in the Early Modern World**

The response to the above frameworks over the past ten to fifteen years by historians of the premodern period has been to explore the intermediary span between medieval Islam and the modern period, whether they term it the early modern or the post-classical. One group of scholars, whom we might label neo-philologists, attempt to fill this gap by the reading the voluminous textual legacy of the post-classical period (which can be vaguely dated from 1200-1800, following the classical formation of Islamic civilization), arguing, in essence, that by simply reading more texts more closely one can demonstrate the continued vitality of Islamic thought and connect the medieval to the modern.<sup>9</sup> Neo-philologists have rightly returned a strong emphasis on reading texts correctly to the historical practice, often in response to instrumentalist projections of social context onto these ideas. However, their implicit approach is that of a traditional history of ideas. Concepts and ideas develop over time in conversation with other ideas, demonstrating the seeming intellectual vitality of an Islamic civilization, but with little connection to social and material environment, often with the unarticulated purpose of dismissing or sidelining theoretical or social scientific concerns. Moreover, the work is intentionally emic, interested solely in the internal categories of the texts, and therefore looks for connections within the Islamic world itself. This dissertation draws upon the worthwhile tools of

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<sup>9</sup> Recent examples of excellent neo-philological scholarship include Khaled el-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Camilla Adang et al., eds., *Accusations of Unbelief in Islam: A Diachronic Perspective on Takfir* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

philology, but aims to provide a vision of early modern Islamic thought and religiosity that goes beyond the purely textual.

With this emphasis, the dissertation follows the main current of historiography in the past twenty years, which argues that the changes of this intermediate pre-modern period resulted from the global emergence of early modernity. These historians identify the contemporaneous emergence of phenomena like strong state apparatuses, broader political participation, the discovery of new lands, individualist subjectivities, or confessionalization as part of a global transition of the world into early modernity.<sup>10</sup> This approach has inserted the Middle East into a connected world and common temporality, in sync with the rest of the world's history.<sup>11</sup> This type of argument has sometimes supported a notion of early modernity as an inevitable telos, by which scholars pick an etic historical phenomenon from Europe and attempt to identify emic parallels within contemporaneous Middle Eastern society and discard any evidence to the contrary.<sup>12</sup> Especially in the case of the Ottoman Empire, which earlier scholarship had stuck firmly in a teleological narrative of decline, the concept of global early modernity has proved to

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<sup>10</sup> Confessionalization is dealt with in more detail in the following chapter Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam : Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011); Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire : Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Dana Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus: Nouveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant*, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman, eds., *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Ali Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> At other times, there is a necessity to demonstrate that the intellectual and epistemic products of European modernity are just as equally present in other parts of the world. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Muddle of Modernity," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 3 (June 2011): 663–75.

be irresistible, leading to any and all phenomena to be interpreted as signs of incipient modernity.<sup>13</sup>

Newer scholarship on global early modernity differentiates itself from more comparative scholarship by its emphasis on connectivity.<sup>14</sup> The movement and exchange of people, objects, practices, and symbols links the aforementioned phenomena within a shared interpretative framework of divergent responses to similar stimuli.<sup>15</sup> These studies have skillfully demonstrated movement from one cultural site of production to another, providing an image of the early modern world as fully interconnected, lacking any intractable cultural divisions.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, thanks to these studies we now define the early modern world by its very increased connectivity, as the exchange of people, organisms, and goods accelerated over the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See for example the conclusion of Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 227–43; Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); For an overview on literature challenging the notion of decline see Cemal Kafadar, “The Question of Ottoman Decline,” *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 4, no. 1–2 (1998 1997): 30–75.

<sup>14</sup> A sampling of comparative scholarship can be found in Jack A. Goldstone, “East and West in the Seventeenth Century: Political Crises in Stuart England, Ottoman Turkey, and Ming China,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, no. 1 (January 1988): 103–42; Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in a Global Context, C. 800-1830: Volume 1: Integration on the Mainland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, C. 800-1830: Volume 2: Mainland Mirrors: Europe, Japan, China, South Asia and the Islands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Reinhard Schulze, “Das Islamische Achtzehnte Jahrhundert: Versuch Einer Historiographischen Kritik,” *Die Welt Des Islams*, New Series, 30, no. 1/4 (1990): 140–59.

<sup>15</sup> The importance of connectivity was best expressed in Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia,” *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (1997): 735–62.

<sup>16</sup> There are too many excellent examples of such work, here are a sample Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Natalie E. Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012); Alexander Bevilacqua and Helen Pfeifer, “Turquerie: Culture in Motion, 1650-1750,” *Past and Present*, no. 221 (November 2013): 75–118; Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*.

<sup>17</sup> Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “A Roomful of Mirrors: The Artful Embrace of Mughals and Franks, 1550-1700,” *Ars Orientalis* 39 (2010): 39–83.

I would argue, however, that for many scholars demonstrating connectivity has become an end unto itself. This raises two issues. First, while we have insightful studies as to the dynamics and mechanics of circulation and commensurability, we have less insight as to how this movement creates change over time. One could say, perhaps, that comparative approaches to early modernity have been overly focused with temporal coincidence and connective scholarship has become narrowly focused on demonstrating spatial concurrence.<sup>18</sup> This dissertation tries to move beyond the excellent scholarship demonstrating movement and mobility in order to examine how the connectivity of the early modern world specifically transformed Ottoman culture and religiosity.<sup>19</sup>

The second problem arising from the close association of connectedness with early modernity is that it is difficult to know what analytical value to give to spaces deemed “unconnected.” Are they beyond the scope of early modernity? This is a question that was raised by Frederick Cooper in his response to the first wave of scholarship on globalization but it is still relevant today. What is one to do with the “lumpy” bits of the world created by the forces of globalization?<sup>20</sup> The question carries a good deal of importance to historians of the Ottoman Empire because at first glance the empire does not seem terribly connected according to its

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<sup>18</sup> One could regard recent work on “deep history” as a temporal complement to the challenge posed by global history. Andrew Shryock, Daniel Lord Smail, and et al, *Deep History: The Architecture of Past and Present* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> It turns to emphasis of some earlier work on circulation “as a kind of shorthand for the capacity of Indian society over the centuries to generate change, The argument made here is not meant to be ‘isolationist’: change in the subcontinent was often connected with the circulation of models and practices which had their origins in the Middle East, Central Asia or, increasingly, Europe. But these models and practices were always reworked locally and cannot be analysed solely in terms of a response to external stimuli.” Claude Markovits, Jacques Pouchepadass, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, eds., *Society and Circulation: Mobile People and Itinerant Cultures in South Asia 1750-1950* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003), 11.

<sup>20</sup> Frederick Cooper, “What Is the Concept of Globalization Good for? An African Historian’s Perspective,” *African Affairs*, no. 100 (2001): 189–213.

textual sources. For example, there are no travelogues or ambassador's reports written about Venice despite the continuous presence of Ottoman subjects in the Serenissima. It is often quite hard to textually demonstrate connectivity to Europe or elsewhere because the writing and genre conventions simply precluded discussion of travels or the Other in the same manner as European sources.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps this is why Francesca Trivellato recently expressed the following concern when reviewing recent work on the intersection of Renaissance Italy and the Islamic Mediterranean: "What do we make of the differences between the often optimistic views of cross-cultural exchanges that emerge from studies of material artifacts and the more somber conclusions deriving from studies of written texts?"<sup>22</sup> Add to this the fact that most studies examining early modern circulation generally regard the contribution of the non-Western lands to be materials and objects whereas Western contributions have generally been categories of thought, ideas, styles, and the like. The metric of connectivity can quickly start to replicate and rehash the very narratives of the expansion of Western modernity and local reaction that it had intended to replace.<sup>23</sup>

### **Recognizing Circulation in the Ottoman Empire**

The first intervention of this dissertation lies in its reorientation of encounter and connectivity in the Ottoman Empire. While we have a number of strong studies of the connectivity between the Ottoman and European coasts of the Mediterranean, we sometimes lose

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<sup>21</sup> See for example necessity to establish a (relatively weak) connection in an otherwise great article in the second half of Derin Terzioğlu, "Where Ilm-i Hal Meets Catechism: Islamic Manuals of Religious Instruction in the Ottoman Empire in the Age of Confessionalization," *Past & Present* 220 (2013): 79–115.

<sup>22</sup> Francesca Trivellato, "Renaissance Italy and the Muslim Mediterranean in Recent Historical Work," *The Journal of Modern History* 82 (March 2010): 152.

<sup>23</sup> The point is brought up nicely in Subrahmanyam, "A Roomful of Mirrors," 40.



sight of what might be a closer and more vital encounter.<sup>24</sup> I prioritize in this dissertation a particular regime of circulation that emerged between the Turkish-speaking Rumi and the Arabic-speaking segments of the empire. The term *Rūmī* (pl. *Arwām*) originally was used to refer to the Romans, that is the Byzantines, but by the twelfth or thirteenth centuries it became predominantly associated with the Turkish-speaking Muslims of Anatolia. By the nineteenth-century, the meaning shifted again and came to refer to the Greek-speaking Christians in the empire. For the early modern period that this dissertation covers, the lands of *Rūm* came to be defined as a cultural space that started around the Taurus Mountains north of Syria and extended to the northern Balkans.<sup>25</sup>

The evolving exchange between Rumis and Arabs was one of the constitutive circuits of the empire and it was created largely due to the expansion of the Ottoman state into the Arab lands in 1516-17. This interaction is often overlooked because of the fact that both were Muslim, and encounters with European actors, who seem less commensurable, are prioritized instead.<sup>26</sup> The Ottoman conquest, however, marked the first time in almost a millennium that the eastern Mediterranean had been politically united.<sup>27</sup> It was not only a linguistic separation that divided

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<sup>24</sup> For examples of strong connective work see Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Mediterranean* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul*; Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire: Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean World* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>25</sup> Understanding Rumi identity as separate from Ottoman identity is a relatively new development initiated by the article by Cemal Kafadar, “A Rome of One’s Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum,” *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World* 24 (2007): 7–25; see also Selim S. Kuru, “The Literature of Rum: The Making of a Literary Tradition (1450–1600),” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: Volume 2: The Ottoman Empire as a World Power, 1453–1603*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi and Kate Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 548–92.

<sup>26</sup> A similar point is raised in Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012) There are, of course, limits as at a certain point any social encounter between two humans can be interpreted as an encounter.

<sup>27</sup> I thank Molly Greene for bringing this fundamental point to my attention.

Rumis and Arabs but also a larger set of cultural practices.<sup>28</sup> Rumi cultural life remained well within the orbit of the Persianate sphere, from which Arab urban life largely remained separated. Even, for example, in the corpus of legal and philosophical commentaries that the two groups wrote largely in Arabic, they shared different foundational texts.<sup>29</sup> The dynamics of the exchange, though, were built on the unequal power relationships instituted by imperial conquest and subsequent integration of the Arab lands into a new intellectual and political hierarchy, in which Rumis continued to hold the upper hand. At the same time, Arab scholars were generally seen as more learned and more pious by both sides, at least initially. The continued dialectic of exchange between the two over the centuries forged many of the practices of Ottoman Islam. In this way, my dissertation joins recent work by Guy Burak and Helen Pfeifer, which moves beyond the traditional focus of scholars on the integration of Arab provinces into a centralizing empire, and instead focuses on the reciprocal relationship between Arab and Rumi that transformed the culture of the empire as a whole.<sup>30</sup>

Examining Rumi-Arab relations helps disperse the relatively monolithic category of Ottoman into more analytically useful entities, but it raises a question as to what meaning the term Ottoman actually carries. I use the term “Ottoman” in this thesis to describe the cumulative effect of the material and social networks instituted by the empire. I avoid any suggestion that there is any mentality or any particular cultural habit found among the rulers of the empire or

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<sup>28</sup> For the time being, historians have largely focused on the cultural circulation, rather than, say, ecological, though there is the possibility for that too, for example in movement of coffee.

<sup>29</sup> el-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*.

<sup>30</sup> Guy Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law : The Hanafi School in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Helen Pfeifer, “Encounter after the Conquest: Scholarly Gatherings in 16th-Century Ottoman Damascus,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47 (2015): 219–39; For an example of the previous approach see Jane Hathaway, *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800* (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2008); Jane Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: The Rise of the Qazdağlıs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

their subjects.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, it is more than just the actions of the dynasty and its apparatus. For example, I argue in this dissertation as a whole that the particular circuits initiated by the Ottoman Empire ultimately created many of the phenomena we associate with Islam today. This was an Ottoman Islam not because it deviated from a supposedly authentic form of Islamic practice or because a particular state policy toward religion but because it resulted from the material and social networks established by the empire.<sup>32</sup> It is a usage of the word Ottoman that strikes a chord with recent work by scholars like Nükhet Varlık who defines an “Ottoman” experience of plague as the product of particular forms of circulation initiated by the expansion of the empire and its connection of urban centers which allowed *Y. pestis* to become an endemic and recurring presence in the Mediterranean.<sup>33</sup> Another example is Christine Philliou’s elaboration of the social networks that created an “Ottoman governance” by integrating Phanariots into the ruling mechanisms of the empire.<sup>34</sup>

## Entanglement in Early Modernity

This dissertation attempts to demonstrate how cultural and intellectual aspects of seventeenth-century Ottoman society—such as religious polemicism, new cultures of reading, or

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<sup>31</sup> See for example the (insightful) work of Walter Andrews, *The Age of Beloveds : Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Robert Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality : The World of Evliya Çelebi* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

<sup>32</sup> Different circulatory regimes, whether that of the Mughal Empire, or the trans-Saharan space, or nineteenth-century steam travel would create their own networks and therefore their own forms of Islam.

<sup>33</sup> Nükhet Varlık, *Plague and Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean World: The Ottoman Experience, 1347-1600* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>34</sup> Christine M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2011), xxii–xxiv; Helen Pfeifer adopts this concept to look at the interaction of Rumi governors and Arab intellectuals in the early seventeenth century in “To Gather Together: Cultural Encounters in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Literary Salons” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2014), 14–18.

forms of pilgrimage—arose from the new material environments of the early modern world. It takes its inspiration from intriguing recent studies that have argued that major cultural or intellectual changes in early modern European history have emerged inadvertently and unintentionally from the interactions with objects and peoples brought to European shores by new regimes of circulation.<sup>35</sup> These books provide useful case studies but I would like to draw on a more systematically explicated framework to explore these changes, that of the “entanglement” between the material and human worlds elaborated by Ian Hodder.<sup>36</sup> Although Hodder is an archaeologist, and therefore draws his examples largely from Neolithic or contemporary societies, I believe the concept of entanglement can also help us understand how circulation can create directional change in the early modern world.

Hodder introduces a new framework for understanding how directional and often reinforcing change in human society emerges out of the increasingly entangled relationships between humans with things. In Hodder’s words, humans have a tendency to move “toward and away from things,” forming “dependencies” both between themselves and things and between different things.<sup>37</sup> In these entanglements, though, something inevitably goes wrong. Things break down or run out and humans need to come up with new solutions. As humans and things become increasingly entangled, the pace of change likewise increases because more

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<sup>35</sup> e.g. Harold Cook argues that the “objectivity” of the Scientific Revolution arose not from English experimenters but from Dutch merchants attempt to make sense of and give value to new objects from their colonial possessions in *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009); see also Daniel Smail’s slightly manic take on the relationship between new psychotropic substances and the Enlightenment in *On Deep History and the Brain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 157–89.

<sup>36</sup> Hodder actually has borrowed the term from cultural theorist of contemporary South Africa, Sarah Nuttall. Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 90.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 15–27.

dependencies are forged. There is directionality because this change is progressive and often irreversible without great costs. Humans can only keep fixing, resolving, and finding new alternatives to these material dependencies, because a return to previous practices is too difficult.

In one of many examples he provides based on his years of fieldwork in the Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük (near modern-day Konya), he describes how humans became dependent on wild cattle not only as an intensively utilized food source but also in feasting, cattle-baiting, and burial rituals that helped produce the social cohesion necessary for the maintenance of houses, which were the main social and architectural unit of the settlement.<sup>38</sup> (Çatalhöyük contained no streets, just a set of packed houses accessed through rooftop entrances.) Around 6400 BCE, its residents were faced with a severe decline in wild cattle populations, and were confronted with a decision of either returning to their pre-bovine existence or finding a new source of cattle. The archaeological record demonstrates that they adopted domesticated cattle from further east, which necessitated new sets of material investments and dependencies. Giving up a dependence on cattle would have been difficult as it would have necessitated building smaller houses (despite a much a larger population) and using less symbolism in religious ceremonies and certain burial practices. Feasts would have been curtailed and the use of clay pots to cook, rather than clay balls, and the attendant industries needed to create these pots, would have become undone. As Hodder concludes, "in all these ways to go back would have involved giving up on investments, on ownership, on rich social networks and established histories."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 172–73.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 13.

The utility of “entanglement as a term” is that it “aims to allow a materialism but embedded within the social, the historical, the contingent.”<sup>40</sup> Although this dissertation relies heavily on the techniques and insights of cultural history, it is wary of basing arguments solely within the realm of textual representation. For example, Shahab Ahmed ends his book with a definition of Islam as “the hermeneutical engagement with Pre-Text, Text, and Con-Text of Revelation: as the act of meaning-making for the individual and/or collective self from the various sources of Revelation.”<sup>41</sup> It might be, however, that Islam is not solely a product of a textual engagement. At the same time, neither is it a purely determined by ecological or material factors, as a recent study of agrarian saint-worship in early modern Syria by James Grehan claims.<sup>42</sup> That which produces directional and irreversible change is rather the “tautness” of the entanglements in Hodder’s view.<sup>43</sup> This approach, of course, bears similarity to many other recent social scientific and humanistic approaches that emphasize the role of networked materiality or material culture as a means of bridging the divide between materialism and social constructivism.<sup>44</sup> The other approaches tend to emphasize instead material objects as social symbols or sites of memory, or want to bind linguistic representation to a material basis, or are more interested in blurring the distinction between object and subject.<sup>45</sup> As insightful and useful

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 95–96.

<sup>41</sup> Ahmed, *What Is Islam?*, 543.

<sup>42</sup> This book is dealt with in more detail in the first chapter. James Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints: Everyday Religion in Ottoman Syria and Palestine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>43</sup> For Hodder’s explanation of tautness see Hodder, *Entangled*, 103–5.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>45</sup> Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); Bruno Latour, “On Technical Mediation - Philosophy, Sociology, Genealogy,” *Common Knowledge* 3, no. 2 (1994): 29–64; Bruno Latour, “The Berlin Key or How to Do Words with Things,” in *Matter, Materiality and Modern Culture*, ed. P.M. Graves-Brown (London: Routledge, 2000), 10–21; Bill Brown, “Thing Theory,” *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (2001): 1–22; Carl Knappett, *Thinking Through Material Culture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*

as these other approaches may be, I am drawn to Hodder's emphasis on our dependence on things and its capacity to generate directional yet non-teleological change. For example, he argues that even the emergence of major changes, such as the development of sedentary agriculture, can be explained as a set of entanglements without the need for intentionality or for a prime mover.<sup>46</sup>

The best examples of the interaction between the material world and Islamic religiosity come from the nineteenth century and the works of Nile Green in particular. Green's work focuses on how new cultures of travel, worship, and labor emerged in the nineteenth century as steam power, whether fueling ships, factories, or presses, allowed for greater mobility and new regimes of circulation.<sup>47</sup> Green's focus on the scalar leap in mobility in the nineteenth century helps counter notions that modern Islamic religiosity was simply a result of the imposition of colonial categories, but the often quite significant changes that emerged from early modern circulation are often lost in the contrast. As the authors of a recent volume on deep history suggest, "the leap from human communities numbering in the tens of people to those numbering in the thousands may be just as momentous for social relations as the leap from millions to hundreds of millions; indeed, the smaller shift probably required more complicated and durable alterations in human interactive styles."<sup>48</sup>

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(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Leora Auslander, "Beyond Words," *The American Historical Review* 110, no. 4 (October 2005): 1015–45.

<sup>46</sup> Hodder, *Entangled*, 200.

<sup>47</sup> Nile Green, "Spacetime and the Muslim Journey West: Industrial Communications in the Making of the 'Muslim World,'" *The American Historical Review* 118, no. 2 (April 2013): 401–29; Nile Green, *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the Western Indian Ocean, 1840-1915* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>48</sup> Shryock, Smail, and et al, *Deep History*, 147.

## Methodology

Since my research focuses on the *intellectual* and *cultural* outcomes of new or intensified regimes of circulation between the Arab and Rumi segments of the Ottoman Empire, I heavily utilize textual sources. My reliance on texts raises two problems however. The first is that the textual legacy of the early modern Islamic world is still relatively unknown given the traditional focus on the “classical” medieval period. Ottoman historians often focus on one or two well-known authors but remain largely unaware of the thousands of other authors from the period. The second problem is that textual analysis in cultural history has a predilection toward only analyzing representations and in the process losing a grasp on materiality. My solution was to use the physical form of the texts to guide my research, that is, to use their miscellany format to find new and seemingly unrelated texts. The method then pushed me to examine the manuscripts themselves as material agents that transformed Ottoman society through their circulation. My research methodology therefore combines an archival approach with insights from material culture studies to analyze multiple copies of cheap, small manuscripts in libraries across the former Ottoman Empire.<sup>49</sup> The methodology itself attempts to forge a path between the “defterology” of the earlier approaches of social historians and emphasis of cultural historians on narrative representation.<sup>50</sup> This is the reason why of the hundreds of manuscripts I cite in this dissertation (which I have culled from the thousands examined in total), many are cited not only

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<sup>49</sup> I published some of my initial thoughts on this methodology in the section titled “How Digitization Has Transformed Manuscript Research: New Methods for Early Modern Islamic Intellectual History” in Chris Gratien, Michael Polczyński, and Nir Shafir, “Digital Frontiers of Ottoman Studies,” *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 1, no. 1–2 (2014): 39–42.

<sup>50</sup> For a response to the traditional “document” oriented approach to Ottoman history see Cemal Kafadar, “Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature,” *Studia Islamica* 69 (1989): 121–50; Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003).



for their textual information but also for their documentary or material evidence. These approaches and insights are increasingly common among literary scholars and historians working on other regions of the world, but are still relatively undeveloped for the early modern Islamic world. There is a great deal of encouraging and excellent new literature on the history of the book in Islamic world, but this dissertation goes further by using the insights of codicology and book history to make interpretive claims about Ottoman social and cultural life.<sup>51</sup>

Traditionally scholars of intellectual and cultural history in the Islamic world have worked from critical editions of heavy tomes, which might exist in one to four manuscript copies. Librarians estimate, however, that for the early modern period (1500-1800) three to four million Arabic-script manuscripts still exist, the majority of which are small, cheap texts like catechisms, prayer books, storybooks, and polemical pamphlets. The massive material archive of early modern Islamic manuscripts—which encompasses languages written in the Arabic script from sub-Saharan Africa to East Asia—is an opportunity and treasure that very few other fields possess. Scholars of the medieval Islamic periods do not have many surviving copies of the texts that they study, or they are reliant on the copies made by early modern readers. Historians of early modern East Asia and Europe are working on historical contexts in which public intellectual production is largely reproduced through printing. Again, one current of scholarly practice might see this as a burden that must be properly purified into critical editions and printed before it can be analyzed. But a more fruitful approach might be to incorporate the material life of these texts into our analyses.

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<sup>51</sup> e.g. Konrad Hirschler, *Medieval Damascus: Plurality and Diversity in an Arabic Library: The Ashrafiya Library Catalogue* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016); Yavuz Sezer, “Architecture of Bibliophilia: Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Libraries” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2016); Meredith Quinn, “Books and Their Readers in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 2016).

I often made use of the fact that many of these texts are physically grouped together in miscellanies (*mecmūʿa*), which revealed the intellectual interests of the copyists and readers who compiled them. At the same time, they contain all sorts of marginal comments, footnotes, reading and ownership marks, letters, documents, and more. Using the information found in these miscellanies, I reconstructed forgotten intellectual networks of titles, topics, and authors in the early modern period. I began with one author or work and then examined everything else that was grouped with that work to discover recurring names of other authors and titles until I uncovered, from the material remains of manuscripts themselves, the social usage and milieu of a text and its author. This allowed me to write intellectual histories of the Middle East that go far beyond the familiar characters (such as Muṣṭafa ʿĀlī or Kātib Çelebi). Moreover, the methodology values each physical manuscript as a source in itself, allowing multiple copies of the same work to each reveal new information, and not just serve as a disembodied text, read for its factual information or representations.

Much of this analysis has been made possible only by recent shifts to digitize large portions of manuscript libraries and catalogs in Turkey, Bosnia, and, to a lesser degree, Saudi Arabia. I originally developed my methodology inadvertently in the digitized Islamic manuscript collections in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, the largest collection of Islamic manuscripts in the world. Despite, or because of, its size, the collection can only be accessed via the computers in the reading room. We tend to think of digitization reductively as a process that only obscures the physical manuscript from the eyes and hands of the reader. I found in the course of my research, however, that while manuscripts do become disembodied on the computer screen, being able to view such a large number of them paradoxically refocused my attention on their very materiality. The searchable catalog and the instant access to manuscripts allowed me to

examine thirty to one hundred manuscripts a day rather than three to five (the daily limit in traditional manuscript libraries). The increased access allowed me to discover small, cheap manuscripts rather than have to economize my time by solely reading and transcribing the text of larger ones. In turn, I began to pay more attention to small pieces of evidence like reading marks, binding, and more across multiple copies of the same manuscript. Over more than a year of fieldwork, I gained a deep familiarity with the manuscript tradition(s) of the Ottoman Empire, both in terms of content and materiality, which allowed me to quickly identify unique and significant pieces of evidence. Having acquired this background knowledge, I then began to work in non-digitized collections in Western Europe and North America such as Leiden, Paris, London, Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester, Vienna, Berlin, Princeton, and Washington, D.C. These collections, which were acquired from a variety of different locations, made me realize that different networks of authors and books predominated in different regions. In sum, we should see a digital copy of a manuscript not simply as a “digital proxy,” which connotes preservation and access, but as a “digital hybrid” that provokes new research questions and revives the importance of the physical manuscripts themselves.

In the process of my research I have had to develop new techniques for analyzing this material archive of Islamic manuscripts. In a sense, I treat this “manuscript record” like an archaeologist might analyze the archaeological record, sometimes focusing on one particular find and at other times conducting broader surveys. Many of these techniques dwell in a sort of mesoscopic level of analysis of the material aspects of manuscripts, between the close reading of art historians of paper, binding, scripts, dyes and the like, and a possible, but yet unachieved, quantitative distant reading of the metadata of thousands of manuscripts. So while we can closely examine the history of one particular Qur’an from its material aspects, for example, what can we

tell from the analysis of twenty to thirty copies of the same manuscript? This comes up in my second chapter in my analysis of the revival of the heresiographical tradition in the early seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire. The texts themselves made few references to any event or dispute from the period and attempting to historicize the text through the authors' biographies was equally fruitless. It was only by examining the placement of numerous copies of the text within multiple miscellanies that I was able to show that it was being read alongside polemical pieces about wayward Muslim practice from the period. In another example, I look at the question of what precisely qualifies as a well-read or popular manuscript in the early modern Ottoman Empire. At the moment we only have the crude metric of extant manuscript copies, of which perhaps five or more copies suggests a somewhat popular manuscript. However, what interpretive value does a manuscript that only exists in one or two copies possess? The fifth chapter, on early modern travelogues in the Ottoman Empire, tackles this question by examining the different forms of usage enjoyed by travelogues with only one or two extant copies and the limited forms of reading engendered by travelogues of which hundreds of copies currently exist. Similarly, the material traces of ownership and readership allowed me to link these travelogues into a united textual corpus even when they did not necessarily refer to each other within the text. This approach has likewise led me to question what parts and forms of the textual record survive today.

The downside of relying on the Islamic manuscript record is that non-Muslim life is often completely obscured. Basing ourselves solely on the textual record, it often seems that Muslims, Christians, and Jews are living in entirely separate worlds. I try to show, however, that this is not necessarily the case. Sometimes, this can be done directly through the texts such as when I mention Judeo-Turkish copies of seventeenth-century heresiographies written by Muslims. At

other times, I try to draw parallels between the writing of Greek, Armenian, and Arab Christian authors and those of Muslims, as in the chapters on pilgrimage and travelogues. At other times, I turn toward non-textual material objects, such as ceramics, to elucidate the connections and demonstrate that Muslims and non-Muslims were entangled in the same material and social networks of the Ottoman Empire.

### **Plan of Dissertation**

This dissertation follows a thematic rather than narrative framework. While this introduction draws out the shared questions and common framework uniting the chapters, they can also be read as independent pieces.

The second chapter of this dissertation is a two-fold examination of the main approaches used to narrate the transformation of Islamic religiosity in the early modern Ottoman Empire. The first half dissects the still predominant narrative for interpreting the polemical debates of the Ottoman Empire during the seventeenth century—the Kāḍīzādeli movement. The conventional narrative of the Kadizadelis relies heavily on a socio-economic take on Islamic fundamentalism that was constructed in the wake of the Iranian Revolution. Now that it has become part of the basic narrative of Ottoman historians, it continues to guide our interpretation of the period. I argue that the Kadizadeli movement, however, is not a coherent social movement and therefore the events of the period require different explanations. I then examine the various other social scientific explanations for religious transformation, such as the Asadian interpretation, materialism, and early modern confessionalization. The second half of the second chapter demonstrates that the categories of religion, faith, and practice were actively transformed by the polemical debates as Ottoman society became increasingly polarized over the seventeenth

century. It does so through a multifaceted study of heresy. I start with a reinterpretation of a supposed riot in early eighteenth-century Cairo against the saints in which each side repeatedly tried to anathematize the other. I then try to uncover how the accusation of heresy came to be used so readily, looking at attempts by the state to mold the definition in legal discussion while also uncovering the revival of the heresiography tradition in the first half of the seventeenth century. At the same time, it reveals moments in which Ottoman subjects actively tried to escape the new heretical atmosphere by taking refuge in the concept of the “religion of Abraham (*millet-i Ibrāhīm*)” and the notion of thinking the best of others (*ḥusn al-ẓann*). The chapter insists on the long-term importance of these polemical fights both against views that these are periodic outbursts of Islamic fundamentalism and against Asadian approaches that sideline the premodern. In particular, it pulls out how the definition of heresy began to emphasize practices and material objects rather than direct statements of unbelief.

The third chapter argues that the polemical religious battles of the seventeenth century were caused by the proliferation of cheap manuscript “pamphlets.” In other words, it looks at how the manuscripts themselves were agents in the religious transformation of the period. The first part of the chapter focuses on providing a definition of the manuscript pamphlet and clarifying the relationship to its print counterparts. In particular, I argue that focusing on the manuscript pamphlet forces us to reimagine the textual world of the Ottoman Empire not as one embodied in expensive and heavy tomes but as a flood of cheap and mobile literature. The chapter describes how pamphlets became entangled in Ottoman society as people became more and more dependent on these pieces in this polemical period. It takes a close look at one particular and widely popular pamphlet debate—the debate over the odd medical practice known as “chickpea cauterization (*kayy al-ḥimmaṣa*)”—and one particularly successful pamphleteer—

‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī—and the strategies he used to disseminate his work. The second part of the chapter examines how the circulation of these pamphlets—both geographically and socially—slowly eroded the social trust that facilitated the transmission of knowledge, leading to the polarization of Ottoman society around partisan reading groups. What emerged in response was a variety of new scribal techniques and analytical forms of individual, silent reading that facilitated a new social and material life of knowledge.

The fourth chapter looks at the charged question of pilgrimage practices during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Pilgrimage to the tombs of saints had been a central Islamic practice through much of the late medieval and early modern periods but faced a variety of challenges since the sixteenth century. This chapter takes a step back from the polemical pamphlet debates over pilgrimage and sainthood and turns instead to an interaction with a material landscape. I examine how the Ottoman state’s expansion into the Arab lands, and the subsequent flow of Rumi pilgrims, became entangled with the material landscape of Syria. The result, I argue, was the centrality of the hajj for all of the subjects of the empire—Muslim and non-Muslim alike. I demonstrate how the hajj emerged as a particularly resonant form of pilgrimage at the expense of other forms as it became enmeshed in Ottoman social and material life. Part of this was the result of the local rebellions the Ottoman state found itself facing in the early sixteenth century, which facilitated a choice to build an infrastructure of the hajj through the Syrian route. The emphasis on the land journey through Syria made the hajj intersect with a medieval Islamic world of graves constructed in the wake of the Crusades. It also led Christians to prioritize their own journeys to Jerusalem, which in turn led to the further assertion by Muslims that the hajj was a primary Islamic practice. In short, it demonstrates how an Ottoman

culture of pilgrimage emerged not only at the direction of the state, but from the material and social networks instantiated by the empire.

The fifth chapter examines the means by which circulation was textually expressed in the Ottoman Empire through a study of a large corpus of early modern Arabic and Turkish travelogues as material objects. As mentioned earlier, it often seems that the Ottoman Empire is not terribly connected to the rest of the world because some of the main proxies for connection, such as travelogues to distant lands, are seemingly absent. I argue, however, that Ottoman subjects traveled far and wide but often chose to represent in texts only a small portion of these movements. Indeed, if we look at the corpus of hundreds of travelogues from the period, the majority of them trace a common circuit between the major urban centers of the Arab lands such as Damascus, Cairo, Medina, and the imperial capital, Istanbul. Rather than dismiss or ignore these travelogues, I focus on the social function of these texts. These were not a continuation of an earlier Islamic travelogue genre, but a new one that was forged in the wake of the Ottoman conquest as Arab scholars presented poetic gifts—the travelogues—to their Rumi patrons. Shifts in inter-imperial relations, the usage of books, and an increasingly confessionalized atmosphere, expanded the scope and audience of the travelogue genre. They were no longer private gifts possessed by a notable family but texts that were read far and wide by a large number of readers. By the mid-eighteenth century, travelogues were written and read for geographic information, and began to represent distant lands. In other words, I argue that there was a reciprocal relationship between the usage of travelogues as objects and the circuits that they textually represented. It was not that people were necessarily traveling more or further between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, but the function of travelogues, as both texts and objects, changed.



## Chapter 2: Approaches to Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire: Fundamentalism, Confessionalization, and Heresy

*The Balance of Truth* is a book that lies directly on the social and cultural faultlines of the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire.<sup>1</sup> Written by Kâtib Çelebi—the seventeenth-century polymath and dilettante from Istanbul—in 1656, it is comprised of twenty-one “discussions” that inspired the polemicists of the time.<sup>2</sup> Some dealt with the legality of relatively new substances, like coffee and tobacco, introduced in the empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, respectively. Others were about issues more directly in the sphere of religious practice—whether it was permissible to pray at the graves of saints or conduct séances where believers would dance and sing. Yet others involved related historical questions—did the parents of the Prophet Muhammad die as believers or infidels? This list of controversial topics was by no means a figment of the author’s imagination. *The Balance of Truth* was one of Katib Çelebi’s most popular writings, copied widely throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The grand vizier, Rāmī Meḥmed Paşa, had a copy made for himself while in office in 1700.<sup>3</sup> A judge writing on October 17, 1696 (20 Rabia I, 1108) in Chania, Crete, also found the text so compelling that he noted that his students had forty more discussions to heap on.<sup>4</sup> The comments that these readers left on their copies over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, along with the treatises with which they were grouped, demonstrates that the treatise had tapped into a well-

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<sup>1</sup> The full title is *Balance of Truth: Making the Best Choice (Mizānū’l-Ḥaḳḳ fī İhtiyāri’l-‘Aḥaḳḳ)*

<sup>2</sup> Kâtib Çelebi, *The Balance of Truth*, trans. G. L. Lewis (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1957).

<sup>3</sup> Kâtib Çelebi, *Mizānū’l-Ḥaḳḳ*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS H Hüsnü Paşa 705

<sup>4</sup> Kâtib Çelebi, *Mizānū’l-Ḥaḳḳ*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Mihrisah Sultan 440

spring of anxiety and interest as to what it meant to be Muslim in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The salience of these polemical disputes raises two complementary sets of questions. First, what was the cause of this great tumult and continuous debate during the early modern period, especially during the seventeenth century? Second, what set these fights apart from the small, minor debates over Muslim practice and the occasional persecution of heretics that persisted over the centuries? In other words, did these polemical fights represent any sort of significant change? Answering these questions requires not only an exploration of the debates themselves but also a reassessment of the frameworks historians use for understanding religious change in the early modern Middle East. In particular, it requires a rethinking of Islamic fundamentalism or revival, which has been the default framework over the past thirty years for understanding various forms of religious polemics in the modern and pre-modern Middle East. This framework, which emerged in 1980s as social scientists tackled with the unexpected appearance of Islamicist movements, and the Iranian Revolution in particular, imparts certain socio-economic stimuli to the appearance of religious movements. More importantly, they view transformations in piety, morality, and religion as momentary hiccups or recurrences of a true Islamic orthodoxy rather than pieces of larger societal transformations in piety. Although the fundamentalism framework is now quite dated, it continues to exert a heavy influence on the writing of early modern Middle Eastern history. In response, there have been a number of studies in the past fifteen years that have examined how religious orthodoxy has been socially, or materially, constructed.

The aim of this chapter is to unravel the narrative of Islamic fundamentalism from the events of the seventeenth century and to test the applicability of various other social

constructivist frameworks for understanding religious change in the Middle East. While the dissertation as a whole attempts to cleave a middle path between cultural and material explanations by emphasizing that new patterns of religious life emerged through circuits of circulation in the early modern world, this chapter focuses more on demonstrating that there was a large scale shift in religiosity in the early modern Ottoman Empire through an examination of heresy. In the fundamentalism framework, these larger scale shifts in the religious practice are largely overlooked given that the cause is short-term economic disaffection.<sup>5</sup> This signified both a realignment of the relationship between practice and belief that had defined Muslim religiosity in the early modern period and a breakdown of the traditional safeguards on the mass anathematization of Muslims. By the end of the seventeenth century, Muslims were increasingly polarized throughout the empire, easily calling each other heretics and using the term in a variety of new manners, while also trying to shield themselves from such accusations.

This chapter, and the dissertation as a whole, makes a second methodological intervention by eschewing or deprivileging the traditional chronicle sources used to write the history of religious change in the early modern Ottoman Empire. The basic problem is that the chronicles, with their formal focus on the machinations of the court and courtiers, were largely unable to comment on the transformations of larger society, except when crowds or non-court figures occasionally forced themselves into the narrative. Overreliance on the chronicles as sources has caused distortions in the depiction of politics in the empire, which feed into the fundamentalist narratives of religion and society. I turn instead to the prodigious written products of these fights, the various pamphlets, legal debates, and heresiographies to draw out a different narrative of longer scale shifts in religiosity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

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<sup>5</sup> Whereas in Asadian circles, the question of what constitutes the category of religion is moot for premodern world.

## Narratives of Islamic Revival and Orthodoxy

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 was a watershed moment for scholars of the Islamic world. The revolution, alongside the Islamist political and pietistic movements that emerged in the 1980s, seriously challenged the prevailing view that the inexorable forces of modernization would render religion a quaint tradition of bygone eras.<sup>6</sup> For the past thirty odd years, social scientists of all stripes have attempted to explain the revival of Islamic thought and practice in the twentieth century. Initially, scholars applied the concept of an atavistic fundamentalism but now the continued vitality of religious belonging in the present day, not just in Islamic societies, but throughout the world, has become commonly accepted.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, even secularism, once believed to be the inevitable product of modernity, has been recast as a particular, historical phenomenon of the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

For the most part, scholars of Islamic “revival” have located its origins as both a reaction to and a product of the ontological rupture of modernity initiated by the intrusion of Western imperialism—that is, Western political power, technology, and categories of thought—in the Middle East in the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> The preceding centuries form a scenic backdrop in front

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<sup>6</sup> e.g. Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> Robert A. Orsi, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, ed. Robert A. Orsi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1–14.

<sup>8</sup> One formative example of the growing field of secular studies is Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); see also Saba Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> See for example Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 205–56; For an older narrative of Islamic modernism see Albert H. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

of which modern actors play their roles, occasionally evoked as an imagined, ideal past. At the same time, the interest in Islamic revival has led scholars to identify moments of seeming incipient Islamic fundamentalism—such as Ibn Taymiya in the fourteenth century—that seem to presage and even inspire many of the same themes of twentieth-century Islamic revivalist movements.<sup>10</sup> However, as these are unattached to the telos of modernity, they are often written as part of short-lived and cyclical moments of Islamic fundamentalism or *salafism* that attempted to return Islamic society to its imagined origins.<sup>11</sup> Even if most scholars of these older movements do not explicitly draw out continuities and connections between the premodern past, the presumptions of social scientific scholarship on Islamic revival in the past thirty years continues to inform their works. In the following section, I survey the varied theories of religious transformation in the early modern and modern Middle East, drawing out both their strengths and weaknesses.

### *Beyond the Ẓāḍīzādelis*

For the early modern Middle East, one narrative of Islamic revival in particular has gained inordinate popularity—that of the Ẓāḍīzādelis (*Ẓāḍīzādeliler* in Turkish). I argue here that historians should stop using the narrative of the Ẓāḍīzādelis or even regard it as a particularly distinct movement. Although certain aspects of the Ẓāḍīzādeli narrative have met with substantial critique,<sup>12</sup> the overall frame of the Ẓāḍīzādelis has had remarkable staying

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<sup>10</sup> Konrad Hirschler, “Pre-Eighteenth-Century Traditions of Revivalism: Damascus in the Thirteenth Century,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental & African Studies* 68, no. 2 (2005): 195–214.

<sup>11</sup> John Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought in the Ottoman Empire : The Rise of the Halveti Order, 1350-1650* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 79.

<sup>12</sup> Derin Terzioğlu, “Sufi and Dissident in the Ottoman Empire : Niyazi-i Misri, 1618-1694” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1999), 190–220; Derin Terzioğlu, “Where Ilm-i Hal Meets Catechism: Islamic

power. Indeed, its popularity has only risen in the past few years as scholars continue to examine the seventeenth century for the origins of modern Islamism.<sup>13</sup> Over the years, the Kādīzādelis have been credited not only with setting off a (short-lived) firestorm of Islamic fundamentalism but also of alternately initiating the decline of the Ottoman state,<sup>14</sup> the intellectual closure of Islamic society,<sup>15</sup> religious modernity in Islam,<sup>16</sup> and the dissolution of Islamic philosophy.<sup>17</sup> In doing so, many of the basic presuppositions embedded in the narrative of the Kādīzādeli movement have remained.

Madeline Zilfi was the first to popularize the term “Kādīzādelis” and highlight a movement of discontent clergymen and preachers.<sup>18</sup> Before Zilfi, the events and religious fights of the period were largely ignored, but on the occasion they were mentioned, scholars referred to

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Manuals of Religious Instruction in the Ottoman Empire in the Age of Confessionalization,” *Past & Present* 220 (2013): 79–115.

<sup>13</sup> Simeon Evstatiev, “The Qādīzādeli Movement and the Revival of Takfir in the Ottoman Age,” in *Accusations of Unbelief in Islam: A Diachronic Perspective on Takfir*, ed. Camilla Adang et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 213–43; Simeon Evstatiev, *The Qādīzādeli Movement and the Spread of Islamic Revivalism in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Preliminary Notes*, CAS Working Papers 5 (Sofia: Centre for Advanced Study, 2013); James Muhammad Dawud Currie, “Kadizadeli Ottoman Scholarship, Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab, and the Rise of the Saudi State,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 26, no. 3 (2015): 265–88; Mustapha Sheikh, “Qādīzādeli Revivalism Reconsidered in Light of Ahmad al-Rūmī al-Āqḥīṣārī’s Majālis al-abrār” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oxford, 2012); Marc Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> Madeline Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis MN: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988).

<sup>15</sup> Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 179–85.

<sup>16</sup> Gottfried Hagen, “Afterword: Ottoman Understandings of the World in the Seventeenth Century,” in *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi*, by Robert Dankoff (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 245–46.

<sup>17</sup> Bekir Harun Küçük, “Early Enlightenment in Istanbul” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2012), 96–103.

<sup>18</sup> See Madeline C. Zilfi, “The Kadizadelis: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 45, no. 4 (October 1986): 251–69.

them as a general religious fanaticism or as a sort of proto-Wahhabism.<sup>19</sup> Although Zilfi's narrative would become the dominant one in the scholarship, there was a rash of dissertations on the Kādīzādelis that appeared in the 1980s as a response to the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979.<sup>20</sup> In Zilfi's reading of the events, a groundswell of dissent began to form among provincial scholars unable to find appointments as judges, teachers, and jurists in the increasingly competitive world of the early seventeenth century. Jobs were monopolized by a few key families while a growing base of provincial youths went into the education system seeking, and failing to find, some kind of employment. A group of influential preachers channeled this professional frustration against at the sinful mores of the elites and the urban life of the seventeenth century. Smoking, coffee drinking, saint worship, and séances became objects of critique. These were considered innovations (*bida' a*) in relation to the practices of the original community of Muslims (*ṣalaf*).<sup>21</sup> Every generation or so, a new preacher would rise to the fore, rallying the riff-raff and students in mass sermons each Friday, gaining in power, until they became personal confessors and preachers to the imperial family itself. First there was the eponymous Kādīzāde Meḥmed Efendi, who was followed by the Damascene immigrant Uṣṭuvānī Meḥmed Efendi in the 1650s and finally the zealous Vānī Meḥmed Efendi who drove the government to attempt, once more, to conquer Vienna in the 1680s and reclaim the glory of

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<sup>19</sup> Barbara Flemming, "Die Vorwahhabitische Fitna Im Osmanischen Kairo 1711," in *İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı'ya Armağan* (Ankara: Türk Tarihi Kurumu Basımevi, 1976), 55–65; Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600.*, 179–85.

<sup>20</sup> Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*; Necati Öztürk, "Islamic Orthodoxy among the Ottomans in the Seventeenth Century with Special Reference to the Qādī-Zāde Movement" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1981); Semiramis Çavusoğlu, "The Kadizadeli Movement an Attempt of Şerī'at-Minded Reform in Ottoman Empire" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1990).

<sup>21</sup> Zilfi actually does not use the word *Ṣalafī* to describe the Kādīzādelis but later historians often borrow the term to describe them.

the Empire and Islam. Following the disastrous failed siege of Vienna in 1683, Vānī Mehmed Efendi was dismissed and the movement ceased to be an influence on the politics of the empire.

The latent explanatory power of the Ẕāḍīzādeli narrative lies in its combination of social historical analysis with a convenient and instrumentalist understanding of Islamic orthodoxy.

The narrative argues that the growing economic instability of the empire led a group of opportunistic mullahs to drive its rulers, and subjects, toward religious extremism, furthering the empire's already precipitous decline and isolationism. Readers should not be surprised if this story has a familiar ring. It is one of the prevailing explanations of the Islamic revolution in Iran that had occurred only a few years prior to the publication of Zilfi's book.<sup>22</sup> At its heart is a structural and social narrative of Islamic revival that has held sway since the appearance of Islamic movements in the late twentieth century: abortive modernization, i.e. economic development, causes a certain class of people to take up in protest the banner of religiosity and fanaticism.<sup>23</sup> This religiosity is understood as an Islamic fundamentalism, a return to some sort of original and orthodox Islam, rather than a historically situated and constructed form of Islamic practice.

Zilfi deserves credit for drawing the attention of historians to the religious life of the empire but by centering her narrative on the three preachers—Ẕāḍīzāde, Uṣṭuvānī, and Vānī—she has imposed rather severe limitations on our understanding of the transformation of religiosity in the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire. First, the narrative is overwhelmingly centered on Istanbul, precluding any consideration of an empire-wide social movement. Second,

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<sup>22</sup> Zilfi, at least as evinced by her dissertation research, was originally interested in the monopolization of state institutions by certain elites. The Iranian revolution provided the opportunity to graft this onto questions of religious revival. See Madeline Zilfi, "The Ottoman Ulema 1703-1839 and the Route to Great Mollaship" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1977).

<sup>23</sup> Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).



it ignores a variety of other, often minor, preachers, authors, and figures who contributed to the supposed movement. Thus, there are always historians ready to point to the activities of a previously unknown set of actors and figures like Rūmī Aḥmed Akḥiṣārī.<sup>24</sup> Third, the preacher-centered narrative has a rather desultory end date of the 1684 with the fall of Vānī Meḥmed Efendi. One could easily point to Vānī Meḥmed's son-in-law, Feyzullah Efendi, who became the de facto ruler of the empire during the years of 1698-1703, for instance, as an example of the continuity of the movement.<sup>25</sup> These elisions, however, are not mere oversights but point to a larger problem. They suggest that the ideas and beliefs represented by the Qāḍīzādeli movement of the seventeenth century had no pull or effect either beyond the walls of Istanbul, beyond the small coterie of sultans. In other words, there was no lasting effect on larger society or past the seventeenth century. It represents a vision politics that is limited to the preachers and their pernicious influence on the sultans, who in turn enacted new laws and policies. It implies that what was occurring was not a larger shift in piety and religious practice but rather the instrumental use of religion to achieve social or economic goals.

Many of these limitations are a consequence of an overreliance on one source—a few small sections of the chronicle that the historian Naima wrote in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, decades after most of the events in question.<sup>26</sup> It is Naima's chronicle that takes disparate events and personalities and establishes them in a unified framework. Naima,

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<sup>24</sup> Sheikh, "Qāḍīzādeli Revivalism Reconsidered."

<sup>25</sup> Regarding Feyzullah Efendi see Rifa'at Abou-El-Haj, *The 1703 Rebellion and the Structure of Ottoman Politics* (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te İstanbul, 1984); Michael Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics and the Ulema Household* (Houndmills Basingstoke Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>26</sup> Naima Mustafa Efendi, *Târih-i Na'imâ (Ravzatü'l-Hüseyn fî Hulâsati Ahbârî'l-Hâfikayn)*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2007), 3:1290-301, 1434-8, 4:1704-13.

though, was not necessarily a neutral observer of these events.<sup>27</sup> He was a client of the Köprülü vizierial family and later Rāmī Meḥmed Paşa. Both of these patrons later found a political nemesis in Feyzullah Efendi, the tutor to the Ottoman prince and şeyhülislam, who was also the aforementioned Vani Efendi's son-in-law twice over. Beyond Naima's own biases, it is important to note that the narrative of a discrete movement of followers of Kāḍīzāde Meḥmed Efendi does not begin to emerge until the 1680s. Chroniclers like Peçevî and Karaçelebîzāde, who wrote in the 1650s, by which point the movement was supposed to have been fully formed, make no mention of Kāḍīzāde Meḥmed Efendi.<sup>28</sup> The printed version of Solakzade's chronicle from the 1650s mentions the Kāḍīzādelis and their actions, but none of the manuscript copies save one actually contain this event, suggesting that it was added later to the manuscript in the late 1670s.<sup>29</sup> Katib Çelebi mentions Kadizade in the 1650s in his *Mizānu'l-Hakḳ* and the *Fezleke* but these are biographical entries rather narrative renderings.<sup>30</sup> In short, the *narrative* of the Kāḍīzādelis as a movement begins to emerge only in the 1680s and mainly in the work of Naima.

Equally problematic is that Naima's, and therefore Zilfi's, narrativization of the Kāḍīzādelis lends the group too much coherence as a discrete movement. Firstly, the term "Kāḍīzādeli," was not frequently used in the seventeenth century, neither by the purported Kāḍīzādelis themselves nor by their detractors. If we were to part with the chronicles and look at

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<sup>27</sup> Lewis Thomas, *A Study of Naima*, ed. Norman Itzkowitz (New York: New York University Press, 1972).

<sup>28</sup> For a description of some of the chronicles mentioning the Kāḍīzādelis see Çavusoğlu, "The Kadizadeli Movement," 4–6.

<sup>29</sup> The manuscript in question is Şolāḳzāde Mehmed, *Tārīḥ-i Şolāḳzāde*, Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 3078. It was copied by a certain Derviş Halil b. İbrahim in 1083h. The printed copies are Şolāḳzāde Mehmed, *Tārīḥ-i Şolāḳzāde*, (Istanbul: 1297h/1879-80), 752-4 and Solak-zāde Mehmed Hemdemî Çelebî & Vahid Çabuk (tr.), *Solak-Zāde Tarihi*, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1989, Vol. 2, pp. 628-630.

<sup>30</sup> Kâtib Çelebi, *The Balance of Truth*; Katip Çelebi, *Fezleke-i Kâtib Çelebi*, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Ceride-i Havadis Matbaası, 1286), 182–83.

the writings of the supposed Ẓāḍīzādelis, we find that they simply called themselves “Muslims” and their opponents “infidels (*kuffār*).” Seventeenth-century critics of the group that we today identify as Ẓāḍīzādelis called them *munkirīn*—which literally means “deniers,” but can perhaps be more colloquially translated simply as “haters.” In other words, the Ẓāḍīzādelis did not necessarily see themselves as part of a discrete group nor did their opponents. References to the Ẓāḍīzādelis do appear in a few rare instances in the eighteenth century, but more as a general synonym for zealots than as a recognizable movement.<sup>31</sup> For example, in a short tract in defense of the graves of saints and prophets in early eighteenth-century Syria, Muṣṭafa al-Bakrī calls his opponents the “*Zādaliyya*,” followers of a certain pious shaykh named “Zādā.”<sup>32</sup> It is a misnomer that arises from his poor Turkish and failure to understand the term “Ẓāḍīzādeli.” The term Ẓāḍīzādeli literally means “Judge-son-er” but our Syrian scholar misread or misheard the name as “Judge Zada,” failing to realize that “zada” is simply the Persian filial suffix and not an individual’s name. (Had he known Turkish he would have called them the *Qāḍīzādaliyya* in Arabic). The mistake suggests that the Ẓāḍīzādelis were such an amorphous entity that even a well-educated early eighteenth-century scholar could not get their name right. The false delineation of the group has led to a variety of useful but perhaps misguided historical exercises on the part of scholars today. For instance, one constantly finds Sufis expounding supposedly Ẓāḍīzādeli positions, which has led historians to label a variety of seventeenth-century religious

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<sup>31</sup> See the example cited later in the chapter by al-Hamawī in 1680s Cairo, and the citation of Ẓāḍīzādeli from mid-eighteenth century Sarajevo in Kerima Filan, “Saraybosnalı Mollâ Mustafâ’nın Mecmûası Işığında Bir Osmanlının Topluma Bakışı,” in *Eski Türk Edebiyat Çalışmaları VII: Mecmûa: Osmanlı Edebiyatının Kırkamarı*, ed. Hatice Aynur (Istanbul: Turkuaz, 2012), 271–90.

<sup>32</sup> Muṣṭafa al-Bakrī al-Siddīqī, *Bur’ al-Asqām fī Ziyārat Barza wa’l-Maqām*, ed. Ghalib Anabsi (Kafr Qar’: Center of Arabic Literature Studies, Bet Berl, 2009), 116.

leaders as Kādīzādeli Sufis.<sup>33</sup> In other instances, scholars have attempted to find, with mixed success, a social class that undergirded the Kādīzādelis.<sup>34</sup>

By continuing to employ the Kādīzādeli narrative, historians are implicitly adopting and furthering Naima's and Zilfi's presumptions.<sup>35</sup> Naima's political commitments, coupled with the genre conventions of chronicle writing in the period, led him to cast the Kādīzādelis as a movement limited to a few key preachers capable of influencing the palace and the masses, a momentary hiccup of Islamic conservatism that occurred every few centuries. This narrative in turn found a welcome home in the social scientific scholarship on Islamic revival in the 1980s that often emphasized the instrumentalist adoption of religion as a means of social protest by those modernization had failed. It is a socio-historical explanation of the religious transformation of the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century. It assumes the existence of an inherent original orthodox Islam, whose banner is ready to be taken up as a cause by a certain disaffected social class. Yet, as I have demonstrated above, identifying a specific class or a coherent movement of Kādīzādeli supporters or participants is relatively difficult.

I therefore suggest that historians refrain from using the narrative of the Kādīzādeli movement in their explanations of early modern religious life. This does not mean that figures like Kādīzāde did not exist or that the aforementioned fights over the verity of saints did not occur, rather that the predominant narrativization of these events is faulty. Seventeenth-century

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<sup>33</sup> Dina Le Gall, "Forgotten Naqshbandis and the Culture of Pre-Modern Sufi Brotherhoods," *Studia Islamica* 97 (2003): 87–119; Dina Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism: Naqshbandīs in the Ottoman World, 1450-1700* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005).

<sup>34</sup> The attempt to associate the Kādīzādelis with a merchant community is given a go in Marinos Sariyannis, "The Kadızadeli Movement as a Social and Political Phenomenon: The Rise of a 'Mercantile Ethic'?", in *Halcyon Days in Crete VII: Political Initiatives "from the Bottom Up" in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Antonis Anastasopoulos (Rethymno, Greece: Crete University Press, 2012), 263–89.

<sup>35</sup> The reliance on and mirroring of chronicles is most clearly seen in Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam*.

Ottoman society was highly polarized, with people constantly calling each other heretics and infidels. This is due to shifts in the definition of Islam itself, in the practices that undergirded this tradition, and thus involved all layers of society, not just a small social group.<sup>36</sup>

### *An Anthropologist's Response*

The strongest response to the framework of Islamic fundamentalism has come from outside the discipline of history. Talal Asad, Saba Mahmood, Charles Hirschkind, and others have attempted to understand the Islamic revival as more than the revival of Islamic tradition rebelling against insurmountable modernity, but as a reconfiguration of morality and politics in the face of the predominant secular liberalism of the past two centuries.<sup>37</sup> Together they have interrogated the notion that the private, moral, religious sphere of human action must remain separate from the realm of politics.

Mahmood felicitously titled her book *The Politics of Piety*, the same title that Zilfi gave to her book on the *Ḳāḏīzādelis*, which makes it a convenient counterpart and starting point. In Mahmood's view, Islamic revival movements, even if they eschew the traditional arena of electoral politics, are inherently political in that their insistence on changing public morality presents a deep challenge to the secular-liberal notion that religious practice and ethics must be confined to the sphere of private, individual belief.<sup>38</sup> This is an important departure from Zilfi's

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<sup>36</sup> In this, I follow the insights of Terzioğlu, "Where Ilm-i Hal Meets Catechism," 85.

<sup>37</sup> Asad, *Formations of the Secular*; Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

<sup>38</sup> Mahmood and Hirschkind's interpretation of Islamic piety movements of the past generation met some criticism in the wake of the revolutions and revolts in the Arab world in the early 2010s, when ordinary citizens made rather recognizably liberal political claims for representation and rights, but their overall framework retains its use. See Charles Hirschkind, "Beyond Secular and Religious: An Intellectual Genealogy of Tahrir Square," *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 1 (2012): 49–53.

work in its insistence that we take seriously the words and feelings of those involved in Islamic piety movements, rather than simply seeing them as representing a befuddled false consciousness of sorts.<sup>39</sup> Piety in Mahmood's view is not used as a tool through which to channel socio-economic woes, but as a reorientation of subjectivities, and a means to challenge the separation between the religious and secular.

Mahmood's, and by extension, Talal Asad's, interrogation of the category of religion and her description of the challenge that Islamic revival movements pose to such categorization is invaluable. Yet, the challenge inherent in the Islamic piety movements she describes only has valence in the modern period, a period in which secular-liberal modernity reigns. After all, what would it mean to revive Islamic norms and subjectivities in a period prior to this, when no specific category of religion exists? How was the private or moral sphere constructed in the early modern period? The insights of Asad and Mahmood flatten all distinctions in the premodern period and turn pre-modern Islam into a tradition in which religion, morality, and politics are naturally one and the same. Shahab Ahmed, in his recent posthumous book, turns this seeming limitation into a feature of pre-modern Islam. As mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, Ahmed creates a space called the Balkans-to-Bengal complex which is a "the common paradigm of Islamic life and thought," a place in which a norm-less Islam could expand to all aspects of life, in ways that seem quite contradictory to us today.<sup>40</sup> He adds a layer of historicity by splitting the pre-modern in two, a formative period from 650-1300 and a more

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<sup>39</sup> Aspects of this approach can also be found in Marc Baer's investigations of the meaning of conversion in the seventeenth-century Ottoman world. see *Honored by the Glory of Islam*.

<sup>40</sup> Shahab Ahmed, *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 73–85.

productive, open period from 1300-1800. The end point, though, is essentially the imposition of the Western category of “religion” onto Islam with the coming of colonialism.

Both frameworks, then, suffer from a distinct lack of historicity. Those proffering the fundamentalism view argue for some basic, ahistorical form of Islamic orthodoxy or norms that are championed by certain social groups. Asadian critiques can turn the premodern into a primordial muck in which categories of religion and thought cease to exist until the shock of colonialism. In the sections that follow, I chart a course between these two poles of thought to find a historicity effaced by their approaches. The obvious starting point is the assertion that the events of the early modern period contributed to transformation of Islamic religiosity, and indeed, to the very category of religion in the empire. I have already covered the most common historicization used by scholars of the Ottoman Empire, that is, the *Ḳāḍīzādeli* movement, which holds that the economic and social pressures of the empire during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century drove the rise of an Islamic fundamentalism. I have argued however that it is quite difficult to prove that the *Ḳāḍīzādeli* movement was a coherent social movement. I turn now to other theories of early modern change put forth by historians, and then turn to how a culture of heresy led to both shifts in Islamic orthodoxy and the category of religion itself.

### **Newer Theories of Early Modern Islamic Change and Transformation**

The most straightforward attempt to give us a fuller view of the early modern period comes from the neo-philologists who have tried to unearth the various Islamic texts on medieval Islamic revival movements. The approach taken is to draw a line of thought connecting the supposed early fourteenth-century progenitor of Islamic *salafī*sm or revival, Ibn Taymiyya, and

the current day, making stops along the way in the Kādīzādeli movement and the Wahhabis.<sup>41</sup>

The technique, while excavating important figures like Rūmī Ahmed Akḥīṣārī, suffers from the basic shortcomings of any history of ideas, namely, an inability or inclination to connect the existence of ideas to its social context.

Two other attempts to historicize the religious transformation of the early modern Ottoman Empire focus on new, and old, material spaces. One of these interpretations is that the seventeenth-century controversies were a result of the profusion of urban culture and institutions, which provided new spaces for public discussion and debate.<sup>42</sup> In this narrative, it is the advent of the coffeehouse and other public spaces in the late sixteenth century that fuels religious polemic. Coffee, along with its constant friend, tobacco, become contentious substances not only for their novelty but for the social spaces they enabled. The coffeehouse becomes a social space without the social stigma of the tavern or the closed membership of the *majlis* (symposium), and thus allowed for new and diverse groups of people to come together to talk, gossip, and, of course, debate one another.<sup>43</sup> In other words, there was not necessarily a transformation in religious subjectivity or practices, but rather a change in the social space of discussion that allowed them to reach polemical levels. There is certainly a great deal of truth to this theory and one could also examine how traditional sites like mosques became new social spaces that

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<sup>41</sup> e.g. Mustapha Sheikh, “Taymiyyan Influences in an Ottoman-Hanafi Milieu: The Case of Ahmad Al-Rumi Al-Aqhisari,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 25, no. 1 (January 2015): 1–20; Currie, “Kadizadeli Ottoman Scholarship”; A well-thought response to such work can be found in Derin Terzioğlu, “Bir Tercüme ve bir Intihal Vakası: ya da İbn Teymiyye’nin Siyasetü’ş-Şer’iyye’sini Osmanlıcaya Kim(ler), Nasıl Aktardı,” *Türklük Bilgisi Araştırmaları* 31/II (2007): 247–75.

<sup>42</sup> Cemal Kafadar and his students have been the largest proponents of such a view though this view is never fully explicated. See, forthcoming work by Aslihan Gürbüz.

<sup>43</sup> Ralph Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East* (1985: University of Washington Press, 1985); Regarding the majlis as a social institution, see Helen Pfeifer, “To Gather Together: Cultural Encounters in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Literary Salons” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2014).



accommodated more mass gatherings, which often turned riotous. However, this interpretation does not explain why certain practices became contentious, other than coffee or tobacco, of course. Why should issues such as saint worship or the possible damnation of the Prophet Muhammad's parents become fraught topics, for example? In this sense, the "urban public space" theory can fall too easily into the pattern of reifying an innate Islamic orthodoxy.

If some scholars argue that growing urbanity itself played a role in religious shifts of the early modern period, James Grehan has recently argued that the religious life of early modern cities was largely irrelevant. The learned scholars and their contentious fights never touched upon the majority of the population, who lived a rural existence and were therefore ensconced in an "agrarian religion" that was defined by the attachment to the cult of the saints.<sup>44</sup> Only the technological and infrastructural transformations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries delivered the necessary shocks to dismantle this world of the saints and miracles. In a historiography that continuously emphasizes the power of the cultural, Grehan's narrative is one of the few to take material conditions seriously. Few have examined the religious life of the countryside so deeply. Yet, Grehan's materiality often comes across as Marxisant, tying a superstructure of saintly religiosity and nature worship to the substructure of agrarian modes of production. Moreover, the sort of agrarian stasis he argues for precludes any sort of premodern circulation, such as the movement of pilgrims or judges or books, to name a few. Pilgrims from distant lands brought with them different conceptions of the holy while the constant rotation of state officials could bring along those who wished to chop down saintly trees and shrines.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> James Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints: Everyday Religion in Ottoman Syria and Palestine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>45</sup> Fatwa in margins of Katib Çelebi, *Mizānū'l-Ḥaqq*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Çelebi Abdullah 393, f. 51b.

The most significant reinterpretation the religious transformation of the early modern Ottoman Empire—one in which orthodoxy is nearly completely socially constructed—comes from the recent work of Tijana Krstic, Derin Terzioğlu, and others. Together, Krstic and Terzioğlu, have reinterpreted the religious transformation of the early modern period as emerging from the use and control of religion as a tool of state building and centralization, especially during the sixteenth century. They label this process “confessionalization,” a term initially used by scholars of European history in the 1970s and 1980s but recently reintroduced by Krstic as an applicable model to understand the connected histories of early modern religious change across the Middle East and Europe.<sup>46</sup> It is possible to reduce, in a crude manner, the concept of confessionalization to the formation of a state religion, but it has a more complex and nuanced heritage. Some scholars have focused on the tensions of inter-imperial rivalry as leading to the increased identification of the Ottoman state and dynasty as particularly Sunni Muslim, in contrast to its Catholic Habsburg or Shī‘a Safavid rivals.<sup>47</sup> Terzioğlu, on the other hand, has taken the concept of confessionalization further and posited a convincing synthesis of how the Ottoman Empire underwent a gradual and multi-faceted process of “sunnitization.”<sup>48</sup>

Demonstrating how the process of state identification with Sunnism had roots in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, she presents a narrative of the gradual strengthening and centralization of frontier polities in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that drew on the knowledge of urban and

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<sup>46</sup> Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam : Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

<sup>47</sup> Markus Dressler, “Inventing Orthodoxy: Competing Claims for Authority and Legitimacy in the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict,” in *Legitimizing the Order : The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. Hakan T Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 151–73; Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*.

<sup>48</sup> Derin Terzioğlu, “How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization: A Historiographical Discussion,” *Turcica* 44 (2013 2012): 301–38.

migrant scholars to mold religious practice and belief. As Terzioğlu points out, much of this process had begun well before the Kızılbaş revolts flared and the Safavid threat appeared, though imperial expansion and rivalry was surely one motor that consistently drove the dynasty to claim a Sunni, and Hanafi, identity for both itself and its subjects.<sup>49</sup> The legal codes of the empire were systematized and reconciled with the shari'a and an ambitious program of congregational mosque building in every town and city in the empire was undertaken in the mid to late sixteenth century.<sup>50</sup>

The new religious history of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries reframes the origins of the pietistic movement in the seventeenth century. Whereas the Kādīzādelis had previously seemed like a cyclical eruption of Islamic fundamentalism, Krstić and Terzioğlu's work makes them the product, albeit, perhaps unplanned, of state imposition of religious identity onto its subjects. According to Krstić and Terzioğlu, the Kādīzādelis and the broader pietistic movement signaled a shift to confessionalization "from below" whereas the previous century had emphasized confessionalization "from above."<sup>51</sup> The other major distinction is that while fifteenth and sixteenth-century religious anxieties revolved around differentiating between Muslims and Christians, seventeenth-century tracts were primarily aimed at differentiating between different types of Muslims. The increased role of imperial states in regulating and shaping the boundaries of the religious sphere in the early modern period, whether one terms it confessionalization or not, is, to a large degree, undeniable. As Guy Burak has recently shown,

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire : The Historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986); Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

<sup>51</sup> Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 14.

post-Mongol dynasties tried to mold and shift the *shari'a*, a system of law traditionally under the control of independent jurists, by establishing hierarchies of state-appointed scholars.<sup>52</sup>

Of the different frameworks for understanding the development of religiosity during the early modern period, confessionalization has been the most compelling. Its capacity to tie imperial rivalries while integrating non-Muslims into the story of the transformation of Islamic religiosity has allowed for an expanded set of research questions. When confessionalization is interpreted or applied crudely, it can be seen as simply the direct capacity of the state to socially construct the role and content of the religion. This will most likely be the most common usage given the traditional emphasis of Ottoman historians on detailing the workings of the state. I would, however, take the more expansive interpretation offered by Terzioğlu. Namely, that confessionalization has the capacity to connect a variety of phenomena previously regarded as isolated.<sup>53</sup> Building on this, my intent in this dissertation as a whole is to look less at how the Ottoman state transformed Islamic religiosity than the sets of networks and circuits it established and the unintended transformations to Islamic religiosity and the category of religion that resulted.<sup>54</sup> It is hopefully a framework that can accommodate a variety of other actors, human and non-human, into its midst. On that note, the second half of this chapter now sketches out the relationship between heresy, the Ottoman state, and the definition of religion.

## **Saints and Sinners in Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth-Century Cairo**

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<sup>52</sup> Guy Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law: The Hanafī School in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>53</sup> Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization," 305.

<sup>54</sup> The difference between my question and theirs might be that I am not examining why the Ottoman Empire, that is, the state, became Sunni, rather I am looking at changes to Islam, as a religiosity and an intellectual and cultural system as a whole.

One of the signature events of Veli Paşa's reign as governor of Egypt was a riot of sorts that began at the mosque of al-Mu'ayyed in 1711. Over the course of several days, a preacher of Rumi origin drew a swelling, tumultuous crowd with his sermons. He denied the ability of the saints (*awliyā*) to perform miracles (*karamāt*) after their death, and challenged the belief that both saints and prophets, even the Prophet Muhammad, had any capacity to look at the Eternal Tablet (*lūḥ-i mahfūz*), that is to be able to know, and thus impact, the future. He went on to anathematize those who lit candles and lamps at graves as well as those who built domes over graves and even called for the destruction of some of the prominent Sufi lodges in Cairo, decrying those who performed séances (*dhikr*) in front of Bab al-Zuwayla next door. According to some accounts, but not others, he then incited his listeners to take cudgels and swords and attack these dervishes, and, perhaps more importantly, cut down the broadcloth and knobs (*ukar*) on the shrines, taunting believers with the words, "where are you saints now?" In response, some people went to shaykhs of al-Azhar and received a *fatwa* (legal opinion) declaring the preacher a heretic who needed to repent for his heretical statements or be killed. When the preacher saw the *fatwa*, he and a thousand followers marched through the streets of Cairo until they reached the house of the leading juridical official in Cairo (*kāzī'asker*). They demanded that the judge annul the heresy fatwa and summon the two scholars who had issued it to have a disputation with their shaykh; if the two scholars failed to uphold their charges, have them killed. The judge demurred, saying it was already the middle of a Ramadan afternoon and his fasting clerks had already left the office for the day. He told the angry mob to come back tomorrow. When the translator (or possibly the court usher) went out to tell the crowd this decision (in Arabic), they beat him senseless and tore his clothes to pieces, while the judge ran into his harem for safety.

The following day, the preacher had mysteriously disappeared. Suspecting foul play on the part of the judge, the mob marched back to the courthouse and forced the judge, who claimed to have no knowledge of the preacher's whereabouts, to accompany them to the Citadel and speak to the governor (*pāṣā*). After the judge explained his situation to the governor, and the mob was requested to state its demands, the governor gave the crowd an order (*firmān/buyuruldu*) to summon the original fatwa-issuing shaykhs and told the crowd to come back tomorrow to settle the matter. The crowd went out from the Citadel and back to the mosque where the chroniclers intimate to the reader that the preacher's disappearance was all a ruse as the preacher was then taken out of the cells (*halvet*) and informed of their success. In the meantime, the governor called the heads of the different military factions and informed them of the crowd's impertinence (*edebsizlik*) for having stormed the courthouse and the citadel. He requests that they deal with the incipient dissension (*fitna*). The captains set out to arrest all the inciters and banish the preacher but when they arrived at al-Mu'ayyed mosque the following morning they found it clear of all inciters. Those left were arrested and beaten and the preacher made a secret escape out of Egypt and to Jerusalem.

Although the incident lasted only about two weeks, at least five chronicles from the eighteenth century, in both Turkish and Arabic, found the events important enough to detail.<sup>55</sup> As such, the incident stands out as one of the few moments that the religious fights of the seventeenth century enter into the chronicles of the period. This incident thus serves as a gateway

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<sup>55</sup> Aḥmad Shalabi b. Abd al-Ghani al-Ḥanafī al-Miṣrī, *Awḍaḥ al-Ishārāt fī Man Tawalla Miṣr al-Qāhira min al-Wuzarā' wa'l-Bāshāt (al-mulaqqab bi'l-Tārīkh al-'Aynī)*, ed. Abd al-Raḥīm Abd al-Raḥman Abd al-Raḥīm (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khanjī, 1978), 251–55; Yusuf al-Millawānī (Yusuf el-Maylawī) known as Ibn al-Wakīl, *Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb bi-Man Malaka Miṣr min al-Mulūk wa'l-Nawāb*, ed. al-Shushtawī Muhammad al-Shushtawī (Cairo: Dār al-Afāq al-'Arabiyya, 1999), 202–4. Abdulkarīm, *Tārīḥ-i Miṣr*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Hekimoğlu 705, ff. 147a-150b; Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Hallaq, *Tārīḥ-i Miṣr*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserleri Kütüphanesi, MS T628, ff. 296b-301b and Österreichisches Nationalbibliothek MS HO 37, fl. 243a-248b. The episode was also mention in al-Jabarti's History of Egypt.

to explore changes to the religious culture of the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire. How did the society become so divided, its members so quick to anathematize each other and to call each other heretics? What was the role of violence in the religious fights of the seventeenth century and is violence the proper metric for gauging the severity of religious polemic? How did Muslims attempt to break out of this new heightened world of heresy?

At the same time, the incident was also one of the first attempts by historians of the Middle East to highlight early instances of “fundamentalism” following the Islamic Revolution in Iran and thus a good place to reexamine the frameworks historians use to understand the religious culture of the early modern Ottoman Empire, as outlined in the first part of the chapter.<sup>56</sup> However, because the event occurred in Cairo, and not Istanbul, it has been largely overlooked by Ottoman historians. Like the *Ḳāḍīzādeli* narrative, analysis of the event has been pushed squarely into the framework of social history: unrealized social mobility drives a marginal social group to take up the cause of an ahistorical orthodox Islam as an instrument of protest. In this case, there is also an ethnic element of the Turkish-speaking, or *Rūmī*, preacher initiating the events. In Rudolph Peters’ interpretation, the Turkish-speaking graduate students from Anatolia, frustrated at the bleak prospects for their future in the professoriate back home and resentful at the economic mobility of their Egyptian colleagues, decide to attack Sufism as a particularly unequal form of social organization.<sup>57</sup> The problem, though, is that it is rather difficult to associate these beliefs with any one social group or class. Moreover, that analysis is built on a slightly shaky foundation. Peters amalgamates four accounts into one general account,

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<sup>56</sup> Flemming, “Die Vorwahhabitische Fitna Im Osmanischen Kairo 1711”; Rudolph Peters, “The Battered Dervishes of Bab Zuwayla: A Religious Riot in Eighteenth-Century Cairo,” in *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion and John O. Voll (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 93–115.

<sup>57</sup> Peters, “The Battered Dervishes,” 100–101.

ironing out the subtle but significant differences, such as the role of violence or ethnicity in the events.

In this section, I argue that the events of 1711 do not mark a short-lived and violent paroxysm of orthodoxy, but rather the increased polarization of Egyptian, and Ottoman, society over the course of seventeenth century. By the time the quasi-riot occurred in 1711, many in Cairo were willing to anathematize and even attack each other over questions such as the reality of saints' miracles. The main question here is not what practices became heretical, although the intensity and scope of the polemic surrounding saint worship did become amplified, but how the fragmentation and polarization of society into mutually anathematizing segments occurred. In the sections that follow, I demonstrate how the definition of heresy, and the notion of religion as a whole, changed. The requirements for proving heresy shifted away from explicit declarations of unfaith to much more minor actions and words that could be interpreted as unbelief. Numerous people in the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire were keenly interested in heresy, fueling a flood not only of polemical treatises as to proper practices of Muslims but also of new heresiographies and other works on the nature of heresy. We need to turn to these new sources to uncover the changes in heresy and the definition of religion.

One of the most commonly debated measures of heresy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries revolved around the capacity of saints to perform miracles and possess special powers. This topic was at the heart of the fights in Cairo in 1711. The basic claim was that the saints were no different than other humans and thus incapable of beseeching God for miracles following their death and lacked special powers whether alive or dead. In the major narrativization of the quasi-riot in Cairo, this was seen as part of the notion of fundamentalism. This however, was not



an isolated incident, a small fight that flared up. The fact that the claim seems unusual springs from the genre conventions of the chronicle form—which highlighted the incident not for the views of the preacher, or the possible attack on the *dhikr* performers, but for the attack on the *kaziasker* and governor’s court. This section demonstrates that there was an ongoing discussion on the nature of sainthood in many levels of Cairene society throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

If we turn away from the chronicles and begin to reconstruct the debates through various pamphlets and other writings from the period, we gain a sense of a society in which tensions are increasingly rising until heretical actions become moments to anathematize large segments of the society. For example, the Egyptian scholar Muhammad al-Shawbarī (d. 1658-9) fielded the questions of a few petitioners sometime in the mid-seventeenth century in regard to both the capacities of the saints and the right for people to question the saints’ powers:

What do you have to say in regard to the saints (*awliyā*)? Do they have *wujūd*? Are their miracles established? Do their special powers (*taṣarruf*) end with their death? ... Is it permitted to ask them to intercede with God? Do prominent men, nobles, and leaders (*awtād wa aqnāb wa nuqabā*) and such have *wujūd*? ... And what comes to those who prohibit all that was mentioned? When a saint dies, does he determine whether his saintliness continues on (*yaḥkum bi-biqā’ wilāyatihī*) or not, given the possibility that he did not die as a Muslim (*l’iḥtimāl mawtihi ‘ala ḡayr al-islām*)? Is it acceptable to kiss the sarcophagi (*tawābīt*) and thresholds of the saints? Is it established that prophets are capable of grand miracles and saints of lesser miracles (*thabata ‘an mā kāna mu’jiza li-nabi kāna karāma li-walī*)? And if a person swears that Sīdī Aḥmad al-Badawī and others like him are saints, is he sinning/perjuring (*yaḥnath*)? Is it established with proof or not?<sup>58</sup>

The questions posed to Shawbarī reveal some general doubts and anxieties regarding the status and reality of the saints in the face of criticism. The criticism focuses on the precise ontological status of the saints, both before and after death, their difference from ordinary human leaders, and how they are able to influence the material world. From the questions it is clear that what

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<sup>58</sup> Muḥammad al-Shawbarī, *Fatwa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi 1446, f. 248b; Atif Efendi Kütüphanesi MS 2787, f. 86b

was under dispute was not the possibility of miracles themselves, which were always acts of God granted to either his friends (i.e. saints) or prophets.<sup>59</sup> Rather, it was the notion that a human could be so special that he possessed special powers (*taṣarruf*) in life and could even after his death, maintain a presence in this world so that he could request miracles (*karāmāt*) from God. The questions then move onto the permissibility of practices that are used to honor saints as well as attest to their reality, in this case, regarding one of the major saints of Egypt, Sīdī Aḥmad al-Badawī.<sup>60</sup>

More interesting, however, is the language used to describe critics of the saints. The questioner, while expressing some anxiety regarding the criticism, used relatively tame terms. The words heresy and anathematization, *kufr* and *takfīr*, respectively, do not appear in the discussion at this point. Critics of saint worship do not deny or condemn (*inkār*), the terms found in later discussions, but “prohibit (*manʿ*),” a more civil term. Attesting to the reality of the saints does not make one an infidel but rather a “sinner (*hīn*).” And the questioner does not ask whether those who criticize the saints are infidels and should be executed, but the rather more open-ended “what comes to them (*yatarattab ʿala*).” Shawbarī’s response to these questions likewise is not terribly polemical or defensive, he says that all is permitted and the saints have influence in this world following their death and politely ignores the question as to what should happen to those who attempt to prohibit saint worship. Yet, a few decades later, in 1679 (1090h), when a scholar from the Nile Delta named Shāhīn b. Shaykh Wāsim, copied down Shawbarī’s pamphlet, he titled it “a fatwa regarding those who deny (*ankara*) the miracles of the saints, alive

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<sup>59</sup> In other words, the critique of the saints is not tied to an incipient materialism.

<sup>60</sup> The importance of many of these saints, whether al-Badawī or even al-Shāfiʿī cannot be overstated. Major political and religious ceremonies, as well as personal milestones, took place at the tombs. For instance, rebels in Cairo in 1610 swore an oath at the tomb of Sīdī Aḥmad al-Badawī.

or dead, God grant us victory over those who deny this.”<sup>61</sup> It was an escalation of rhetoric that was to mark much of the polemical debate in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

This escalation can be found throughout Egyptian society in the late seventeenth century, from the streets to the governor’s assemblies. By the 1660s, ‘Abd al-Bāqī b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 1667) wrote a small pamphlet in which he noted that “it has become common to question the miracles of the saints of the Merciful after their passing to the next realm (*barzakh*).”<sup>62</sup> To make his position clear, he named his work *Sharpened Swords at the Necks of Those who Deny the Miracles of the Saints after their Death*.<sup>63</sup> Around the same time, the Egyptian scholar Aḥmad b. Aḥmad al-‘Ajamī (d. 1675) presented a more philosophical proof of the existence of the saints that he introduced with the observation that the critique of the saints had spread throughout the city, noting that “it has become common now in the practice (*sunna*) of preachers to mention that the miracles of saints come to an end (*tunqati* ‘) after their deaths and that beseeching them and seeking their intercession is not permitted.” To make his own position clear, he quickly states that “it is not as they claim though,” and embarks on a polemical rebuttal of their points and obliquely suggests that they are Mu‘tazilīs and need to be punished (*ta‘zīr*).<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> “*fī man ankara karamāt al-awliyā fī hayātihim wa mamātihim fataḥa Allah man ankara dhalik*” Al-Shawbarī, *Fatwa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi 1446, f. 248a, 252a.

<sup>62</sup> Imām al-Ashrafiyya, ‘Abd al-Bāqī b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, *al-Suyūf al-Ṣiqāl fī Raqabat man Yunkiru Karāmāt al-Awliyā ‘ba ‘d al-Intiqāl*, Maktabat Jāmi‘a al-Malak al-Sa‘ūd, Riyadh, MS 3451, f. 1a

<sup>63</sup> The word رقية in the title can alternately be understood as “neck (*raqaba*)” or “wariness (*riqba*)” which provides the slightly less ominous interpretation of *Swords at Ready: Being Wary of those who Deny the Miracles of the Saints after Death*

<sup>64</sup> Aḥmad al-‘Ajamī, *Ithbāt Karāmāt al-Awliyā ‘ba ‘d Mawtihim*, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, Ahmed Pasa 335, f. 154b, 157b. His counterpoints to the critics of the saints are the aforementioned al-Shawbarī and Khayr al-Dīn al-Ramlī, mentioned below. He obliquely quotes Ramlī to suggest that the critics are Mutazilis and uses an unknown section of al-Shawbarī to suggest that deniers of the saints’ miracles should be lashed (*ta‘zīr*)

If preachers brought a critique of sainthood to the streets, mosques, and coffeehouses, it was also intensely debated in the governor's court as well. The scholar Ahmad al-Ḥamawī (d. 1687) wrote in 1680 one of the more biting defenses of saint worship at the request of the governor 'Abdurrahman Paşa (r. 1676-80), who had arranged for a debate to occur on the subject in his assembly (*majlis*). In Ḥamawī's work, we find the first appearance of the claim by critics that it is heretical to even argue that the saints can continue to dispense miracles following their death thanks to their powers.<sup>65</sup> At first, Ḥamawī, after an elaborate proof, questions how one could anathematize someone for simply trying to establish that saints' miracles exist. Then, however, he starts railing against the critics, accusing them of misleading the commoners and dressing up their critique in the guise of faith, whereas they are really possessed by Satan.<sup>66</sup> He says it is a wonder they are called Sunnis (*ahl al-sunna*), when they are rather people of heresy (*ahl al-bida'a*) and compares them even to the Ẓāḍīzādelis in lands of the Rum, whom he considers to be on a slippery slope (*jurf hārī*) to becoming Mu'tazilīs, the word most commonly used for generic internal enemies of the faith.<sup>67</sup> Then, right before he ends, he bites his tongue, pulls back from his rage, and quotes al-Ṭahāwī (d. 933/321h) that "the scholar must, if this

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<sup>65</sup> Ahmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥamawī, *Nafaḥāt al-qurb wa-l-ittiṣāl bi-ithbāt al-taṣarruf li-awliyā' Allāh ta'ālā wa-l-karāma ba'd al-intiqāl*, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, Ahmedpasa 335, f. 163a. Hamawī's treatise was quite popular throughout the Ottoman Empire. This particular copy from Istanbul, is one of two autograph copies and has al-'Ajamī's treatise bound together in the same volume. The autograph was purposefully collected by a visiting Meccan scholar and fan of al-Ḥamawī, 'Abdurrahman b. Muḥammad, shortly after the author's death. This 'Abdurrahman seems to eventually have entered into the employ of Mehmed Efendi b. Faḫlallah of Bolu, who was serving as judge in the Egyptian port city of al-Rashīd in 1706, and 'Abdurrahman copied a few other treatises for the judge. The judge, Mehmed Efendi, also eventually copied down al-Ajamī's treatise and, perhaps on his return to Istanbul, it was eventually bought by the learned scion and short-serving grand vizier of the Köprülü family, Nu'man Köprülüzade, who left his ownership mark on the whole volume sometime before 1710. Nu'man Efendi was an avid collector of works on the saints and Hızır.

<sup>66</sup> al-Ḥamawī, *Nafaḥāt al-qurb* f. 166ab

<sup>67</sup> al-Ḥamawī, *Nafaḥāt al-qurb* f. 167a

arises, not rush to anathematize the people of Islam” and “not exclude a man from the faith unless he explicitly states his apostasy (*ridda*).”<sup>68</sup>

In the next two decades, whatever was left of this restraint or hesitancy to anathematize quickly faded. In 1694, the famous Damascene scholar ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nābulusī visited Cairo and was handed by his friend Muṣṭafa al-Rūmī, a popular pamphlet containing the collected opinions (*fatwas*) of a number of al-Azhar shaykhs on two sets of questions. One was the set of inquiries regarding the capacity of saints to perform miracles following their deaths and the permissibility of visiting their tombs in search of intercession. The other set centered on the permissibility of vocal *dhikr*, which the questioner described as “circles called *huwiyya*, spinning and devotedly saying, ‘*hū, hū, hū,*’ seeking thereby to remember God, becoming crazed with passion and desire for what they must do in the service of the beautiful names of God ...”<sup>69</sup> The importance of these fatwas was not just the commonplace approval of saint worship and *dhikr* but the anathematization of their critics. According to the questioner, the opponents of *dhikr* and saints repeatedly cast their practitioners as heretics, and “beyond the circle of Islam,” whose actions were comparable to those of al-Sāmīrī (the Samaritan), that is, the man who led the Jews in Sinai to create and worship the false idol of the Golden Calf.<sup>70</sup> The questioner then introduces two new terms to the discussion, slander (*qadh*) and calumny (*iftirā*). This leads to the question of “if this [practice] is permissible then what must happen to these slanderous objectors of those masters, so deeply rooted in the timeless Muhammadian tradition. Must the authorities forcibly

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<sup>68</sup> al-Ḥamawī, *Nafaḥāt al-qurb* f. 170a

<sup>69</sup> ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa’l-Majāz fī Riḥlat Bilād al-Shām wa Miṣr wa’l-Ḥijāz*, ed. Riyād ‘Abdulḥamīd Murād (Dimashq: Dar al-Ma‘rifah, 1998), 2:221-2.

<sup>70</sup> Regarding the story of al-Sāmīrī in the Qur’an 20:83-98 and B. Heller & A. Rippin, “al-Sāmīrī,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

suppress (*zajr*) those that object to it? Is this the case now and if not when is it the case?”<sup>71</sup> As one would expect from a polemical pamphlet, the Azhari shaykhs are all overwhelmingly favorable to *dhikr* and the saints and they decry the critics of such practices. They varied a bit, however, in their response as to how the authorities should deal with such critics. Some told the critics to repent while others told them to renew their faith, marking their formal exclusion, and subsequent reintegration, into the Muslim community. Similarly, they all thought that the authorities should forcibly and quickly “suppress” critics of saint worship and who falsely declared other Muslims heretics.<sup>72</sup> Many however went further by declaring that they should be disciplined, and even “to set the sword upon [those who oppose the truth] in order to stifle others like him.”<sup>73</sup>

By the time the quasi-riot occurred in Cairo in 1711, polarization had escalated to the point each side was willing to anathematize the other without hesitation. As one chronicler remarked before relating the story of the incident in Cairo in 1711, “in those days the commoners (*re‘āyā*) had split into two groups, each calling itself good and the other bad (*ḥaram ve sa‘d*), each trying to control the other through killing, looting, beating, and robbing.”<sup>74</sup> The Rumi preacher with which I began this story, called those who believed in and practiced saint worship infidels and in turn they acquired a fatwa calling for the preacher and his followers to repent or be executed. The “battered dervishes” that were the focus of Peters’ narrativization of the events,

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<sup>71</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa’l-Majāz*, 2:222.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 2:222-7.

<sup>73</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa’l-Majāz* Regarding the call to repent see the response of Muḥammad al-Aḥmadī al-Shāfi‘ī on p. 2:223; for the call to renew their faith see Abi’l-‘Izz Aḥmad al-‘Ajamī al-Shāfi‘ī al-Wafā’ī on p. 2:227; for call to kill the detractors see Muḥammad al-Muhalhil al-Mālikī on p. 2:223.

<sup>74</sup> “Anuñ zamānında re‘āyā iki fırka ḥaram ve sa‘d dedikleri biri birine muşallaṭ olub katl ve seleb ve ġāret ve nehb ederler idi” Abdülkerim, *Tārīḥ-i Mişr*, Hekimoğlu 705, f. 147b

were not particularly exceptional then. The four or five chroniclers who included the event in their works mentioned it not because of the attack on the dervishes, but because of the attack on the kaziasker and the march to the governor's court, a direct challenge to state power. Two of the chronicles made no mention of the attack on the dervishes at all.<sup>75</sup> Other chroniclers simply did not find the incident worthy to begin with.<sup>76</sup>

The selective gaze of the chronicles forces us to turn to other sources to reconstruct this process of polarization and mutual anathematization. In this section, I have attempted to use the polemical "pamphlet" literature to reconstruct the debate more fully. Yet, all the pamphlets that I have traced and consulted are resolutely supportive of saints and saint worship. Where, then, are the pamphlets attacking the saints? On the one hand, it seems that the critique of sainthood resided in the more oral realm of sermons and never entered into the written record. On the other hand, one of the chroniclers mentions that the preacher had initially started by forming a reading circle on the floor of al-Mu'ayyed mosque devoted to the pamphlets of Birgivi Mehmed Efendi.<sup>77</sup> The clue suggests, as will be elaborated in future chapters, that polemical pamphlets were frequently used by all parties. The difference lay in the notions of authorship employed by pamphleteers: defenders of saints and other practices often relied on the authority of their name and position, the critics on the other hands grouped themselves under the collective multi-person authorship of figures like Birgivî, Kâḏîzâde, and a few others. Thus it is more difficult to identify the specific pamphlets that were produced from the debates in Cairo and elsewhere.

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<sup>75</sup> See Yusuf al-Millawânî, *Tuhfat al-Albab* and Abdülkerim, *Tārîḫ-i Mişr*

<sup>76</sup> See for example Ahmad al-Damurdashi, *Al-Damurdashi's Chronicle of Egypt, 1688-1755: al-Durra Al-Muṣāna fî Akhbār al-Kināna*, trans. Daniel Crecelius and 'Abd al-Wahhab Bakr (Leiden: Brill, 1991).

<sup>77</sup> Yusuf ibn al-Hallāk, *Tārîḫ-i Mişr*, Istanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserleri Kütüphanesi MS T628, f. 296a

Interrogating the perspective of the chronicles also leads to us to question the role of violence as a metric of religious polemic. The 1711 incident in Cairo has drawn the attention of historians because it was one of the rare examples of when a disagreement over Islamic religious practice devolved from rhetorical violence to physical violence, the presumption being that the presence of violence reflects the severity of the debates. Given the degree of the polarization and how frequently others were called heretics, what is equally surprising is that these fights so rarely entered into the realm of physical violence. This is a marked contrast to both to the predominant image of the Middle East in twenty-first century, i.e. a region in which religious hatred has initiated immense inter-communal violence, and the experience of Protestant and Catholic violence throughout Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Does this mean that the religious fights of the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire were not terribly consequential given their lack of violence? Or perhaps that low-level violence was so widespread that it was seen as irrelevant to the chroniclers?

Perhaps the better question is whether we should use violence as the predominant metric to gauge the severity of polemic in the first place. In this regard, the work of David Nirenberg on violence and sectarian relations in medieval Iberia provides a starting place for reflection.<sup>78</sup> Nirenberg argues that violence, rather than being an ahistorical phenomenon, a marker of when civility and tolerance break down, is a social relation. Violence, in other words, operates in an economy of other possible social relations. For instance, violence was actually rarely practiced upon Jews in medieval Iberia, in comparison to other social groups such as Muslims and lepers. When violence was unleashed upon Jews, it was done as a means to indirectly attack kingly

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<sup>78</sup> David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).



power. In this way, the question of violence is reframed as to what role violence actually served in these polemical religious fights and at whom was it aimed. In this case, it must be pointed out that both sides of this fight were potentially willing to use violence against the other. The defenders of the saints made increasingly strident calls for the state to suppress, punish, and even execute critics of the saints. Critics of the saints, on the other hand, were more likely to use the less sanctioned violence of the crowd. Beyond the attack on the kaziasker's retinue, the chronicles saw the attack on the saints' graves themselves—that is cutting the broadcloth off and the wood knobs—as more noteworthy than the attack on the dervishes. On top of this, these small acts of violence should be contextualized in the “civil war” among the different military factions in Cairo that had recently ended in the months prior to the incident in which perhaps 3,000 people were killed.<sup>79</sup>

Finally, it bears mention that the ethnic aspect of this event, that is, a supposed foreign Rumi instigation against local Arabs, is far from clear. Peters' casts the incident as one of fundamentalist Turkish madrasa students against more latitudinarian Arab dervishes. This, however, comes from an undue privileging of one of the chronicles over the others. While all the chronicles mention that the preacher was a Rumi, that is, a Turkish speaker, only Aḥmad Çelebi b. Abdülḡanī's rendering gives the event a particularly ethnic bent, which is partially due to his position as a partisan for and participant in Sufi rituals. It is clear from both the audience of the pamphlets, and the fact that a translator addressed the crowd in Arabic in front of the courthouse, that these debates involved an audience of both Arabic and Turkish-speakers. Rumis formed a

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<sup>79</sup> Peters, “The Battered Dervishes,” 104; André Raymond, “Une ‘révolution’ au Caire sous les Mameloukes, la crise de 1123/1711,” *Annales Islamologiques* 6 (1966): 95–120.

long-standing and coherent community in Cairo with their own “shaykh” and leader.<sup>80</sup> Others were able to identify strong parallels between events in Cairo and Istanbul. We should be hesitant therefore before jumping into a particularly ethnic association for these polemics. At the same time, quite a few observers of the events in Cairo, both in 1711 and before, ethnicized the critics as Rumis. The mechanics of this association are suggested in the following chapters.

By reexamining the quasi-riot of Cairo in 1711 we can reconsider the traditional narrative of Islamic fundamentalism, which suggests that the “fundamentalist” or “*salafi*” segment of the population adheres to a true orthodox Islam and castigates the rest of the population for deviating from the historic norm. Instead here, we find here a slow and consistent polarization of the society, with each side increasingly adept at casting their practices as timeless tradition, excommunicating opponents, and selectively using violence. Although perhaps not surprising, it should be underlined that Sufis are just as capable of pushing others toward excommunication and heresy. As I suggested in the previous section, this does not mark a recurrent or early episode of Islamic fundamentalism but a larger shift in the intellectual and cultural practices of Islamic life in the Ottoman Empire as a whole. The rest of this dissertation explains how transformations in material life and circulation enabled many of these changes. In this next section though, I would like to turn to changes in the definition of heresy itself and how Ottoman society became so quick to anathematize large portions of the Muslim population.

### **The Question of Heresy**

Heresy also leads us to questions about the relationship between the state and society as accusations of heresy are generally seen as initiated and enforced by a state power, such as the

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<sup>80</sup> On this, see Chapter 4.

Inquisition. In the Islamic lands, the role of the state in defining heresy always had traditionally been relatively minimal. There was the well-known Abbasid experiment of the *miḥna*, al-Ma'mun's short-lived attempt to make all scholars agree to certain precepts of the faith, such as the fact that the Qur'an was created, but this quickly foundered upon the objection of the clergy and was never successfully repeated. The state could assign judges, teachers, and other legal functionaries but for the most part the actual definition of heresy itself was outside of the hands of government officials.<sup>81</sup> This changed in the early modern Ottoman Empire with appointment of a hierarchy of jurists by the state, who were able to establish something much closer to an official state position on legal matters. Did this mean that heresy was only defined by the state? What did it mean when scholars with no capacity to enforce decisions began to call people heretics? How do we understand heresy in this period?

Guy Burak has recently written about the emergence of the practice of “renewing the faith (*tajdīd al-imān* [ar.]/*tecdīd-i imān* [tr.])” in the early modern Ottoman Empire. He argues that the practice, which was not previously found in the medieval legal manuals,<sup>82</sup> developed within the Hanafi legal school in order to preserve the categories of heresy and apostasy in an empire with a Muslim population that participated in a variety of practices that were at odds with certain normative Islamic practices. The practice enabled the state to forgo mandating the execution of large portions of the population.<sup>83</sup> This became more important as the Ottoman

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<sup>81</sup> Ahmed el-Shamsy, “The Social Construction of Orthodoxy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. Tim Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 102.

<sup>82</sup> It may be too early to define this as a particularly Ottoman legal practice. Mention of this practice may be found in the *Sharḥ al-Wahbāniyya* of Ibn Shaḥna, a fifteenth-century Aleppan scholar. See the possible quotation of his work in Khayr al-Dīn al-Ramlī, *Untitled Exchange of Treatises on Heresy with Minḳārīzāde Yahya Efendi*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Hekimoglu 322, 302a and the original work at Kitabkhāna-yi Majlis-i Shura-yi Milli MS 9708.

<sup>83</sup> Guy Burak, “Faith, Law and Empire in the Ottoman ‘Age of Confessionalization’ (Fifteenth - Seventeenth Centuries): The Case of ‘Renewal of Faith,’” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 28, no. 1 (2013): 5, 10.

dynasty became invested in defining the confessional identity and practices of its subjects. The act of ‘renewing the faith’ entailed a Muslim declaring his faith in front of a judge, renewing his marriage vows (as he had technically divorced his wife upon apostatizing), and then being meted out a lesser punishment. At the same time, it was also a mechanism to expand the number of actions which were considered heretical, a point that Burak describes as primarily entailing punishments for insulting or disregarding the imperial learned hierarchy that the Ottoman dynasty had instituted. Importantly, he mentions that this expansion of heresy was not encoded in the formal legal manuals of substantive law but occurred in the imperial collections of legal opinions (*fetāva*). Together, these changes shifted the definition of apostasy away from a formal declaration of unbelief to a set of actions that could be counted as signs of heresy.

The capacity to diagnose unbelief from actions rather than explicit denials of faith was only expanded in the seventeenth century. In the sixteenth-century examples that Burak provides, the relationship between practice and belief is implied rather than explicitly developed. By the mid-seventeenth century, this may have been the de facto policy but it had not been inscribed de jure. It was this type of shift that chief jurists like *şeyhülislam* Minkārīzāde Yahya Efendi (1608-1678) had in mind when they explicitly argued that actions and practices were the true measure of heresy. Perhaps to create some legal consensus or preempt any challenge, Minkārīzāde requested the opinion of jurists around the empire with whom he corresponded in regards to a *fatwa* (legal response) he had recently issued on the question of heresy.<sup>84</sup> The main interlocutor that he chose was an extremely influential scholar and jurist named Khayr al-Din al-Ramlī

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<sup>84</sup> Ramlī, *Untitled Treatise on Heresy*, MS Hekimoglu 322, 296a (this bit of information is only found in this copy)

(1585-1671), who was issuing fatwas independently of the imperial legal hierarchy while living in the hinterlands of Palestine.<sup>85</sup>

Minkārīzāde posed and answered the following question: “Someone says, ‘if he does so and so, then he is an infidel,’ believing that infidelity follows from action and intending by these words to prevent himself from that action. Does he have a way to do that [action] without being a heretic? Minkārīzāde’s answer was simple, “The fact that heresy follows action is established (*muqarrar*) and he has no way [to do that action].”<sup>86</sup> Yet, he then listed three problematic cases (*ṣuwar*) in which committing the action is not considered heresy. These revolve around whether the person knew that his actions constituted heresy when he committed them, namely 1) if he was aware of the original declaration that an action was heretical, 2) if he had forgotten said declaration, or 3) if he believed in his heart that the action was not heretical.<sup>87</sup> Minkārīzāde launches into a refutation of these three points, to which Ramlī affixes a response.<sup>88</sup> Ramlī’s response surveys the various literature on the fulfillment of the conditions of heresy, and declares, contrary to Minkārīzāde’s position, that it is “prohibited to anathematize (*takfīr*) a

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<sup>85</sup> For a small description of Ramlī’s life based off of his biography in al-Muhibbi’s dictionary see Judith E Tucker, “Biography as History: The Exemplary Life of Khayr al-Dīn Al-Ramlī,” in *Auto/Biography and the Construction of Identity in the Middle East*, ed. Mary Ann Fay (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 9–17. For a more intimate portrait written by his student following his death see Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān al-Janīnī, then, al-Dimashqī, *Tarjamāt al-Shaykh Khayr al-Dīn al-Ramlī*, Bibliotheque nationale de France, MS Arabe 669, ff. 29-38.

<sup>86</sup> Ramlī, *Untitled Treatise on Heresy*, MS Hekimoglu 322, 296a; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Resid Efendi 187b: *Maḍmūn al-su’āl uwa annahu law qāla shakḥ an fa’la kadha fa-huwa kāfir mu’taqidan luzūm al-kufr ‘and al-fi’l qāṣidan bi-hadha al-qawl zajara nafasahu ‘an dhalik al-fi’l fa-hal lahu ṭarīq in yaf’al dhalik min ghayr an yakūn kāfiran wa maḍmūn al-jawāb anna luzūm al-kufr ‘and al-fi’l muqarrar wa-la ṭarīq lahu.*

مضمون السؤال هو انه لو قال شخص ان فعل كذا فهو كافر معتقدا لزوم الكفر عند الفعل قاصدا بهذا القول زجر نفسه عن ذلك الفعل فهل له طريق ان يفعل ذلك من غير ان يكون كافرا ومضمون الجواب ان لزوم الكفر عند الفعل مقرر ولا طريق له

<sup>87</sup> Ramlī, *Untitled Treatise on Heresy*, MS Hekimoglu 322, 296ab; MS Resid Efendi 1215, 187b-188a.

<sup>88</sup> It seems that Minkārīzāde’s objection to these cases is that “the jurists built heresy on the acceptance (*raḍi*) of heresy and acceptance is a voluntary action (*amr ikhtiyārī*) that is not found in the three cases. Ramlī, *Untitled Treatise on Heresy*, MS Hekimoglu 322, f. 296b.

Muslim for a rarely said word or even single word,” that you can only do this for those explicitly declared “deviant apostates intent at destroying the religion and other Muslims through their books and writings.”<sup>89</sup> In other words, he refocuses the notion of heresy back on explicit declarations of unbelief, not a quickly interpreted actions or words. Perhaps recognizing the impropriety of his argument with the *seyhülislam* and his words, Ramlī ends his treatise by explicitly declaring that there is absolutely nothing wrong with his opinion, that it is the result of eighty years of expertise and was not reached by mistake or error.<sup>90</sup>

As an aside, the exchange is noteworthy for the fact that Minkārīzāde felt the need to engage directly and publicly with Ramlī, Minkārīzāde after all held the highest post in the imperial learned hierarchy and Ramlī, while highly regarded, was an independent jurist living in the hinterlands of Palestine. The exchange points to the fact that even with the rise of an imperial school of law, the state was never completely able to monopolize legal discourse. Independent jurists could still develop followings in the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, Minkārīzāde could not accept Ramlī’s rejection of his arguments and responded with another counterargument that repeated his point that heresy was now indisputably derived from actions.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, the fact that many pieces of Ramlī’s correspondence with the Minkārīzāde circulated suggests the

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<sup>89</sup> Ramlī, *Untitled Treatise on Heresy*, MS Hekimoglu 322, f. 303a; MS Reşid Efendi 1215, f. 192ab. “*al-murād ... yamna’ al-takfīr fī kalima taqa’ min al-muslim nādiran aw kalima wāḥida aw mā fī hukmahā la mā waqa’a li-ba’d al-mulāḥida al-māriqīn min al-dīn murūq al-sihm min al-ramiyya min taṣnīf kitāb aw kutub muqtaḍiya hadama ‘an al-dīn wa mukhālifa sā’ir al-muslimīn wa da’ wahu fī dhalik al-ḥaqq al-yaqīn fa-annahu la yajūz ta’wīlahu wa la ḥamla ‘ala mā dhakarna bal yujib al-kuffār qā’ilihu fī l-radd ‘alayhi tanfīran min bida’atihi wa ḍalālātihi fa-in al-ta’wīl fī mith dhalik la yakūn ila fī kalām al-ma’šūm.*”

المراد... يمنع التكفير في كلمة تقع من المسلم نادرا او كلمة واحدة او ما في حكمها لا ما وقع لبعض الملاحدة المارقين من الدين مروق السهم من الرمية من تصنيف كتاب او كتب مقتضية هدم عن الدين ومخالفة سائر المسلمين ودعواه في ذلك الحق اليقين فانه لا يجوز تأويله ولا حمله على ما ذكرنا بل يجب الكفار قابله في الرد عليه تنفيرا من بدعته وضلالته فان التأويل في مثل ذلك لا يكون الا في كلام المعصوم

<sup>90</sup> Ramlī, *Treatise*, MS Hekimoglu 322, f. 303a; MS Resid Efendi 1215, f. 192b.

<sup>91</sup> The next piece of the correspondence can be found in Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Hekimoglu 322, ff. 303b-306a. The MS Resid Efendi 1215 copy was completed shortly after the first piece of correspondence was sent back to Minkārīzāde. See the colophon on f. 192b

relationship between the two was substantive and reciprocal, an interstice that served a purpose for both the state functionaries like Minkārīzāde and independent figures like Ramlī.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, Ramlī kept a constant correspondence with many of the high jurists in the imperial hierarchy.<sup>93</sup>

The example, while limited, suggests a larger shift in the nature of heresy. Heresy over the seventeenth century became increasingly defined as sets of observable, measurable actions. Praying at a grave could become a marker of infidelity, which in turn required a strong defense, which quickly escalated the situation, as demonstrated in the case of the riots in Cairo. Let me argue that this is more than a generic shift from orthodoxy to orthopraxis, the latter of which is always present, indirectly, in the self-definition of any community. The focus on heresy, on the ability to quickly eject someone from the fold, I believe marks this difference. The emphasis on practices, rather than direct statements of belief and unbelief, moreover provided a greater opportunity for the material world to become entangled in the very definition of belief and unbelief. Smoking tobacco or lighting a candle at a grave could in turn become direct reflections of heresy. The following sections provide other examples as to how the polemical fights of the seventeenth century became entrenched in the very definition of heresy, the changing definition of religion, and the ways ordinary people and scholars tried to escape this.

### **The Revival of the Heresiography Tradition in the Seventeenth Century**

The obsession with heresy and its definitions found expression beyond the legal sphere as well. One of the most striking phenomena in the literature of the period is the revival of the

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<sup>92</sup> See for example another collection of fatwas and correspondence between Minkārīzāde and Ramlī and other Arab scholars, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arabe 669.

<sup>93</sup> Khayr al-Dīn al-Ramlī, *Dīwān*, Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, MS Revan 700, ff. 1-2, 10a-13b, 16a-18a, 22a-24a, 40a, 46a, 91b-92a, 103b-104a, 116a, 122a-123a, 127a-134b, 166b-169b, 180a-180b, 196a-198b, 210b-212a, 217a-218b

medieval heresiography tradition in the second quarter of the seventeenth century. After a silence of centuries, at least three scholars writing independently of one another within a fifteen-year period reworked the medieval heresiographies and translated them into Turkish. The renewed interest in the heresiographies—by authors, patrons, and readers alike—reflected a desire to grasp what seemed like a fragmenting and divided Muslim community in the seventeenth century, besieged by enemies from both without and within.

The perplexing paradox of these works is that although they aimed to identify divisions within the Muslim community in the seventeenth century, they largely retained the medieval vocabulary of groups and sects whose time had long since passed. This makes it difficult to attach the text of these works or even the authors of these works to any social context from the period. They did not even associate seventeenth-century groups with medieval heresies. Instead they listed all the obscure groups from the medieval period, regardless of whether or not they existed in the present. Part of this is, of course, purposeful. The medieval past offered seventeenth-century authors a readymade list of concepts and actors to apply to their times. It was also partly procedural. All the heresiographies entertained the notion, recalled from a famous, and possibly apocryphal, hadith, that the Jews were divided into seventy-one sects, the Christians into seventy-two, and the Muslims into seventy-three. Thus no fewer than seventy-two varieties of infidelity needed to be identified and who were these authors to suggest that their predecessors had erred in their task? Indeed, some of the terms were still in circulation even. Take for example the term *mu'tazilī*, a medieval theological sect that insisted, among other things, that the Qur'an was a created rather than an eternal entity. It was one of the major group of sects listed in the heresiographies but it had long since ceased to exist, and yet, by the early modern period the term had acquired a generic meaning of an enemy of the faith, to be deployed



against ideological opponents as a broad slur.<sup>94</sup> If this was the case, though, then what was the purpose of these heresiographies, other than a shift in language? Some answers can be found in the origins of the genre itself.

Rather than a catalog of all the enemies of early Muslims, the heresiographical tradition in Islam was an unintentional byproduct of the florescence of rational theology in the medieval period. Theologians (*mutakallimūn*) initially attempted to prove the existence of God and the Prophet rationally with the tools of Greek philosophy to best Christian theologians in competitive public debates.<sup>95</sup> Students of rational theology would adopt their teachers' arguments and then try to develop their own, casting all those who disagreed with them as infidels. The end result was multiple branches and varieties of theology, each regarding the other as heretical, but also at odds with the other intellectual method of the time—those that compiled and preserved the traditions (*ḥadīth*) of the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>96</sup> Heresiographies were written to dismiss rival theological sects. This divisive intellectual environment came to a close in the “Sunni revival” in the eleventh and twelfth centuries with the rise of the much more inclusive Ash’ari and Maturidi theological schools, which set higher standards for denouncing and anathematizing intellectual rivals.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> The word could be used against those who denied the reality of saints, or friends of God (*wali*) or those who denied that certain treatises were purposeful misattributions. This is explored more in more detail in the following chapter. See for example, Ebuahmedzade Muhammad Efendi, *Fikh-i Ekberin Imam-i Azim Hazretlerinin olduğunu tasdik etmeğiün*, Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, MS 46, fl. 23b-25b.

<sup>95</sup> A basic version of this story along with its relation to the question of heresy can be found in Josef van Ess, *The Flowering of Muslim Theology*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).

<sup>96</sup> el-Shamsy, “The Social Construction of Orthodoxy,” 105–6.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 106; For information on the Sunni revival in general see Jonathan Porter Berkey, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 189–202.

The most popular and influential heresiography, during both the medieval and early modern period—*Religions and Sects (al-Milal wa'l-Niḥal)* by al-Shahrastānī—was written in this irenic period. Like all the heresiographies, it starts with a rendition of an apocryphal hadith stating that “my community will divide itself into 73 divisions and only one will be saved.” Of these 73 divisions, all are theological distinctions, from well-known groups like the Mu‘tazilīs and the Shī‘a to the failed medieval theological schools of the Qadariyya and the Jahmiyya. The difference, though, was that al-Shahrastānī was remarkably latitudinarian in his descriptions of the history and stances of each theological school, refusing to dismiss and anathematize any one sect, and instead organized the divisions according to their views on central theological questions.<sup>98</sup> This ecumenicalism extended even to descriptions of non-Muslim unbelief: Jewish and Christian sects, Indian religions, and various ancient Greek philosophical schools were described in detail, though perhaps with less interest than that of the Muslim sects.<sup>99</sup> For this reason, the text has achieved some fame among Orientalists of the nineteenth and twentieth century as an amazing work of comparative religion by a medieval Muslim scholar.<sup>100</sup> The heresiographical tradition in Shahrastānī’s hands was less a call for the persecution of the infidels and heretics of the twelfth century than an expression of a *modus vivendi* of a new Sunni consensus.

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<sup>98</sup> Knysh, Alexander D., “‘Orthodoxy’ and ‘Heresy’ in Medieval Islam: An Essay in Reassessment,” *The Muslim World* 83, no. 1 (January 1993): 50–51; Dominique Sourdel, “La classification des sectes islamiques dans le ‘Kitab al-Milal’ d’al-Šahristānī,” *Studia Islamica* 31 (1970): 239–47.

<sup>99</sup> There have been various studies on medieval Muslim understandings of the non-Muslim religions, though fewer examinations of the historical context of Shahrastānī’s work see Bruce B. Lawrence, *Shahrastānī on the Indian Religions, Religion and Society* (Hague, Netherlands) ; 4 (The Hague: Mouton, 1976); Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm Shahrastānī, *Livre des religions et des sectes*, ed. Daniel Gimaret and Guy Monnot (Paris: Peeters, 1986).

<sup>100</sup> Steven Wasserstrom, “Islamic History of Religions?,” *History of Religions*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (May, 1988), pp. 405–411

This *modus vivendi* was only heavily called into question five centuries later when at least three authors in the Ottoman lands began to rework and translate Shahrastanī's oeuvre during the 1620s and 1630s.<sup>101</sup> We can point to at least three authors engaged in this process of translation and reworking whose works were often read side by side. The most commonly found and longest was that of Nūḥ b. Muṣṭafa, a prolific Rumi scholar who lived primarily in Cairo and was briefly mufti of Konya.<sup>102</sup> His translation and radically shortened and edited version of Shahrastanī's work, titled simply *The Translation of Religions and Sects* (*Tercüme-i Milel u Niḥal*), was written no later than 1639.<sup>103</sup> The two other major ones included the *The Mirror of Belief* (*Mir'ātü'l- 'Aḳā'id*), written around 1630 by an author who simply called himself Dervīş Ahmed, a resident of the Sufi lodge at the Küçük Aya Sofya complex in Istanbul.<sup>104</sup> The last well known one, *A treatise explaining the variety of sects*, was penned by the prolific scholar Muḥammad Emīn b. Şaḍruddīn Mollazāde el-Shirvānī, a migrant from Azerbaijan who became a professor (*muderris*) in Istanbul. (Interestingly, Shahrastanī's work was also translated into Persian in the early seventeenth century for the Mughal emperor Jahangir, yet the Persian version never took hold in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>105</sup>) It is worth noting that these authors, so aware of heresy and innovation in their own times, were by no means the traditional image of the

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<sup>101</sup> There do not seem to be any major commentaries or extensions of Shahrastanī's work with the exception of the obscure and short piece to be found in the Topkapı Palace library. See the first volume of *Ghayāt al-Afkār wa Nihāyet al-Anzār*, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 1868.

<sup>102</sup> Little research has been done on Nūḥ b. Muṣṭafa, a fascinating figure and major author of the seventeenth century. For basic biographic information see M. Kâmil Yaşaroğlu, "Nūḥ b. Mustafa," *Türk Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 33:230-1

<sup>103</sup> This is the copy date of a collated copy of his translation commissioned by a certain steward Muṣṭafa in the palace and copied from the author's copy, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Fatih 2913 ff. 118b-119a

<sup>104</sup> On this biographical tidbit, see the colophon of Dervīş Ahmed, *Mir'atü'l-Aḳā'id*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS M Arif-M Murad 177, f. 71

<sup>105</sup> Muṣṭafa b. Hālīqdār al- 'Abbāsī, *Tarjama-yi Milal u Niḥal*, Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, MS Revan 513

Ḳāḍīzādeli puritan that one might expect to champion such works. Rather they were mainly well-known scholars, often with Sufi leanings or dervishes themselves, demonstrating a broad desire throughout the society to tackle the renewed question of heresy.

Each of these three works, all written within a decade of one another, and heavily copied throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, were patronized by or dedicated to various powerful officials. Nūḥ b. Muṣṭafa wrote his *Translation* at the behest of a certain Yusuf Efendi in Cairo. Manuscript copies of Dervish Ahmed's *Mirror of Belief* were dedicated to four different individuals—the *şeyhülislam* (chief jurist) Yahya Efendi (1553-1644), two separate grand viziers, Bayram Paşa and Mehmed Paşa, and even Sultan Murad IV himself.<sup>106</sup> Although the wide variety of government figures suggests that Derviş Ahmed had some difficulty in finding a sponsor interested in his work, just a decade later, one copyist would note that he copied the treatise in the presence of Sultan Mehmed IV and the chancellor Nişancı Mehmed Paşa.<sup>107</sup> Shirvānī likewise wrote his work for a grand vizier named Mehmed Paşa.<sup>108</sup> The variety of influential government figures seen as worthy patrons for these works reflects both government officials' implicit interest of defining the boundaries of Islam, yet the texts also caught the eyes of an educated public eager to identify deviance in a world of unbelief.

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<sup>106</sup> See Derviş Ahmed, *Mir'ātü'l-'Akā'id*. Those dedicated to Şeyhülislam Yahya Efendi can be found in Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi: MS Özel 276, MS Hacı Mahmud Efendi 1514, MS Serez 3879, MS Hüdai Efendi 879, MS İzmir 114; Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, MS 2144; İbrahim Hakki Konyalı Kütüphanesi MS 594; İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserleri Kütüphanesi MS T4000. To Sultan Murad IV: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 984, MS Yazma Bağışlar 74. To Bayram Paşa: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Şehid Ali Paşa 1723, MS Asır Efendi 183, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserleri Kütüphanesi MS T5919, MS T5923. To Mehmed Paşa: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Şehid Ali Paşa 1723. With no dedication: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS M Arif-M Murad 177,

<sup>107</sup> Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS M Arif-M Murad 177, f. 71

<sup>108</sup> Muḥammad Emīn b. Şadrüddīn Mollazāde eş-Shirvānī, *Risāle fī Beyan Mezāhib Muḥtelife*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Darulmesnevi 258, f. 74b

The seventeenth-century translators and authors of the heresiographies did not intervene by updating the categories and sects of the medieval writers but by dismantling the *modus vivendi* the original heresiographers had constructed during the Sunni revival, which included a hesitancy to anathematize fellow Muslims. The changes were often quite subtle. Nūḥ b. Muṣṭafa's translation of Shahrastānī's *Religions and Sects* adds small bits to the original such as longer discussions about some of the newer philosophical and theological points that the Mu'tazilis had originally raised, but he also inserts refutations of most of the sect's core ideas, doing away with Shahrastānī's irenic approach.<sup>109</sup> In addition, he radically reduces many sections of Shahrastānī's original work, both in the histories of movements like the Mu'taliziis but also the section on non-Muslim religions. All mention of Iranian and Indian religions is excised and segments on Jews and Christians and philosophers heavily reduced. In its place is a large section outlining the proper belief of the elect sect, *fırka-yı nāciye*. One of the translations, that of Dervīş Aḥmed, does mention the Indian religions, but it also makes sure to insert a necessary section on the correct beliefs of Muslims, including catechismic sets of questions and answers in response to heretical beliefs.<sup>110</sup> Shirvānī, in his heresiography, inserts generic descriptions of some heretical Sufi sects, such as the Kalenderiye, an antinomian movement that had adherents in Anatolia and the Iranian world in the tenth to fifteenth centuries, but none of these exceeded one or two sentences nor were there any Kalenders around in the seventeenth century.<sup>111</sup> The

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<sup>109</sup> Nūḥ b. Muṣṭafa and Kemal Efendi, *Tercümetü'l-Milel Ve'n-Nihal* (Istanbul: Tabhane-i Amire Matbaası, 1862), 15–36.

<sup>110</sup> Dervīş Aḥmed, *Mir'ātü'l-'Akā'id*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserleri Kütüphanesi, MS T5919, f. 23b-25b; İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı Kütüphanesi, MS 594, ff. 59b-64a

<sup>111</sup> Muḥammad Emīn b. Şadrüddīn eş-Şirvānī, *Risāle fī Beyāni Mezāhib Muḥtelife*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Darulmesnevi 258, f. 82b

heresiography tradition kept the theological focus of the genre, but it became increasingly insistent on differentiating unbelief and more easily labeling Muslim heretics.

This is most clearly seen in the heated conclusion of Shirvānī's heresiography. He calls on the sultan to "appoint to every city in the empire a scholar well-versed in theology (*'ilm-i kelām*) who knows proper and improper belief so as to maintain the Islamic creed from deviant sects and heresies and the like and protect the domains of Islam against its internal enemies, just as the Muslim soldiers and walls preserve it from its external enemies."<sup>112</sup> After castigating the sultan for failing to send scholars to the major cities to educate the people and disparaging the work of scholars (*'ulema*) in general, he ends with an interesting proposition as to the benefit of the work of heresiographies. He notes that although God has granted victory to the Ottomans over the Kizilbaş (i.e. the Safavids and their supporters), he wonders what would happen if the Shah of Persia decided to make peace and put aside any religious and theological differences. Shī'a (*revāfīz*) would then stream into the empire and bring the beliefs of ordinary people crumbling to the ground. Only a scholar trained in heresiography could confront these heathens in a debate and force them to concede (*ilzām*) with irrefutable evidence. Shirvānī's point (while perhaps colored by the current war against the Safavids and his migration from the Safavid territory of Shirvān to Istanbul) makes it clear the new heresiography was meant to help more easily distinguish errant belief among other Muslims and defeat them with proper proof. Derviş Ahmed makes the same point in his introduction: the world is full of unbelief and the true Muslim must be prepared with arguments and proof, and not just simply recite the basic tenets of

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<sup>112</sup> Şirvānī, *Risāle*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Çelebi Abdullah 195, f. 16a: "*pādişāh-i Islāma lāzımdır ki memleketinde her şehirde bir 'ālim-i mutebahhir nasb ide ki 'ilm-i kelāme 'arīf olub 'akā'id-i saḥīḥ ve fāsīde'ye muṭtali' ola ta 'akā'id-i Muslimīnī fark-i zālīle'nin şukūk ve şebihinden maşūn idub, hevze-i Islām'i a'dā'i-yi bāḥiniyeden ḥafz eyleye, nitekim tehciz cuyūş-i Muslimīn ve sedd-i Islām süğür-i Islām ile a'dā'i-yi zāhireden şiyānet olunur*"

belief, if they were to defend the faith.<sup>113</sup> In the minds of these writers and readers, Islam was breaking apart at the seams into many different groups and only a strong offensive attack could properly defend it. This feeling was so widespread that even non-Muslims became interested in these heresiographies. A tantalizing Judeo-Turkish copy of Shirvānī's [see fig. 1] heresiography has survived, suggesting that even Jews were aware of the changing times, perhaps interested in using these arguments against heretics in their own fold or to defend themselves against aspiring Muslim theologians.<sup>114</sup> These heresiographies facilitated the anathematization of members of the fold.

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<sup>113</sup> Dervīş Aḥmed, *Mir'ātü'l-'Akā'id*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserleri Kütüphanesi, MS T5919, f. 2a

<sup>114</sup> al-Shirvānī, *Risāle fī Beyan Mezāhib Muḥtelifē* (Judeo-Turkish version), Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, MS Or 1129(g)

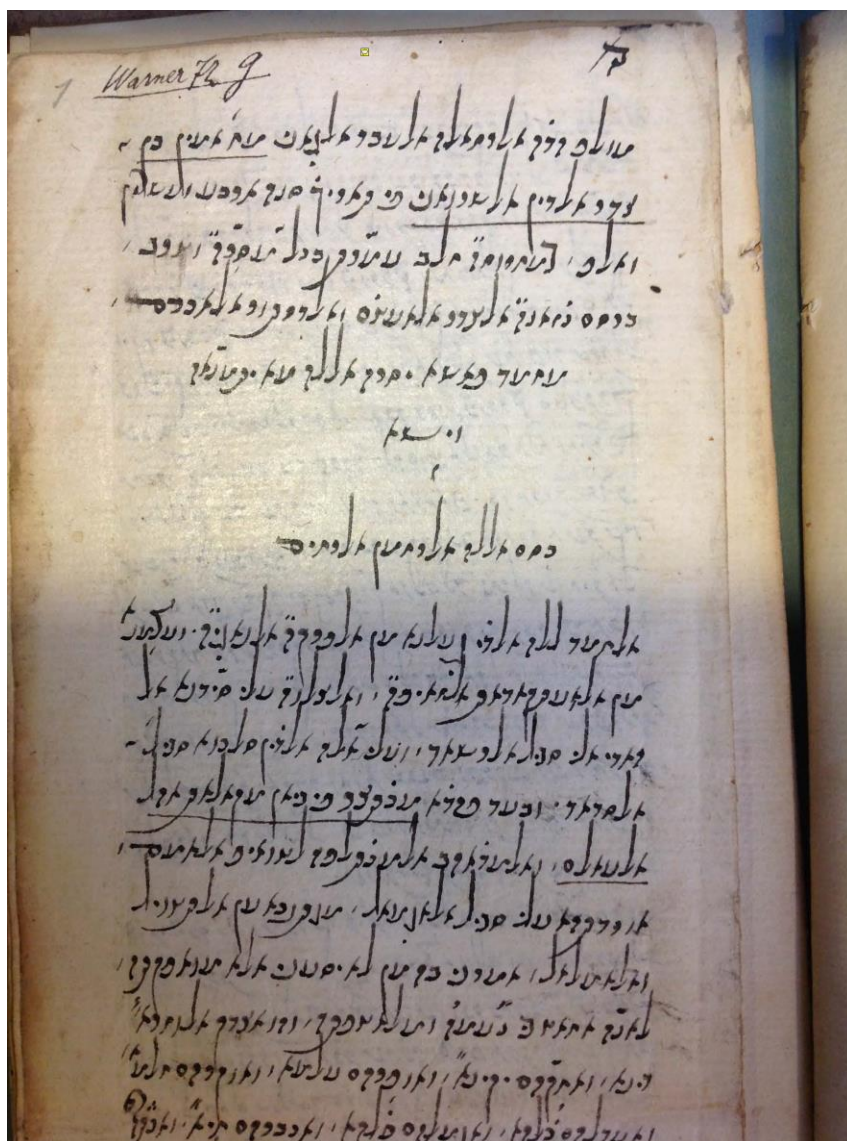


Figure 1: Shirvānī's heresiography written in Judeo-Turkish, acquired in Aleppo. Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, MS Or 1129g. (Photograph of the author)

While the heresiographies offered a conceptual vocabulary and history of Muslim unbelief the question remains as to how precisely they were applied to the religious debates of the seventeenth century. As mentioned before, these were works based off of a medieval model, with little identification of current forms of heresy. The placement of these heresiographies in manuscript miscellanies

becomes an invaluable resource. When the text itself and the biography of the author fails to provide a context, the material placement of the manuscripts provides. First, these new heresiographies were often copied and bound together, demonstrating an organic connection that readers forged between the texts, rather than reading them in isolation.<sup>115</sup> Other times they were

<sup>115</sup> E.g. Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ozel 276, MS Hudai Efendi 879, MS Izmir 114; Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, MS 2144



found bound with creeds, works outlining basic beliefs of faith like the famous ones of Nasafi or the new ones of shaykhs like Abdülmecîd Sîvâsî Efendi.<sup>116</sup> Sometimes just the segment on the “elect sect” were copied out to function as a creed (‘*akâ’id*).<sup>117</sup> Elsewhere a copyist simply reproduced the introduction, which insisted on the fractured state of the Muslim community.<sup>118</sup> Most importantly, many of the copies were found in miscellanies containing other pamphlet-like polemical treatises on the burning questions of the period. On copy from 1682 (1093h) was written by a certain Muḥammed b. Ḥasan b. Sulaymān, who copied in the same volume and within the same month treatises by the firebrand Rūmî Aḥmed Aḫḫisārî on the abominable practice of performing séances (*zîkr*) and smoking tobacco.<sup>119</sup> Other groupings point to similar reading patterns: the heresiographies are found alongside works by the late sixteenth-century pietist Birgîvî, more works on twirling during séances (*deverân*), the tract of the aforementioned Rūmî Aḥmed, Seyhülislam Mînkârîzâde’s tract on groups of Muslims calling themselves part of “the religion of Abraham (*millet-i İbrâhîm*)” (mentioned in the next section) and more.<sup>120</sup> Most interestingly, we find the heresiographies grouped with works explaining that particularly early modern Ottoman term for heretics—*kizilbaş*.<sup>121</sup> The term originally meant partisans of the

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<sup>116</sup> For Nasafî, Aqâ’id, see Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Hacı Mahmud Efendi 1413, and for Abdülmecîd b. Muḥarrem es-Sîvâsî, see *Dürerü’l-‘Akâ’id*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Celebi Abdullah 195, ff. 30b-109b

<sup>117</sup> al-Shîrvânî, *Risâle fi Beyan Mezâhib Muḥtelife*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Mihrisah Sultan 440, ff. 27a-28b

<sup>118</sup> Dervîş Ahmed, *Mir’atü’l-Aka’id*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yazma Bağışlar 3842, ff. 57b-59b

<sup>119</sup> Miscellany containing Shîrvânî’s *Risâle*, and Rūmî Aḥmed Aḫḫisārî’s treatises on tobacco and *zîkr*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Darulmesnevi 258, ff. 70b-109b

<sup>120</sup> Miscellany containing Dervîş Ahmed’s work with *Kitâb-i Rūmî Aḥmed Efendi*, Birgîvî, *Fîḫ-i Akbar*,

Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yazma Bağışlar 3842; Miscellany containing Shîrvânî’s *Risâle*, and Birgîvî and *Millet-i İbrâhîm* treatises MS Mihrisah Sultan 440; Miscellany containing Shîrvânî’s *Risâle*, and Birgîvî and *deverân* treatises, MS Harput 11.

<sup>121</sup> Anonymous, *Risâle fi Ḥurûc-i Şâh-i Ismâ’îl ve Tâ’ife-i Kizilbaş*, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, MS 4976 ff. 124-5 alongside Shîrvânî, *Risâle*, MS 4976, ff. 12-19, although separated in space, the two treatises were written by the same scribe. Miscellany containing Shîrvânî’s *Risâle with comments on the Kizilbaş*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS

Safavid Shah Ismail, but by the seventeenth century it often just meant a generic internal enemy of the faith, one with Shī‘a leanings perhaps. In the case of the latter, we find one copy of the heresiographies copied in Baghdad in the year 1626 (1035h), in the time of governor Ḥāfiẓ Aḥmed Paşa. The timing and location here are significant: the Ottomans had just reconquered Baghdad from the Safavids and just as Shirvānī had called for, his heresiography now provided a template for judging the fidelity of their newly reconquered subjects.<sup>122</sup>

The revival of the heresiography tradition in the seventeenth century reflected an anxiety that new subjects and neighbors were possibly outside the fold of the religion, that the boundaries of proper Muslim behavior were quickly changing, and a more distinct definition of religious belonging was necessary to declare fellow Muslims heretics. At the same time there were many that felt that this stronger culture of heresy was proceeding too quickly, that multiple types of human behavior were now being grouped under the rubric of religion, and under new scrutiny. One response was an attempt to create new categories of religion and practice, to divert and obscure the impulse to heresy.

### **Breaking Free of Heresy – Alternative Confessional Identities of Muslims**

Sometime in the first or second quarter of the seventeenth century, Muslims in the Ottoman Empire began to utter a strange statement. They began to state that they were “of the religion of Abraham [*millet-i Ibrāhīm ‘danim*].” Although to the modern ear the phrase suggests

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Tercuman 262. See Nūh b. Muṣṭafa, Tercüme-i Milel ü Nihal, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 2197 ff. 1-153 grouped alongside Kādizāde ‘İlmī Mehmed b. Muṣṭafa, *Naşru’l-Aşhāb fi Kahri’s-Sebbāb (er-Risāle eş-Şerife fi Menākibi’s-Şahāba)* MS Ayasofya 2197, ff. 154a-181a which is a treatise about defining heresy (bida‘āt).

<sup>122</sup> See colophon of miscellany containing Shirvānī’s treatise along with Sivāsī’s *Dürerü’l- ‘Akā’id*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Celebi Abdullah 195.

that they were professing to be Jews, the Muslims who said it never denied Islam nor had any express interest in Judaism. The utterance arose from a Quranic verse, “Say, no, [ours is] the religion of Abraham,” a response to Jews urging the young Muslim community to become Jews themselves.<sup>123</sup> Although commented upon by medieval authors, it was only in the seventeenth century that a social phenomenon emerged of Muslims claiming to be part of the “religion of Abraham.” Why did it only emerge then and what did it mean? Unfortunately, the sources available point more to the widespread popularity of professing that one is of “the religion of Abraham” and the expression’s exegesis and less toward its actual social usage. Yet, much can still be gleaned from the available writings. I argue here that the “*millet-i Ibrāhīm*” was an attempt to employ the vagueness of the Quranic verse’s wording in order to create multiple spaces of confessional Muslim identity and escape from the increasingly constricted meaning of religion that had developed over the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

Much of the available information about the “religion of Abraham” comes from a pamphlet written by Minkārīzāde Yahyā Efendi b. ‘Ömer (1609-1678). We encountered Minkārīzāde earlier when discussing his legal circular regarding whether or not the formal definition of heresy encompassed actions. That piece was written when Minkārīzāde had become a seminal chief jurist (*şeyhülislām*) in the late seventeenth century but at the time he wrote the *millet-i Ibrāhīm* treatise, most likely in the 1650s, he was moving back and forth between Cairo and Istanbul, being appointed, dismissed, and reappointed to judgeship of Cairo.<sup>124</sup> Minkārīzāde

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<sup>123</sup> Slightly altered translation taken from M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, trans., *The Qur’an* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 16. The full quote, which is only sometimes fully quoted, is “Say, no, [ours is] the religion of Abraham..., who did not worship any God but God. (قل بل ملة ابراهيم حنيفا)” This was in response to some Jews requesting that the new Muslims become Jews as well.

<sup>124</sup> On Minkārīzāde’s appointments see Abdülkadir Altunsu, *Osmanlı Şeyhülislamları* (Ankara: Ayyıldız Matbaası A. Ş., 1972), 89.

actually wrote two pieces on the topic. One a longer treatise, about fifteen to twenty folios, the other a much shorter rendition that was often only two to three folios.<sup>125</sup> Selections of the former were also quoted and abridged by the aforementioned Katib Çelebi in *The Balance of Truth* in his description of the controversy over *millet-i Ibrāhīm*, although he ascribed them anonymously to simply a learned scholar (*fāzil*).<sup>126</sup> Minḳārīzāde’s abridged work—whether in Katib Çelebi’s collection or in its own pamphlet form—was immensely popular, reproduced in pamphlets, miscellanies, margins, and notebooks thousands of times over until it reached readers from the streets to the palace itself.<sup>127</sup> Minḳārīzāde actually purposefully crafted it for such wide distribution, specifically shortening his longer piece so that “reading it visually would not tire its readers.”<sup>128</sup> His treatise set off a number of a responses, though Kâtib Çelebi himself pointed out that over eighty treatises had been written on the topic in general (perhaps not all directly on the question of the *millet-i Ibrahim*) in the preceding years.<sup>129</sup> The state similarly tried to ban the use of the expression through the imperial collections of legal opinions (*fatāwa*) well into the eighteenth century.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> For the long version see, Minḳārīzāde Yahya Efendi, *Risāle fi’s-Su’ali ve’l-Cevāb fî Haḳḳı Millet-i Ibrāhīm (the long version)*, MS 4952, ff. 33-55

<sup>126</sup> In his translation of the section, Lewis decided to translate “fāzil,” or “scholar,” as a proper noun and not as a simple descriptor. He also found Katib Çelebi’s treatment of the topic rather tedious. Kâtib Çelebi, *The Balance of Truth*, 12, 110.

<sup>127</sup> For the palace copy, see Minḳārīzāde, *Risāle-yi Millet-i Ibrāhīm*, UCLA Young Research Library Special Collections, Collection 896, Box 109, MS 740. See chapter 3 regarding its place of production.

<sup>128</sup> Minḳārīzāde, *Risāle-yi Millet-i Ibrāhīm*, f. 1b

<sup>129</sup> Kâtib Çelebi, *The Balance of Truth*, 121.

<sup>130</sup> Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi, *Behcetü’l-Fetāvâ*, ed. Süleyman Kaya et al. (Istanbul: Klasik, 2011), 25; Kâtib Çelebi, *The Balance of Truth*, 121.

The core question of the literature on the phrase's legality was whether or not it was permissible for Muslims to say that they were "of the religion of Abraham." Behind this question loomed two larger questions. First, what was the relation of Islam and Muhammad to its forbearers? Did Muhammad supersede the previous prophets upon his arrival through the process of inheritance (*muwriş*) or did the older prophets remain valid? In short, it abstractly asked what actually separated Islam and the other religions given that they were all technically "religions of Abraham." Defenders of the practice argued that they were simply honoring the prophet Abraham and had no intention of insulting Muhammad.<sup>131</sup> The worry of commentators like Minḳārīzāde and others was that the phrase "[ours is] the religion of Abraham," could be interpreted literally, rather than figuratively, to insist that Muhammad was never the top prophet.<sup>132</sup>

Given the fear over the verse's possible misinterpretation, an equally important aspect of the phrase's danger was whether or not it should be open for discussion by the broader public. While the commentators took it for granted that the well-educated would know to interpret the phrase contextually and metaphorically, it was really the unlettered public that was their main worry. Minḳārīzāde repeatedly states in his first work that the phrase should be avoided lest it enter into the mouths of commoners.<sup>133</sup> The government too tried, on numerous occasions, through repeated fatwas, to ban the practice of saying "I am of the religion of Abraham." Even into 1720s, the şeyhülislām, Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi, was fielding questions on the topic and

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<sup>131</sup> Hasan Efendi, 'Response to Minḳārīzāde,' Beyazıt Kütüphanesi, MS Veliyuddin Efendi 1064, ff. 168b-169a

<sup>132</sup> Kâtib Chelebi, *The Balance of Truth*, 110–11. Minḳārīzāde Yahya b. Omer Efendi, *Millet-i Ibrahim Treatise, Long Version*, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, MS 4952, ff. 27-28

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 111–12.

trying to stop the practice by making it the very first fatwa in his collection.<sup>134</sup> The government might have had recourse to imperial legal collections to disseminate its view, but one wonders how effectively it could contain the phenomenon. Kâtib Çelebi, in his comments on Minḳārîzâde's first treatise mentions, uncharacteristically, that the times had changed and it was useless to assume that one could limit religious discussions to a qualified few.<sup>135</sup> Minḳārîzâde seems to have conceded to this logic when he transformed his longer treatise to one a very short one so that he could reach new unlettered publics.<sup>136</sup>

The second question centered on the precise meaning of the word “*millet* (tr.)/*milla* (ar.)” and its intersections with the concept we call “religion” today. The word *millet* was an uncommon one in the seventeenth century and discussions of its meaning often also included two overlapping words: *dîn*, the word more commonly translated as religion today, and *sharī‘a*, which is often translated as Islamic law. The notion of *millet* as religion is also quite different from the meaning of *millet* familiar to modern readers as a nation of people bound by a shared religious identity (thus *millet-i Ibrahim* is often translated erroneously as the “people of Abraham,” i.e. the Jews, who, however, were traditionally associated with Moses). That meaning emerged in the nineteenth century, when the Ottoman government introduced a “millet system” to establish an official relation between the government and the leaders they had appointed to the communities. Before this, though, millet never really had the particular meaning of “nation” and

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<sup>134</sup> The fatwa in question was in a specially made section regarding belief: “Question: ‘When Zeyd the Muslim is asked “what religion [*millet*] are you?” which of the following must he say: “I am of the religion of Muhammad...” or “I am of the religion of Abraham...?” Answer: He must say, ‘I am of the religion of Muhammad.’ ”Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi, *Behcetü'l-Fetâvâ*, 25.

<sup>135</sup> Kâtib Çelebi, *The Balance of Truth*, 120–21.

<sup>136</sup> There are hundreds of copies of Minḳārîzâde's short treatise. See Beyazıt Kütüphanesi, MS Veliyuddin Efendi 1064, ff. 166a-168a for example.

instead was associated with a vague notion of “religion.”<sup>137</sup> Some, such as Birgivi Mehmed Efendi, an important late sixteenth century pietistic author, understood *millet* and *din* to only encompass the aspects of religion ordered around belief whereas *Shari‘a* meant aspects of religion centered on practice.<sup>138</sup> Minḳārīzāde, however, given his aforementioned predilection to expand the variety of human behavior categorized under the term religion, held that all three words had the same meaning. Therefore, saying that one “was of the religion of Abraham” was tantamount to saying that one was generally against the religion of Muhammad and an infidel. The main contention of Minḳārīzāde’s critics was that there was a difference between *millet* and *din* and *shari‘a*;<sup>139</sup> though they might identify themselves with the *millet* of Abraham, they were still undoubtedly within the fold of Islam.

So, how did Muslims in the seventeenth century actually put the term to work? It is quite difficult to actually pinpoint their usage. They certainly did not seem to have claimed some sort of exemption from Islamic law or belief in the courts. Instead it seems to have been used as a sort of informally organized community, a set of like-minded people, dedicated at times to the prophet Abraham. The term appears somewhat randomly in many texts of the seventeenth-century. The Meccan scholar Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī wrote in his late seventeenth-century analysis of the grammatical declination of the testimony of faith (“there is no god but God”), that he hoped that the treatise would find favor with scholars of the “*millat al-Ibrāhīm*.”<sup>140</sup> At other times, it

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<sup>137</sup> Daniel Goffman, “Ottoman Millets in the Early Seventeenth Century,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 11 (1994): 135–58; Paraskevas Konortas, “From Taife to Millet: Ottoman Terms for the Ottoman Greek Orthodox Community,” in *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism*, ed. Dimitri Gondicas and Charles Issawi (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 169–79.

<sup>138</sup> Kâtib Chelebi, *The Balance of Truth*, 115–16.

<sup>139</sup> See the responses to Minḳārīzāde in Beyazit Kütüphanesi, MS Veliyuddin Efendi 1064, ff. 168-9

<sup>140</sup> E.g. Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī, *Inbāh al-Anbāh ‘ala Taḥqīq I’rāb Lā Ilah ilā Allah*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Carullah 2069, MS Laleli 2150, etc.

seems to have gone further. ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, the seventeenth-century Damascene intellectual, encounter in the letters and works of a certain Ibrāhīm al-‘Ubaydī, a mufti from the Delta town of Buḥayra, the claim that he had found a revelatory letter from the prophet Abraham to posterity, in which the prophet ensures one and all that he would guard them.<sup>141</sup> Others, including Nābulusī’s student Muṣṭafa al-Bakrī, set out on quests to find and glorify Abraham’s tomb, one of which was situated outside of Damascus.<sup>142</sup> If some scholars used attachment to the prophet Abraham intentionally, and defended its use vigorously, there were many more who perhaps used out habit and predilection. In sum, *millet-i Ibrāhīm* seems to have been a way of providing a purposefully flexible and alternate confessional Muslim identity as figures like Minkārīzāde increasingly tried to constrain the capacious definition of Islam. *Millet* provided a space of action and practice in which, a definition of religion, that was outside the bounds of greater state insistence on heresy. Thus it was perhaps not surprising that Minkārīzāde and other government officials tried to stamp out the practice with official pronouncements, rulings, and pamphlets as best they could.

There were other ways of defusing the tense atmosphere that had emerged in the seventeenth century. While suspicions and accusations of heresy were common among the population, there were other scholars who encouraged neighbors and colleagues to take a more optimistic and open-minded attitude toward their Muslim brethren. This was done through the somewhat popular works that appeared in the seventeenth century about “thinking the best of others (*ḥusn al-ẓann bi’l-nās*).” The most common was ‘Ali b. Muḥammad al-Miṣrī’s *Gift for the*

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<sup>141</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa’l-Majāz*, 2:280.

<sup>142</sup> al-Bakrī al-Siddīqī, *Bur’ al-Asqām*.



*Wise: Thinking the Best of People*.<sup>143</sup> The act of “thinking well” of others was not simply a manifestation of positive thinking, but a constant hedge against those that wished to anathematize larger segments of the populations. For example, the aforementioned Ramlī, in his response to Minkārīzāde’s attempts to lower the requirements for heresy, suggests that, “If there are aspects in a case that require excommunication (*takfīr*) and just one aspect that prohibits excommunication, then the jurist (*muftī*) must privilege the aspect that prohibits it, in order to think best of the Muslim (*taḥsīnan lil-ẓann bi’l-muslim*).”<sup>144</sup> The point behind the practice, as both Ramlī and Miṣrī stated, was to judge people by the intent behind their actions, not simply the action itself.<sup>145</sup>

‘Ali al-Miṣrī wrote the book as a response to “the rush to think ill ... that has proliferated in the shaykhs and scholars of our time, not to mention others. See how one of them thinks ill by the merest sight of something that he saw or heard or was mentioned in a rumor, without verifying it.”<sup>146</sup> The precise period of ‘Ali al-Miṣrī is a bit hard to pin down, but, given that he frequently quotes or mentions ‘Ali al-Khawāṣ (d. 1542/3) and Muḥammad b. Abi’l-Ḥasan al-Bakrī (d. 1586), one could place him as active in Cairo during the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries.<sup>147</sup> After a selection of hadiths and other choice quotes he then goes into a

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<sup>143</sup> There appear to be two major versions of his work, one a bit longer than the other. Both seem to reiterate the same pieces of evidence, wording and general themes, though, suggesting that the shorter one might be a slightly abridged version with a more Hanafī bent. For the shorter version see ‘Ali b. Muḥammad al-Miṣrī, *Tuḥfat al-Akyās fī Ḥusn al-Ẓann bi’l-Nās* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad Efendi Muṣṭafa, 1893).

<sup>144</sup> Ramlī, *Treatise on Heresy*, MS Hekimoğlu 322, f. 302b

<sup>145</sup> Ramlī, *Treatise on Heresy*, MS Hekimoğlu 322, f. 302b; ‘Ali b. Muḥammad al-Miṣrī, *Tuḥfat al-Akyās fī Ḥusn al-Ẓann bi’l-Nās*, Istanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Atatürk Kitaplığı, MS Osman Ergin Yazmaları 501, f. 79b.

<sup>146</sup> Miṣrī, *Tuḥfat al-Akyās*, MS Osman Ergin 501, f. 81a

<sup>147</sup> Some catalogs (identify) him incorrectly with Ali Efendi, the son of Niyāzī-i Miṣrī but this seems highly unlikely.

variety of examples as to when one should avoid thinking ill and condemning others. For example, he quotes that “if you hear a person say most of the scholars of our time hate truth (*haqq*) and love evil (*fitna*), do not rush off to condemn (*inkār*) him for it is possible that by truth he meant “death” and by ‘evil’ he meant ‘wealth and children,’ for God said, ‘only your possessions and progeny are *fitna*.’”<sup>148</sup> The explanation goes on to say that the person might just truly selfish and narcissistic, and does not need to be condemned as a heretic.<sup>149</sup> In another example, he tells bystanders not to castigate shaykhs who beat their pupils for no apparent reason for the student might have approached the shaykh for a judgment on a future bad deed.<sup>150</sup> None of this is to say that Ali al-Miṣrī wanted to do away with the category of heresy; he makes sure to emphasize that acts such as adultery and wine drinking are plainly within the scope of heresy.<sup>151</sup> Instead he wanted to limit the act of condemnation (*inkār*) and excommunication (*takfīr*) to moments when it is truly necessary and irrefutable. In another example, he exhorts people to

avoid rushing to condemn those associated with heresy (*bidaʿa*) ... Do not condemn them unless you personally engage with them and see something that does not agree with the shariʿa and then warn them against it (*nahaytahum*) and they then dismiss the warning. For it is known that the hearts of the people are the treasure houses of God, and perhaps God lodged between all those heretics (*muḥtadīʿa*) one of his friends (*awliyā* i.e. saints) to keep them from slipping into further misfortune...<sup>152</sup>

Miṣrī’s point was not to take apart heresy as a category but to fend off the constant accusations of heresy and the accompanying condemnation (*inkār*) that was the hallmark of the polemical fights of the period. The insistence of the practice in the textual records and the popularity of

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<sup>148</sup> Qurʿan, 64:15. *Fitna* here is usually translated as “test” or “trial.”

<sup>149</sup> Miṣrī, *Tuḥfat al-Akyās*, MS Osman Ergin 501, f. 93b

<sup>150</sup> Miṣrī, *Tuḥfat al-Akyās*, MS Osman Ergin 501, f. 114a

<sup>151</sup> Miṣrī, *Tuḥfat al-Akyās*, MS Osman Ergin 501, f. 79b

<sup>152</sup> Miṣrī, *Tuḥfat al-Akyās*, MS Osman Ergin 501, f. 114a

Miṣrī's work point to the fact that despite government insistence and popular pressure, there were many that were not willing to the anathematize everyone around them.

## Conclusion

This chapter has focused on finding a proper analytical vocabulary for the deeply polemical debates over Islamic practice in the Ottoman Empire during the seventeenth century. Moreover, it has done this by going beyond the one or two chronicles from which traditional examples of these polemical fights are often drawn. The first part of this chapter rejected the conventional narrative for these polemical debates—the *Ḳāḏīzādeli* movement—as a socio-economic explanation inspired by the events of the Iranian Revolution. I argued that, as a social movement, the *Ḳāḏīzādelis* had little social coherence and therefore we need to use other approaches for explaining the religious transformation of Islamic societies such as confessionalization. The second part of the chapter uses a series of episodes to adumbrate a heightening polarization of Ottoman society around religious practice along with shifts in the very definition of religion. These can be found not only in the polemical pamphlet literature but in legal debates and heresiographies. From the circulars of *şeyhülislams* to the revival of the medieval heresiographical tradition to discussions on the “religion of Abraham,” we find a loosening of the traditional strictures on declaring fellow Muslims heretics alongside extended discussions on the distinction between religion, faith, and practice. These changes led in the general direction of heresy being read in more than simple statements of faith and apostasy, but in everyday actions, practices, and in the presence of certain objects. While the desire to anathematize fellow Muslims was not willingly or easily accepted by all subjects and scholars of the empire—as seen in the attempt of scholars to create a space in the “religion of Abraham,”

and the push to think the best of other Muslims—it also found supporters among a wide spectrum of society. The importance of these transformation are two-fold. On the level of historiography, they demonstrate that these fights represented more than a recurring paroxysm of Islamic orthodoxy, the still predominant interpretation of these events, but a larger shift in the boundaries and definition of religion. At the same time, these discussions add a historicity to the concept of religion that is generally passed over in the approaches of anthropologists of Islamic revival. More importantly, I would argue that these discussions inserted a strong aspect of materiality, in which a disruptive object or practice could become a marker of disbelief, into the very definitions and processes of heresy.

### **Chapter 3: Pamphleteering in a manuscript culture: The circulation of cheap books and the polarization of Ottoman society**

Much of our knowledge of the polemical debates in the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire comes from the small and short pieces that permeate the manuscript record of the period. Scholars and intellectuals constantly penned short treatises castigating their enemies and defending their own polemical arguments as we saw in the previous chapter with the debates over heresy and saint worship in seventeenth-century Cairo. While these provide an overview of the debates and the legal arguments used by each side, a history of ideas essentially, we often pay less attention to the materiality of the works themselves. In this chapter, I would like to turn to the circulation and movement of what I call manuscript “pamphlets” through the empire and the effect of this circulation on its religious and intellectual life. I argue that the pamphlets themselves were a cause of the polemicism of the period. In other words, I would like to treat here physical manuscripts as agents rather than the ideas inscribed within.<sup>1</sup> The payoff is a move away from purely intellectual or social histories of religious change in the Ottoman Empire to one that is entangled within the material world.

This chapter makes two major interventions. The first intervention is a reimagining of the manuscript legacy of the early modern Islamic world. When we think of Islamic manuscripts, we often think of large, heavy, and expensive volumes with numerous miniatures and illumination. The reality, I argue, is that most of the manuscripts, both historically and at present, are small,

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter takes its cue from James Secord’s challenge to understand science and “knowledge-making itself as a form of communication” James A Secord, “Knowledge in Transit,” *Isis* 95 (2004): 661.

cheap, and quite mobile.<sup>2</sup> While there were many types of cheap manuscripts in the Ottoman Empire, such as catechisms and storybooks, I focus here on small, polemical pieces that I call “pamphlets.” Much of the first half of the chapter focuses on defining the pamphlet by demonstrating its material and social qualities and differentiating it from its print counterparts and historical precedents. I emphasize that pamphlets are purposefully argumentative texts, made to be used by groups of skilled and unskilled readers who wanted ready access to arguments and proofs to deploy in debates. As such, these pamphlets were a category of texts that emerged from both material and social entanglements, like the supply of cheaper paper from the Italian Peninsula, the state’s monopolization of the legal sphere, and the growth of semi-educated lay readers. Having defined the pamphlet, I then examine more closely the popular pamphlet debate over the medical procedure known as “chickpea cauterization (*kayy al-ḥimmasa*)” and one particular pamphleteer—the Damascene ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nabulusī. After establishing a new material environment and a regime of circulation that defined it, I move onto understanding the intellectual repercussions of pamphlets.

The second part of the chapter looks at the transformation of social relations engendered by the circulation of pamphlets across the empire. Rather than argue that pamphlets led to an expanded public sphere, I focus instead on the erosion of social trust that supported the transmission of knowledge in medieval Islamic societies.<sup>3</sup> For medieval and early modern Islamic societies, scholars have generally understood intellectual space to be generated out of interpersonal, face-to-face contact. To this end, most historians of knowledge in Islamic societies

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<sup>2</sup> This is in line with, and inspired by, recent work by Meredith Quinn, “Books and Their Readers in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> For an insightful discussion of the “deliberative and the disciplinary” interpretations of media on religion and culture see Charles Hirschkind, “Civic Virtue and Religious Reason: An Islamic Counterpublic,” *Cultural Anthropology* 16, no. 1 (2001): 3–34.

have focused on those spaces, institutional or otherwise (e.g. the *madrasa* and the *majlis*), that have hosted and validated such interpersonal exchanges.<sup>4</sup> Pamphlets, however, disrupted such sites. They encouraged superficial and visual reading, a practice outside the traditional social strictures of learned society. Moreover, they actively led to the false ascription of texts to more famous authors. Readers began to claim that certain texts by major authors like Abu Ḥanīfa and Taftazānī or Birgivī were not actually by their purported authors and began to divide themselves along lines of readership. In fact, I argue that the Ḳāḏīzāleli movement mentioned in the last chapter are actually best thought of not as a social movement but an amorphous group of writers and readers who used the author-figures of scholars like Birgivī and Ḳāḏīzāde to disseminate and identify each other's writings. Contemporaneous observers of the period actively understood that a process of polarization and decanonization was occurring and began to develop new techniques of reading, writing, and dissemination to counter them.

### **Manuscript pamphlets and the history of the book**

The history of the book in the early modern Islamic world, unfortunately, has largely been written as a history of the failure to adopt print.<sup>5</sup> An earlier generation of scholars had regarded the printing press as one of the indisputable motors of modernity and change and pointed to religious obscurantism and tradition as the reason behind the Islamic world's abortive

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<sup>4</sup> George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981); Daphna Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition: The Sunni "ulama" of Eleventh Century Baghdad* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000); Jonathan Porter Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992); Samer M Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons in the Islamic Middle Ages: Poetry, Public Performance, and the Presentation of the Past* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010); Helen Pfeifer, "To Gather Together: Cultural Encounters in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Literary Salons" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 303–6; Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964).

adoption of the technology.<sup>6</sup> Newer scholarship, however, has dismantled the technological determinism imbued in this older view.<sup>7</sup> Instead of arguing that print naturally conferred upon a text increased fixity, circulation or stability of authorship, these scholars have unearthed the social practices—from new methods of reading to market mechanisms—that could make printed books as either trustworthy or suspect as they spread across Europe. This crack in the telos of print provides scholars a space in which to explore the practices that allowed the manuscript culture of the early modern Ottoman Empire to flourish and develop rather than regard it as static and unchanging, a “lack of print.” Instead of seeing manuscripts as inherently inhibiting the circulation of knowledge with their supposedly high cost, limited numbers, and naturally local communities, this chapter directs our attention to those manuscript “pamphlets” that were cheap, plentiful, and widespread.

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<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth L Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change : Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge [Eng.]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>7</sup> Here I refer specifically to Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book : Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books : Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994).



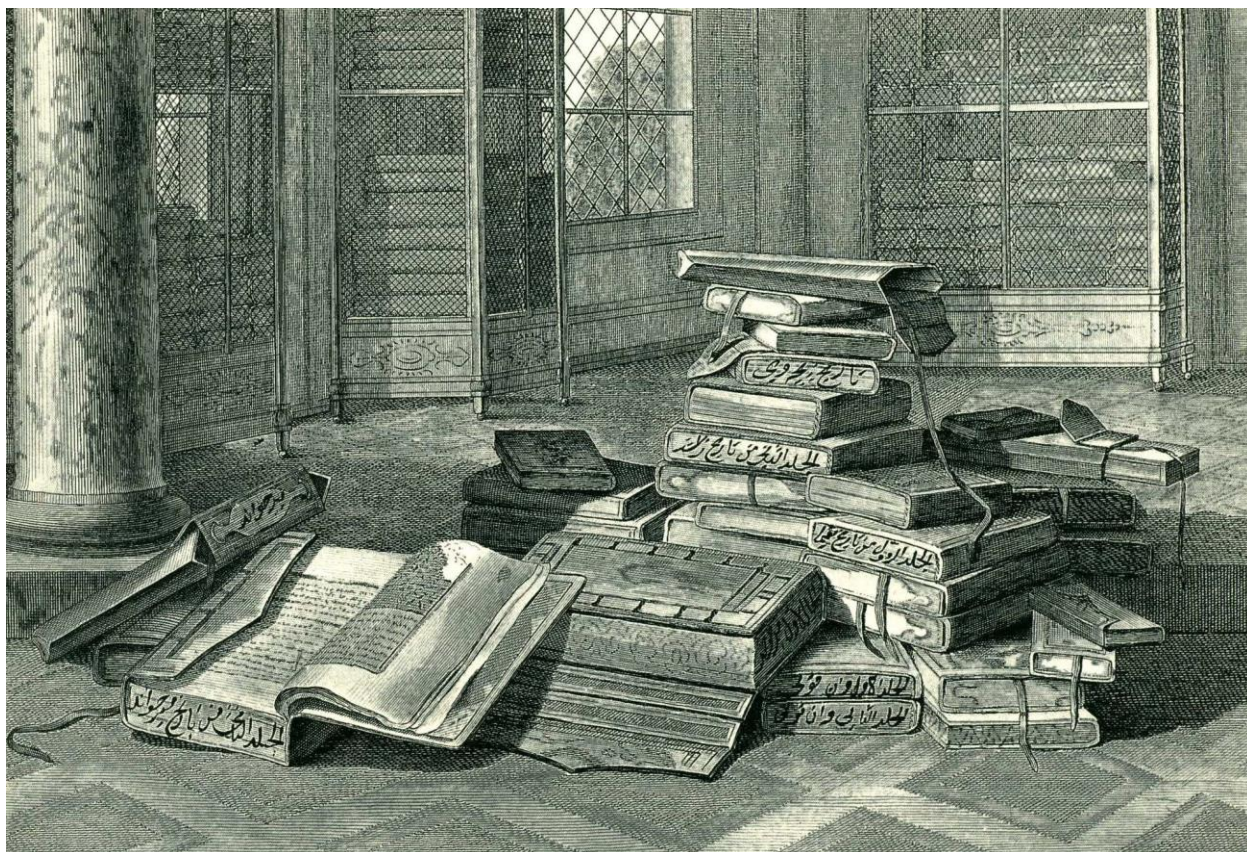


Figure 1: The conventional image of Islamic Manuscripts. Engraving from Mouradega d'Ohsson, Ignatius. *Tableau général de l'Empire othoman*. Paris: Imprimerie de monsieur Firmin Didot, 1788. Pl. 39.

Pamphlets are just one subset of cheap books, those short, easily copied, economically priced, and often ephemeral manuscripts that were extremely popular throughout the early modern Ottoman Empire. Other types of cheap books include stories and tales (*hikāye*) and catechismic texts (*‘ilm-i hāl*).<sup>8</sup> Yet, despite the fact that these inexpensive books were the most common types of texts in circulation, the little scholarship that exists on the history of the manuscripts in the early modern Ottoman Empire, and the early modern Islamic world at large, has emphasized elaborate and costly books, often lavishly illustrated with miniatures and

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<sup>8</sup> On the catchecisms as popular texts see Derin Terzioğlu, “Where Ilm-i Hal Meets Catechism: Islamic Manuals of Religious Instruction in the Ottoman Empire in the Age of Confessionalization,” *Past & Present* 220 (2013): 79–115; On cheap stories and tales see Quinn, “Books and Their Readers in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul.”

produced in palace workshops.<sup>9</sup> Low-cost manuscripts also lie outside the scope of the valuable, but limited, studies of institutionalized book collecting, that is, the various private and public libraries (which did not collect cheap books), or the minor, piecemeal, and largely unsuccessful experiment in printing in the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Cheap books bridge the gulf traditionally posited between reading, regarded as the purview of the elite and highly educated, as in the examples above, and the vibrant oral culture, so often linked to the masses. Examining cheap manuscripts in general and pamphlets in particular forces scholars to look at manuscripts and their social world as a dynamic changing entity that could accommodate changes in readership and reading practices rather than remain static for a thousand years.

The word pamphlet, however, is a peculiar choice given that it is most frequently associated with the advent of cheap *printed* books. In the European context, pamphlets are a seventeenth-century development that spread thanks to the ability for the printing press to produce many printed texts at relatively little cost.<sup>11</sup> Yet, despite the fact that there does not seem to have been a technological development in manuscript production, I have chosen to use the world pamphlet to create some analytical distance and a sense of temporal change. Pamphlet

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<sup>9</sup> Julian Raby et al., *Turkish Bookbinding in the 15th Century: The Foundation of an Ottoman Court Style* (London: Azimuth editions on behalf of l'Association Internationale de Bibliophilie, 1993); Zeren Tanındı, "Manuscript Production in the Ottoman Palace Workshop," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 5 (January 1990): 67–98; Zeren Tanındı, "Bibliophile Aghas (Eunuchs) at Topkapi Saray," *Muqarnas* 21 (2004): 333–43; Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> İsmail Erünsal, *Osmanlı Vakıf Kütüphaneleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2008); İsmail E Erünsal, *Ottoman Libraries: A Survey of the History, Development and Organization of Ottoman Foundation Libraries* ([Cambridge, Mass.]: The Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, Harvard University, 2008); Orlin Sabev, *İbrahim Müteferrika ya da ilk Osmanlı matbaa serüveni, 1726-1746: yeniden değerlendirme* (İstanbul: Yeditepe, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> On the emergence of pamphlets Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Alexandra Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Cambridge [England]; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

denotes a material category but there were internal categories for these works: Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, one of the chief pamphleteers of the period sometimes called his numerous short works *‘ujālas*—short, quickly written pieces. Most often they were simply called *risālas*—“treatises” in its most generic meaning. Yet, to call them *risālas*, or the equivalent translation of an “epistle” or “letter” or “treatise,” elides some of the rather drastic changes to reading culture and circulation that had occurred since the medieval period for the sake of linguistic continuity. For a new world of cheap books and far-flung readers, maybe it would be wiser to use the word pamphlet than *risāla*.

Let me suggest four criteria by which we can adumbrate a working definition of the manuscript pamphlet. I will only briefly and generally mention them here, as I touch upon many of these aspects throughout the chapter.

1) *Pamphlets were cheap*. That is they were cheap in terms of both the cost of materials and the amount of time required to copy them. In general, they were physically small books and short, ranging from the two to thirty folios. In earlier periods, a *risāla* could stretch out for hundreds of folios, e.g., the “epistles” of Brethren of Purity. The pamphlet on the other hand, is a purposefully short work of limited length so that it could be easily composed or copied in a sitting. Pamphlets likewise lack any ornamentation and sometimes even binding. Extremely ornate pamphlets produced by the palace, complete with gilding, illumination, and ornamental bindings, despite being only a few pages long, do exist, but these are exceptional.

2) *Pamphlets were independent texts*. They were a small but complete textual world rather than just a small selection of a larger text or an abridgement. They include benedictions, prefaces, and conclusions just as any larger text but of a characteristically short length.

Moreover, they are independent in that they can be read independently of a teacher or another text. Unlike the short, but incredibly dense, student “handbooks” on various subjects that were memorized, recited, and then thoroughly discussed by *madrasa* students, pamphlets are notable for the fact that they do not require a teacher or guide to explain obscure or difficult passages. This is not to say that they did not quote other books or respond to them, but one could read them on their own without necessarily requiring knowledge of the previous book.

3) *Pamphlets provided arguments.* They proffered hadiths and choice quotes for aspiring readers and polemicists. Instead of having to buy a whole book, and be required to navigate its arguments, logic, and disputations and such, pamphlets provided a ready set of references, stories, counterarguments, and examples for instant deployment against one’s opponents or for personal reflection. Their capacity to short circuit the scholarly apparatus of traditional books, and to bypass the social etiquette that accompanied them, made pamphlets especially liberating to their readers and threatening to other scholars. Often pamphlets responded to some of the many other pamphlets on a controversial issue, though, again, one did not necessarily need to have read those other pamphlets to make sense of the pamphlet in one’s hands.

The argumentative aspect of pamphlets also differentiates pamphlets from other cheap books that proliferated in the seventeenth century—such as tales and stories (*hikāyeler*) or small books of prayers. It also makes them different from their European counterparts in they did not provide “news” in the literal sense of new information about current events or scandals. Instead, they were texts with a longer shelf life, often copied, read, and circulated for decades since they addressed long-standing legal and societal debates such as permissibility of various religious practices, coffee, smoking, land tax issues, merchant morality, etc. Not all pamphlets were

necessarily polemical, but I believe that their polemical tone and arguments drew readers toward them.

4) *Pamphlets were made to travel*. Not only were they light and small, but they were meant to be read by and circulated to a variety of individuals outside of the personal circle of the author. Unlike earlier practices of publication that were debuted in *majlises* to a small, local community, these pamphlets were made to be distributed and spread.<sup>12</sup> While these texts were most likely discussed and debated in public, the fact that there is little variance between the numerous extant copies suggests that they were not orally transmitted. Nor did they resemble the *risāla* in the sense of an epistle or private letter, which existed as a separate type of composition. While pamphlets readily circulated, their circulation did not seem to rely on market mechanisms, rather they were distributed by individuals.

5) *Pamphlets had a different visuality*. The emphasis in the pamphlet is on the text itself. Not only were there no illustrations, the reader was not meant to interact visually with the work through its calligraphy or illumination. There was no expected script and the quality was meant to be low. A reader would only extract meaning from the text. By way of contrast we can look at the normative visuality of the Qur'an in the early eighteenth century as expressed in a *fetva* about a woman who desires to copy the Qur'an. The comparison, while perhaps surprising, is apt given the common presumption that basic holy texts, like the Qur'an or the Bible, should be the cheapest and most readily available texts. The example quickly makes it clear the difference between the two texts.

Q: Hind is copying the Holy Qur'an at home. She touches it without an envelope and turns the pages. When she wishes to occupy herself with the writing of the Qur'an, in what manner must she write?

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<sup>12</sup> On earlier forms of book publication see Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands : A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012); Pfeifer, "To Gather Together."

A: She must be in a pure state and not ritually impure, menstruating, bleeding ... The Holy Qur'an must be placed in a high place and her stylus must not be too thin and she must write in a traditional script, with pure ink, on the best and whitest paper, spacing out the lines of texts and in a relatively large scale.<sup>13</sup>

What is most striking in this legal opinion is how the Qur'an as a text comprises far more than just its words. It entails gestures (not to touch it directly), bodily states (to be ritually pure), physical space (it must be located higher than everyday objects), certain mise-en-page (a formal calligraphic one, widely spaced), and certain material requirements (pure ink and white paper). A pamphlet had none of this.

### **Pamphlets in the wild: archives, preservation, and economies of distribution**

Today these pamphlets only exist in rather specific formats. Thousands of copies of pamphlets exist in manuscript libraries currently, but usually only in bound miscellanies. I would argue, however, that in the past pamphlets existed both as independent texts—a quire or two strung together and lacking binding—and as texts copied into the pages of small notebooks. Scribal technology proved to be more flexible than printing with pamphlets circulating as various readers encountered them and quickly copied them down on whatever spare sheets of paper they had available. What survives in libraries today, though, is mainly 1) those pamphlets preceding or following a larger text considered worthy of preservation or 2) large miscellanies of pamphlets on a shared subject or author, assembled by a copyist or a binder. Like their European counterparts, the public libraries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whose collections form the basis of today's research collections, generally did not collect such short works.<sup>14</sup> Instead, they preserved long, rare, and old books, often for the purposes of providing editions for

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<sup>13</sup> Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi, *Behcetü'l-Fetâvâ*, ed. Süleyman Kaya et al. (Istanbul: Klasik, 2011), 568.

<sup>14</sup> Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print*, 1.



the act of copying or collating, rather than providing access to cheap, popular books.<sup>15</sup> The same can be said for early modern European collectors of Islamic manuscripts who seem to have largely focused their efforts on collecting large tomes, often histories and geographies. These

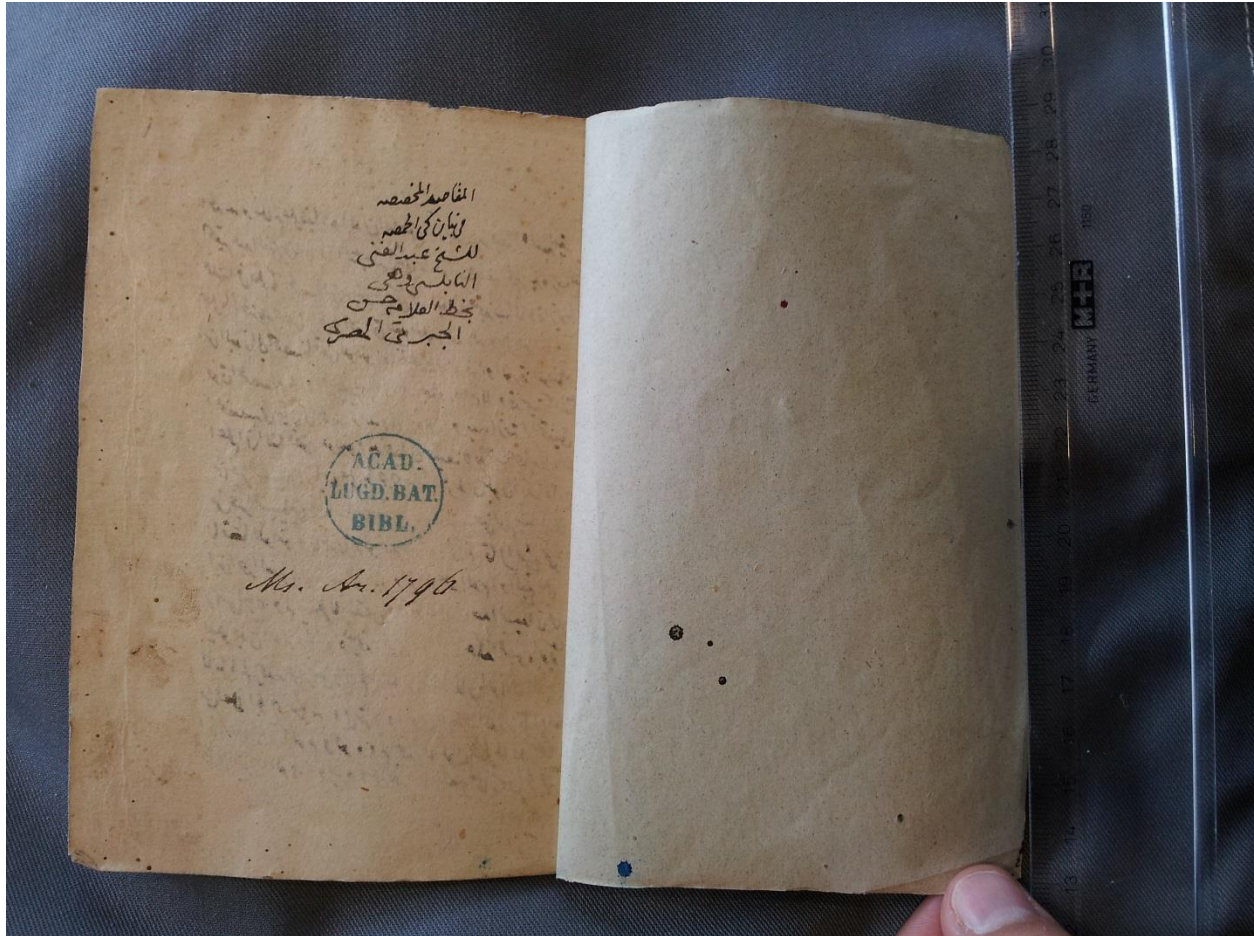


Figure 2: An independent, unbound, and quite small pamphlet from the Medinan collection of Amīn al-Madanī. It measures 10 cm x 15 cm. It was an extremely popular pamphlet by the Damascene ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī on the topic of chickpea cauterization (dealt with below). The pamphlet probably dates from the early eighteenth century and only has two folios and contains no other text. According to the title page (pictured) the work was copied by Ḥasan al-Jabartī al-Miṣrī, the father of the famous Egyptian historian, ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Jabartī, and this famous association might have been the reason for its preservation. (Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, MS Or. 2438) (Photograph of the author)

<sup>15</sup> See for instance the endowment charters of the Feyzullah Efendi Library (Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Fotokopi 31) and the Köprülü family libraries (Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Köprülü Ekler Vk Fh VSK, 1-4). Libraries for more popular texts did exist however, such as the eighteenth-century Kemankeş collections at the Atik Valide Camii in Uskudar, now also housed in Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi.

collecting practices adversely affected the survival of the pamphlets as small, individual, volumes, whose lack of binding made them susceptible to wear and tear and, eventually, destruction.

We can gain a better sense of the predominance of pamphlets and cheap books when we examine the private libraries of nineteenth-century Ottoman scholars which have been preserved whole within larger manuscript collections. For example, the huge Oriental manuscript collection of Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden contains within it the 600-manuscript library of the Medinan scholar Amīn al-Madanī bought by Brill in the 1880s.<sup>16</sup> The Library of Congress acquired the 5000-volume library (of which 1300 are manuscripts) of Shaykh Maḥmūd al-Imām al-Mānṣūrī, a shaykh at al-Azhar in 1945.<sup>17</sup> Andreas Tietze acquired for UCLA in 1965 a partial library of 912 volumes, stored in a farmhouse near Edirne, from the Turkish sea captain Ulvi Tekeş. It had originally belonged Rashīd al-Khawalsī, a müderris (professor) at Süleymaniye who fled to al-Azhar in 1928, presumably following the closure of the medrese system in Republican Turkey.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Carlo Landberg, *Catalogue de manuscrits Arabes provenant d'une bibliothèque privée à el-Medina et appartenant à la maison E. J. Brill* (Leide: E.J. Brill, 1883).

<sup>17</sup> This collection is still not fully catalogued. Salih al-Munajjid cataloged a few pieces in his *fihrist* from 1969 but it is mostly listed as a handlist in card catalog form which can be accessed in the offices of the librarians. See <http://www.loc.gov/rr/main/religion/ne.html> for more information.

<sup>18</sup> "Letter from Andreas Tietze to Robert Vosper," 4 July, 1965. See also letter from Andreas Tietze dated 1 Feb 1965. UCLA Young Research Library Special Collection, UCLA – University Archives, Record Series #510: Library, Associate University Librarian Karin Wittenborg's Administrative Subject Files, 1971-1993, Box 16. This collection (Tekes Collection, UCLA Young Research Library Special Collections, Collection #898) has not been adequately cataloged either but there is a handlist available. Small selections of it were also sold to the British Museum and Princeton. The seller apparently had legal permission to export the manuscripts, in case one is concerned that Tietze or UCLA acted improperly.



When we look at these collections we readily find small independent pamphlets (see for example, fig. 1), or small, cheaply copied miscellanies of scholars.

The question of the preservation leads to a larger point about the nature of the economies through which these pamphlets circulated. Today we tend to prioritize the market as the primary method of distribution of texts. However, my sense is that cheap manuscripts, especially pamphlets, largely operated beneath the sphere of market relations. Although they rarely contain formal colophons or such, they were probably copied by the reader, possibly from the copy of a friend or intermediary. They were most likely not acquired from booksellers (though one could take a short treatise to a scribe and have produce a copy), which would explain the fact that they rarely had prices written down on their flyleaves. The probate inventories of bookowners and booksellers show similar disposition against pamphlets and other cheap books: only large or well-known books are written by their title, whatever pamphlets that might exist inside them are disregarded, and if pamphlets exist independently they are referred to generically as “a book” or “a collection of treatises.”<sup>19</sup> When we look at the court-prepared list of books owned by one of the empire’s most prolific pamphleteers, Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, we find his hundreds of pamphlet works simply referred to as “four collections of pamphlets (*arba ‘a majāmī‘ al-rasā’il*)” and “another collection of pamphlets” rather than by their title.<sup>20</sup> Unless preserved in large, well-made collections, many of these pamphlets would simply not have been worth the effort to sell. To oversimplify a complicated story, the market economy primarily dealt with large scholarly

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<sup>19</sup> İsmail E Erünsal, *Osmanlılarda sahaflık ve sahaflar* (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2013); Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*; Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print*.

<sup>20</sup> Abdelmajid Chaabane, “Amlāk al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī wa maktabatuhu fī wathā’iq maḥākīm Dimashq al-shar‘iyya (Biens et Bibliothèque du Cheikh Abdelghani Nabulsi a la Lumière des Registres Judiciaires de Damas),” *Arab Historical Review for Ottoman Studies / Al-Majalla al-Tārīkhīya al-‘Arabīya li-l-Dirāsāt al-Uthmāniya* 35 (November 2007): 172.

books, compilations of poetry, and the occasional popular books that were cleanly copied in a readable and common script (usually naskh or ta'liq). Beyond this level existed a gift economy for manuscripts with heavy illumination, high-quality binding, and illustrations. These were most likely never actively sold on the market and so were beyond, to a certain degree, a monetary value, and circulated most readily in the palace and the high servants of the government.<sup>21</sup>

### **Cheap books in the past and present**

Librarians and bibliographers of Middle Eastern manuscripts estimate that there are at least three to four million manuscripts in the Arabic script remaining today in private and public collections. While this covers the entirety of the Muslim world, a very large chunk of them comes from the former lands of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, as any researcher knows, and as the catalogs likewise reflect, the overwhelming majority of datable manuscripts were produced during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. We should not think of these millions of manuscripts as large, heavy, medieval tomes but as small, cheap books, one type of which are pamphlets. One of the most common presumptions about manuscripts, in comparison to printed books, is that they were extremely expensive and thus inherently limited both book ownership and readership. The reality though is that manuscripts existed in all price ranges; as Meredith Quinn has noted from her thorough quantitative research on the subject, manuscripts could be as cheap as a rag or as expensive as a house.<sup>22</sup> In this section, I briefly look at the available data derived from probate inventories to show how the majority of manuscripts in circulation were actually quite affordable and thus capable of reaching broad swathes of the

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<sup>21</sup> On these types of books see Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*.

<sup>22</sup> See forthcoming dissertation by Quinn, "Books and Their Readers in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul."

population. While the figures of book ownership from these inventories has traditionally been used as a proxy for reading, I will deploy them here for the more modest aim of demonstrating the preponderance of cheap books.

Cheap books are not only the majority of manuscripts today but were also the majority of books in the past. From the rough quantitative work on the probate records in Cairo, Damascus, and other cities, we gain a partial picture of book ownership. While probate records provide the clearest quantitative data regarding book ownership, we do not fully understand the social and legal negotiations that resulted in a deceased person's belongings being processed by the court.<sup>23</sup> Not to mention the fact that the richest people often seem to have endowed their valuables, especially their books. This was not only for charitable reasons but also to keep a family's wealth from being divided or seized, and thus these books might escape the grasp of the probate courts. Despite these qualifications, there is some useful data that we can extract from this work. For instance, Nelly Hanna, one of the first authors to explore questions of book consumption in the early modern Middle East, has undertaken an initial quantitative study of the probate inventories of Cairo. She claims that there was general rise in the number of the books that were handled by the courts following the deaths of various subjects. Unfortunately, her study only offer glimpses of four ten-year periods in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (1600-1610; 1703-1714; 1730-1740; 1749-1759) from the two Cairene neighborhoods from which she was able to extract 467 private libraries. The total number of books in these libraries went from 2,427 in 1600 to 3,535 in 1703 to 5,991 in 1730 to a steep and unexplained decline to 2,077 in 1749. The figures are too piecemeal to prove her point in a statistically significant fashion, and likewise

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<sup>23</sup> Nor for that matter, do we understand how the probate courts came up with the book prices listed in the records.

decontextualized from the rest of the probate inventories that do not contain books, but they do draw attention to the relatively low prices of books.

Percentage of books in the 1-30 <i>nisf</i> range appraised and sold during the probate courts of Cairo during select periods and select jurisdictions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries <sup>24</sup>	
1600-1610	37.9% (723/1910 books)
1703-1714	45.4% (1459/3214 books)
1730-1740	43.4% (2322/5354 books)
1749-1759	48% (898/1858 books)

Hanna provides a rough breakdown of the price points of the books that were processed and subsequently sold at auction by two of the Cairo probate courts, revealing that the cheapest range of books,

from 1-30 *nisfs*, consisted by far the largest group of books. The most expensive books could reach up to 10,000 *nisfs*, pointing to the vast array of books on the market. Hanna mentions that most of the books in the lowest price range were between 5-10 *nisfs*, and speculates that they were short treatises, those very same that I am attempting to call pamphlets. 5-10 *nisfs* which was equivalent to 0.19-0.37 kilograms of coffee (0.42-0.84 *ratl*) or 2.25-4.50kg (5-10 *ratl*) of cheap local olives.<sup>25</sup> All in all, a cheap book was actually cheap and could be bought within the range of daily goods. The percentage of books in this price range seems to have been consistent across the decades, remaining steady across much of the eighteenth century at around 43-48%.<sup>26</sup> Yet this relatively stability is belied by the fact that the Egyptian *nisf* lost nearly half of its value between 1680-1780; for instance, the value of the *nisf* decreased by 17.20% between the 1703-14

<sup>24</sup> Nelly Hanna, *In Praise of Books: A Cultural History of Cairo's Middle Class, Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 91.

<sup>25</sup> Many thanks for Zoe Griffith for the pointing me toward these figures and highlighting the fact that the Egyptian *nisf* lost near half of its value over the course of the eighteenth century. For Cairo commodity prices in 1703 see Aḥmad al-Damurdāshī, *Al-Damurdashī's Chronicle of Egypt, 1688-1755: al-Durra Al-Muṣāna fī Akhbār al-Kināna*, trans. Daniel Crecelius and 'Abd al-Wahhab Bakr (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 120-21; Damurdāshī provides the prices of the year in *niṣf fiḍḍa* by the *ratl*, which is approximately 0.449 kilograms in Cairo. Unit conversions taken from Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume 1: 1300-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xlii.

<sup>26</sup> The percentage of books in the cheapest price range did rise slightly over the ensuing century, around 7.5%, but the gaps in the ensuing decades keeps us from making any conclusions.

and 1730-40 periods and fell another 5% by the 1749-59 period.<sup>27</sup> In other words, the market share of cheap books and pamphlets actually grew in Cairo over the eighteenth century.

When we expand our inquiry to the other major cities of the empire, we find similar suggestions and conclusions regarding cheap books though we need more statistically significant quantitative studies, not to mention a better grasp of the functioning of the probate courts. There has been a small study of the probate inventories in Damascus containing books during the period 1686-1717 by Colette Establet and Jean-Paul Pascual. Their study, which collected more detailed yet different information from Nelly Hanna's work, has concluded that the average price

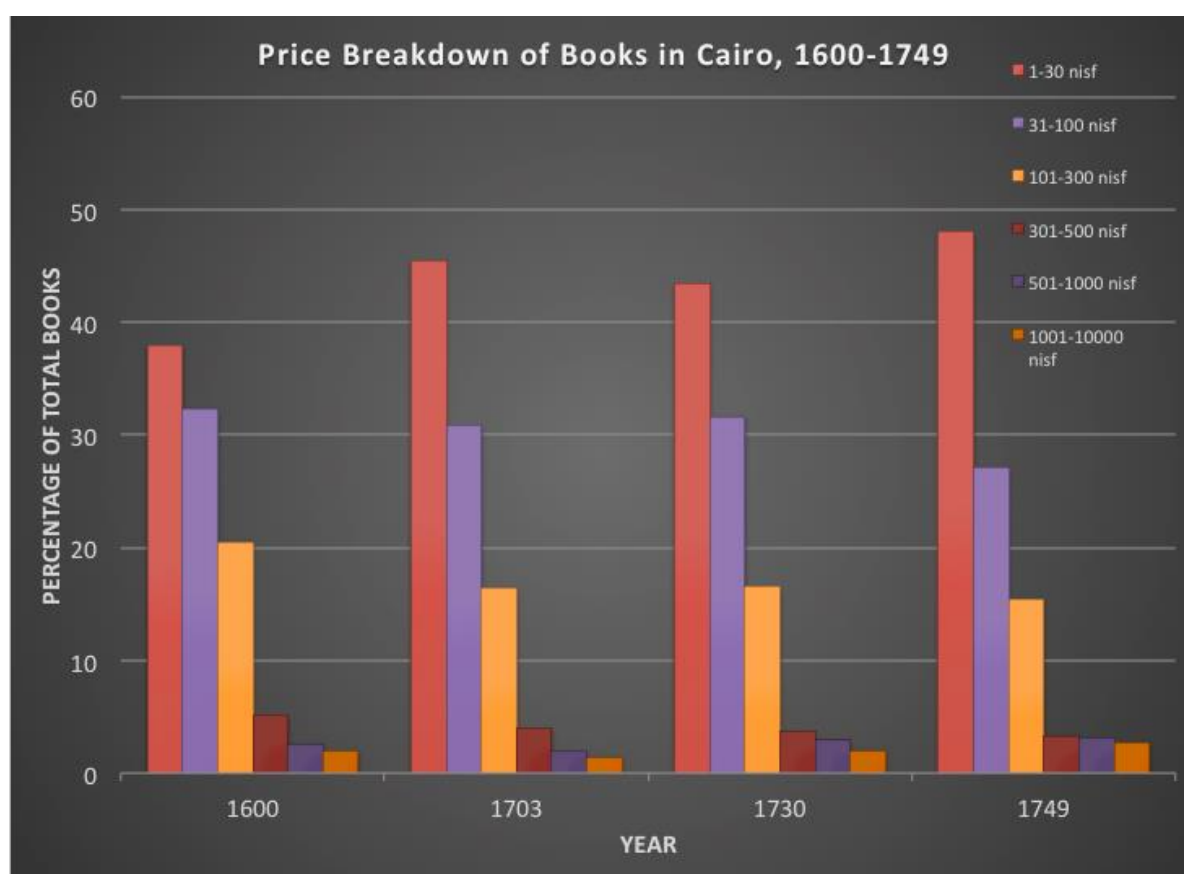


Figure 3: Graphic representation of the percentages of the table. Taken from Nelly Hanna, *In Praise of Books*.

of book was 2.3 piasters, which is coincidentally the average price of one Syrian *ratl*, or 1.85kg, of

<sup>27</sup> These percentages are derived from André Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle* (Damas: Institut français de Damas, 1973).

coffee in Damascus during the aforementioned period.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, they do not provide the price breakdown for the books except for very expensive ones. Therefore, while an average book might seem a good bit more expensive, we might safely assume that actually many lower-priced books existed, especially if the percentage of cheap books in Damascus was like that of Cairo.

Establet and Pascual also point to the fact that in this period the percentage of Damascene households that owned books was 18.2%, which is equivalent to the rate of book ownership in the major cities or countries of Europe during the same period, like England (19%), Amsterdam (12%), Paris (22.6%).<sup>29</sup> This is also only slightly higher than the ownership rates of books in Istanbul in the third quarter of the seventeenth century, according to a forthcoming study of the city's probate records.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, James Grehan, in his study of probate inventories and household commodities in eighteenth-century Damascus, states that only 6% of Damascene male estates left behind books.<sup>31</sup> In a related point, Boris Liebrecht's work on datable price statements from the flyleaves of Damascene books currently in the libraries of Berlin and Leipzig, suggests that books were far from affordable for most of the population.<sup>32</sup>

There were important changes in book production that allowed for the emergence of cheaper manuscripts. The introduction of paper and the development of techniques to produce

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<sup>28</sup> This price is higher than its equivalent in Cairo, though this might be due to the higher transport costs of bringing coffee to Damascus. Coffee prices taken from James Grehan, *Everyday Life & Consumer Culture in 18th-Century Damascus* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 138–39; Unit conversions taken from Inalcik and Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume 1: 1300-1600*, xlii.

<sup>29</sup> Colette Establet and Jean-Paul Pascual, “Les livres des gens à Damas vers 1700,” *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 87–88 (n.d.): 147–48.

<sup>30</sup> Quinn, “Books and Their Readers in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul.”

<sup>31</sup> Grehan, *Everyday Life & Consumer Culture in 18th-Century Damascus*, 182.

<sup>32</sup> Boris Liebrecht, “‘Mit Gold nicht aufzuwiegen’: Der Wert von Büchern im osmanischen Syrien (11.-13./17.-19. Jahrhundert),” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 164 (2014): 653–86. I thank Boris for sharing his article with me prior to its publication.

rag-paper books in Iraq during the eighth to tenth centuries resulted in a fluorescence of book production and book collecting, cementing the role of book as the predominant technology of the knowledge transmission in the Islamic world.<sup>33</sup> We can point to similar changes in the Mediterranean over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as cheaper Italian paper came to be the standard paper used for book production. New binding techniques, such as *chahār-kūshe* (four-corner) binding allowed for a book to be sturdily bound at much less cost. Instead of using an entire piece of leather to cover the pasteboards, bookbinders would cover the corners and edges of a book, with either leather or cloth, drastically reducing costs.<sup>34</sup>

These conflicting conclusions as to whether access to books was widespread or not should make us treat the quantitative sources with extreme care and a good amount of skepticism. The fact that European collectors rarely collected popular or cheap literature, instead favoring large and expensive histories, dictionaries, and geographies, mitigates Liebrecht's study of book prices. Moreover, as I suggested before, only a small segment of books circulated on the open market; at the lower end many books were probably just copied out by readers and at the highest end many circulated within a gift economy. Similarly, the probate inventories require us to investigate the processes that pushed certain estates and commodities to be recorded and if they differed from city to city. For instance, the studies from both Cairo and Damascus seem to show a drop in book ownership in the eighteenth century, though this might be due to the fact that certain books, presumably the cheapest, had stopped being regarded as assets with a market

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<sup>33</sup> James E. Montgomery, *Al-Jāhīz: In Praise of Books* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 39–41; Jonathan M. Bloom, *Paper before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 46–89.

<sup>34</sup> The technique was also eventually used to create different forms of upmarket editions and new forms of decoration such as using marbled paper on the covers. Jake Benson, "Satisfying an Appetite for Books: Ottoman *çahār-kūshe* bindings," presented the conference *Manuscript Cultures of the Ottoman Empire*, Orient-Institut, Istanbul, June 6-7, 2014.

value.<sup>35</sup> This might very well be the case since in Nelly Hanna's study of Cairo, the total value of books dramatically increases in the mid-eighteenth century even though the number of books recorded falls.<sup>36</sup> In Meredith Quinn's examination of book ownership in the late seventeenth-century Istanbul probate records, we find that by far the largest category of books (when arranged according to genre) is "unknown" or generically referred to simply as "a book" or "an unbound work." This is also the group with the lowest prices by far.<sup>37</sup> Many of these, too, might be pamphlets. The point being that the pamphlets and cheap books often existed below the threshold of a codicological unit in the court records, either overlooked or attached to the sides of works of greater importance.

### **Classes and Causation: The Possibility of New Readers**

Did the ready economic availability of books correspond to a growth in new classes of readers? Given that we cannot make the introduction of printing a straightforward, if deterministic, motor of these changes, we are left with the suggestion that there was an expansion in either the production of books, the intensity of their consumption, or the number of readers. Quite a few scholars have recently suggested that the number of readers actively engaging with written texts did increase. Yet, the evidence for such a shift is still tentative, and often indirect, especially if consider that we are simply much closer to the moment of preservation today. The relatively limited evidence might dampen grand claims to a revolution in reading for the moment but there are still hints of large shifts.

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<sup>35</sup> Hanna seems to explain this drop by stating that the Mamluk rulers of the late eighteenth-century had become more efficient at extracting taxes from the population and thus impoverished the residents of Cairo.

<sup>36</sup> Hanna, *In Praise of Books*, 86.

<sup>37</sup> see forthcoming dissertation by Quinn, "Books and Their Readers in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul."



Some scholars suggest that the fact that the overwhelming majority of the millions of extant manuscripts date from the early modern period points to an increase in readership and book production. Nelly Hanna makes this very argument in her study of books and their readers in early modern Cairo, stating that books point to the growth of some sort of new middle class.<sup>38</sup> Yet, we have to balance this preponderance of books in the period with the, perhaps inconvenient, fact that there was a large growth in public and private manuscript collections, both in the Middle East and in Europe, during this very same period and these are the foundations of many of the collections researchers use today. Not to mention that manuscripts have had less time to be destroyed in myriad ways in the three hundred years since 1700 in comparison to the six hundred years since 1400. In other words, the moment of preservation for many manuscripts neatly coincides with the period identified as the one of increased book production and consumption.

While it is certainly possible that millions of manuscripts were produced and largely destroyed over the period of 1250-1550 whereas millions more were produced and (partially) preserved over the three hundred years between 1550-1850, there are several counter-arguments that make this less likely. The first is that were we theoretically to chart the number of the surviving manuscripts according to their copy date, the result would be the exponential rise, starting in the mid-seventeenth century, of an accelerating book production rather than the steady linear ascent of constant production. Second, while the estimates of remaining Arabic-script manuscripts are truly just educated guesses, the number of manuscripts preserved in libraries today are only a small though significant fraction of the total number of these manuscripts in the world. The average “large” oriental manuscript library comprises of perhaps 10,000 manuscripts

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<sup>38</sup> Hanna, *In Praise of Books*, 83–85.

while a small one contains around 500. The truly unique libraries, such as Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul or Dar al-Kutub, have collections of nearly 100,000 manuscripts. Given that these public collections might only account for a few hundred thousand of the remaining manuscripts, millions of volumes, often the “cheap books” that are the subject of this chapter, remain in private collections and family libraries. Finally, the increased growth of institutions, like public libraries, that actively preserved books can itself be interpreted as a changing attitude toward reading and book production.<sup>39</sup>

While the aforementioned quantitative evidence is still insufficient to demonstrate diachronic change, anecdotal evidence from a variety of sources also demonstrates the development of new groups of readers within the empire during this period. Derin Terzioğlu has written briefly about a new group of “vernacular readers” in her article on *‘ilm-i hāls* or catechisms of basic Muslim belief. These works were aimed at partially educated readers who could read or write, and perhaps recite some verses of the Qur’an but had difficulty reading longer more complicated theological works. These readers were thought of as a valuable potential audience, one that needed the proper guidance lest they turn toward error. One of the major writers of such morality texts, an author who went solely by the name “Nuşhi (Advice-giver),” characterized this group of readers “as *ūmmī*, a word that is usually translated as ‘illiterate’, but which had a broader range of meanings. It could denote those who had limited fluency in Arabic and Persian learned discourse, or those who were literate only in Turkish or who were unable to read and write in any language.”<sup>40</sup> Apparently, readers were a common

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<sup>39</sup> Erünsal, *Osmanlı Vakıf Kütüphaneleri*; Yavuz Sezer, “Architecture of Bibliophilia: Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Libraries” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2016).

<sup>40</sup> Terzioğlu, “Where Ilm-i Hal Meets Catechism,” 12.

enough occurrence that Nuṣḥi constantly exhorts his “coreligionists to ‘read and, if unable to read, then listen to’ a vocal reading of his book.”<sup>41</sup> This was not an uncommon refrain; a number of contemporary authors set out to create works for those who found it difficult to read, aiming to create texts for the high and the low.<sup>42</sup> As these comments suggest, literacy, of various levels, was widespread in cities and towns, among the upper classes and much of the middling classes as well.<sup>43</sup>

Other scholars, like Dana Sajdi, look at the products of this new environment of semi-educated lay readers by examining the new “commoner chronicles” that emerged in eighteenth century Damascus as more and more individuals from the artisanal or military backgrounds began to participate in the literary scene of the city.<sup>44</sup> Both Hanna’s and Establet and Pascual’s studies of the probate inventories of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Cairo and Damascus found a significant percentage of book owners who were traders and artisans, showing that book ownership was not just the prerogative of the scholarly classes.<sup>45</sup> Sajdi’s work highlights how these new classes began to produce literary works, especially chronicles, on their own by the eighteenth century. To some degree, the participation of these lower classes in learned discussions was not necessarily new. The reading circles of medieval Damascus were frequented by a small but consistent group of artisans and merchants.<sup>46</sup> These artisans never seem to have

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>42</sup> Hanna, *In Praise of Books*, 105–38.

<sup>43</sup> Nelly Hanna, “Literacy among Artisans and Tradesmen in Ottoman Cairo,” in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (Routledge, 2012), 319–31; Terzioğlu, “Where Ilm-I Hal Meets Catechism.”

<sup>44</sup> Dana Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus: Nouveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant*, 2013.

<sup>45</sup> Establet and Pascual, “Les livres des gens,” 150–51.

<sup>46</sup> Hirschler, *The Written Word*, 32–82.

produced books but this might have been because the work of earlier lay writers had perished due to the vicissitudes of time and the sole copy of Dana Sajdi's barber chronicle was preserved. Yet there does seem to be more literary production and consumption in the seventeenth and eighteenth century by people who were neither artisans nor full scholars—lower rank imams, shaykhs, clerks, and more all began to partake in the flourishing book culture of the early modern Ottoman Empire.<sup>47</sup>

From this varied anecdotal evidence, we gain a sense of a significant section of the population who would have had a relatively developed capacity to read and even write. While it is difficult to tell how novel this state of affairs is, the emergence of semi-literate group of readers does seem relatively new. Yet, I hesitate to locate these new readers within a particular social class or group. Moreover, the underlying concern of demonstrating a growth in classes of readers equivalent to those in societies in Europe (or Asia) is orthogonal to the aim of this chapter and dissertation. I am less interested here in demonstrating the emergence of a class of new readers, that is, an underlying social cause, than examining the transformation caused by the movement and circulation of these manuscripts within the Ottoman Empire. The next section begins to examine this process.

### **Hummus and Hot Iron: A Pan-Imperial Debate in Pamphlets**

To get a better sense of the social and intellectual effects of pamphlet circulation, it is worthwhile to examine one case in depth. *Kayy al-ḥimmaṣa*, which can be translated from Arabic

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<sup>47</sup> Derin Terzioğlu, "Sunna-Minded Sufi Preachers in Service of the Ottoman State: The Naşihatnâme of Hasan Addressed to Murad IV," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 27 (2010): 241–312; Cemal Kafadar, "Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature," *Studia Islamica* 69 (1989): 121–50.

as “chickpea cauterization,” was an extremely popular and novel medical procedure that began to be practiced in the Ottoman Empire in the mid to late seventeenth century. It was also the topic of the most widely copied and read set of manuscript pamphlets in the empire during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. (In fact, the medical procedure seems to only be attested to in the pamphlet literature.) There are hundreds, even thousands, of copies of treatises on the topic in existence, whereas a well-received manuscript might have four to five extant copies today. Many of the copies of this work are so short—copied in a cramped hand in the margins or ends of texts—that they have escaped the attention of catalogers and scholars. It is also one of the polemical religious debates of the period that was not mentioned in Kātib Çelebi’s *Balance of Truth*.<sup>48</sup> It is rare to find such a ubiquitous document that is also unknown to scholars today.

Like much of the history of medicine or science in the early modern Middle East, the procedure of chickpea cauterization has yet to be examined. This is not necessarily due to a lack of popularity on the part of the procedure. One commentator writing in 1693 stated that both “commoners and elites” readily practiced it and that “there remains no place in the Ottoman Empire free from this technique, especially in that seat of high power, Constantinople.”<sup>49</sup> The procedure itself involved a patient with some localized pain (*wajʿ*) having a doctor cauterize the site in question with a hot iron. After this, the doctor would place a single chickpea (or possibly dried and ground chickpeas), into the wound so that it would not scab over and cicatrize (*yudammal*). A leaf (*waraqā*) of paper or Persian lilac or a small rag (*khirqā*) would then be placed on the wound and bound tightly with dressing. The wound would then be purposefully

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<sup>48</sup> See the introduction to Chapter 2 on this work.

<sup>49</sup> Mehmed Fikihī Efendi el-ʿAynī, *Fayḍ al-Ḥayy fī Ahkām al-Kayy*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 251, f. 25b.

left to fester and pus in order to draw out from the body the substance causing the pain. It is this purposeful suppuration that differentiated this procedure from cauterization in general. The association of the procedure with the discharge of pus is attested by one of its Turkish names, *çesme*, meaning “fountain,” rather than normal name for cauterization, “*dağlama*.”<sup>50</sup>

So what was the attraction of this new medical procedure? Cauterization had always been present as a medical technique in Middle Eastern societies.<sup>51</sup> Yet all the pamphlet writers insisted that the procedure had been newly invented (*ikhtara* ‘a) or devised (*istinabağa*) by the “people of medicine (*ahl al-ṭibb*).”<sup>52</sup> The purpose of chickpea cauterization according to its exponents was to draw out harmful substances from the body which would not normally exit on their own. Others argued that it was useful for expelling wetness (*raṭūbat*) from the body, which particularly afflicted people in the clime of Istanbul and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>53</sup> The cautery caused the opening, the chickpea drew out the harmful matter, and the piece of paper or cloth placed on the wound allowed the patient to see the successful results. Chickpea cauterization broke away from the tradition of letting the body self-regulate its humoral balance and attempted to actively intervene and extract supposedly harmful substances from the body.<sup>54</sup> While the procedure represents an important break in medical practice and theory, I will focus here on what

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<sup>50</sup> Mehmed Fikhi Efendi el-‘Ayni, *Fayd al-Ḥayy fi Ahkām al-Kayy al-Ḥimmaşa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 251, f. 25b.

<sup>51</sup> See Cyril Elgood, *Safavid Medical Practice*, passim; Miri Shefer-Mossensohn, *Ottoman Medicine: Healing and Medical Institutions, 1500-1700*, pp. 55-56

<sup>52</sup> Hasan al-Shurunbulālī, *Risālat al-Ahkām al-Muhallasa fi Ḥukum Mā’ al-Ḥimmaşa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Resid Efendi 251, f. 19b

<sup>53</sup> Abu’l-As‘ad al-Ayyūbī al-Shāmī, *al-Risāla al-Mulahhaşa fi Bayān Kayy al-Ḥimmaşa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 251, ff. 3b-5a. When discussing the climes, the copyist included a selection from the *Tārīḥ-i Hadīs-i Nev*, better known as the Ottoman history of the Americas.

<sup>54</sup> I thank Ahmed Ragab for helping me understand the medical novelty of the procedure.

happened when this medical procedure and the legal debate surrounding it entered the contentious space of pamphlet circulation and transformed an ultimately benign medical procedure into one of the largest debates over Muslim religiosity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The pamphlet debate over chickpea cauterization centered on the legal implications of the procedure rather than any question of its medical efficacy or necessity.<sup>55</sup> While all of the works provided some medical explanation of the procedure, at the heart of the debate over chickpea cauterization was its effect on the state of ritual purity given that the constant and purposeful dripping of pus negated the state of ritual purity, which was a requirement for the five daily prayers. This led to the first question tackled in the pamphlets: whether the suppuration from the procedure negated ritual purity. This tied it to the main legal question of whether or not a person with the procedure was *ṣāhib al-ʿudhr*, a state in which a person incapable of sustaining normative ritual purity would be allowed to pray.<sup>56</sup> Some argued that this legal state was only applicable in very limited conditions, such as when a man was incontinent, and those with chickpea cauterization should not partake in prayer.<sup>57</sup> Others, like the Damascene ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, argued that those with the procedure were *ṣāhib al-ʿudhr* and thus allowed to pray.<sup>58</sup> In other words, a wildly popular medical procedure began to impede on daily normative Islamic practice—prayer. Those who had the procedure and avoided prayer would be excluded not only

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<sup>55</sup> This makes it difficult to use as a reference for medical theory but an invaluable source for the social implications of medical practice.

<sup>56</sup> On the legal usage of the term see *al-Mawsūʿa al-Fiqhiyya* (Kuwait: Wizārat al-Awqāf waʾl-Shuʾn al-Islāmiyya / Dār al-Ṣafwa, 1994), 30:19-31.

<sup>57</sup> ʿAbd al-Laṭīf b. ʿAbd al-Haqq al-Ṭarābulusī, *Risāla fī Masʿalat Kayy al-Ḥimmaṣa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Çelebi Abdullah 401, ff. 31a.

<sup>58</sup> ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Abḥath al-Mukhallasa fī Hukm Kayy al-Ḥimmaṣa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 251, ff. 13b-15a

from the mosque but from key social spaces like the bathhouse as well.<sup>59</sup> The procedure could also potentially stop its practitioners from reading or writing any sort of religious text, like the Qur'an (as we saw earlier in the fetva about how a woman must not be menstruating while copying the Qur'an.). Whether or not people chose to pray following the procedure, a general atmosphere would have been sowed once the pamphlets and legal opinions banning the practice reached different cities. Given that the suppurating wound would have not been visible underneath the patient's clothes, and as some argued, there was no need to wash it for every prayer, one never knew whether the prayers of one's fellow worshippers were valid or not. It was a procedure that caused one to question whether one's neighbor was a true Muslim and quickly complemented the many other polemical debates at the time over normative Muslim religiosity. The creation of a pamphlet discussion around the procedure transformed it into a pan-empire debate.

The pamphlet debate over chickpea cauterization began in 1649 (1059h) with the work of Ḥasan al-Shurunbulālī's, a well-known scholar and pamphleteer in Cairo. He wrote *Summarized Rulings on the Law of Chickpea Water*,<sup>60</sup> a work he calls a "short and simple pamphlet (*nubdhā yasīra*)" on the topic, directing readers who want to know more to consult his larger jurisprudential work.<sup>61</sup> His basic judgment is that the pus from the procedure does negate ritual purity. In the manuscript record, there does not seem to be many pamphlets on the subject until about 30 years later, written by the aforementioned 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nabulūsī, the major

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<sup>59</sup> Regarding the question of bathhouses and puss, see Meḥmed Fikḥī Efendi el-'Aynī, *Fayḍ al-Ḥayy fī Aḥkām al-Kayy*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 251, 35b

<sup>60</sup> Ḥasan al-Shurunbulālī, *Risālat al-Aḥkām al-Mulakhkhaṣa fī Ḥukm Mā' al-Ḥimmaṣa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 251, ff. 19b-22b; Maktabat al-Malik 'Abdallah b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, MS 1913.

<sup>61</sup> Shurunbulālī, MS Resid Efendi 251, f. 22a, the larger work was *al-'Iqd al-Farīd fī Bayān al-Rājiḥ min Jawāz al-Taqlīd*.



Damascene intellectual and writer. In fact, Nābulusī wrote two pamphlets: *Tested Objectives: An Explanation of Chickpea Cauterization* and *Liberating Discussions: The Ruling on Chickpea Cauterization*.<sup>62</sup> These three works, that of Shurunbulālī and the two by Nabulūsi, comprise the vast majority of the thousands of pamphlets copied on the subject. In the first, Nābulusī simply provides references to older works on similar topics, especially those of his father, and states that the procedure does not negate ritual purity if properly covered by a paper and then bound. In the second work, which he noted that he composed on August 15, 1687 (6 Shuwwal 1098h), he goes further and states that those with the chickpea cauterization procedure are *ṣāhib al-‘udhr*, and allowed to pray despite the constant discharge of pus. Nābulusī wrote this statement, one which flew in the face of all other legal opinions, in less than an hour according to his own attestation. One hour of work would result in thousands of hours of discussions and debate.

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<sup>62</sup> ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *al-Maqāṣid al-Mumahḥiṣa fī Bayān Kayy al-Ḥimmaṣa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 251, ff. 8b-12a; ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Abḥāth al-Mukhallaṣa fī Ḥukm Kayy al-Ḥimmaṣa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 251, ff. 13b-15a

It was Nābulusī's and Shurunbulālī's work that set off a number of other pamphlets in the next few years. The case that most clearly demonstrates the power of pamphlets is that of

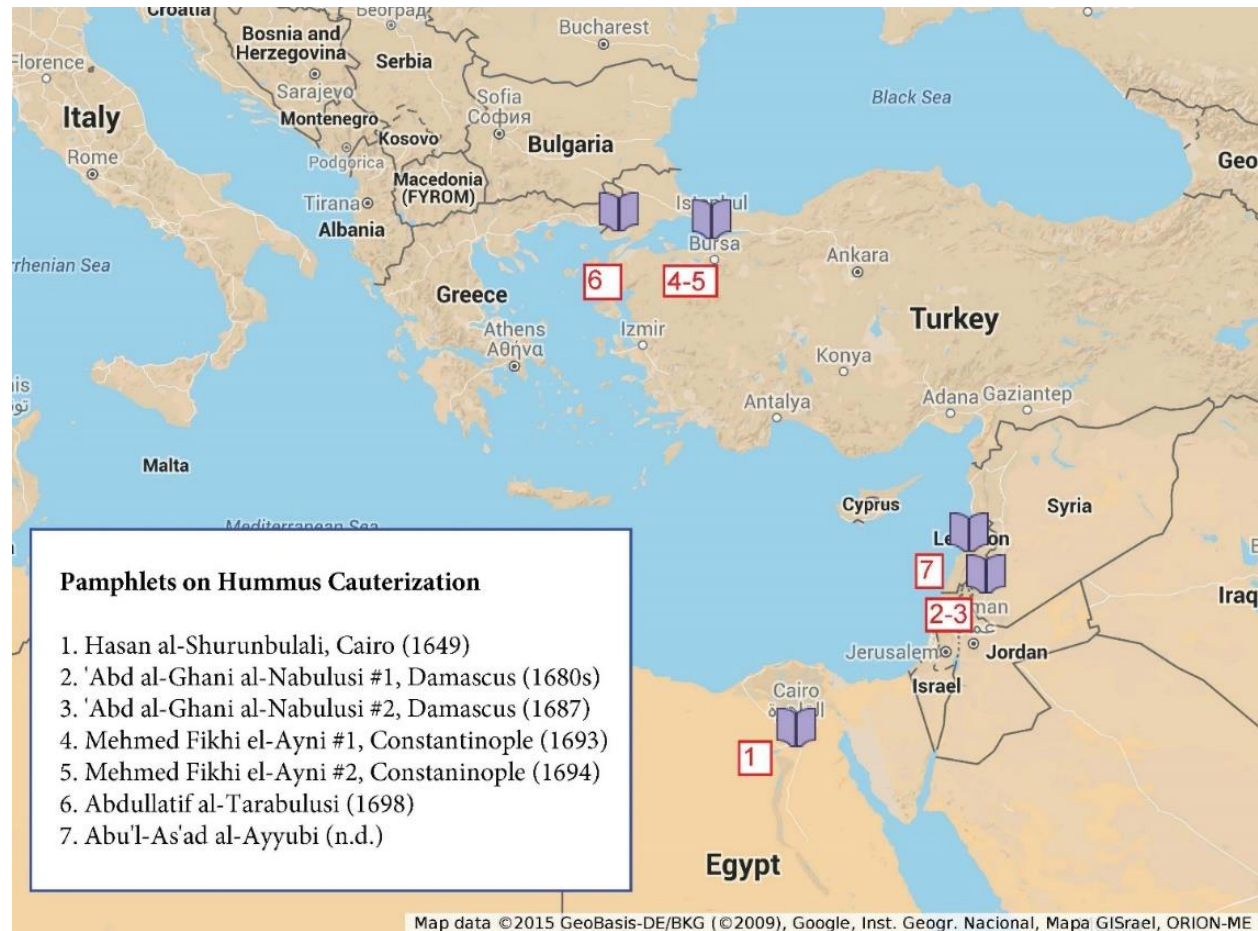


Figure 4: Map of authors and dates of publication of pamphlets on "chickpea" or "hummus cauterization."

Mehmed Fikhi el-‘Ayni, a legal scholar in Istanbul. ‘Ayni seems to have stumbled into the occupation of pamphleteer, perhaps in response to his experience arguing with Nābulusī.<sup>63</sup> At the same time, he seems to have been closely tied to the imperial legal hierarchy, writing two years afterwards a professional and ethical manual for jurists and he would eventually become the chief compiler (*fetva emīnī*) for *şeyhülislam* Yenişehirli ‘Abdullah Efendi in the 1710s and

<sup>63</sup> In addition to his work on chickpea cauterization, he wrote pieces on tobacco, coffee, and “renewal of the faith (*tecdīd-i imān*). See for example copies at Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Hacı Mahmud Efendi 6400, ff. 26-27 and MS Halet Efendi 770, ff. 244-247.

1720s.<sup>64</sup> His career trajectory and his writings reflected the reciprocal and competing relationship between pamphleteers and official state muftis. Around 4 July 1693 (1 Dhu'l-Qa'da 1104) he wrote a pamphlet, slightly longer than some of those that had preceded it, titled *The Abundance of the Living: Rulings on Cauterization*.<sup>65</sup> He jumped into the fray over chickpea cauterization, disgusted that people were performing required and supererogatory prayers while puss dripped off their bodies. He essentially sided with Shurunbulālī in taking a limited notion *ṣāhib al-ʿudhr*, meaning that people with the procedure were generally not allowed to pray, and added to this largely Hanafī discussion the opinion of Shafīʿī jurists. In particular he was arguing against a particular Hanafī scholar, who, following convention, he refuses to name.<sup>66</sup> He completed the pamphlet and debuted it to his colleagues who approved of it. However, he quickly realized that his pamphlet had little to no sway and that people were using different works, those of Nābulusī, to justify their choice to perform prayers while dripping pus.<sup>67</sup> He then found that Nābulusī's pamphlets, although “embellished with lies (*muzakhraf*),” were nearly everywhere in the empire and that even some of his own colleagues agreed with Nābulusī.<sup>68</sup> So in order to aid the distribution of his own earlier pamphlet across the empire (*intasharat nusukhaha fi'l-bilād*), and

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<sup>64</sup> His name is attached to most copies of Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi's official fetva collection. See also Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi, *Behcetü'l-Fetâvâ*, 9–10. For his jurists' manual composed on 16 July 1696 see Mehmed Fikhi el-Aynī, *Adab al-Muftī*, Atıf Efendi Kütüphanesi, MS Eki 13. Although this treatise postdates his work on hummus cauterization, he cites his jurists' manual in his pamphlet, so it seems that at least one version seems to have existed beforehand. See *Fayd al-Hayy fi Ahkām al-Kayy*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 251, f. 34b.

<sup>65</sup> Mehmed Fikhi Efendi el-Aynī, *Fayd al-Hayy fi Ahkām al-Kayy*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 251, 25b-36a. The title likely also references the call “*ḥayy al-ṣalāt*,” “come to prayer!”

<sup>66</sup> My guess is that this Hanafi jurist was most likely Nābulusī. *Fayd al-Hayy*, MS Resid Efendi 251, f. 25b

<sup>67</sup> Mehmed Fikhi Efendi el-Aynī, *al-Qawā'id al-Mumahhiṣa fi Ahkām Kayy al-Ḥimmaṣa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 251, ff. 37b-38a

<sup>68</sup> He even mentions the existence of a third Nābulusī work on kayy al-ḥimmaṣa that I have not yet encountered. *al-Qawā'id al-Mumahhiṣa*, MS Resid Efendi 251, f. 37b

specifically to counter those of Nābulusī, he released a second pamphlet: *Clarified Principles: Rulings on Chickpea Cauterization*.<sup>69</sup> In short, ‘Aynī attempted to have a local discussion, one that was limited his imperial jurist colleagues, sitting in a *majlis* (salon), but he realized that he had to circulate his work as a pamphlet to counter that of Nābulusī.

‘Aynī’s pamphlet, while popular, never quite achieved the mass reception of Shurunbulālī or Nābulusī’s works. It may have been too long and detailed for the audience of pamphlet readers, and for that reason, a man named Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī al-Mizārī turned Fikhī’s thirteen folio work into a one-folio work shortly thereafter.<sup>70</sup> However, because these works were distributed and copied by strangers, Mizārī became confused with another, much more famous, Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī from the early sixteenth century (mentioned in Chapter 4), a time well before the technique of chickpea cauterization existed.<sup>71</sup> The work started to circulate under his name as well, which made it seem that a much more respected and older authority was against the practice. Finally, in 1698-99 (1110h), a certain ‘Abd al-Laṭīf b. ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Ṭarabūlūsī wrote his own treatise on the subject, fielding a question from an elite member of the imperial government in Edirne (which was the capital at the time), he declared that all cauterization (*kayy*) was banned according to numerous hadith sources.<sup>72</sup> Needless to say, he does not believe that anyone with the procedure deserves to be *ṣāhib al-‘udhr*. Such sentiments reflected the fact that the debate over chickpea cauterization had rent divisions within the community and cast the

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<sup>69</sup> Mehmed Fikhī Efendi el-‘Aynī, *al-Qawā‘id al-Mumahḥiṣa fī Ahkām Kayy al-Ḥimmaṣa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 251, ff. 37b-56a

<sup>70</sup> Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Ḥalabī al-Mizārī, *Risālat al-Ḥimmaṣa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 251, f. 25a; MS Pertev Paşa 651, ff. 1-2

<sup>71</sup> For an example of a misascribed copy see Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Bağdatlı Vehbi 2070, ff. 77b-78a or Sadberg Hanım Müzesi, MS 43

<sup>72</sup> ‘Abd al-Laṭīf b. ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Ṭarabūlūsī, *Risāla fī Mas’alat Kayy al-Ḥimmaṣa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Çelebi Abdullah 401, ff. 30ab

whole practice of cauterization as un-Islamic. Perhaps it is not surprising then that there were widespread rumors that the practice was a European introduction meant to subvert Islam. A man called Abu'l-As'ad al-Ayyūbī al-Shāmī wrote an undated treatise on the topic in which he clarifies that cauterization *is* Islamic, the procedure was invented by Muslim doctors, and that one could still pray after having the procedure done.<sup>73</sup>

The debates over chickpea cauterization, *kayy al-ḥimmaṣa*, encapsulate many of the possibilities enabled by the pamphlet debates. First, on a purely textual level, the pamphlets extracted key points of legal discourse from larger jurisprudential works and made them available to everyday worshippers in order to justify their actions independently. It allowed those who had the procedure multiple viewpoints to draw from in order to justify their own or others' inclusion in the Muslim community. These smaller works circulated quickly and frequently, so that in the space of a few years they could move across the empire, creating a discussion throughout all of its cities. Nābulusī, who had no formal position within the legal hierarchy of the empire, could spread his opinion far beyond the locals of Damascus. On the other hand, pamphlets by Shurunbulālī and 'Aynī could turn a practice considered uncontroversial locally into a testy subject. The quick circulation and copying of these pamphlets also led to misattribution (in this case unintentional). Scholars like 'Aynī found themselves no longer able to only address a small group of fellow scholars they knew personally and found that they had to try to spread their works as far as possible in pamphlet form. The imperial legal hierarchy found its capacity to formally shape legal opinion and practice limited. The space of acrimonious debate opened up by the pamphlets even led to an entire medical technique to be regarded as

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<sup>73</sup> Abu'l-As'ad al-Ayyūbī al-Shāmī, *al-Risāla al-Mulaḥḥaṣa fī Bayān Kayy al-Ḥimmaṣa*, ff. 3ab

non-Islamic, giving it in turn a European association. Having examined a debate in pamphlets as a whole in the Ottoman Empire, let us now examine one of the pamphleteers in detail.

## Two Pamphleteers: ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī and Minkārīzāde

One of the most prolific pamphleteers in the empire (and one of the main protagonists of this dissertation) was ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641-1731/1050h-1143h). As he remained in political seclusion in his hometown of Damascus,<sup>74</sup> Nābulusī’s works spread throughout the empire, from the neighboring Arab provinces to the Turkish-speaking lands of Rum, and further into the Balkans and North Africa. Scholars today mainly study his larger tomes, in particular, those that deal with his interpretations of Ibn Arabi and Sufism, and thus overlook the majority of his oeuvre—his hundreds of pamphlets.<sup>75</sup> The majority of the two to three hundred works he wrote in his lifetime, many of which survive in numerous copies across the world, were pamphlets. Nābulusī was not the only pamphleteer in the empire; both before and after him, many major and minor scholars partook in writing these short, and sometimes polemical, pieces. Only al-Suyūṭī in Cairo and Ibn Kemālpaşa in Istanbul come to mind in the sixteenth century,

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<sup>74</sup> Nābulusī’s seclusion, or ‘*uzla* (ar.)/‘*uzlet* (tr.), was one of the most productive periods of his life in terms of writing. Although the term suggests that he sealed himself up in his room, indeed, that is the name of his treatise on the practice (*Perfecting One’s Moral Qualities by Staying at Home*), it was more of a political retreat from public life rather than a total seclusion and a practice shared by other dissident intellectuals of the time like Nābī and Niyāz-i Mişrī. See ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Takmil al-Nu’ūt fi Luzūm al-Buyūt*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Çelebi Abdullah 385, ff. 357-376

<sup>75</sup> There has actually been quite a few dissertations and short introductory works on Nābulusī in the past thirty years. Bakri Aladdin provides a review of his life and a useful list of the remaining copies of his manuscripts. Bakri Aladdin, “‘Abdalḡanī an-Nābulusī (1143 1731), oeuvre, vie et doctrine, (2 Volumes)” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Sorbonne, 1985); Barbara Von Schlegell, “Sufism in the Ottoman Arab World: Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731)” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1997); Samer Akkach, *Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi: Islam and the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007); Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascus : ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nabulusi, 1641-1731* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005); Andrew N Lane, “‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi’s (1641-1731) commentary on Ibn ‘Arabi’s Fusus al-hikam: an analysis and interpretation” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Oxford University, 2001); Samuela Pagani, *Il rinnovamento mistico dell’Islam: un commento di Abd al-Gani al-Nabulusi a Ahmad Sirhindi* (Napoli: Università degli studi di Napoli L’Orientale, 2003).

but there are many more in the seventeenth century. The pamphlets of figures like ‘Alī al-Qārī in Mecca; Ḥasan al-Shurunbulālī and Najm al-Dīn al-Ghayṭī, Mar‘ī b. Yusūf al-Karmī and Aḥmad al-Ḥamawī in Cairo; Nūḥ b. Muṣṭafa in between Konya, Cairo, and Istanbul; Niyāz-i Miṣrī in Istanbul; Emīrzāde in Aydın are found through the manuscript libraries of the Middle East. In the eighteenth-century there is also no shortage of pamphleteers like Saçaklızāde, Mustakīmzāde (both Nābulusī’s students), and Ebu Sa‘īd Meḥmed el-Ḥādimī. These men wrote at least twenty to thirty pamphlet pieces each, but there were, of course, many other authors who only wrote one or two pieces. Even figures who did not generally write short works in their lifetime, could come to possess an oeuvre of short pamphlet-like works. A sixteenth-century scholar like Mehmed Birgivī, for instance, had fifty extra texts attributed to his name in the seventeenth century, the vast majority of them short, polemical treatises.<sup>76</sup> As we will see below, quite a few recognized scholars became authors of pamphlet-length pieces following their deaths. Today we find thousands, even tens of thousands, of these works in manuscript libraries.

The range of topics that Nābulusī tackled was as wide as his pamphlets were numerous. At their core, however, lay a common theme of what practices and beliefs constituted the Muslim community. First among these were those closely associated the tradition of Islam known as “Sufism:” the reality of the saints, *semā’*, *dhikr*, (the latter two being musical or recited rituals conducted by Sufis), and a number of treatises defending Ibn Arabi. As mentioned in the last chapter, many of these beliefs and practices were at the heart of the controversies about what it meant to be a Muslim during this period. Yet, to cast Nābulusī merely as a defender of

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<sup>76</sup> Ahmet Kaylı, “A Critical Study of Birgivi Mehmed Efendi’s (D.981/1573) Works and Their Dissemination in Manuscript Form” (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, 2010).

“Sufism” writ large would miss both the scope of his work and its larger political significance.<sup>77</sup> He wrote a number of treatises about different debates that did not particularly involve Sufis, at least directly, for instance the legal implications of certain medical procedures (such as *kayy al-ḥimmasa*), on love theory, smoking, and forgetfulness. While a few of these, such as his treatise on forgetfulness and memory were not polemical, and written at the request of the governor of Egypt, others were quite political while seemingly scholastic. Take for the example his pamphlet on the diversity of legal schools in the Islamic world, written in response to another short piece by al-Ḥaskafī: Nābulusī pushes against the imperial policy of designating one particular individual as the only valid *mufti* (jurisprudent) in an area, and thus against the state policy of forging a single official legal school.<sup>78</sup> In another pamphlet, Nābulusī takes up a debate against an unnamed Turkish-speaker over a small line in Ibn Arabi’s work as to whether or not non-Muslims gain happiness by paying the poll tax (*jizya*).<sup>79</sup> The debate seems obscure but it comes precisely at a time when empire’s tax system was being reformed to be more heavily centered on the taxation of non-Muslims.<sup>80</sup> Nābulusī’s response that non-Muslims could become Muslims in

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<sup>77</sup> Samuela Pagani, “Défendre le soufisme par des temps difficiles: ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, polémiste anti-puritan,” in *Le Soufisme à l’époque ottomane XVIe - XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Rachida Chih and Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen (Le Caire: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2010), 309–36.

<sup>78</sup> Guy Burak, “The Abu Hanifa of His Time: Islamic Law, Jurisprudential Authority, and Empire in the Ottoman Domains, 16th-17th Centuries” (New York University, 2012), 87–92. The treatise in question ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *al-Radd al-Wafī ‘ala Jawāb al-Ḥaskafī ‘ala Mas’alat al-Khiff al-Ḥanafī*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 1762.

<sup>79</sup> A summary of the treatise’s contents can be found in Michael Winter, “A Polemical Treatise by ‘Abd al-Ḡanī al-Nābulusi against a Turkish Scholar on the Religious Status of the *Ḍimmīs*,” *Arabica* 35, no. 1 (1988): 92–103. For copies of this treatise see al-Nābulusī, ‘Abd al-Ghanī, *Kitāb al-qawl al-sadīd fī jawāz ḥulḥ al-wā’id wa’l-radd ‘ala al-Rūmī al-jāhil al-‘anīd*, UCLA Young Research Library Special Collections, Collection 898, Box 99, MS 576, pp. 4-79 and Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 3606, ff. 207-224.

<sup>80</sup> The traditional tax system in which a small number of askeri (military/rulers) did not pay taxes and the large numbers of re’aya (subjects) did was slowly coming apart as more and more of the population was becoming part of the askeri. To counter these changes and to pay for the nearly fifty years of extended campaigns in Crete and Vienna, the taxation system of the empire was changed to be more reliant on non-Muslim poll taxes. The word reaya became associated predominantly with non-Muslims and political community became increasingly sectarianized.



the hereafter by paying their taxes in the herenow is actually a small salvo in the fight over what it meant to belong to the political and religious community of the empire.

This polemicism is found in many of his pamphlets from the 1680s, a period in which he devoted himself to reading and writing while sequestering himself from society at large. In a few places he tells a friend that he is focusing on “study (*durūs*), reading (*muṭāla‘āt*), writing (*taṣnīf*) composition (*ta‘līf*).”<sup>81</sup> In one pamphlet, in which he argues for rejecting society altogether and sealing oneself in one’s house, he declares the Islamic community of his time to be corrupt and the Islam of his time to be the religion of hypocrites.<sup>82</sup> This was a frequent theme. In one treatise after another he would take on a strident tone and insult his enemies as idiots who could barely read Arabic and declare that anyone who called him an infidel was an infidel himself.<sup>83</sup> Later in his life, he would soften his relentless polemicism and even publish a few years before he died, a pamphlet simply titled, “to those who say, ‘I’m a believer, you’re an infidel!’”<sup>84</sup> It was this polemical twenty-one year period, from around 1673-1694 (1084h-1106h), that he wrote the majority of his works, or around 148 of his 231 dated works.<sup>85</sup> He seems to have emerged from his seclusion as one of the best-known authors of his time as we shall see below.

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See some of the comments in Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire : Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 235–36.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Abd al-Ghanī Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar: The Correspondence of ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641-1731) (Wasā’il al-Taḥqīq wa Rasā’il al-Tawfīq)*, ed. Samer Akkash (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 138; ‘Abd al-Ghanī b. Ismā‘īl Nābulusī, *Murāsālāt al-Nābulusī : Wasā’il al-Taḥqīq wa Rasā’il al-Tawfīq*, ed. Aladdin Bakri (Dimashq: Dar al-Ninawá, 2010), 84 See footnote below for differences between the two published versions of the correspondence.

<sup>82</sup> Nābulusī, *Takmīl al-Nu‘ūt*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Çelebi Abdullah 385, f. 367a

<sup>83</sup> Winter, “A Polemical Treatise,” 100.

<sup>84</sup> ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Ana mu‘min wa huwa kāfir*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 1762, ff. 314a-316b

<sup>85</sup> Data compiled from Bakri Aladdin, “Abdalḡanī an-Nābulusī (1143 1731), oeuvre, vie et doctrine, Vol. 1” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Sorbonne, 1985), 261–67.

Nābulusī consciously and strategically thought about how his pamphlets and longer books were disseminated and received, carefully crafting his authorial persona. An anthology of letters that Nābulusī selected and published shortly after the 1703 Revolution, itself part of his constant fashioning of his authorial image, gives us a small glimpse into how he used a widespread network of correspondence.<sup>86</sup> Geographically, his network stretched from Medina and Cairo in the south, and moved east toward Sinjar (in present-day Iraq), and then north to places like Sivas, Van, Edirne, Istanbul, and even as far as Sombor (a city in present-day Serbia).<sup>87</sup> Socially, Nābulusī's correspondence network spanned a spectrum of grand viziers, *şeyhülislams*, grandees, and generals in Istanbul and Cairo to lowly and largely unknown provincial scholars.<sup>88</sup> To some of his correspondents he sent pamphlets directly and would inform them about his new writings for the year, and, in turn, many of these correspondents, only some of whom he seems to have met in person, actively disseminated his work.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> The dating of the publication of this anthology of letters is a bit difficult as it seems that copyists added other letters to work. The bulk of the treatises are from 1675-1703. Bakri Alaadin, in his edition of the text, adds three more letters from the end of Nabulusi's life (early 1730s) that are not found in Samer Akkach's edition. The anthology is listed in the Nabulusi's own bibliography of his compositions that is found in his travelogue, written in 1698, but that list also includes books written after that date, like his travelogue to Trabulus in 1701 and thus suggests that this anthology of correspondence could easily have been published later. The most commonsense answer is that the letters were published after 1703 in the months following the 1703 Revolution. Thanks to the change in government and perhaps even to the anthology, Nābulusī was finally appointed to a state position as a *mudarris* (professor) in Damascus. Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā'il al-Taḥqīq)*; Nābulusī, *Murāsalāt al-Nābulusī*; 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa'l-Majāz fī Riḥlat Bilād al-Shām wa Miṣr wa'l-Ḥijāz*, ed. Riyād 'Abdulḥamīd Murād (Dimashq: Dar al-Ma'rifāh, 1998), 1: 266-280.

<sup>87</sup> Sombor was taken by the Habsburgs only three years after Nabulusi's last letter to his correspondent there, part of Nābulusī's constant and active concern with frontier issues and the wars of the empire. For an accurate map and list of the correspondents see Nābulusī, *Murāsalāt al-Nābulusī*, 318-21.

<sup>88</sup> The letters to high officials are sent to an unnamed high administrator in the Ottoman army, the Grand Vizier Muṣṭafa Paşa Köprülüzāde, şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi (the defacto ruler of the empire during his reign), and the extremely powerful Bakrī family of Cairo. Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā'il al-Taḥqīq)*, 149-52; Nābulusī, *Murāsalāt al-Nābulusī*, 92-93.

<sup>89</sup> Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā'il al-Taḥqīq)*, 221-24; Nābulusī, *Murāsalāt al-Nābulusī*, 138-40.

His correspondents often requested that Nābulusī pen a refutation of other polemical pamphlets and books they had encountered. Nābulusī wrote at least 57 of his works at the request of others, 23 of whom are mentioned as living in other cities around the empire.<sup>90</sup> Yet Nābulusī did not automatically write a pamphlet in response to every request.<sup>91</sup> Instead, he strategized his publications for maximum impact. When one friend sent him an offending pamphlet against Ibn Arabi and requested a countering pamphlet from Nābulusī, he declined, stating that it was a “waste of time.”<sup>92</sup> Instead, Nābulusī sent his correspondent another, similar pamphlet, and provided him a list of other works to physically destroy (*itlāf*) if he happened to read them. He exhorted his correspondent that “it is incumbent upon every righteous believer and fortunate mind that he destroy (*yutlif*) everything that he reads like this, if he owns it, and that he put an end to this 'denier' (*munkir*) whom God Almighty created to further the people of error and deviance.”<sup>93</sup>

We can glean an understanding of the mechanics of pamphlet circulation by examining one of the offending works that Nābulusī lists—a pamphlet that viciously attacks Ibn Arabi and his admirers, supposedly written by the noted fourteenth-century scholar Sa‘d al-Dīn al-Taftazānī.<sup>94</sup> Despite Nābulusī’s call for its destruction, a number of copies still exist.<sup>95</sup> This

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<sup>90</sup> Number are taken from Aladdin’s valuable catalog of Nabulusi’s works. Aladdin, “‘Abdalḡanī an-Nābulusī,” 272–74.

<sup>91</sup> For one example of a request see Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā’il al-Taḡqīq)*, 170–76; Nābulusī, *Murāsālāt al-Nābulusī*, 105–9.

<sup>92</sup> Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā’il al-Taḡqīq)*, 227; Nābulusī, *Murāsālāt al-Nābulusī*, 143.

<sup>93</sup> Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā’il al-Taḡqīq)*, 231; Nābulusī, *Murāsālāt al-Nābulusī*, 145–46.

<sup>94</sup> Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā’il al-Taḡqīq)*, 170–76; Nābulusī, *Murāsālāt al-Nābulusī*, 105–9. The order to “destroy and declare false” this treatise is also found on p. 174 of Akkach and p. 108 of Bakri.

<sup>95</sup> At least five copies of the treatise remain: Pseudo-Taftazānī, *Untitled Treatise against Ibn Arabi*, British Library, MS India Office Islamic 4644, ff. 51b-72b and Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Hacı Mahmud Efendi 2680, ff. 73-106; MS Tekelioğlu 913, ff. 75-101, Atıf Efendi Kütüphanesi, MS 1269, ff. 1-31. There is an early printed copy that

pamphlet, too, was brought to the attention of Nābulusī by one of his correspondents, who likewise asked for a refutation to distribute as a pamphlet. Nābulusī here refuses to engage with the pamphlet because he claims that it was purposefully and falsely attributed (*madsūsa*) to Taftazānī to increase its circulation (*rawāj*).<sup>96</sup> Nābulusī’s main proof for such a claim was that it did not agree with the statements in Taftazānī’s other works—i.e. failure of authorial consistency. This failure of the “author-function,” emerged partially because the treatise had newly arrived in Damascus. “We had not heard about it in our lands (i.e. the Arab provinces) until recently, when a group from the lands of Rum brought it down with them from someone who denied the Great Shaykh (Ibn ‘Arabi).”<sup>97</sup> Nābulusī then reveals that he had actually seen the treatise itself from a “loathsome man of Arab descent, who brought it from the lands of Rum,” a sort of anthropological projection of the quality of the book onto that of the man.<sup>98</sup> Finally, Nābulusī argues that the pamphlet’s style did not match the peerless style of Taftazānī: the words were “feeble” and the expressions were “loose.”<sup>99</sup>

From this example and those above it, we can see how Nābulusī and his correspondents were actually quite aware that they lived in a world of quickly circulating and far-reaching polemical pamphlets. Manuscripts readily appeared in towns and cities and it was unclear if they

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is really just a printing off one of the miscellanies containing the treatise. See Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Serez 1492. None of these copies provide any possible proof could possibly be the work of Taftazānī. MS Atıf Efendi 1269 has a small statement that it was copied from the works of Nebi Ṭurhān b. Ṭurmūş al-Sinābī, the lecture assistant (mu‘īd) of Ibn Kemālpaşa. Nebi Turhan was a semi-popular author whose main work is a mid-to-late sixteenth century morality manual titled *The Lives of Hearts* that has a very long section damning Ibn ‘Arābī, the Fuşūş al-Ḥikam, and Ḥalvetīs in particular. While he might have been the original author/forgery, he could also have been an interested party.

<sup>96</sup> Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā’il al-Taḥqīq)*, 174; Nābulusī, *Murāsālāt al-Nābulusī*, 108.

<sup>97</sup> Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā’il al-Taḥqīq)*, 171; Nābulusī, *Murāsālāt al-Nābulusī*, 106.

<sup>98</sup> Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā’il al-Taḥqīq)*, 174–75; Nābulusī, *Murāsālāt al-Nābulusī*, 108.

<sup>99</sup> Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā’il al-Taḥqīq)*, 174–75; Nābulusī, *Murāsālāt al-Nābulusī*, 108.

were reliable or trustworthy. The character of the transmitter was of secondary importance to a work's content. Instead, the capacity of a manuscript to circulate depended on the fame of its author and astute readers understood that there were characters out there that would purposefully misattribute a manuscript to a famous author to increase its circulation. As I shall discuss later, Nābulusī and his students were actively aware that the partisans writing against them were purposefully misattributing texts. While in a print culture one might censor books by stopping their distribution in warehouses, in a manuscript culture, the only way to stop the spread of an offensive book was by physically destroying it as one encountered it. Nābulusī was a champion for readers that shared his political and religious outlook. His authorial fame served as a motor for the further spread of his works.

Nābulusī's awareness of the mechanics of this quickly flowing manuscript world made him guard and develop his own authorial persona as quickly as he denounced that of others. In another letter, Nābulusī responds to a request from his "literary agent" in Edirne, Muḥammad al-Ḥumaydī,<sup>100</sup> to remove, in the process of copying and distribution, controversial statements about tobacco smoking from his (very long) commentary on Birgivī's *al-Tarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya* (*The Muhammadan Path*). Ḥumaydī feared that common people incapable of understanding it

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<sup>100</sup> The expression "literary agent" comes from Von Schlegell, "Sufism in the Ottoman Arab World," 90; So far, no one has been able to identify Nābulusī's agent, but I believe that he is probably the son of Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Burhān al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī al-Ḥumaydī, an Arab scholar whose family had moved to Istanbul over the years and the former *naqīb al-ashraf* in the lands of Rum. The father was known as Shaykhī (not the author of the Ottoman biographical dictionary, Şeyhi). Aḥmad al-Khafājī regarded the elder Ḥumaydī as a close friend and tells the story of how when he visiting him in the mid-seventeenth century in Istanbul he would not allow him to smoke in his salon because he, coincidentally, hated tobacco. The same story was also repeated to the father of al-Muḥibbī, but this time it is mentioned that Khafājī is quickly hidden from the salon party because the Sultan Murad IV joins them and recites a poem about how much he dislikes smoking. Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Khafājī, *Rayḥanat al-Alibbā wa Zaharat al-Ḥayāt al-Dunyā*, ed. 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Hulw (Cairo: Matba'at 'Isa al-Babī al-Halabī, 1967), 2:279-280; Muḥammad Amīn b. Faḍl Allāh al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-Athar fī A'yān al-Qarn al-Ḥādī 'Ashar* (Cairo, 1284), 4:177-181.

(*al-qāṣirīn min al-khalq*)<sup>101</sup> might encounter and reject it and thus decrease its circulation (*tadāwwul*).<sup>102</sup> Ḥumaydī's hesitations were not misguided; only a few decades prior two authors who had penned commentaries on the same work had been sentenced to death.<sup>103</sup> One of the authors managed to escape with his life into exile in Bursa, but the other was executed and the threat continued to loom. In spite of these concerns, Nābulusī's rejected the proposition vehemently, stating that, one, he never wrote his books to gain worldly fame or position and it would be an insult to God if he were to retract his work now, and, two, that it would contradict similar statements he wrote in a shorter, independent work on tobacco.<sup>104</sup> He asks that his friend change no part of his works and faithfully copy them as he found them.<sup>105</sup> Regardless of Nābulusī's claim that he did not care about worldly fame and the increased circulation of his work—the seventeenth-century scholar's take on “making art for art's sake”—he was actively interested in the circulation of his works and wanted them to spread across all levels of society, even to those who might not have been able to fully understand them. A danger lurked, though, precisely when Nābulusī's work passed beyond his distributing intermediaries and into a world of largely unmediated circulation. Misinterpretation, which could result in censure, and even death, was a real possibility and thus it became paramount to safeguard his authorial reputation.

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<sup>101</sup> The phrase, “*qāṣirīn min al-khalq*” is somewhat vague. An alternative translation might be “of low character” but would be somewhat grammatically incorrect.

<sup>102</sup> Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā'il al-Taḥqīq)*, 190; Nābulusī, *Murāsalāt al-Nābulusī*, 118.

<sup>103</sup> Naima Mustafa Efendi, *Târih-i Na'imâ (Ravzatü'l-Hüseyn fî Hulâsati Ahbâri'l-Hâfikayn)*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2007), 3:1434-37 “*Sūra ma katabahi Yahya Efendi al-ma'rûf bi-Minkārîzâde fî ibtâl sharh al-Ṭarîqa al-Muḥammadiyya li-Muḥammad al-Kurdî al-munfîy* (A copy of what Yahya Efendi, known as Minkārîzâde, wrote in declaiming the commentary of the exiled Muḥammad al-Kurdî on al-Ṭarîqa al-Muḥammadiyya)”, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmedpasa 152, ff. 77a-79a.

<sup>104</sup> Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā'il al-Taḥqīq)*, 190–91; Nābulusī, *Murāsalāt al-Nābulusī*, 118–19.

<sup>105</sup> Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā'il al-Taḥqīq)*, 191–93; Nābulusī, *Murāsalāt al-Nābulusī*, 119–20.

This did not mean altering the content of his works according to the political winds of the time but ensuring that the same message and attitude extended across his different works, both long and short. It was after all the contradictions of the pseudo-Taftazānī pamphlet with the well-known works of Taftazānī that doomed it in Nābulusī's eyes. For this reason, too, his distributors, that is, his friends, students, and correspondents, aided in the spread of his authorial authority by creating and preserving reliable exemplars of his works, copied from and collated against Nābulusī's rough drafts (*musawwada*), the truest expression of authorial intent possible at the time.<sup>106</sup> Similarly, Nābulusī and his readers compiled and copied bibliographies of his work to formally establish his corpus.<sup>107</sup> As a part of his purposeful publishing strategy, his anthology of letters, published in the wake of the turbulent events of 1703, only reinforced this authorial image of a man who never compromised his beliefs.<sup>108</sup>

Nābulusī claimed that he did not write for the sake of worldly fame, but it seems that it was indeed his authorial persona and prolific writings that fueled his popularity and renown. Although he became regarded as a saint after his death, while he was alive he performed no holy acts or miracles, led no Sufi order, nor played the role of the holy man. Neither was he from a particularly prominent or well-known Damascene family; while both his ancestors and progeny

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<sup>106</sup> Nābulusī has an unusually large number of works that are either collated against one of his drafts or written by his disciples. For a few examples see UCLA Young Research Library Special Collections, Collection 898, Box 99, MS 576; Istanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserleri Kütüphanesi, MS A3767

<sup>107</sup> For examples of his bibliography see İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserleri Kütüphanesi, A2669, ff. 18ba-25b; University of Tokyo, Daiber Collection, MS 1426; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi: MS Hacı Mahmud Efendi 5018; MS Hacı Mahmud Efendi 6343; MS Bağdatlı Vehbi 2112, ff. 47-49; Mustafa al-Bakrī, *al-Fath al-Ṭarī al-Janī fī ba'd Mā'āshir Shaykhinā ... al-Nābulusī al-Ḥanaḩī*. Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Çelebi Abdullah 385, ff. 385-395. There a bibliography of his works contained as a separate chapter of his hagiography as well. Muḩammad Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Intimate Invocations: al-Ghazzī's Biography of 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641-1731) (al-Wird al-Unsī)*, ed. Samer Akkach (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 366–85.

<sup>108</sup> Again these can be found in Nābulusī, *Murāsālāt al-Nābulusī*; Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā'il al-Taḩqīq)*.

were respected scholars, none ever achieved his level of fame.<sup>109</sup> He spent the vast majority of his life in Damascus, only departing for Istanbul and its environs once as a youth in a failed search for connections.<sup>110</sup> This resulted in a briefly held position as a provincial judge, but he was not granted a high *madrassa* position by the state until 1704, following the change in government, and was only briefly appointed mufti of Damascus at the end of his long life by popular acclaim of the city's denizens.<sup>111</sup> The start of his popularity seems to have come from his seclusion during which he devoted himself to reading and writing. By the time he set out on his journeys to Biqa'a Valley, Jerusalem, Cairo, and Mecca, detailed in his well-known travelogues, he was already a famous scholar, with hundreds of people, commoners and elites alike, accompanying him as he entered or left a city.<sup>112</sup> Grand viziers and şeyhülislams wrote to him to ask him to support their foreign campaigns and he was even asked to augur the fortunes of the Ottoman army against Muscovy.<sup>113</sup> His renown spread even to places he never once visited such as the Balkans. Scholars from Belgrade, Samakov, and Sarajevo would seek him out when they came to Damascus on hajj, asking for his small, superficial ijāzas when he was alive and visiting his grave and collecting his old books as mementos after he died.<sup>114</sup> Even Ahmed III, the sultan who

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<sup>109</sup> The basics of Nābulusī's life can be found in many of the aforementioned studies. The following are succinct overviews: Von Schlegell, "Sufism in the Ottoman Arab World," 23–112; Andrew Lane, "'Abd al-Ghanī ibn Ismā'īl Nābulusī (1641-1731): experiences of a Sufi shaykh on the margins of society," in *Marginal voices in literature and society: individual and society in the Mediterranean Muslim world*, ed. Robin Ostle, 2000, 89–116.

<sup>110</sup> Von Schlegell, "Sufism in the Ottoman Arab World," 44–45.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>112</sup> His travelogues are treated in more detail in Chapter 5. al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa'l-Majāz*, 1:475.

<sup>113</sup> These were the letters from grand vizier Muṣṭafa Paşa Köprülüzāde and later şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā'il al-Taḥqīq)*, 149–52; Nābulusī, *Murāsālāt al-Nābulusī*, 92–93. On his prognostications of the Ottoman armies fights against "the Rūm known as Muskū" see 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *al-Ṣafwat al-Ḍamīr wa Naṣrat al-Wazīr*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 1572.

<sup>114</sup> Ijāza from 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī to Shaykh Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr b. Muḥammad b. Riḍwān al-Ṣamaquwī in Nov-Dec 1708 (Ramadan of 1120), St. St. Cyril and Methodius National Library, MS OP 1618, ff. 176ab; See the hajj itineraries in Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, MS Or. 12373, f. 154b. On the collection of Nābulusī's books see



came to power after 1703, frequently read his works and as stated before, numerous copies of his hundreds of works survive throughout the former lands of the empire.<sup>115</sup> It was Nābulusī's writing that made him famous.

Nabulusi's ability to the widely and reliably circulate his works across the empire even became inscribed in his hagiography. His saintliness stemmed not from miraculous feats of flying and transportation, but from his many miracles of authorship. One student noted in the hagiography that, "Everyone in the world wanted [his books] and sought them. If you wanted them, you could only get them by finding someone to copy them for you, and they were being copied and transferred continuously."<sup>116</sup> Another student, a certain Aḥmad al-Maqdisī al-Ṣāliḥī, doubted that Nābulusī could have authored so many books. He describes the miraculous way that Nābulusī was able to convince him otherwise.

Shaykh Aḥmad al-Maqdisī al-Ṣāliḥī, was astounded by the state of the master (Nābulusī) while writing. For indeed his writings were nearly innumerable, and his poetry and letters were unending, even though he was always busy lecturing and teaching, addressing the needs of the people, meeting with people from every country, and going on leisurely park strolls with the brothers... But Shaykh Ahmad was seized by some undeserved doubts and he intruded upon the master while he was in his writing state. [Nābulusī] said to him, "Ahmad, go out to the coffee seller and bring me a cup of coffee, as precious and refreshing as ambergris." So [Ahmad] went out quickly without tarrying or tripping, and went to the coffee seller and came back with a cup of coffee. But when he entered the hall, he found a group of likenesses of the respected master, sitting crowded together, jam-packed, each of them writing in the form and manner of the master as they emitted a screech of reed pens. And he gave the cup to one of them, and left to bring coffee for the rest as the group had become forty. Later, after he returned the cups he entered into the room of the master and found him all alone as if no one had been with him. He kissed the master's hands and the sole of his feet. Nābulusī said to him, "Ahmad, abandon your doubts..."<sup>117</sup>

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inscription by Khalil, a *muderris* at the Şehriyārī *madrasa* in Belgrade from 3 Oct 1759 (10 Safar 1173), see Gazi Husrev-begova biblioteka, MS 3357, f. 3a.

<sup>115</sup> Regarding the reading of Nābulusī's works by the Sultan Ahmed III, see Aḥmad Mānīnī, *al-ʿIqd al-Ṣanī fī Mazaya al-Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghanī*, Dar al-Kutub, MS Tarikh 3985, f. 20b. I thank Samuela Pagani for being so generous as to share this source with me.

<sup>116</sup> Slightly altered translation from Akkach's, taken from the *al-Wird al-Unsī* by Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī. Akkach, *Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi*, 45–46.

<sup>117</sup> al-Ghazzī, *Intimate Invocations (al-Wird al-Unsī)*, 508–9.

The scene is startling. Ahmad was rightfully suspicious that any academic could manage to prodigiously publish while still being able to teach, travel to conferences, conduct public outreach, and maintain an active and healthy social life.<sup>118</sup> Nābulusī's trick was even more astounding. Tens of Nābulusīs, shoulder to shoulder, papers on their knees, scratching away with their reed styli as they made copy after copy of the master's work. Moreover, these would all be considered Nābulusī's autograph, the most reliable possible version of a text. Nevermind that Nābulusī actually used an amanuensis to produce the majority of his own fair copies.<sup>119</sup> The point of the story was that his authorial integrity was intact no matter how far and wide his work circulated. Nābulusī's miracle was his authorship.

Nābulusī's tale is of a man who spurned the imperial learned hierarchy and used his powers of authorship to rise from upstart rebel to prominent and respected scholar. The fact that the state so thoroughly controlled the avenues of advancement and jurisprudential thinking forced him to take up pamphleteering. High government officials, however, also found themselves forced to spread their views through pamphlets. Şeyhülislam Yahya Efendi b. 'Ömer, often referred to by his sobriquet, Minḳārīzāde, was one of the longest serving and most powerful chief jurists (*şeyhülislam*) of the seventeenth century and, as it turns out, the author of one of the most popular pamphlets of the period. At the time he wrote it, though, he was a *kāziasker* in Cairo, bidding his time until becoming *şeyhülislam*. As explained in the previous chapter, Minḳārīzāde was well known among the scholars of the Arab provinces. More

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<sup>118</sup> There is no mention of Nābulusī's family obligations.

<sup>119</sup> He seems to have relied heavily on his student and servant, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Dakdakjī (also known as al-Iznīqī or Ibn al-Simān). For examples of his work see the huge miscellany of Nābulusī's work that was originally owned by Nābulusī himself in Gazi Husrev-begova biblioteka, MS 3357.

importantly, he was well acquainted with the power of the written word—he had issued a legal opinion in favor of the execution of the aforementioned Kurd Molla only a few decades earlier for writing a commentary on the *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*, accusing him not only of various heresies, but also of “abundantly lecturing and composing books... with the sole purpose of arousing within the weak and feeble of the people the delusion of these misguided errors.”<sup>120</sup> Minkārīzāde wrote a variety of works, large and small, but I would like to focus here on one of his most popular works, a small pamphlet on the “religion of Abraham.”

Minkārīzāde’s text on the “religion of Abraham,” the “*millet-i Ibrāhīm*,” demonstrates many of the inherent qualities of the pamphlet form. The work, which was explored in more detail in the second chapter, addressed one of the most contentious issues of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, namely whether a Muslim may call himself part of the “religion (*millet*) of Abraham.” Although the name suggests to the modern ear something related to Jews, it is nothing of the sort, at least, directly. The issue instead lies along one of the main faultlines of the period, namely, what does it actually mean to be a religious community (*milleti olmak ne ma’nāyedir?*), what are the boundaries of the Muslim community, and what parts of the past, i.e. the Biblical past, can Muslims claim as their own.<sup>121</sup> Minkārīzāde’s short work, however, is one of the main pamphlets directly on the topic, whereas other opinions were located in larger books, such as *fetva* collections or longer works on general topics.

Minkārīzāde first tells the reader that he had actually written a longer and more eloquent treatise earlier, but to keep readers from exhausting themselves in the course of reading, he

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<sup>120</sup> Minkārīzāde, “A copy .... declaiming ... Muḥammad al-Kurdī”, MS Ahmedpasa 152, f. 78b

<sup>121</sup> Minkārīzāde, *Millet-i Ibrāhīm*, UCLA Young Research Special Collections, Collection 896, Box 109, MS 740, f. 4b

created a shorter version.<sup>122</sup> The longer version is not actually that much longer, only around fifteen to twenty folios in the two remaining copies, but the *şeyhülislam* felt the need to reduce its length even further, to about two folios, and to rid the text of its already meager authorial glosses/footnotes, which constituted part of the traditional scholarly apparatus of a text. Although the longer piece was already in a relatively straightforward Turkish, Minkārīzāde simplified it even further to the point that it reached a nearly colloquial level. After a discussion of the nature of prophethood and *shari'a*, he reduced it to one central, widespread (*da'ir*) question: “Is someone from the community of Muhammad allowed to say, ‘I am of the religion of Abraham.’? (*ümmet-i Muhammed aleyhi's-selām'dan bir kimesne millet-i İbrahîmdanim demek câ'iz midir*)” Here, though, the pamphlet diverges from its closest antecedent, the *fetva* (a legal opinion)—which is answered with an unequivocal yes or no—by providing a short summary of the legal and philosophical discussions involved. It aims for an audience that wants a more involved discussion than a simple ruling but cannot navigate complicated, even slightly more complex, legal discussions by themselves.

Minkārīzāde understood that for a question that had spread widely among the people of the time, he needed an even more basic and easily distributed format for an audience with limited capacity for reading. He states that he shortened and summarized the work “in order that most of the people not be fatigued by reading it (*keşîretü'l-ş'a'b olmağla muṭāla'asında ta'b çekilmesin diyu*).”<sup>123</sup> As will be discussed below, the use of the word of “*mutala'a*” for the act of reading is telling since it refers to a visual, silent, and individual reading of a text, the type that exhausted

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<sup>122</sup> The long version is Minkārīzāde Yahya Efendi, *Risāle fi's-Su'ali ve'l-Cevāb fi Haqqı Millet-i İbrāhīm*, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi MS 4952, ff. 33-55; MS Yazma Bağışlar 1438, ff. 103-116

<sup>123</sup> Minkārīzāde, *Millet-i İbrāhīm*, UCLA Young Research Special Collections, Collection 896, Box 109, MS 740 Ms 780, f. 1b

“most people,” who endeavored to read it nonetheless. The word he used for “people”, “*ša'b*” is also a peculiar choice, for it was rarely used at the time, but with which he seems to connote a more general sense of the masses or folk. The new pamphlet by Minkārīzāde proved popular enough by these “folk” that it was heavily copied in its time. Compared to the two existing versions of Minkārīzāde’s longer treatise, the shorter, pamphlet version has at least thirty copies within the manuscript libraries of Istanbul. As I mentioned earlier, these rarely survive as independent pamphlets but are copied or compiled into *mecmuas* (miscellanies), often within two or three folios, and sometimes on the margins of other texts.<sup>124</sup>



Figure 5: The first page from a typical copy of Minkārīzāde's pamphlet on the "millet-i İbrāhīm." The comment on the left is a short authorial gloss/footnote. The one on the right is a quote from unknown work identified by the catchtitle 'Ma'alim al-Shar'i (sic)' Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Mihraşah Sultan 440 ff. 79b-80a.

<sup>124</sup> One example of an independent pamphlet is Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS M Arif-M Murad 23; some examples in miscellanies are Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi: MS Sütluçe Dergahi 111, ff. 71-73, MS Mihraşah Sultan 440, ff. 79-80, MS A Tekelioğlu 810, ff. 10-12; MS Giresun Yazmalar, 170-12 ff. 237-9; MS İbrahim Efendi 871, ff. 216-220;

As with most pamphlets, the copyists and readers of these short, quick texts are often anonymous or identify themselves simply as “‘Abd Allah” or “Ḥasan b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz” meaning that we cannot easily say much about who was reading such texts. However, one copy of this pamphlet does survive from the imperial palace itself (fig. 3). With its ornate illumination, gilding, and fine *nesih* calligraphy, it is visually quite different from the other versions, even from the relatively orderly and neat copy in figure 2. Produced by a certain Ismā‘īl el-Bosnevī in the “*hāne-i seferli*,” a building in Topkapı Palace that over the course of the seventeenth century was turned into a book production studio, the piece might have even been presented to the sultan, as suggested by a draft address on the back pages.<sup>125</sup>

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MS Yazma Bağışlar 7354, ff. 129-137; For an example of one on the margins of a text see Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Hacı Mahmud Efendi 4865 ff. 1-25.

<sup>125</sup> This might also have been an uncompleted draft of a letter addressing the Sultan written by a courtier. UCLA Young Research Special Collections, Collection 896, Box 109, MS 740, f. 8b





Figure 6: The "Treatise on the Religion of Abraham" (*Risāle-i Millet-i İbrāhīm*) by Minkārīzāde Yahya Efendi. This particular pamphlet was circulated as an independent volume and, unlike most pamphlets, exhibits fine illumination and nesih calligraphy typical of palace produced books. UCLA Young Research Library Special Collections, Collection 896, Box 109, MS 740

Even if the higher standards resulted in a longer text (eight folios instead of the typical three), the fact that pamphlet format could win over readers from the streets to the seraglio demonstrates that it could traverse social space just as well as geographic space.

### Polemics, Pamphlets, and the Corrosion of Local Intellectual Community

So far this thesis has focused on the describing the capacities and possibilities of manuscript pamphlets in the Ottoman Empire. I would like now to turn to their effect on social

and intellectual life. The following sections demonstrate how pamphlets brought about new techniques of reading and interacting with texts.

In spite of his championship of the pamphlet format, Nābulusī and others were wary of the unmediated, individual reading of these works. As he explains in his letter to Ibrāhīm Efendi of Hayrabolu in regard to a pamphlet falsely attributed to Taftazānī, “The man (Ibn Arabī, the famous medieval mystic) is his knowledge, which is not concealed from the people until someone begins to express doubts about its standing. [But] his knowledge is just in his books, and his books are in the hands of the people who visually read (*yuṭāla ‘ūn*) them and make their own sense of them.”<sup>126</sup> The admission here is twofold: first, that skepticism could slowly unravel the reputations of famous scholars’ works and, second, that this situation was being fueled by the circulation and interpretation of texts largely outside the control of those who claimed to be qualified to interpret them. In particular, Nābulusī indicates that *muṭāla ‘a*—which connotes a specifically visual reading conducted while alone—as the cause of the problem at hand. Nābulusī then explains the proper way of reading books, in his opinion:

We, by God, read [the books] out to the people, day and night, and we relate them to the high and the low, in accordance with the sciences of the Muhammadian Shari’a, without any distortion whatsoever. And we define his terminology in the works, by God... And as for those phrases that instill groundless fears about *hulūl* or *ittiḥād*, and so on found in his books, we explain them in all their aspects and that they are based upon terminology of the gnostics (*qawm al-‘ārīfīn*), and are not<sup>127</sup> necessarily hidden from those strangers other than them, especially the deniers (*munkirīn*).<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> That was my translation of the following line: والرجل علومه ليست مخفية عن الناس حتى يتشكك في شأنه الإنسان وإنما علومه في كتبه وكتبه بأيدي الناس يطالعونها ويفهمونها Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā’il al-Taḥqīq)*, 171; Nābulusī, *Murāsālāt al-Nābulusī*, 106.

<sup>127</sup> The two printed editions of the letter I used differ as whether this important “not” exists in the text or not.

<sup>128</sup> Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar (Wasā’il al-Taḥqīq)*, 171–72; Nābulusī, *Murāsālāt al-Nābulusī*, 106.



Nābulusī here is explaining a model of guided, oral, public reading in which confusing terms are explained and contextualized by a more knowledgeable scholar in contrast to the self-guided, private, visual, and, in his view, problematic forms of *muṭālaʿa*.

Nābulusī's hesitancy might strike us as hypocritical at first—actively distributing his own pamphlets and books across the empire while lamenting the free circulation and reading of opposing pamphlets—but they should be taken as the complaints of a scholar finding himself in the midst of a radically changing intellectual culture. As Derin Terzioğlu notes concerning the catechisms of the period, “lay, vernacular readers were perceived by the learned elites as both a liability and an opportunity. They were a liability because, with their limited intellectual capacity and educational level and their inflated self-esteem, they could easily be led into ‘error and heresy’, but they also represented an opportunity because the scholars could teach them better by writing books tailored specifically for them.”<sup>129</sup> If pamphlets, cheap and short, could readily circulate across a number of geographic and social spaces, then they could also challenge the social conventions of the transmission of knowledge, especially reading and writing. This section gives a short overview of the common medieval practices of knowledge exchange and how pamphlets slowly corroded the community forged out of early interpersonal methods of knowledge transmission through polemicism and anonymity.

Scholars of medieval and early modern Islamic societies have generally understood intellectual space to be generated out of interpersonal, face-to-face contact. Similarly, when they wanted to understand the extension of intellectual space, historians have turned to “networks” of scholars or Sufis that could facilitate such relations.<sup>130</sup> This is because in a traditional medieval

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<sup>129</sup> Terzioğlu, “Where Ilm-i Hal Meets Catechism,” 6–7.

<sup>130</sup> John Voll, “Linking Groups in the Networks of Eighteenth-Century Revivalist Scholars,” in *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987); John Curry, *The Transformation*

context, a variety of social relations strictly regulated the transmission of knowledge. The earliest Islamic scholars distrusted the technology of the written word. Ideal knowledge was transmitted and received orally and when written down, it was collected as lecture notes, aide-memoires for future use, not as proper books.<sup>131</sup> Students would travel from teacher to teacher, aurally collecting, memorizing, and transmitting the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (*ḥadīth*), slowly creating a Muslim community.<sup>132</sup> By the ninth century, the codex had been readily accepted as a transmission technology but its use was often regulated through transmission certificates (*ijāzāt*), in which a qualified teacher stated that a specific text could be taught and transmitted by one of his students.<sup>133</sup> Yet, even when books became an established technology, consuming them visually was never fully sanctioned as an acceptable form of knowledge transmission. Instead, the memorization and recitation of texts played a key role in this process of learning and transmission. Students would, ideally, learn fundamental texts and handbooks through memorization, building upon the skills they developed from years of memorizing first of the Qur'an and then *ḥadīth*. The capacity to memorize and recite a text after hearing it once was often valorized in the biographies of famous scholars. There are numerous examples of how in medieval Islamic world the production of a book was inseparable from its public recitation and

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*of Muslim Mystical Thought in the Ottoman Empire : The Rise of the Halveti Order, 1350-1650* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

<sup>131</sup> Gregor Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: From the Aural to the Read*, trans. Shawkat M. Toorawa, Revised Edition (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

<sup>132</sup> Houari Touati, *Islam and Travel in the Middle Ages*, trans. Lydia G Cochrane (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010).

<sup>133</sup> On the development of the late medieval *ijāza* see Garrett Davidson, "Carrying on the Tradition: An Intellectual and Social History of Post-Canonical Hadith Transmission" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2014).

subsequent memorization.<sup>134</sup> Damascenes were told to avoid the private reading of texts and to avoid learning from those scholars who relied upon visually reading a text rather than reciting it from memory.<sup>135</sup>

Even within a text itself there remained mechanisms for the correct interpretations of texts.<sup>136</sup> Although we tend to dismiss most commentaries (*sharḥs*) as semantically explanatory rather than elaborative or critical, the traditional *sharḥ* pushes students toward the correct linguistic reading of a difficult text by defining words for them.<sup>137</sup> These commentaries often began in oral format as the comments of a teacher upon a recited text, written down by his students into a book. In time though, authors would leave their own glosses on texts (i.e. footnotes) to explain difficult passages, obscure words, alternative interpretations, or small asides. Commentaries would often be read in the presence of teachers in order to explain the main text.<sup>138</sup>

*Muṭālaʿa*, the act of individual, visual reading, (also called *naẓar*) had never been absent from the Islamic context.<sup>139</sup> Since the adoption of the codex, it had been practiced but it was never sanctioned as an acceptable form of knowledge transmission. As Houari Touati explains,

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<sup>134</sup> Ephrat, *A Learned Society*, 82; Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 144–49.

<sup>135</sup> Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350*, 145.

<sup>136</sup> On the commentary tradition in the medieval philosophical context see the special issue of *Oriens*, 41 (2013).

<sup>137</sup> Khaled El-Rouayheb, “Opening the Gate of Verification: The Forgotten Arab-Islamic Florescence of the 17th Century,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38, no. 2 (2006): 263–81; Murat Umut Inan, “Writing a Grammatical Commentary on Hafiz of Shiraz: A Sixteenth-century Ottoman Scholar on the Divan of Hafiz” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 2013); Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 83–85.

<sup>138</sup> Some commentaries on central texts became the main text themselves, leading to secondary (*ḥāshiya*) and tertiary level (*takrīr*) commentaries.

<sup>139</sup> For the different modes of visual reading in the medieval Islamic world, Houari Touati, “Pour une histoire de la lecture au Moyen Age musulman: a propos des livres d’histoire,” *Studia islamica*. 104 (2007): 11.

“Islamic culture of the Middle Ages places books into a paradoxical situation. Although it permits them to be read with the eyes (the term *nadhara* literally means ‘to look at’), it validates access to their content only by means of an ‘audition’ (*samā*’)-that is, through the ears.”<sup>140</sup> The ideal format remained the face-to-face instruction of a book by a teacher to a student or author to reader. When visual reading was practiced, it was often by extremely skilled and established scholars or by princes and kings reading histories and poetry.<sup>141</sup> Even in instances where reading and book culture expanded to new classes of the population, as Konrad Hirschler demonstrates in his work on “popularisation” of reading in thirteenth-century Damascus, the act of reading remained bound by aural transmission as exemplified by the practice of issuing reading certificates, *samā* ‘āt. Reading certificates detailed the actual author or authorized transmitter of the work, the names of the participants (who were of mixed professional backgrounds), the writer of the certificate, and the location of the reading session (which was often in a public setting like a mosque).<sup>142</sup> Together with ‘*ijāzāt* (transmission certificates), *samā* ‘āt ideally guaranteed a proper transmission of both the author’s name and text but also, to the degree possible, authorial intention and meaning.

All of these practices of knowledge transmission were predicated upon and created further social bonds that ensured proper transmission of the knowledge. The constant repetition and reiteration of interpersonal interaction in teaching and reading and the inscription of a lineage of scholarly transmission in written records allowed for a scholarly community to control the interpretation and dissemination of texts. For this reason, scholars have traditionally focused

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<sup>140</sup> Touati, *Islam and Travel in the Middle Ages*, 252.

<sup>141</sup> Touati, “Pour une histoire de la lecture au Moyen Age musulman.”

<sup>142</sup> Hirschler, *The Written Word*, 32–81.

their studies on local institutions—such as the *madrassa* or Sufi lodges or princely courts that could establish and facilitate such interactions.<sup>143</sup> Informal spaces—especially the *majlis* (the salon or symposium)—were equally important as sites of study, places where interpersonal interactions could forge the new bonds of intellectual community.<sup>144</sup>

Pamphlets were often destructive of the bonds that these local spaces fostered. First, pamphlets were often read alone and read visually. As noted above, both Nābulusī and Minḡārīzāde expected their audience to read their treatises visually, that is, through *muṭālaʿa*. Readers might then deploy them in group settings like coffeehouses or mosques, but they did not rely upon the formal approbation of the community for their reading. Because they were largely read alone, and due to their brevity, they did not need traditional mechanisms of transmission. Pamphlets likewise lacked much of the scholarly apparatus, such as glosses and commentaries, that could guide a reader toward a correct interpretation. One can extend this observation to books in general in the period (see below), but pamphlets seemed to have especially fostered these newer forms of reading.

At the same time, the centrality of traditional controls on transmission faded. For reasons that are still unknown to us, all reading certificates (*samāʿāt*) and many, though not all, transmission certificates (*ʿijāzāt*) largely disappeared from the manuscript sources of the early modern period. When we examine the catalog of Arabic reading certificates found in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, only nine of the seventy-two entries date from the sixteenth to

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<sup>143</sup> The major intervention in the study of the madrasa is the argument that madrasas never developed institutional reputations, rather the qualifications of a student always came from his teacher and mentor. Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges*; Ephrat, *A Learned Society*; Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge*; Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350*; Nile Green, “The Uses of Books in Late Mughal Takiyya: Persianate Knowledge between Person and Paper,” *Modern Asian Studies* 44, no. 2 (2010): 241–65; Suraiya Faruqi, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 185–203.

<sup>144</sup> Pfeifer, “To Gather Together”; Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*.

eighteenth centuries, while the vast majority come from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.<sup>145</sup>

These few examples are often not full reading certificates involving a large community, as in the medieval Damascus, but either copies of earlier medieval certificates or brief mentions that a book was read aloud.<sup>146</sup> *Ijāzas*, when found or mentioned, are largely superficial autographs of famous scholars, rather than chains of authority that granted the right to teach a book.

(Coincidentally, the tendency for formal academic works to be written as commentaries and super-commentaries also seems to have shifted toward writing independent texts.)<sup>147</sup> Memory, too, became less important. Nābulusī, one of the only Islamic scholars to have ever written a treatise on memory (or rather, forgetfulness), casts imperfect memory as a natural and acceptable occurrence, especially when read in the light of the adulation of perfect memory found in medieval treatises.<sup>148</sup> While it would be presuming too much to say that pamphlets were solely responsible for these changes in the transmission of texts, they were books that short-circuited the traditional methods of learning and transmission.

Pamphlets were also argumentative texts. They would often mention the general controversy, allude to the author's position, and then supply the various Quranic quotations, *hadiths* (traditions of the Prophet Muhammad), and statements by major, classical scholars that could support that point. On occasion, they would also supply an illustrative anecdote. In a sense,

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<sup>145</sup> These nine books must be situated among the tens of thousands of early modern Islamic books at the BNF that have no reading certificates. Georges Vajda, *Les certificats de lecture et de transmission dans les manuscrits arabes de la Bibliothèque nationale de Paris* (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1956).

<sup>146</sup> See for example, Bibliothèque nationale de France: MS Arabe 3025, ff. 262-3; MS Arabe 3092 ff. 151, 179-80.

<sup>147</sup> Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Relational Syllogisms and the History of Arabic Logic, 900-1900* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

<sup>148</sup> 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nabulusi, *al-Kashf wa'l-Bayan amma Yata'alluq bi'n-Nisyān*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 3607; ff. 243-52; Compare this against the aforementioned examples and Burhān al-Dīn Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Nājī, *Qalā'id al-'Ikyān fī mā Yurith al-Fakr ve'n-Nisyān*, Atıf Efendi Kütüphanesi, MS 453, ff. 199b-202b; Muḥammed b. Muḥammad al-Amīrī Rādī al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Qalā'id al-'Ikyān fī Murithāt al-Fakr wa'l-Nisyān*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Laleli 3767, ff. 247a-249a.

they resembled sermons. Both sermons and pamphlets were exhortative texts, meant to persuade an audience, whether viewed on the page or heard in the mosque.<sup>149</sup> That said the text itself was rather staid and often lacked the rhetorical flourishes which made texts largely inaccessible. They were meant to make a point, supply the proof, and end. Bereft of the logic and rhetoric that accompanied longer scholarly books, pamphlets required fewer technical skills to read. To read a pamphlet, in other words, entailed a quick, superficial reading.

Pamphlets not only encouraged different reading practices but they also supported certain types of writing that further enflamed the acrimonious atmosphere of the time. First, as Nābulusī noted in the case of the fake Taftazānī pamphlet, their circulation was reliant on the fame of their author. To this end, they seem to have encouraged the false attributions not only to major authors of the past but also to major authors of the day. Take for example the corpus of Birgivī Mehmed Efendi, a sixteenth-century author the *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiya*, whose writings became the inspiration for the seventeenth-century reformists dealt with in the last chapter. As Ahmet Kaylı has demonstrated, the corpus of his works began to swell in the seventeenth century as thirty to fifty new pamphlets were attributed to him.<sup>150</sup> Similarly, the name of Ḳāḍīzāde Meḥmed, the man whose name was posthumously attached to the “Ḳāḍīzādeli” movement of reformers in the seventeenth century, became the attributed author of a number of other people’s works.<sup>151</sup> In

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<sup>149</sup> Rūmī Aḥmed Akḥiṣārī, *Majālis al-Abrār wa Masālik al-Aḥyār*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yazma Bağışlar 865. The response is ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *al-Majālis al-Shāmiyya fi ‘l-Mawā‘iz al-Rūmiyya (The Damascene Sessions: Sermons for Rumis)*, ed. Hiba al-Masalih (Damascus: Dar Nur al-Sabah, 2011).

<sup>150</sup> Kaylı, “A Critical Study of Birgivi Mehmed Efendi’s Works.”

<sup>151</sup> Terzioğlu, “Where Ilm-I Hal Meets Catechism,” 9–10; Derin Terzioğlu, “Bir Tercüme ve bir Intihal Vakası: ya da İbn Teymiyye’nin Siyasetü’ş-Şer’iyye’sini Osmanlıcaya Kim(ler), Nasıl Aktardı,” *Türklük Bilgisi Araştırmaları* 31/II (2007): 266–68.

another pamphlet, this one a short polemic against tobacco smoking, we find one of these misattributions in action. The treatise is attributed to Molla Fenārī, an important fifteenth-century scholar, but the attribution is ludicrous given that tobacco, an import from the Americas, did not become widespread until the beginning of the seventeenth century. The copyist, unaware of his anachronism, tells the reader that Molla Fenārī was a major scholar at the Süleymaniye *madrasa* in Istanbul (an institution that itself was only founded in the sixteenth century).<sup>152</sup> The copyist either purposefully misattributed the authorship himself or was so impressed by the claim of Fenari's authorship that he decided to spread the pamphlet further. While these accretions and forgeries might be regarded as the normal state of affairs in any culture, part of the constant back and forth between forgers and critics,<sup>153</sup> in the polemical atmosphere of the period they posed unique problems.

This flurry of false ascriptions is not just a phenomenon we can identify today with the benefit of hindsight and large manuscript libraries. Scholars in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were themselves able to identify this phenomenon. One of Nābulusī's students, Muṣṭafa al-Bakrī, whose slightly confused mention of the Ḳāḍīzādelis we encountered in the last chapter, specifically highlights the group as perpetrators of purposeful misattribution.

[There was] a group which was fanatically polemical, known generally as the "Zadaliyya," who associated themselves with a Shaykh Zāda, although this shaykh was very god-fearing and humble (*wara* ʿ). His followers multiplied in droves, and their reach spread far and wide. His story is well-known, especially in the lands of Rum, and there is no need to mention it because it is common knowledge. This faction which worshipped polemics became his followers, and they appended to him what had not been heard from him and they attributed to him what he did not state and what did not originate from him.

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<sup>152</sup> *Untitled treatise against smoking*, Bošnjakčki institut, MS 459, pp. 45-46.

<sup>153</sup> Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics : Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).



Their followers are a band of the most ignorant people (*shirdhima min jahalat al-nās*) from whose words nothing can be derived or concluded.<sup>154</sup>

Bakrī's fascinating observation not only demonstrates an awareness of the phenomenon of widespread and purposeful misattribution but it also turns the traditional narrative of the Kādizādelis on its head. Rather than a fanatical preacher inciting and duping the masses, Bakrī's narrative has the pious shaykh manipulated and distorted by his polemical followers. They did so by constantly adding to his oeuvre so that the Kādizāde Meḥmed who existed in the world of pamphlets had little resemblance to the real life figure. This point helps us understand that writers like Birgivī Meḥmed and Kādizāde Meḥmed were not actual leaders but rather capacious author-figures that a larger, incoherent group of anonymous writers and readers used to propagate and circulate their own polemical writings and in turn identify with one another. Their opponents rallied behind other champions—one of whom was 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī. Unlike the Kādizādeliler, who had much looser and flexible notions of authorship, partisans of Nābulusī did everything they could to propagate their champion's writings while maintaining his authority integrity.

Scholars and laypeople understood that texts could be benignly or purposefully misattributed, but in the seventeenth century, fights over the attribution of texts began to rend apart the textual community of Muslims. It had always been recognized by scholars that copyist mistakes or misattributions were a possibility in the transmission of texts, but this could be resolved through recourse to an authority whether that of a shaykh or a famous scholar.<sup>155</sup> Let us

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<sup>154</sup> Muṣṭafa al-Bakrī al-Siddīqī, *Bur' al-Asqām fī Ziyārat Barza wa'l-Maqām*, ed. Ghalib Anabsi (Kafr Qar': Center of Arabic Literature Studies, Bet Berl, 2009), 116–17.

<sup>155</sup> Aslıhan Gürbüz el highlights this point nicely. Aslıhan Gurbuzel, "Authenticity and Authorship: A Debate on the Authorship of Abu Hanifa's Fiqh al-Akbar in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul," Unpublished Workshop Paper presented at *Manuscript Cultures of the Ottoman Empire*, Orient-Institut, Istanbul Turkey, 6-7 Jun 2014.

return to the example of the fake Taftazānī pamphlet attacking anyone who admired Ibn Arabi. The offending pamphlet was sent by Nābulusī for his opinion and a counter-pamphlet. At the end of the letter, it becomes clear that the correspondent not only harbors suspicions regarding the authorship of the Taftazānī pamphlet but also asks whether the works of ‘Alī al-Qārī, a respected and prolific early seventeenth-century scholar and pamphleteer in Mecca, who seems to have penned treatises criticizing Ibn Arabi, are truly his. The small episode gives a glimpse as to how suspicions became contagious, undermining the author-function of one scholar after another, factionalizing authors based on the content of their work.

Another episode occurs regarding the creed of Abu Hanifa (one of the foundational figures of Islamic law) titled *Fiḥ Akbar*. Having become one of the key creedal texts of the seventeenth century, it also touched upon one of the major debates of the period, whether or not the parents of the Prophet Muhammad died as unbelievers. That text said they had died as unbelievers, and therefore some scholars started arguing that the text itself was not genuinely the work of Abu Ḥanīfa.<sup>156</sup> The major, well-known texts of the Taftazānī and Abu Hanifa were never called into question but this frequent interrogation of authorship was a symptom of the polemical atmosphere of the period. As Kātib Çelebi, who always attempted to cast himself a removed observer, remarked, “the allegation that the *Fiqh akbar* is not the work of Abu Hanifa is false, a product of fanaticism, a simple denial with no foundation.”<sup>157</sup> Suspicions about the authorship of piece were so rife that a Turkish-speaking writer by the name of Ebu Aḥmedzāde Meḥmed

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<sup>156</sup> Kātib Çelebi, *The Balance of Truth*, trans. G. L. Lewis (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1957), 68–69.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

Efendi<sup>158</sup> went out of his way to defend the authorship of the work and called anyone who opposed it a Mu‘tazilī, in other words, a heretic.<sup>159</sup> His proof was two-fold. First and foremost was the fact that more than twenty other more famous authors—such as ‘Alī al-Qāri (mentioned above) and Ibn ‘Allān—had written commentaries and expansions on the piece and utilized it in their writings over the past two centuries. These writings were in turn widely used among the people (*hāla beynü’l-nās şāyi ‘ve isti ‘māl olan*).<sup>160</sup> If one denied the fact that Abu Hanifa had written the work, then one was repudiating all their writings as well. The second was a traditional chain of transmission in which he tries to prove that the text was faithfully transmitted from Abu Hanifa (to the scholar Qāḍīkhān).<sup>161</sup> In the free-flowing world of manuscript pamphlets, it was a markedly old-fashioned form of proof. Claims of misattribution and false authorship were not only symptomatic of the times but equally corrosive to the notion of a shared textual community and the canon of works that underlay it. Slowly readers began to divide themselves according to texts they thought were honest and believable and others that they felt were untrustworthy.

While a pamphlet’s circulation may have been partially dependent on the fame of an author’s name, the people attacked in a pamphlet often remained anonymous, leading to the expansion of attacks against communities. When one reads these polemical treatises, they are often aimed at the “deniers” or “the Sufis of our times” or at most, “a man from *Rum* (i.e. a Turkish-speaker)” which makes it difficult for scholars to establish to whom they refer precisely.

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<sup>158</sup> Ebu Aḥmedzāde Mehmed Efendi apparently was also a translator of the work. See Tercüme-i Fıkh-i Ekber, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, MS 2189. This treatise is grouped in a miscellany with the usual suspects: Qāḍīzāde Mehmed, Birgivī Mehmed, Rūmī Aḥmed Aḫişārī, and Munīr-i Belgrādī.

<sup>159</sup> Ebu Aḥmedzāde Mehmed, *Risāle-i Ebu Aḥmedzāde Mehmed Efendi ki Fıkh-i Ekber’in Imām-i A‘zam Hāzretlerin ’nin olduğına taşdik içiündür*, Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, MS 46, ff. 23b-25b.

<sup>160</sup> Ebu Aḥmedzāde, *Risāle*, Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, MS 46, ff. 23b.

<sup>161</sup> Ebu Aḥmedzāde, *Risāle*, Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, MS 46, ff. 25b

As Bakri Alaaddin, the first major scholar to tackle Nābulusī's massive corpus, stated, "Nābulusī adversaries remain in the shadows for us; he never named any of them."<sup>162</sup> The habit of anonymizing the object of one's criticism most likely emerged of polite discretion; when criticism was written in a relatively small and closed community the intended target was often known regardless. For instance, in one aforementioned polemical pamphlets regarding whether or not non-Muslims gain "happiness" and therefore salvation by paying their poll tax, the opponent is mentioned, in the title even, as "an obstinate, ignorant Turkish speaker (*al-Rūmi al-jāhil al-'anīd*)."<sup>163</sup> In one copy from Damascus, a reader or copyist seems to have identified the anonymous *Rumi* as one Maḥmūd b. Shaykh 'Alī.<sup>164</sup>

As this work circulated outside of its original setting, the anonymous character of the attack allowed it expand to include all Rumis. One Rumi declared Nābulusī and Arabic speakers in general to be infidels. Nābulusī retorts that the writer was "one of those types who denies the truth in his ignorance, a Christian who converted recently to Islam. He has stuck a white turban on his head and wears Muslim clothes, but only God can know what is really in his heart" as he eats pork and drinks wine.<sup>165</sup> While it might frustrate us that we can rarely identify whom these scholars attacked, the anonymity might had unintentional (and perhaps even intentional) consequences. What might have begun as an attack on a specific individual, once it left it

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<sup>162</sup> Aladdin, "'Abdalḡanī an-Nābulusī," 103.

<sup>163</sup> The work is referenced earlier, Abd al-Ghanī al-Nabulusi, *al-Qawl al-Sadīd*, UCLA Young Research Library Special Collections, Collection 898, Box 99, MS 576, pp. 4-79 and Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 3606, ff. 207-224.

<sup>164</sup> Von Schlegell, "Sufism in the Ottoman Arab World," 101; Aladdin, "'Abdalḡanī an-Nabulusi (1143 1731), Oeuvre, Vie et Doctrine, Vol. 1," 169 The figure of Mahmud b. Shaykh Ali is mentioned in one of Nabulusi's letters, but it the identification could have been the guess of a later reader.

<sup>165</sup> Nābulusī, *al-Qawl al-Sadīd*, p. 6. The quote first appears in Winter, "A Polemical Treatise," 94.

original locale, could become an attack on an entire group, the anonymity a wide brush that tarred large segments of society.

Pamphlets occasionally also simply circulated with only a vague penname as an author-figure or without an author-figure at all, floating anonymously across the empire without implicating the original writer. The aforementioned “Nuṣḥi,” was one; his sobriquet meant only “the Advice-giver.” Others simply circulated as a litany of anonymous accusations. In situations like this we find writers attempting to grasp at some amorphous author-figure, Nābulusī responds to one of these anonymous attacks with his usual ferocity, “O, whoever wrote this (*yā ayyaha al-muṣannif*)! Here is a pamphlet that will demolish your pamphlet!”<sup>166</sup> The anonymity of pamphlets, whether that of the authors or objects of critique, further divorced these works from any one particular locale, pulling apart any community of readers and writers.

Fueled by these polemics, this break in intellectual community began to be expressed as ethnic divisions. Scholars tend to think of Islamic space in particular as either culturally homogenous or riven with timeless national divisions (e.g. those between Persians and Arabs) without recognizing the fact that unity or division is the product of a set of historical processes.<sup>167</sup> In our case, the sixteenth century had seen as a shared, although contested, intellectual community built between Arab and Rumi (Turkish-speaking scholars) through *majlises* and travels in the wake of the Ottoman conquests of the Arab lands.<sup>168</sup> In the seventeenth century,

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<sup>166</sup> ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *al-Radd al-Matīn* (*The Stern Reprimand*), Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Hacı Selim Aga 490, f. 2a.

<sup>167</sup> Scholars of Nābulusī often interpret his attacks on Rumis as part of a long-standing ethnic difference between Arabs and Turks. Von Schlegell, “Sufism in the Ottoman Arab World”; Winter, “A Polemical Treatise.”

<sup>168</sup> Pfeifer, “To Gather Together”; Burak, “The Abu Hanifa of His Time”; Cemal Kafadar, “A Rome of One’s Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum,” *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World* 24 (2007): 7–25.

however, we find Damascene Arabic-speaking commentators like ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, Aḥmad al-Khafājī, and Najm ad-Dīn al-Ghazzī, expressing inherent differences between Rumis (Turkish-speakers) and Arabs despite the fact that both had a wide variety of Rumi friends and connections. They understood the divide to derive from linguistic differences, namely, that non-Arabs failed to read properly.<sup>169</sup> Arabs, unlike Rumis, could understand rhetoric and logic, and thus could interpret texts properly.<sup>170</sup> The attempt to interpret texts correctly across imperial space would lead to new techniques of reading.

### **The rise of new reading techniques and new communities**

In the seventeenth century, treatises began to appear that attempted to define an ethics and practice of purely visual reading—*adāb al-muṭāla‘a*. Their emergence signals an attempt to elevate the practice of visual reading into an acceptable method of knowledge acquisition and transmission. If no authoritative community could guarantee the stability or proper interpretation of a mobile text, and reading (or rather, certain types of reading) increasingly took place outside of the structured and sanctioned aural contexts of the medieval world, then one solution was to train people to read differently. In other words, scholars needed to give people the tools with which to visually read and analyze texts on their own.

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<sup>169</sup> Nābulusī’s opinions are expressed above and in many places throughout his travelogues, Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Husn al-Tanabbuh limā Warada fī al-Tashabbuh*, ed. Nur al-Dīn Ṭālib (Dimashq: Dār al-Nawādir, 2011); Compare this to similar opinions found throughout Shihābaddīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Khafājī, *Rayḥanat al-Alibbā wa Zaharat al-Ḥayāt al-Dunyā*, ed. ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Hulw, 2 vols. (Cairo: Matba‘at ‘Isa al-Babī al-Halabī, 1967) This second work is detailed in Chapter 5 on travelogues.

<sup>170</sup> Nābulusī, *al-Qawl al-Sadīd*, p. 7

The seventeenth-century scholar, Ḥāmid b. Burhān b. Abi Dharr al-Ghifārī instructs his readers clearly in the proper method of visual reading (*muṭālaʿa*).<sup>171</sup>

When you start visually reading, read the piece comprehensively from start to finish, and in your mind extract the desired initial meaning from it. Then observe the conceptual (*taṣawwuri*) aspects through close analysis (*bi-diqqat al-naẓar*) and reflect on them (*istibṣār fihā*): Would some issue that would cause it to be rejected [as evidence] disprove it? Is it possible to refute it and to refute the refutation? And also notice the factual (*taṣdīqī*) aspects through analysis and reflect on them. Is there anything that could be directed toward it that would cause it to be rejected as evidence? Does it allow an escape from logical inconsistency? And observe the things that come up that reject it as evidence and reflect on how to refute it and how to refute the refutation.<sup>172</sup>

The process that Ghifārī explicates is essentially a sort of analytical critical thinking that stems from the individual visual reading of a text. Analysis here is then defined in other places as reading with an eye to the proper vocabulary and semantic context of a work—i.e. the sort of process that Nābulusī explained as proper reading. This was meant to be a purposefully inculcated skill, not a self-evident method of reading. Ghifārī tells the aspiring visual reader that only after a year or two of practice, and many disappointments, would it become second nature.<sup>173</sup> He cautions students not to be dismayed by slow progress since scientific terminology presented quite an obstacle.<sup>174</sup> But the rote memorization of terms, without understanding their true meaning, might deprive the student of the ability to fully comprehend things, not to mention rendering them stupid and making them deviate from their natural capacities. Ghifārī warns that

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<sup>171</sup> There seems to be little to no information on Ghifārī. Other than his popular treatise on *muṭālaʿa* he seems to have no other writings. The two works in Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi which are *adāb al-baḥṭh* texts, attributed to him actually do not seem to have any connection to him when examined. Originally, I thought that the author was a false attribution to some grandson of the famous companion of the Prophet, Abu Zarr al-Ghuffārī, but this seems unlikely due to the titles he employs in the treatise to address his forbears and the fact that he readily admits that *adāb al-muṭālaʿa* is built upon *adāb al-baḥṭh*. The dating of the treatise as from the seventeenth century is from the fact that the earliest of dated copy of it is from 1090, and none of the others seem to be in that precedes the seventeenth century *majmuʿa*. Moreover, Müneccimbaşı identifies him as a later scholar and not an ancient.

<sup>172</sup> Ḥāmid b. Burhān b. Abi Zar al-Ghifārī, *Risāla fī Ādāb al-Muṭālaʿa*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Laleli 2991, ff. 15b-16a; MS Reisulkuttab 1168, ff. 256b-257a

<sup>173</sup> *Ādāb al-Muṭālaʿa*, MS Laleli 2991, f. 16b; MS Reisülkuttab 1168, 257a

<sup>174</sup> *Ādāb al-Muṭālaʿa*, MS Laleli 2991, f. 17b; MS Reisülkuttab 1168, 257b

comprehensive visual reading (*naẓar ‘ijmālī*) without close analysis (*diqqat al-naẓar*) and reflection (*istibṣār*) would have the same effect.<sup>175</sup> However, one of the benefits is the ability to challenge the arguments of major scholars, so much so that Ghifārī tells his reader that there is no shame in retracting your refutation of a famous scholar if you feel the need to do so in your heart.<sup>176</sup> By investing visual reading with this intensive analytical apparatus, Ghifārī and others like him began to rehabilitate its reputation of visual reading and turned it into a valid method of knowledge acquisition and transmission. The intended effect was to dismiss, or at least distance themselves from, other methods of knowledge acquisition, such as memorization and generic visual reading which may have increasingly been the domain of the poorly or semi-educated.

Ghifārī, however, was not constructing a method of visual reading out of thin air. The emphasis on establishing evidence and counterarguments makes it clear that reading theory (*adāb al-muṭāla‘a*) emerged from disputation theory, known as *adāb al-baḥṭh/munazāra*, a field of knowledge that attempted to lay down an official methodology of argument and acceptable evidence.<sup>177</sup> Again, Ghifārī cautions his audience that, “[visual reading] will not become easy until after calling to mind the foundations of disputation and the laws of debate and after these foundations and laws become generally accepted among those people engaged in debate and writing.” It is not surprising that Ghifārī’s work, which was by far the most popular treatise on the topic, is usually found inserted into the blank pages of miscellanies full of commentaries on disputation and logic. Essentially, Ghifārī, and the other seventeenth-century authors who also

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<sup>175</sup> *Ādāb al-Muṭāla‘a*, MS Laleli 2991, f. 17b; MS Reisülkuttāb 1168, 257b

<sup>176</sup> *Ādāb al-Muṭāla‘a*, MS Laleli 2991, ff. 16a-17b; MS Reisülkuttāb 1168, 257b

<sup>177</sup> On the development of this branch of knowledge, see Larry Benjamin Miller, “A Study of the Development of Dialectic in Islam from the Tenth through the Fourteenth Centuries” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1984); Mehmet Karabela, “The Development of Dialectic and Argumentation Theory in Post-Classical Islamic Intellectual History” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, McGill University, 2010).



wrote *adāb al-muṭālaʿa* treatises, extracted and explicated the already existing techniques of argumentation and analysis from this discipline, specially applied them to reading (if they were not already construed as such), and formatted them into independent short works.

Sometime around the year 1680 (1090H), a scholar named Aḥmad b. Luṭfullah al-Mawlawī, better known to Ottomanists as Müneccimbaşı (which meant, the chief astrologer), copied down Ghifārī's pamphlet on visual reading in his notebook. He scribbled in the margins a few comments on its definition and began to draft a chapter on the topic but something held him back. It was only after he lost his standing in Istanbul and moved to Mecca that he found the authorial inspiration to write the work on January 4, 1691. Titling his piece, *The Inspiration of the Sanctuary (Fayḍ al-Ḥaram)*, Müneccimbaşı had written the longest and most thorough exposition on visual reading known to scholars today. In his insightful article introducing the text, Khaled el-Rouayheb has argued that Müneccimbaşı's piece emerged from the greater institutionalization of the high-level madrasas which necessitated the development of analytical reading methods.<sup>178</sup> While this might be true, I propose that the text was actually meant to create reading and knowledge practices that would defuse the polemical exchanges between scholars.<sup>179</sup>

Müneccimbaşı's main complaint with Ghifārī's work, and the field of reading ethics or theory (*adāb al-muṭālaʿa*) in general, is that it was too heavily based upon disputation theory

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<sup>178</sup> I'd like to thank Khaled el-Rouayheb for graciously sharing a draft of the article with me. Khaled el-Rouayheb, "The Rise of 'Deep Reading' in early-modern Ottoman Scholarly Culture," forthcoming.

<sup>179</sup> My hesitation in endorsing Rouayheb's conjecture is that scholars and students never really mention any examinations nor do they really write about test questions in their notebooks, which would be expected had it been a major event, as Rouayheb claims. Ultimately, the larger fault of the argument might be that its logic is reliant on syllogism that is not necessarily true: in the past, learning was non-institutionalized and tied to oral exchanges with a teacher rather than individual book reading. Now that individual, visual reading is more accepted, education must also be more institutionalized.

(*adāb al-baḥṭh*). Why, he wondered, had the previous of generations of scholars in their attempt to help students expounded upon disputation theory and written so many treatises yet ignored reading theory? “For debate is reliant upon reading (*muṭāla‘a*). Whenever debate is not preceded by visual reading, then nothing results save quarrels (*mujādala*) and controversy (*mukhāsama*) and nor is there any outcome except confusion (*khajāla*) and contrition (*nadāma*).”<sup>180</sup> He rejected the assertion that earlier generations of scholars had neglected explicating it since visual reading was a self-evident and natural act as

It would have been more fitting for the etiquette of debate (*adāb al-munāzara*) to have been ignored first, rather than the etiquette of reading (*adāb al-muṭāla‘a*). Compared to the etiquette of reading, the etiquette of debate is lower in rank in terms of necessity, more self-evident, and simpler to grasp from the works (*ṣanī‘*) of the commentators and authors of glosses.<sup>181</sup>

Ghifārī’s treatise had drawn too heavily on disputation theory to make his points, and therefore Müneccimbaşı found it unable to cure the ill from the disease of quarrels and controversy.<sup>182</sup>

In his treatise, Müneccimbaşı attempts to break reading theory free from its background in disputation theory and give the field of knowledge its own disciplinary foundation in an attempt to create the conditions for proper, non-acrimonious intellectual exchange. The modesty he exhibits in his introduction, which emphasizes the amount of hesitation, thought, and work behind the treatise, belies the ambition of Müneccimbaşı’s attempts to found or renovate this field of knowledge. I will not dwell here too much on the specifics of Müneccimbaşı’s treatise, which guides a variety of different students through the act of visual reading and of which Rouayheb has already given an excellent summary and analysis. In the usual fashion,

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<sup>180</sup> Müneccimbaşı Ahmed el-Mevlevī, *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Laleli 3034, f. 161a

<sup>181</sup> *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, MS Laleli 3034, f. 161a

<sup>182</sup> *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, MS Laleli 3034, ff. 161a-161b

Müneccimbaşı begins with a linguistic and terminological definition of the term, i.e. “*iṭṭilā*,” to view or look at, study, examine and

the comprehensive observation of writing to obtain an understood meaning, and specifically, observing written terms, whose conventional meaning is familiar, to arrive thereby at the intention behind their use. Either in explaining their true meaning or establishing the desired meaning through the respected methods of verifiers (*muḥaqqiqīn*).<sup>183</sup>

From this basic definition, Müneccimbaşı then lists its topic, aim, and benefit, which is general practice when explaining the foundations of a discipline. He then spells out the different types and levels of visual reading for students and scholars. Like the other writers on the topic, he states that visual reading is not a natural capacity, but something that has to be inculcated and based on the basic sciences of logic, rhetoric, grammar, etc. With practice, visual reading gives one the ability to extract the true and intended meaning, and not the superficial or mistaken meaning, from the texts one reads. Failure to do so would result in superficial or literalist readings that result in basic mistakes like confusing the literal and figurative or confusing the meaning of a word in two different semantic contexts. Readers, then and now, have long noticed that reading a text is not simply a matter of language and familiarity with the script, but involves a whole set of auxiliary disciplines that guides one to the correct meaning.<sup>184</sup> Once someone had mastery in the basics that applied to all readers, he or she could look at Müneccimbaşı’s later chapters to go over techniques of visual reading for different purposes, “(i) to obtain knowledge that he does not have but for which is prepared; (ii) to move beyond knowledge taken on trust and uncover the evidential basis for scholarly propositions; (iii) to deepen his evidentiary

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<sup>183</sup> *Fayḍ al-Haram*, MS Laleli 3034, f. 162a. I’ve taken Rouayheb’s original, and very correct, translation and filled in sections he left out with my own translations. All mistakes are my own.

<sup>184</sup> In this regard, most of us scholars studying the early modern Islamic world are essentially reading our sources at the level of that problematic semi-educated lay reader, without the proper foundational disciplines and thus only a partial understanding of the texts.

knowledge by repeated perusal, thus obtaining a thorough familiarity with the evidence and ‘the ability to call to mind at will (*malakat al-istiḥdār*); (iv) to deepen his evidentiary and consolidated knowledge by strengthening it through refreshing his acquaintance with familiar texts or through exposure to new texts and alternative presentations and proof.’<sup>185</sup>

While Müneccimbaşı’s theories and instructions regarding visual reading were the focus of his work, the true novelty of his writings lay in the fact that he implicitly understood that reading, even when conducted alone, was always a social act. Yet, in Müneccimbaşı’s writings a rather dramatic shift that has occurred in comparison to the medieval ideal. It was proper reading that now lead to a proper, harmonious community rather than the other way around. He believed that with precise training in the correct method of visual, individual reading scholars would begin to engage in a new, more civil form of intellectual exchange. He called this *mudhakāra*, discussion, which fell within the realm of the ethics of reading (*adāb al-muṭāla‘a*) as compared to *munaẓāra*, debate, which belonged to disputation theory (*adab al- baḥth /munaẓāra*). Structurally, they were not radically different; *mudhākara* reprised the roles of claimant and questioner and the different objections to the admission and capacity of proofs found in *adab al-baḥth*. But Müneccimbaşı found *munaẓāra* too polarizing, too acrimonious to achieve true scholarly interaction. Although the social practice of debate in the period has never been actually studied, we can find hints of the degree of these troubles throughout the chronicles. When Tatar Imām, one of the two scholars eventually sentenced to death for writing commentaries of Birgivi Meḥmed’s *Al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*, was challenged about his claim that the hadiths of Birgivi’s work were fabricated, he yelled, ‘my books of *hadith* are ready, let them first come to

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<sup>185</sup> Rouayheb, “Ottoman Scholarly Culture,” pp. 440-441

the Mosque of Sultan Mehmed and force me to concede my points (*ilzām*)!”<sup>186</sup> The word he uses here, *ilzām*, is a common term in disputation theory, connoting the final stage of a debate when the claimant is forced to withdraw his argument for lack of evidence.<sup>187</sup> In this case, actual debate and discussion had become an afterthought. All that remained was a single-minded desire to prove one’s opponent incorrect.

Instead of having just two opponents face off, *mudhākara* was conducted in a group of two or more. Participants would trade off the different roles of claimant and questioner and constantly rotate as each would chip in their observations and questions in order to hone in on the best understanding of a text.<sup>188</sup> Too often, Müneccimbaşı claimed, people would take on the position of “interrogator” just to destroy their opponent’s claims since it was much easier than coming up with new propositions to defend. The point was not to best the other opponent or simply force them into admitting that they could not support their position, instead it was to create a sort of scholarly consensus around a text.

When Müneccimbaşı outlines the ethics of discussion (*adāb al-mudhākara*) he warns that if these guidelines are not followed discussion will devolve into obstinate quarreling by people who need to be right for the sake of being right.<sup>189</sup> Obstinate quarrelers, deceptive fools and sarcastic jokers cause acrimony within the group but “numbskulls” who only understand things when they are repeated or explained are acceptable though because they do not harm the group

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<sup>186</sup> Naima Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Na’ima*, 3:1436.

<sup>187</sup> For a basic definition of *ilzām* see Taşköprüzade, *Risāla fī ‘ilm al-baḥth*,

<sup>188</sup> *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, MS Laleli 3034, f. 186b

<sup>189</sup> *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, MS Laleli 3034, f. 187a

process of arriving at the correct answer.<sup>190</sup> Another “one of the conditions is that the group like one another and not brutally hate each other because love requires paying close attention (*ḥusn al-isghā*) and that requires an understanding of the intended meaning, just as hatred requires the opposite of that.”<sup>191</sup> The appeal to love your neighbor through proper reading are somewhat generic, but I believe that they attempt to dismantle a deeply polarized atmosphere, one in which polemic and invective had split apart a community of texts and authors.

The new civility of discussion (*mudhākara*), or at least claims to such, necessarily had to follow the prioritization of *muṭāla‘a*. The new *muṭāla‘a* put forth by scholars like Mūneccimbaşı, Ghifārī, ‘Abdullah el-Bosnevi, and others sanctioned the extraction of textual meaning through individual, visual reading of texts by providing the tools for the proper interpretation of a text according to its semantic and terminological context with an eye to its logical, rhetorical, and disputational aspects. While this would ideally guide a properly trained reader to the same interpretation of a text as others, the truth is that people would inevitably return with multiple interpretations. *Mudhākara* was the means to resolve these variant interpretations and create a consensus through engagement with other scholars. As Mūneccimbaşı warns the reader, it is only the cowardly and acrimonious scholar who loves the interrogative role in debate that relies solely on his own *muṭāla‘a* of a text.<sup>192</sup> At the same time, the late seventeenth century was a time when various scholars, like Nābulusī, put forth an ideal of sealing oneself within one’s house, rejecting society, and reading all day. Theorists of visual reading never intended for its practitioners to sit alone, completely isolated from society. Rather readers were supposed to read alone first and

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<sup>190</sup> *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, MS Laleli 3034, f. 187a

<sup>191</sup> *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, MS Laleli 3034, f. 187a

<sup>192</sup> *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, MS Laleli 3034, f. 188a

then emerge into society where they would engage and debate others, respectfully, in coffeeshops, mosques, madrasas, and bazaars. For this reason he reminds the reader that “an hour of *mudhākara* is better than a day, or even days, of *muṭāla‘a*.”<sup>193</sup> In Mūneccimbaşı’s treatise, the relationship between the group and reading has come full circle. For the attendees of a late medieval Damascus reading group, the group guaranteed and sanctioned the reading and the stability of a text. In *mudhākara*, it was the act of proper reading and discussion that guaranteed the group’s stability. Mūneccimbaşı’s inversion of the process reveals a society that had become increasingly dependent on and entangled in books.

## Conclusion

One might not think of manuscripts as a particularly mobile technology—given their reliance on the scribe’s hand and the presumed cost of reproduction—but manuscripts flourished and spread throughout the Ottoman Empire. These manuscripts were not the heavy tomes of medieval Europe, but small, short, and cheap books that had the capacity to circulate through various social and geographic spaces. From these cheap books, I have focused on what I call pamphlets—short, argumentative, and often polemical treatises that often addressed some of the controversial issues of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These short treatises (*risālas*) were not necessarily a new format, but they were used in novel ways by a variety of authors who understood their capacity to reach new audiences across the empire, especially new groups of lay readers.

While the capacity for these pamphlets to spread beyond their local sites of productions and engage new readers was one of the alluring features of the format, they also posed a

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<sup>193</sup> *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, MS Laleli 3034, f. 186b

dangerous problem as they circulated—they dissolved the traditional strictures and communities that had guided reading and writing. Earlier practices of reading were based on the social, interpersonal exchanges that validated and sanctioned the contents of books, especially for those who were learning to read. Pamphlets, on the other hand, were to be read silently and individually by lay and educated readers alike, without the usual methods that would guide readers toward a correct interpretation or validate their use, especially when they circulated outside of the original community of production. Moreover, because they often circulated thanks to the fame of their purported author, they were susceptible to a wide variety of forgeries and misattributions. Much of the pamphlet literature of the period was polemical and the traditional anonymity extended to the object of one's criticism transformed a specific individual into a generic enemy as the pamphlets traveled. This in turn became a mechanism to label large sections of the population unbelievers. As these texts traveled and moved, they began to corrode local communities and inter-personal spaces that had previously guided intellectual exchange. In its place, readers and writers warily interacted with one another as a generic and anonymous figures, never sure whose opinion or writings they could trust. It was a process of decanonization.

At the same time, seventeenth-century scholars began transforming the practice of visual reading (*mutalā'a*) from a seldom-used, problematic, and unsanctioned method of knowledge transmission into a more robust and legitimate analytical technique. One scholar in particular, Müneccimbaşı, recognizing that polemical debate fueled by pamphlets had rent the textual community of the empire apart, suggested a new relationship between reading and community formation. Instead of a local community ensuring the proper transmission and interpretation of a text as had been done in the medieval period, Müneccimbaşı argued that the act of proper, visual



reading would form and guarantee the stability of a community. Even if his words were more prescriptive than practiced, they point to the new entanglement with and dependency on books taking hold in the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire.

That these changes took place in a manuscript culture should make us rethink precisely which unique qualities and causative powers we wish to endow to print in the European or East Asian context.<sup>194</sup> In many ways these developments are isomorphic with those in early modern Europe—religious wars fueled by cheap print, the expansion of reading to new social classes, the rise of individual, silent reading etc.—yet it would be specious to argue that this is part of a general inexorable forward movement of modernity arising simultaneously around the world. At the same time, there is no readily apparent connective relationship that would explain these developments, especially as the printing press was not widely adopted in the Middle East until the late nineteenth century. There is no one cause or mover here, but a confluence of networked material and social factors from the availability of cheaper Italian paper starting in the fourteenth century to the ready mobility of the unbound pamphlets to the polemical atmosphere of seventeenth century to the increasing monopolization by the Ottoman state of the intellectual and legal hierarchy. The moment of crisis and resolution, when the intersection of pamphlets and religious tensions coincided, was in the seventeenth century, but the entanglement was centuries in the making. It initiated a permanent shift in book culture and reading practices that rendered the introduction of print in the nineteenth century a relatively minor affair.

Finally, if we were to examine Ottoman society for concrete social groupings based on reading, what examples might we find? Let me suggest that rather than imagining the whole

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<sup>194</sup> Two differences that I would suggest are the limited capacity for manuscripts to reproduce images and the lack of market mechanisms in dictating the content of works (i.e. authors or copyists seem to have had no real incentive to sell material to a reading public.)

empire as a sort of united reading group, a generic and expanded public sphere, the population was actually further factionalized into geographically dispersed contingents based on adherence to certain author-figures. As a small example, let us examine two opposing groups that I have talked about for much of the chapter—one that belongs to the “*Ḳāḏīzādelis*” and the other to their opponents, led by authors like ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī. In the previous chapter, I mentioned that attempts to tie the *Ḳāḏīzādelis* to a particular social class or milieu have largely failed and were based on outdated models of Islamic revival. Let me suggest that they were a social group, but not one based in a particular economic class, but one defined by the books they read and the authors they supported. After all, the one unifying aspect of this group is their partisanship of the author Mehmed Birgivī. As they grew, they used the authorial figure of Birgivī to write and circulate their texts, regardless of whether or not they were actually penned by Birgivī himself. In contrast, Nābulusī and his followers spread Nābulusī’s works widely but closely guarded and maintained his authorship through the production of trustworthy exemplars and bibliographies. Both groups had holy texts that they regarded sacred and accused anyone who critiqued these texts as heretics—the *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya* of Birgivī and the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* of Ibn Arabi. Here, then, lies a slight irony. Nābulusī, Minkārīzāde, and other pamphleteers used the pamphlet to bring new readers into the fray in hopes of settling the viciously debated controversies of the seventeenth century, yet they only fanned the flames higher.

## Chapter 4: Saints, shrines, and the hajj in an Ottoman holy land:

### understanding the pilgrimage as circulation

This chapter interprets the hajj as a form of circulation, one that transformed the religious life of all the inhabitants of the early modern Ottoman Empire—Muslim and non-Muslim—and reconfigured its sacral landscape. Whereas the previous chapters considered the circulation of material objects and their capacity to alter the intellectual life and social structure of the empire, this chapter examines the largest and most regular circulation of people across a particular material landscape. The hajj was, after all, the most common type of purposeful travel undertaken by the empire's inhabitants. Understanding the hajj as physical journey reminds us that the hajj is not only as a set of rituals incumbent upon all Muslims but a lived experience and a form of movement through a particular landscape. This is especially needed now that discount aviation has reduced much of the inbetweenness of the hajj, the journey shortened to initial preparation at home and time in Mecca and Medina.<sup>1</sup>

Viewing the hajj through the lens of circulation is a departure from earlier social histories that focused largely on the daily lived experience of its pilgrims or administrators.<sup>2</sup> More recent literature has begun to regard it as a circulation, though often from the point of view of colonial authorities' attempts to control the flow of pilgrims unleashed by steam infrastructure

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance the recent academic hajj narrative of Abdellah Hammoudi, *A Season in Mecca*, trans. Pascale Ghazaleh (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Suraiya Faruqi, *Pilgrims and Sultans : The Hajj under the Ottomans, 1517-1683* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1994); Michael N. Pearson, *Pious Passengers: The Hajj in Earlier Times* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1994).

in the nineteenth century, especially from South and Southeast Asia.<sup>3</sup> These histories, with their well-placed emphasis on material infrastructure, are to some degree limited by their implicit technological determinism, which flattens the developments of earlier centuries into a generic Muslim past.<sup>4</sup> Cheap transportation via steamship, railway, or airplane has undoubtedly transformed the hajj and conceptions of Islam, but it did so by reconfiguring a set of earlier relationships and practices that had developed in the early modern period rather than inventing them wholesale.<sup>5</sup> The same can be said about the early modern hajj in relation to its medieval iteration. However, the novel development of the period was not technological—though the new infrastructure did transform the act of pilgrimage—but political—the conquest of the Mamluk realms by the Ottoman Empire. This conquest in turn initiated an intensified and formative cultural encounter between two different groups of Muslims: Turkish-speaking *Rumis* and local Arabs.

I argue in this chapter that this rather contingent event and the subsequent integration of the Arab lands into the Ottoman Empire set off a series of connected processes that led to the creation of an Ottoman holy land and the indelible transformation of the empire's religious life. The first transformation was the championing of the hajj by the dynasty at the expense of other Islamic pilgrimage practices and religiosity. It is tempting to explain this choice by the straightforward fact that following the conquest the Ottomans controlled the holy cities of Mecca

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Christopher Low, "Empire and the Hajj: Pilgrims, Plagues, and Pan-Islam under British Surveillance, 1865-1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 2 (2008): 269–90; Eric Tagliacozzo, *The Longest Journey: Southeast Asians and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* (Oxford, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Nile Green, "The Hajj as Its Own Undoing: Infrastructure and Integration on the Muslim Journey to Mecca," *Past & Present* 226 (2015): 193–226; Nile Green, "Spacetime and the Muslim Journey West: Industrial Communications in the Making of the 'Muslim World,'" *The American Historical Review* 118, no. 2 (April 2013): 401–29.

<sup>5</sup> On the question of modernity, scale, and reconfigurations, see Andrew Shryock, Daniel Lord Smail, and et al, *Deep History: The Architecture of Past and Present* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2011), 242–72.

and Medina and the major land routes to them, and, as an Islamic dynasty, prioritized the patronage of this core Muslim duty. While the holy sanctuaries were an undeniable resource in the quest for imperial legitimacy, I highlight here the purposeful rejection of other models of state religion that were available to post-Mongol rulers coping with the powerful political claims of saints and holy men ensconced in elaborate shrine complexes. The ensuing centuries witnessed an annual flood of tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of pilgrims from the central, Turkish-speaking lands of the empire. Through the state's investment in transport infrastructure and pilgrims' peregrinations across this imperial space, an Ottoman holy land emerged that stretched far beyond the traditional sanctuaries of Mecca and Medina to include the areas around Damascus, the Bīqā'a Valley in Lebanon, Cairo, and the environs of Jerusalem. The physical journey itself, purposefully conducted overland in order to facilitate the visitation of numerous tombs and shrines before and after Mecca and Medina, became an integral part of the hajj. The increased importance of the hajj was so widely felt that even the empire's Christians developed their own parallel and often overlapping hajj to Jerusalem in the seventeenth century.

None of this is to say that the hajj carried no import before the early modern period. Rather, this chapter situates the hajj in a larger ecology of competing and complimentary practices of Muslim religiosity that it began to incorporate, displace, and alter as it expanded in scope and importance in the late sixteenth century. These other practices, which centered on the mediation of saints and holy men, are often referred to collectively as Sufism, an orientation that has defined Islam for most of the second millennium. This chapter, like the rest of the dissertation, eschews the traditional ontological separation between Sufism and legalistic Islam, and likewise sets aside the reigning typologies of Islamic pilgrimage—hajj and *ziyāra*. The visitation of saints' tombs, or *ziyāra*, is often cast as a resolutely local, heterodox, or Sufi

practice,<sup>6</sup> tied to particular neighborhoods or regions or cities,<sup>7</sup> in contrast to the universal and orthodox congregation of Muslims that converges upon Mecca and Medina every year for the hajj. The contrast is often extended by the association of *ziyāra* with sites that maintained millennia-long auras of sanctity, the continuity used to explain their appeal to multiple sectarian communities,<sup>8</sup> whereas the hajj is seen as only a Muslim event. As will be shown, the two are far from opposing concepts but emerged from the same mix of practices, each with their own possibilities and limitations. Thus the political hazards of Turco-Mongol Sufism led to the championing of the hajj, which in turn came to be defined as a set of shrine visitations.

The importance of all this lies in the fact that pilgrimage is the ritualized and embodied act of connecting a landscape to a history.<sup>9</sup> As hajj pilgrims chose to visit each shrine or holy site in this Ottoman holy land they constructed, with their feet, conceptions of empire, Islam, and personal identity. In other words, these pilgrims traversed not a static Muslim landscape but a dynamic one. Each shrine was politicized through potential cultural encounters between Rumis and Arabs or between Christians and Muslims, mediated through the practice of pilgrimage. The influx of pilgrims, in particular, Rumi pilgrims from the Turkish-speaking centers of the empire,

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<sup>6</sup> James Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints: Everyday Religion in Ottoman Syria and Palestine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> see Christopher Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous : Ziyāra and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1998); John Renard, *Friends of God: Islamic Images of Piety, Commitment, and Servanthood* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008); For a wonderful look at the mobility of saintly Islam see Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Nile Green, *Making Space : Sufis and Settlers in Early Modern India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> For a retort to the emphasis on continuity see Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000), 403–11; For an example of saint worship as a particularly multisectarian enterprise see Josef Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> On the usage of religious landscapes see Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

posed a challenge not only because they came with their own conception of which shrines were important, but also because Damascenes and Cairenes saw their presence and practices as representative of the imperial center and even the attack on the cult of the saints. One result, I will argue, is the increased importance of the shrines of pre-Islamic prophets. Yet, the emphasis on pre-Islamic sites in a greater holy land, sites that were often shared with Christians, offered possibilities not only for an Ottoman piety that transcended sectarian boundaries but also for moments of competition and radical doubt. As I will point out, some of these new itineraries of the hajj were defined by a vision of an Ottoman holy land crafted through imperial patronage of the shrines of major Biblical prophets, while others continued to give equal importance to the shrines of local saints. These differing pilgrimage itineraries and conceptions of local and imperial holy lands mirrored the fights over the imagined community of both Islam and the empire.

### **Rumis and Arabs: Cultural Encounters between Muslims**

The conquest of the Mamluk kingdom by the Ottoman Empire in 1516 marked the start of a new set of relations and encounters between Rumis and Arabs. In its most basic sense, Rumi connoted a linguistic and geographic designation, namely, someone who spoke Turkish and came from the lands of Rum—the central lands of the Ottoman Empire between the Taurus Mountains in the south and the Balkans in the north. This particular definition, though, lies at odds with its meaning in both the medieval and modern periods. In the former, it essentially designated Romans, whether of the ancient or Byzantine varieties, and starting in the nineteenth

century it was primarily applied to the Greek-speaking subjects of the empire.<sup>10</sup> This geographic and linguistic distinction was cemented by the development of Ottoman Turkish in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries into an urbane and poetic language capable of competing with Persian, a distinction that separated the Rumi identity from that of the more nomadic or tribal Turk.

The shifting semantics of the word *Rūmī* were as confusing to denizens of the early modern Middle East as they are to modern readers. In his short work, *Strung Pearls: On the Virtue of the Rumis*, the late seventeenth-century Egyptian scholar Aḥmad al-Ḥāmawī spent a good deal of space disambiguating the term. Particularly confusing were the variety of apocalyptic hadiths (sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad) that associated the massive geographical expansions of the Rumis (read Romans) with the coming of the end times. To dissuade his more linguistically inflexible readers that the massive success of the Ottoman Empire was not a sign of the impending Hour of Resurrection, al-Ḥāmawī patiently explained how the original Rumis had been a cluster of star-worshipping pagans who had converted to Christianity under Constantine.<sup>11</sup> The rest of the book is largely an explanation of the superlative qualities of the Ottoman dynasty, a connection that hints that the average Rumi in the provinces could never quite separate himself from being associated with imperial power. Pilgrimage and travel through the Arab lands also pushed Rumis to reflect on their own identity and the labels used to describe it. In the notebook of one Rumi pilgrim, journeying through the Arab lands around the year 1672, we find a moment of terminological inquiry, and, perhaps, self-doubt. From one of the works of Ibn Kemālpaşa, the great sixteenth-century jurist, he transcribed the

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<sup>10</sup> On the development and history of this identity, see Cemal Kafadar, “A Rome of One’s Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum,” *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World* 24 (2007): 7–25.

<sup>11</sup> Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Makkī al-Ḥanafī al-Ḥāmawī, *al-Durr al-Manzūm fī Faḍl al-Rūm (Strung Pearls: The Virtue of the Rumis)*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Pertev Paşa 624, ff. 209-214



following: “One says *Rūmī* in the singular and *Rūm* in the plural, and likewise, *Turkī* and *Turk...*” The traveler must have needed a bit more explanation as the selection continues, seemingly elucidating some other verse, “What is meant by *Turk* are the pagan Turks and by *Rūmī* Christian Rumis, both of whom are infidels.”<sup>12</sup>

The passage may have provided little solace to the confused traveler, but for our purposes making such distinctions breaks apart the generic category of Ottoman, or for that matter, Islamic, into more useful internal categories that highlight a continued encounter between two cultural groups. Yet applying the analytical categories of Rumi and Arab should not be confused for a return to projecting the rather static national identities of Turk and Arab onto these social communities.<sup>13</sup> Rather it requires viewing them as dynamic, evolving across the centuries in relation to one another. A continuous relationship of migration and circulation since the late medieval period by Rumi scholars and merchants to the major intellectual and commercial centers of Cairo and Damascus was fundamentally transformed following the conquest of the Arab provinces by the Ottoman dynasty in 1516. The relationship between the two morphed, albeit slowly and uncertainly, into one between an imperial metropole and its provinces. Even the history of Selim’s conquest itself became the site for the constant reinscription and negotiation of this relationship, as it was retold in coffeehouses and rewritten in courtly histories

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<sup>12</sup> Anonymous, *Untitled*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yazma Bağışlar 2411, f. 42a. The work contains an anonymous guide to the pilgrimage in Jerusalem and Gubari’s guide to the hajj. The quote apparently comes from Ibn Kemālpaşa’s *İşlāḥ al-İdāḥ* from the chapter, *Istighlā’ al-Kuffār*.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. Gabriel Baer, “Egyptian Attitudes Towards Turks and Ottomans in the 17th and 18th Centuries,” *Prilozi Za Orijentalnu Filologiju*, no. 30 (1980): 25–34; Michael Winter, “A Polemical Treatise by ‘Abd al-Ganī al-Nabulusi against a Turkish Scholar on the Religious Status of the *Ḍimmīs*,” *Arabica* 35, no. 1 (1988): 92–103; Steve Tamari, “Arab National Consciousness in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Syria,” in *Syria and Bilad Al-Sham under Ottoman Rule: Essays in Honour of Abdul-Karim Rafeq*, ed. Peter Sluglett and Stefan Weber (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 309–22.

until well into the eighteenth century in both Arabic and Turkish.<sup>14</sup> While a number of studies over the past twenty years have examined this relationship as a process of top-down integration (or Ottomanization),<sup>15</sup> this chapter builds from the insights of recent studies by Guy Burak and Helen Pfeifer to regard the empire as a set of reciprocal relationships that both affected and defined Rumi intellectual and religious practice as much as it defined that of Arabs.<sup>16</sup> The fact that these groups existed as essentially “commensurable” (for lack of a better word) cultures under the rubric of Islam actually increased the difficulty of integration—by making the challenge of Arab scholars impossible to ignore—while obscuring the fact that a cultural encounter had occurred to modern scholars. The term cultural encounter is not necessarily an exaggeration; this was the first time since the initial expansion of Islam in the early seventh century that the northern and southern shores of the eastern Mediterranean had been politically united.

Following the conquest, the power relations between metropole and province were initially reversed, at least in terms of scholarship and learning. Rumi migrants—soldiers, traders,

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<sup>14</sup> For a list of some of these texts in Turkish see Mustafa Argunşah, “Türk Edebiyatında Selimnameler,” *Turkish Studies* 4, no. 8 (Fall 2009): 31–47; Tülün Değirmenci, “Geçmişin Yeniden İnşası: Târih-i Sultân Selîm Han ve Tasvirleri,” *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 18 (Bahar 2013): 63–82. There are no shortage of Arabic chronicles on the topic, but especially important were the histories of Ibn Zunbul, such as those found in the British Library, Or. 3031 and Or. 2811. Also important is its early eighteenth-century Turkish reevaluation by the Egyptian Yūsuf al-Maylawī, *Kitāb Ṭurf al-Majālis bi-Ṭaraf min Akhbār al-Sultān Selīm wa'l-Jarakāsa*, British Library, MS Or. 3211.

<sup>15</sup> A few examples include: Leslie P. Peirce, *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003); Heghnar Watenpaugh, *The Image of an Ottoman City: Imperial Architecture and Urban Experience in Aleppo in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Çiğdem Kafesçioğlu, “In the Image of Rum: Ottoman Architectural Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Aleppo and Damascus,” *Muqarnas* 16 (1999); Karl Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus, 1708-1758* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980); Jane Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: The Rise of the Qazdağlıs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>16</sup> Guy Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law: The Hanafī School in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Helen Pfeifer, “To Gather Together: Cultural Encounters in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Literary Salons” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2014).

and dervishes—streamed into major Arab cities such as Damascus and Cairo, creating their own neighborhoods, mosques, and schools.<sup>17</sup> Rumi scholars (‘*ulamā*), however, were thrust from the margins of the Islamic world to its center as they found themselves at the top of a rather centralized intellectual hierarchy,<sup>18</sup> controlling the fate of senior scholars in Damascus and Cairo at whose feet they might have once learned. At the same time, the former Mamluk imperial institutions, such as madrasas, were rendered superfluous and became training centers for small provincial scholars and functionaries.<sup>19</sup> Arab scholars with grander career ambitions had to travel to Istanbul to secure an appointment, whether in their home cities or in the capital itself, though they could leverage the cachet of their intellectual training and their scholarly lineage to acquire positions.

The superior learning of Arab scholars in the Islamic sciences posed a challenge to the carefully crafted Ottoman system that had emerged in Rum. As Guy Burak points out, the Ottoman government had over the course of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries attempted to mandate an imperial branch of the Hanafī school of Islamic law in which only officially appointed *muftīs* (jurisprudents) and *şeyhülislāms* (chief jurisprudents) were allowed to make precedent-setting judgments.<sup>20</sup> This, though, flew in the face of the traditional decentralized Islamic system of jurisprudence in which any well-educated scholar could offer a valid legal

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<sup>17</sup> See for example the madrasa of Ḥasan al-Rūmī, south of the Citadel in Cairo. A Rumi neighborhood in Cairo also seems to have developed around the mosque of Altıparmak. Mohamed Abul Amayem, *Islamic Monuments of Cairo in the Ottoman Period*, ed. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) & Research Centre for Islamic History, Art, and Culture (IRCICA), 2003), 153–56.

<sup>18</sup> see Richard Repp, *The Mufti of Istanbul : A Study in the Development of the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986).

<sup>19</sup> Guy Burak, “Dynasty, Law, and the Imperial Provincial Madrasa: The Case of Al-Madrasa Al-’Uthmaniyya in Ottoman Jerusalem,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45 (2013): 111–25.

<sup>20</sup> Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law*.

opinion. Arab scholars were not only often better educated, and thus potentially more valid jurists, than their Rumi counterparts in the legal sciences, but were also draped in the cloak of greater piety. Biographical dictionaries, as both Pfeifer and Burak point out, served as a means to establish and defend proper communities of interpretation, especially on the Rumi side.<sup>21</sup>

Take, for example, Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī, who became one of post-conquest period's most prominent Arab figures, known as much for his knowledge and sanctimonious piety as for his staunch criticism of Rumi lapses of faith. As his name suggests, he hailed from Aleppo (*Ḥalab* [ar.]/*Halep* [tr.]) and studied in Damascus and Cairo before moving to Istanbul shortly before or after the conquest of the Arab lands. He progressed quickly up the ranks becoming a prayer leader (*imām*) and then a preacher (*imām khāṭib*) at the mosque of Sultan Mehmed II, before being appointed the head of a college specializing in Qur'ān recitation.<sup>22</sup> His fame and authorial reputation, though, stemmed from his accessible handbook of Islamic jurisprudence, *Multaqa al-Abḥār*, that was used throughout the empire's schools and quickly incorporated into the juridical canon. Today there are thousands (if not tens of thousands) of manuscript copies of it still in existence (a well-received book from the early modern period might have ten manuscript copies remaining today). Alongside his handbook, much of his work and opinions seems to have circulated as short, cheap pamphlets (the notion of manuscript pamphlets is detailed in the previous chapter), like other famous authors of his time. In one short book, titled *The Most Important Matters* (*'Ahamm al-'Umūr*) he listed 56 “matters” that Muslims had to adhere to in order to be true to their faith. Ḥalabī was spurred by the fact that too many people “in his time in

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.; Pfeifer, “To Gather Together,” 140–76.

<sup>22</sup> Ahmad b. Mustafa Taşköprüzade, *al-Shaqā'iq al-Nu'māniyya fī 'Ulamā' al-Dawla al-'Uthmāniyya*, ed. Ahmed Subhi Furat (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1985), 499–500; Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib al-Sā'ira bi-'A'yān al-Mi'a al-'Ashira*, ed. Khalil al-Mansur (Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, 1997), 2:77.

general, and in the lands of Rum, in particular” were wasting their time on the study of pointless knowledge and only gaining an inflated sense of self.<sup>23</sup> Ḥalabī asks what might the state of the commoners be when learned scholars themselves were so ignorant. The solution was to train Rumis—both scholars and lay people—to not only repeat the basic tenets of belief, but to be able to deploy the pieces of evidence and proof necessary for them to conduct arguments on their own.<sup>24</sup> Like many such popular religious works from the period, there is a chance that the work is a seventeenth-century ascription, and not Ḥalabī’s own sixteenth-century composition.<sup>25</sup> Regardless, the work demonstrates the image of Arab scholars as models of some sort of truer Islam that circulated well into the seventeenth century among the populace of Rum.<sup>26</sup>

### **Holy Lands, Old and New: Ottoman Diffidence in the Saintly Lands**

When Sultan Selim entered Damascus in 1516, he marched into a land replete with saints and shrines, a world constructed in response to an earlier invasion. Historians utilizing textual,

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<sup>23</sup> In the text al-Ḥalabī actually quotes another scholar to make the point. The marginal comments suggest that “ilm al-ilahiyya” (metaphysics) were particularly to blame. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī, *Aḥamm al-‘Umūr*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Laleli 2153, f. 2a.

<sup>24</sup> *Aḥamm al-‘Umūr*, MS Laleli 2153, f. 4b-5b

<sup>25</sup> As mentioned in an earlier chapter, many of these popular, sermonizing works were falsely ascribed to older authors, such as Mehmed Birgivī. Here, I am suggesting it is a forgery because the author’s name is not stated outside of the heading on the work; there are no copies dating prior to the late seventeenth century; the work is not mentioned in his biographies, nor, for that matter, latter listings of his works; other pamphlet works of his seem to be clear false ascriptions (see his treatises on *kayy al-ḥimmaṣa* which are copies of Mehmed Fikhī Efendi el-‘Aynī’s work); the Arabic seems a bit rough and simple; and finally, he cites another controversial work—the Fikh-i Akbar of Abu Ḥanīfa—that was regarded as falsely ascribed by some authors. None of these are clear signs of the false ascription of this treatise, but one should not readily grant authorship. Selim Şükrü Has, “A Study of Ibrahim Al-Halabi with Special Reference to the Multaqa” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1981); Kâtib Chelebi, *The Balance of Truth*, trans. G. L. Lewis (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1957), 68–69.

<sup>26</sup> One can guess at the semi-educated, Turkish readership of the work by looking at certain marginal translations. One reader seems to have misread the word “sā’iq” (driver, motor) as an odd plural of “sāqī” (water carrier/giver) and gave an interlinear Turkish translation of water-carrier, “*sucu*,” rather than the driver. Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Laleli 2153, f. 3a

architectural, and archeological sources increasingly point toward the development of the saintly infrastructure of greater Syria as emerging in response to the Crusades and, to a lesser degree, the Mongol invasions. In the nearly two hundred years of crusader presence, at least four hundred chapels and churches were built in the Levant by the Latins, which comes to nearly twenty to forty major building projects every decade.<sup>27</sup> As the Ayyubids (under Salāh al-Dīn) and the Mamluks (under Baybars) began to reclaim this land, they quickly began a campaign of creating a new Muslim holy land in southern Syria. Rulers, officers and common townsfolk took part in rediscovering (through their dreams) the tombs of early Islamic figures and heroes from the wars against the Crusaders and then contributing to their construction and upkeep. Older, smaller pilgrimage sites, such as the tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron were greatly expanded and non-Muslims were banned from entering them. Churches and monasteries were converted into Sufi lodges; revenues from villages that previously supported monasteries and churches were seized and reendowed to support the new shrines.<sup>28</sup> Whereas earlier holy sites had predominantly stressed Biblical events and urban locales, this new wave of shrine building saw the establishment of the graves of a wide variety of early Islamic figures, learned scholars, and military heroes throughout both the urban and rural landscape. The new geographies and pilgrimage guides (pilgrimage to shrines, that is) of the period, al-Idrīsī and al-Harawī, respectively, began to include these new shrines and sites. While the Crusader incursion might have spurred the renewed sacralization of the lands of Syria, the spread and establishment of

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<sup>27</sup> Here she references the work of Denys Pringle, Stephennie F. Mulder, *The Shrines of the 'Alids in Medieval Syria: Sunnis, Shi'is and the Architecture of Coexistence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 260.

<sup>28</sup> Yehoshu'a Frenkel, "Baybars and the Sacred Geography of Bilad al-Sham: A Chapter in the Islamization of Syria's Landscape," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2001): 153–70; Daniella Talmon-Heller, "Graves, Relics and Sanctuaries: The Evolution of Syrian Sacred Topography (Eleventh-Thirteenth Centuries)," *ARAM* 18–19 (2007–2006): 601–20; Mulder, *The Shrines of the 'Alids in Medieval Syria*.

shrines by themselves was part of the growing shift in the middle to late medieval period toward an Islam centered on saints and holy men.<sup>29</sup> Cairo became one of the largest concentration of holy graves and saints.<sup>30</sup>

As the newly expanded Ottoman Empire took over this land of tombs and shrines, the imperial government took a relatively diffident, and at times, even hesitant, approach to establishing or renovating saintly graves. This is a surprising choice given that post-Mongol Muslim empires mostly took it as their prerogative to intervene and develop the saintly landscape of their realms. The Mughals, when they conquered the Deccan, began to transform and redefine the shrines of the previous Muslim sultanates.<sup>31</sup> The Safavids too, built massive tomb complexes in Ardabil around their dynasts' graves, in effect creating a cult of the dead around the shah himself as they sidelined other Sufi orders.<sup>32</sup> However, the tomb building and shrine patronage activities of the Ottoman state, at least on the imperial/dynastic level, were always rather limited. The energy and money of the imperial government went into constructing Friday congregational mosques (*jāmi'*) as it tried to propagate a particular notion of religiosity based around more observable acts of worship.<sup>33</sup> When the imperial government intervened in the Arab provincial

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<sup>29</sup> Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012); Renard, *Friends of God: Islamic Images of Piety, Commitment, and Servanthood*.

<sup>30</sup> Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous*.

<sup>31</sup> Nile Green, *Indian Sufism since the Seventeenth Century: Saints, Books, and Empires in the Muslim Deccan* (London: Routledge, 2006); Green, *Making Space*.

<sup>32</sup> Kishwar Rizvi, *The Safavid Dynastic Shrine: Architecture, Religion and Power in Early Modern Iran* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011).

<sup>33</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Zeynep Yürekli, "Writing down the Feats and Setting up the Scene: Hagiographers and Architectural Patrons in the Age of Empires," in *Sufism and Society: Arrangements of the Mystical in the Muslim World, 1200-1800*, ed. John J. Curry and Erik S. Ohlander (London: Routledge, 2012), 94–119.

cities, it often did so through a campaign of specifically imperially Ottoman central mosques, as it did in Aleppo and Damascus.<sup>34</sup>

One of the reasons that the imperial government sponsored or built so many fewer shrines than other Muslim empires was the consistent potential for holy men/saints to quickly become contenders for political power in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Only a decade prior to his conquest of the Mamluk lands, Sultan Selim had quelled a series of rebellions in central and eastern Anatolia by followers of the Safavid Shah Ismail, who had used his descent from a holy man to found a state in the late fifteenth century.<sup>35</sup> The Mughal emperor Akbar experimented with a sort of Sufi order in which he was the holy shaykh and his courtiers and subjects were disciples.<sup>36</sup> This specifically political capacity of sainthood might have been a particularly post-Mongol introduction, which came with an attendant architectural development of the multi-function shrine.<sup>37</sup>

The Arab lands, as well as the lands of Rum, were never exempt from this particularly Turco-Mongol concept of political sainthood. A large migration of holy men from the Iranian world swept through the area during fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>38</sup> Whether they were

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<sup>34</sup> Watenpaugh, *The Image of an Ottoman City*; Kafesçioğlu, ““In the Image of Rum.””

<sup>35</sup> The founding myth of the Ottomans is intimately tied to a holy man as well. The eponymous founder of the Ottomans, Osman had a dream of a tree sprouting from his belly and growing to eventually shade the whole world. Upon waking, Osman went to Shaykh Edebeli who interpreted the dream as sign that he would become a world-conquering sultan and proceeded to give him his daughter’s hand in marriage.

<sup>36</sup> Moin A. Azfar, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

<sup>37</sup> Zeynep Yürekli points out that these called *dergāhs* or *āsītānes* (thresholds) rather than just *türbes* (tombs) or *zāviyes* (Sufi lodges). *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire: The Politics of Bektashi Shrines in the Classical Age* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 15–16.

<sup>38</sup> For an example of this migration see, John Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought in the Ottoman Empire: The Rise of the Halveti Order, 1350-1650* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 50–86.



fleeing from the political instability of fifteenth-century Iran or sensing new opportunities, quite a few of these holy men established themselves in the major Arab cities. Cairo provides a clear example of this process as the last years of Mamluk rule saw the establishment of large Sufi lodges on the outskirts of the city by holy men from eastern Anatolia and Iran, such as al-Damurdashi (Demirtaşı), Shahīn al-Khalwatī (Ḥalvetī), and Ibrāhīm al-Kulshānī (Gülşenī). Gülşenī, in particular, grew increasingly politically powerful until he was imprisoned by the last Mamluk sultan and tried for heresy.<sup>39</sup> The Ottoman invasion and the subsequent power vacuum allowed him to cultivate a large following of both imperial troops and locals, who congregated at his large tomb complex which was built on appropriated sultanic endowments, next to the former Mamluk sultans' congregational mosques. He even married off his son to the widow of the former sultan.<sup>40</sup> Eventually he became a thorn in the imperial government's side and was permanently summoned to Istanbul, away from his power base. The government, in turn, found more pliable Sufi families to work with, families that did not invest in shrine-tomb complexes.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>For analysis of Gülşenī's relationship with the Ottomans and the Mamluks and how his story was reinterpreted from one of rebellion into an example of Ottoman cooperation in the seventeenth century see Side Emre, "Ibrahim-i Gülşenī (ca. 1442-1534): Itinerant Saint and Cairene Ruler" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2009).

<sup>40</sup> Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The Takiyyat of Ibrahim Al-Kulshani in Cairo," *Muqarnas* 5 (1992): 43–60; Doris Behrens-Abouseif and Leonor Fernandes, "Sufi Architecture in Early Ottoman Cairo," *Annales Islamologiques* 20 (1984): 103–14; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Change in Function and Form of Mamluk Religious Institutions," *Annales Islamologiques* 21 (1985): 73–93.

<sup>41</sup> The Bakrī family, a long line of shaykhs and holy men, became one of the chief advisors to the Ottoman governors during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Rather than having a tomb complex like other shaykhs, they kept palaces and were buried around the tomb of Imam Shafī'ī. They regarded themselves as descendants of the caliph Abu Bakr and had at least one narrative of themselves as late fifteenth-century migrants from Medina who accompanied Sultan Selim as he entered Cairo. al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa'l-Majāz*, 2: 214-216; For a larger description of their history in the sixteenth century see Adam Sabra, "Household Sufism in Sixteenth-Century Egypt: The Rise of al-Sada al-Bakriya," in *Le Soufisme à l'époque ottomane XVIe - XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Rachida Chih and Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, Cahier des Annales islamologiques 29 (Le Caire: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2010), 101–19.

For the most part, the Ottoman government seems to have a limited vision for the shrines and tombs of the provinces it conquered (being aware of their ability to foster political competitors). Even when we look at the architectural programs of the Ottoman governors, who tended to commission buildings that were in conversation with local expectations,<sup>42</sup> we find a relatively limited amount of intervention in saints' tombs. When they donated to or renovated the tombs of saints, they tended to be long dead companions of the prophets rather than anyone with a living descendant.<sup>43</sup> The government likewise redirected public ceremonies and marches away from the necropolis of the Mamluk sultans in Cairo.<sup>44</sup> When they did donate to the endowments of certain living shaykhs, these focused on those that catered to the Rumi population of the city around the Citadel (the seat of the government) rather than attempt to spread specific cults from the lands of Rum into the country.<sup>45</sup> When tomb complexes were constructed it was most often done by local Arab shaykhs and their followers.<sup>46</sup> As Behrens-Abouseif has observed, the holy men and saints of Rum never seem to have gained much of a foothold in local Egyptian religious life.<sup>47</sup> Perhaps it is not surprising then that all of the shrine complexes established immediately

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<sup>42</sup> Kafesçioğlu, "In the Image of Rum," 91.

<sup>43</sup> See the list in Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment to Ottoman Rule: Institutions, Waqf and Architecture in Cairo (16th and 17th Centuries)* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 179–80.

<sup>44</sup> Julien Loiseau, "La Ville Démobilisée," 280–281.

<sup>45</sup> See the example of Ḥasan al-Rūmī who set up a tomb-madrasa complex only for Rumi origins. Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment to Ottoman Rule*, 95–105.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 229; Behrens-Abouseif and Fernandes, "Sufi Architecture in Early Ottoman Cairo"; Loiseau, "La Ville Démobilisée," 275 The evidence that Behrens-Abouseif and Fernandes provide for this statement seems to come largely from fifteenth-century Mamluk examples and the first twenty years of Ottoman rule. Loiseau uses the data compiled by Behrens-Abouseif to suggest that most of the architectural projects of the sixteenth-century governors in Egypt were actually mosques, and not tombs. .

<sup>47</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment to Ottoman Rule*, 102–3.

after the Ottoman conquest in Cairo, those that appealed to Rumi communities (e.g. Ḥasan al-Rūmī, Shāhīn al-Khalwatī, Ibrāhīm al-Kulshānī), are today abandoned ruins.

The result of this neglect and restraint of shaykhs from Anatolia and Iran was the immobility of saint-based Islam. This was noticed by contemporary commentators as well, such as Naẓmī Efendi who sat down to write his account-cum-hagiography of a lineage of contentious Sufi shaykhs in seventeenth-century Istanbul. Despite the fact that the founders of his order had sent out disciples from their Iranian homeland of Shirvān (today in Azerbaijan) to both Anatolia and the Arab lands in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, he could find no information about the holy deeds of the shaykhs in the Arab lands in the books of the Rumis as he wrote in 1696/1108h. Nor did the Arabs or Persians of his order mention any of the shaykhs and holy men of Turkish-speaking lands.<sup>48</sup> Naẓmī Efendi had, in effect, noted a failure of mobility: neither Rumis nor Arabs knew about the saints of the other. The graves, texts, and rituals of the saints—a form of religious mobility that had been so successful in earlier and contemporary societies—had become increasingly circumscribed.<sup>49</sup>

### **Introducing Ibn Arabi: a Failed Attempt at a State-Sponsored Saint's Cult**

There is one notable exception to this imperial policy of limited investment in shrines, and that is the rediscovery and sanctification of the tomb of Ibn Arabi in Damascus.<sup>50</sup> It is a

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<sup>48</sup> Mehmed Nazmi Efendi, *Hediyyetül'l-İhvan: Osmanlılarda Tasavvufi Hayat - Halvetilik Örneği*, ed. Osman Türer (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2005), 250–51.

<sup>49</sup> This should not be written into a teleological vision of saintly Islam inevitably failing as the world became more modern.

<sup>50</sup> The major cult and shrine of Sayyida Zaynab (the daughter of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and patron saint of Cairo) was supposedly introduced by the Ottoman governor in the mid-sixteenth century but this seems to have happened without any mention in any of the narrative sources or fanfare. Behrens deduced that that shrine and cult was introduced by the Ottoman government by comparing the endowment of governor ʿAlī Paşa and a description of the shrine from a fifteenth-century and realizing that it was originally the shrine of an unknown descendant of the

significant exception as it hints at a different historical trajectory, one in which the Ottoman government attempted to set up a shrine-complex and pilgrimage to rival and possibly even replace the hajj and the Holy Sanctuaries. At least, in a world where shrine construction could easily be construed as a cultural encounter, that is how contemporary Arab observers saw it.

Ibn Arabi, the thirteenth-century Andalusian-born Sufi theorist, was a figure who elicited mixed reactions from both scholars and lay people.<sup>51</sup> With his pantheistic theories of the unity of being (*wahdat al-wujūd*) he became regarded as either the greatest Sufi master or the master of the infidels.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps for this reason, his grave was largely unknown to the residents of the city, despite it being well known that he had died in the Damascene suburb of Ṣālīhiyya. Travelers seeking out his grave state that it was supposedly being used, purposefully, as a rubbish dump in the fourteenth century. In 1499, one apparently had to scale the wall of a bathhouse in order to access the neglected graveyard housing Ibn Arabi's unvisited tomb.<sup>53</sup> Other observers, such as Ibn Ṭūlūn, the future imam of the mosque built at Ibn Arabi's tomb, tell us that it was already the tomb of a certain Ibn al-Zakī. Change came with the Ottoman conquest of Damascus. Sultan Selim seems to have attributed his victory against the Mamluk troops to the omens and intercession of Ibn Arabi, who also had prophesized the rise of the Ottomans in a

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prophet who died in 854. Loiseau, following Benjamin Lellouch, claims that Ottoman soldiers desecrated the shrine of the Sayyida Nafisa upon conquering the city but there is no evidence of this. Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment to Ottoman Rule*, 163; Loiseau, "La Ville Démobilisée," 272; Yusuf Ragib, "Al-Sayyida Nafisa, Sa Légende, Son Culte et Son Cimetière (Suite et Fin)," *Studia Islamica*, no. 45 (January 1, 1977): 43.

<sup>51</sup> On his image in Arab and Ottoman lands see, Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition the Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999); Tim Winter, "Ibn Kemal (D. 940/1534) on Ibn 'Arabi's Hagiology," in *Sufism and Theology*, ed. Ayman Shihadeh (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 137–57.

<sup>52</sup> I borrow and adapt here Green's more fitting idiomatic translation of "*al-shaykh al-akbar*" and "*al-shaykh al-akfar*." Green, *Sufism*, 79.

<sup>53</sup> The traveler was Ali b. Maymun al-Fasi (d. 1511). 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, "The Hidden Secret Concerning the Shrine of Ibn 'Arabi: A Treatise by 'Abd Al-Ghanī an-Nābulusī," ed. P. B. Fenton, *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 22 (1997): 27–28.

pseudopigraphic work (*al-Shajara al-Nu‘māniyya*), and thus decided to build an imperial tomb at the site.

Sultan Selim devoted a great number of resources into the tomb of Ibn Arabi, but it did not win many accolades from the Damascenes.<sup>54</sup> Upon his victorious return from Cairo in 1517/923h, Selim set out immediately to build the tomb and ordered that the residences, bathhouses, and an already standing mosque be bought from their owners and quickly demolished. Within three months, a congregational mosque around the tomb of Ibn Arabi had been built. In Ibn Ṭūlūn’s narration of the events, though, a number of bad omens seems to have augured poorly for the project from the beginning, however efficiently its construction may have proceeded. On the day the Rumis bought the neighboring buildings, sudden rains caused severe flooding and mudslides, adding to the general chaos and disturbance (*tashwīsh*) that the Rumis had created. The next day, as they demolished the existing mosque,<sup>55</sup> a deep lake nearby overflowed and flooded the place again.<sup>56</sup> One week later, Ḥasan, the brother of the Sultan’s teacher, Ḥalīm Çelebi, died.<sup>57</sup> Two weeks afterwards, Ḥalīm Çelebi himself—the man who convinced the sultan to build the mosque and tomb in the first place—also passed away.<sup>58</sup> Both were buried at the foot of Ibn Arabi’s grave as the Rumis poured their energy into turning it into a holy site. Shortly thereafter they erected a dome, a traditional sign of sainthood, over the tomb

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<sup>54</sup> Most scholars, such as Josef Meri and Paul Fenton believe that the building of the tomb was greeted with general merriment, but the main source, Ibn Ṭūlūn, suggests against such a reading. Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria*, 171–73.

<sup>55</sup> The mosque had recently been renovated by Shihāb al-Dīn b. al-Sumaydī.

<sup>56</sup> Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ahmad al-Ṣāliḥī Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī Ḥawādith al-Zamān (Friendly Banter on the Events of the Times)* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1998), 370.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 371.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 373.

and dug more graves, but only under the cover of night, being “afraid of what the people might say and thinking that no one would find out about it.”<sup>59</sup> While the sultan scattered coins to celebrate the building’s progress and gifted a thousand dirhams for a poem praising Ibn Arabi, the people of Damascus complained of high prices due to the Rumis’ presence and the quartering of soldiers in their houses.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, an ominous sign of the Safavid threat appeared one day when a spy of “Ismail the Kharajite and Sufi,” chained to the belly of his steed was dragged into the city.<sup>61</sup> As the shrine neared completion, they installed pillars taken from a building that a former governor, Janbulāt, had built, unaware that these pillars had been originally spoliated from the tomb of the Garbageman King (*al-malik al-zabbāl*).<sup>62</sup>

Sultan Selim and the other Rumis officially unveiled the tomb of Ibn Arabi on the Day of Arafat (9 Dhu’l-Hijjah). The Day of Arafat is the central rite of the hajj, when the pilgrims stream onto the plain of Arafat and pray for the entire day; missing this rite invalidates a pilgrim’s hajj completely.<sup>63</sup> Ibn Ṭūlūn suggests that the Ottomans were attempting to replace the hajj with pilgrimage to the new tomb of Ibn Arabi, as they had canceled the northern pilgrimage caravan to the Ka’ba and refused to defend pilgrims against the marauding Bedouins.<sup>64</sup> Whatever significance or substitution the Rumis might have implied with their choice of day was lost, though, because the chief judge of the Rumis, Zeynelabidīn, was so religiously incompetent that

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 374.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 375 Kharajites are an early breakaway sect of Islam that believed that none of the caliphs (neither Ali or Mu’awiya) were true leaders of the Islamic community. They were known for declaring anyone who disagreed with them infidels and attacking them, but here the term is used as a generic insult against heretical Muslims.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Venetia Porter, ed., *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam* (London: The British Museum Press, 2012), 48–49.

<sup>64</sup> Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat al-Khillān (Friendly Banter)*, 372.

he could not correctly sight the crescent moon and announce the Day of Arafat, even with a cloudless sky.<sup>65</sup> In other words, he announced the holiday a day early. Regardless, 50,000 ‘Uthmāni coins were distributed to populace and chandeliers lit throughout the major sites of the city the night before. On the day of the event, 150 sheep and 20 camels were given out in the celebrations by the sultan. As he distributed the animals, it appeared for a moment that he had truly built the shrine of a saint. A miraculous pillar of holy light appeared on the eastern minaret of the mosque. “Some said it was an angel. Others said it was divine forces at the employ of the sovereign (*hadhā istikhdām ma‘ al-khunkār*). Word of it spread among the viziers, the pashas, and the men of state. Later it was written down that it was the smoke of one of the nearby bathhouses, which became mixed with some clouds, and when the sun hit it, they believed it to be holy light.”<sup>66</sup> Not only did the purported miracle fail to impress, but also very few of the sheep and none of the camels were sacrificed that day as residents decided to be thrifty due to the high prices brought on by the invasion.<sup>67</sup>

Ibn Ṭulūn experienced a small miracle himself the next day when he was appointed the prayer leader and preacher of the mosque at Ibn Arabi’s tomb. While he consoled himself with the thought that “God chooses what is best for us,” few of his friends came to visit him in his new quarters.<sup>68</sup> The (Arab) judge of the land refused to visit the tomb when he came to town, preferring the more traditional tombs at the Small Gate cemetery. All he was left with were the Rumis who had made it their custom to visit the tomb during their travels and vulgar commoners

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 376.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 376–77.

like Umar al-Iskāf who came with his friends to the tomb to pretend to be great Sufis by interpreting each other's premonitions (*khawātir*).<sup>69</sup>

Ibn Ṭūlūn's askance take on Ibn Arabi's tomb reveals the radical uncertainty that accompanied the religious agenda of the Ottomans and Rumis (the two were one and the same in his mind) immediately following the conquest. The tomb and the cult faced opposition among scholars in the capital too, though. Although Rumi scholars had a generally favorable opinion of Ibn Arabi, reverence for the saint was enforced among all the scholars in the imperial hierarchy. Authoritative legal opinions were issued by the chief jurist (*ṣeyhülislam*) Ebussuud and similar opinions regarding the tomb were approved by the former chief jurist Kemālpāşazāde (ar. Ibn Kemālpāşa) and posted on the walls of the tomb.<sup>70</sup> A most problematic episode occurred when chief jurist Çivīzāde (ar. Jawīzāda) (d. 1547), issued legal opinions critical of Ibn Arabi and the aforementioned shaykh, Ibrahim Gülşeni.<sup>71</sup> For this and other reasons, he was eventually dismissed from his position. The pressure was real enough, though, that the biographer of the aforementioned Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī felt it necessary to note that the scholar was awarded a top teaching position despite being critical toward Ibn Arabi.<sup>72</sup> In 1535, a scholar named Muḥammad al-Falūjī was sentenced to death by the judge of Aleppo for voicing a critique of Ibn Arabi.<sup>73</sup> Perhaps it is not so surprising then that criticizing Ibn Arabi became part of a set of critiques

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 389.

<sup>70</sup> Şükrü Özen, "Ottoman 'Ulama Debating Sufism: Settling the Conflict on the Ibn al-'Arabi's Legacy by Fatwas," in *El sufismo y las normas del Islam: trabajos del IV Congreso Internacional de Estudios Jurídicos Islámicos, Derecho y Sufismo, Murcia, 7-10 mayo 2003*, ed. Alfonso Carmona (Murcia: Editora Regional de Murcia, 2006), 309–41.

<sup>71</sup> Repp, *The Müfti of Istanbul*, 252.

<sup>72</sup> al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib al-Sā'ira*, 2:78.

<sup>73</sup> Eric Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie sous les derniers Mamelouks et les premiers Ottomans : orientations spirituelles et enjeux culturels* (Damas: Institut français d'études arabes de Damas, 1995), 134.



against the government (grouped alongside issues of land tenure, charitable endowments based on cash, and more). In time, certain Arab scholars became much more invested in Ibn Arabi and his theories for various intellectual and political reasons, but as we shall see below, this did not entail an acceptance of his tomb and shrine.<sup>74</sup>

What these two short examinations of the politics of sainthood following the Ottoman conquest reveal is that the imperial government was not terribly successful at transforming the inherited saintly landscape of the Arab provinces nor using saints to create a unifying religious framework throughout the empire. While it seems that there was a short-lived attempt to create a major cult around Ibn Arabi that might even have possibly rivalled the hajj, the Ottoman government ultimately eschewed experiments in connecting saintly and political power, unlike its neighbors in Iran and South Asia. When they did introduce saints, the reaction among the population was relatively lukewarm, and the tombs rarely had an appeal outside of the resident Rumi community. While holy men and Sufi orders spread throughout the Middle East from the fourteenth to early sixteenth centuries, especially from the Iranian world, it is unclear if they continued to function as a cohesive empire-wide network. Moreover, the government nipped in the bud the most successful ones, such as Ibrahim Gülşeni, before they could develop too powerful of a cult. In its place, the government developed a different religious architecture across the Arab provinces—the architecture of the hajj. The examples above, though, should remind us that it was not necessarily a forgone conclusion that the government invest both money and legitimacy into the hajj and the Two Sanctuaries.

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<sup>74</sup> see Khaled El-Rouayheb, “Opening the Gate of Verification: The Forgotten Arab-Islamic Florescence of the 17th Century,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38, no. 2 (2006): 263–81.

## An Ottoman Hajj: Investing in New Forms of Religious Mobility

Around the middle of November of the year 1621, the Cairene scholar, Mar'ī b. Yūsuf, wrote a short Arabic book, *The Necklace of Pure Gold: The Virtues of the House of Osman*, explaining why the Ottoman dynasty was superior to any other dynasty past or present. The timing of the book—only a few months before the controversial sultan, Osman II, would become the first Ottoman sovereign to be deposed and killed<sup>75</sup>—suggests that it was a failed attempt to rally support among his colleagues for the beleaguered sultan and dynasty. The book proved popular enough to set off a number of expansions and translations throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, known by their generic title of *The Virtues of the Rumis* or the *The Virtues of the House of Osman*.<sup>76</sup> The works had their share of Rumi readers too, which made them the site of an incipient public exchange about the nature of imperial rule and legitimacy in the Arab provinces. An admission of this audience peeks through when one author, Ahmad al-Ḥamawī, lightly jabs his Rumi readers, and their presumed difficulty with understanding the finer points of Arabic, in an overweening footnote. Explaining his use of the metaphor “bosoms of grace,” he warns his readers not to mistake the word and its plural: “teats (*akhlāf*) is the plural of teat (*khilf*), which the fairer sex possesses, or as you call them in Turkish, ‘boobies (*meme*).” Despite their linguistic differences, the two brothers had no need to fight over the teat of beneficence; the flow of money and resources unleashed by the dynasty’s investment in the hajj was enough to sate all stomachs.

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<sup>75</sup> Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), On this event see; Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire : Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>76</sup> Şifā'ī, for instance translates Mār'ī b. Yūsuf's book into Turkish and significantly expands it, to support the newly established government of Ahmed III following the 1703 Revolution. After this translation, the genre seems to largely exist in Turkish for a Rumi audience. Şifā'ī Şa'bān b. Ahmed, *Ḳalā'idü'l- 'Ikyān fī Fezā'il Āl 'Osmān*, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, MS 3404 and Österreichische Bibliothek, MS HO 27.

Mar'ī b. Yūsuf portrays the Ottoman dynasty as paragons of both religious and martial virtue, a surprising view compared to the tepid image of the Rumis that the Ottoman troops and governors encountered a century beforehand. Whereas they had been routinely portrayed as religiously inept brutes, they were now keen defenders of Islam. Partially, this was a response to the challenges of integrating Arab scholars into the imperial power structure; Rumi imperial scholars had consolidated their credentials and image in the face of a more educated Arab scholarly class.<sup>77</sup> Besides their startling military success, Mar'ī b. Yūsuf mentions the loyalty of the dynasty's troops (only a few months before they were to depose the sultan), and the fact that they were descended from a line of kings from Balkh, or, perhaps, Medina.<sup>78</sup>

Mar'ī b. Yūsuf focused most intently on the massive investment in the people and religious sites of the hajj. The sanctuaries of Mecca and Medina, as well, as those of Jerusalem and Hebron, became the object of attention for the imperial government starting in the mid-sixteenth century. He noted how they spent hundreds of thousands of dinars on the poor of the Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem and Hebron, so much so that the poor were never needy. This was in addition to the significant payments to ensure the security of the caravan.<sup>79</sup> The claim was by no means an exaggeration; the record books from the seventeenth century demonstrate that the gifts and payments became increasingly large and elaborate.<sup>80</sup> These imperial donations were supplemented by payments from the various foundations that came from both villages and

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<sup>77</sup> See again, Pfeifer, "To Gather Together"; Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law*.

<sup>78</sup> Moreover, the dynasty is applauded for applying the shari'a assiduously, even to members of the dynasty itself and for keeping up their moral behavior even in the privacy of their house, e.g. avoiding wine, tobacco, and wanton lust. Mar'ī b. Yūsuf b. Abi Bakr al-Maqdisī al-Ḥanbalī al-Karmī, *Qalā'id al-'Iqyān fī Faḍā'il Āl 'Uthmān (The Necklace of Pure Gold: Virtues of the House of Osman)*, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, MS 609, f. 4a, 37a-39a

<sup>79</sup> *Qalā'id al-'Iqyān*, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, MS 609, f. 45a

<sup>80</sup> Munir Atalar, *Osmanlı Devletinde Surre-i Hümayun ve Surre Alayları* (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1991). These notebooks can easily be found in the Başbakanlık Arşivi.

provinces around the empire and from the imperial family itself.<sup>81</sup> The government also rebuilt the walls around Medina and Jerusalem, renewed much of the area around the Ka'ba, built madrasas and mosques, and covered all the monuments in gold, silver, and brocade.<sup>82</sup>

These renovations and donations to the shrine were part of a larger imperial hajj infrastructure project that started in the mid-sixteenth century. This began with the large hajj complex built in Damascus by Imperial Chief Architect Sinān that included two mosques, a hostel, and a madrasa.<sup>83</sup> It was followed by a complex of forts to secure the Syrian route from Bedouin raids, along with water reservoirs and other major facilities (see fig. 1).<sup>84</sup> Although the Syrian route had been used during the Mamluk period, it contained no forts or formal infrastructure to provide services to pilgrims, other than the few existing towns.<sup>85</sup> One should not take this infrastructure for granted. The threat of Bedouin attack was so immense that it became impossible to travel without both armed escorts and forts. Similarly, a system of payments to the Bedouin tribes was established to limit attacks on the hajj caravans.<sup>86</sup> The system functioned quite well at keeping the hajj caravans safe; Mar'ī b. Yūsuf proudly mentions how one of the

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<sup>81</sup> Mustafa Güler, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Haremeyn vakıfları, XVI.-XVII. yüzyıllar* (İstanbul: TATAV, 2002); Miriam Hoexter, *Endowments, Rulers, and Community: Waqf Al-Ḥaramayn in Ottoman Algiers* (Leiden: Brill, 1998). For some random examples see Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi d.7386, d. 1144.

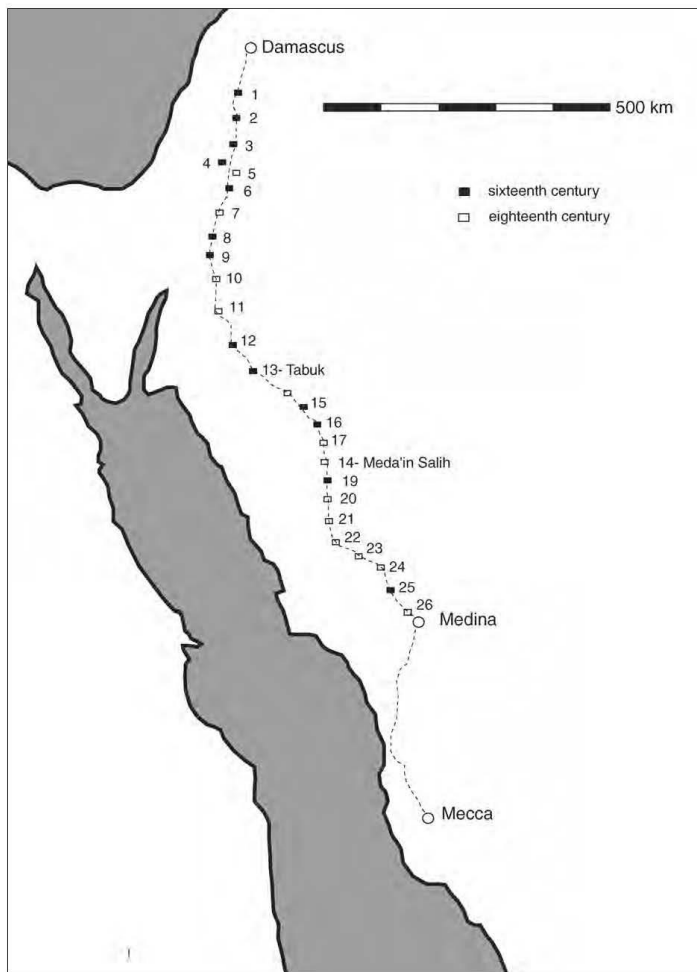
<sup>82</sup> *Qalā'id al-'Iqyān*, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, MS 609, ff. 39a-45a

<sup>83</sup> Andrew Petersen, *The Medieval and Ottoman Hajj Route in Jordan: An Archaeological and Historical Study* (Oxford: Oxbow Books ; Council for British Research in the Levant, 2012), 27; Kafesçioğlu, “In the Image of Rum.”

<sup>84</sup> Petersen, *The Medieval and Ottoman Hajj Route*.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>86</sup> Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus, 1708-1758*, 167–78; Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans*, 54–73.



Map 5. Map of Hajj route showing locations of forts in the 18th century. 1) Muzayrib, 2) Mafraq, 3) Zerka (Qasr Shebib), 4) Zizia (Birkat Zizia), 5) Balqa (Dab'a), 6) Qatrania, 7) Hasa, 8) 'Unaiza, 9) Ma'an, 10) Fasu'a ('Aqaba al-Hijaziyya), 11) Mudawwana, 12) Dhat al-Hajj, 13) Tabuk, 14) al-Qalandariyya, 15) 'Ukhaydir, 16) Qal'at al-Mu'azzam, 17) Dar al-Hamra, 18) Mada'in Salih, 19) al-'Ula, 20) Bir al-Channam, 21) Zummurud, 22) Sawrah (Bir Jedid, Valide Kuyusu), 23) Hadiyya/Antar, 24) Nahlatayn (Fahletein, Istabel Antar, Shaywa), 25) Wadi al-Qura (Biar Naszeif), 26) Hafira.

Figure 1: Map showing hajj forts and facilities built on the Syrian route from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. From Petersen, *The Medieval and Ottoman Hajj Route in Jordan*, 23

virtues of the Ottoman dynasty was their success at pacifying the Bedouin.<sup>87</sup> The system began to falter, though, in 1757 when a spectacularly gruesome attack resulted in the loss of the entire caravan and the death of over 20,000 pilgrims.<sup>88</sup> As they developed the Syrian hajj route, the government stopped providing support to hajj land routes other than those from Damascus and Cairo. For instance, the route from Iraq

maintained and actually closed to prevent Safavid Shi'i pilgrims

from arriving (Shi'i pilgrims had to come through Anatolia before joining the caravan in

Damascus).<sup>89</sup> The end result was that Damascus became the major hub of pilgrimage as around

<sup>87</sup> *Qalā'id al-'Iqyān*, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, MS 609, ff. 21ab

<sup>88</sup> While the formal explanation for this attack is a breakdown in the system of payments, Petersen notes that environmental changes drove new tribes to migrate to the area at the same time as handheld guns that could be fired from horses were developed, allowing the Bedouins to become increasingly dangerous by the mid-eighteenth century. Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus, 1708-1758*; Petersen, *The Medieval and Ottoman Hajj Route*, 27.

<sup>89</sup> In response, the Safavid government developed new shrines on their own territory. Petersen, *The Medieval and Ottoman Hajj Route*, 19; Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of*

60,000 pilgrims, most of them Rumis, (compared to 10,000-15,000 total South Asian pilgrims<sup>90</sup>) streamed into the city every year and stayed there for months as preparations were made.<sup>91</sup>

The heavy investment in the physical infrastructure of the hajj did not go unnoticed by the pilgrims and travelers themselves as it transformed the nature of the journey itself. Deserts are oceans of a certain sort and while not traversed by the steamers of industrial modernity, they required a massive infrastructure to ensure the safe and quick passage of the tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of pilgrims, whether on saddles, in litters, or, overwhelmingly, on foot. When Ẹayt al-Dāvudī, one of the official time-keepers of the hajj, sat down in 1573-4 (981h) to write a Turkish handbook for pilgrims (especially for servants and those others walking on foot) it had been forty years since the previous handbook had been written detailing the Mamluk infrastructure. After undertaking the hajj twenty-two times along the Cairo-Hijaz route, he found the landscape fully transformed. So many “mountains had been parted, water reservoirs (*kuyūlar*) excavated, fortresses built,” that previous descriptions of the route had become irrelevant.<sup>92</sup> The caravan was now also precisely timed, each minute of rest and travel planned and measured. Forty minutes (*derece*) were given for a rest stop at the newly built *Gāh* water reservoir followed by a hundred minutes of travel and ten minutes for the evening prayer.<sup>93</sup> The hajj was one of the

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*Discoveries, 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 32–44; Kishwar Rizvi, “Sites of Pilgrimage and the Objects of Devotion,” in *Shah Abbas: The Remaking of Iran*, ed. Sheila R. Canby (London: The British Museum Press, 2009), 98–115.

<sup>90</sup> Pearson, *Pious Passengers*, 58.

<sup>91</sup> It is difficult to estimate the number of pilgrims on the route. These numbers are taken from Petersen but see Faroqi for other numbers regarding animals. Faroqi, *Pilgrims and Sultans*, 46; Petersen, *The Medieval and Ottoman Hajj Route*, 34; Pearson, *Pious Passengers*, 51–58.

<sup>92</sup> Ẹayt al-Dāvudī, *Untitled*, Maktabat Jāmi‘a al-Malak al-Sa‘ūd, MS 6783, ff. 2b-3a. He explains on ff. 8b-9a that a *kuyū* is not just a well, as in modern Turkish, but the name the Rumis give to a much larger water reservoir structure. Other copies may be found in Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 1827, ff. 41-59 and MS Darülmünevi 133, ff. 44-63

<sup>93</sup> Ẹayt al-Dāvudī, *Untitled*, Maktabat Jāmi‘a al-Malak al-Sa‘ūd, MS 6783, ff. 8b-9a

first places Muslim hailing from all corners had to submit to the same unified time regime, which became increasingly strict as they approached Mecca.<sup>94</sup> It is not surprising, then, that of all travelers only hajj pilgrims partitioned and recorded their travelogues in the time-distance unit of hours (*sa‘āt*). The discipline of timing had a purposefully martial parallel; when the roads were not full of pilgrims they were utilized by the armies. It is no coincidence that following his detailed account of the road between Cairo and Mecca, al-Dāvudī then describes the trails he encountered while on campaign with Sinān Paşa to disband a rebellion in the highlands of Yemen.<sup>95</sup>

As the physical infrastructure of the hajj was further developed by the Ottoman dynasty, there was a concomitant investment in books explaining the hajj and translating it into high Ottoman idiom. Texts were collected and bought, at first, from the Arab provinces. Upon conquering Aleppo, the Ottoman troops inventoried the citadel’s library and sent onward to the palace library in Istanbul those books they deemed worthy of keeping while auctioning off the rest.<sup>96</sup> Among the volumes of Turkish and Persian poetry sent back was a small tome on the practicalities of managing the hajj caravans and office of the *amīr al-hajj*.<sup>97</sup> More common were the numerous illustrated copies of the Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Lārī’s Persian ode to the holy places and explanation of the rites of the hajj. Titled *Futuḥ al-Ḥaramayn*, it was originally dedicated to the

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<sup>94</sup> On the introduction of modern time regimes in the Middle East, see Green, “Spacetime”; On Barak, *On Time: Technology and Temporality in Modern Egypt* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013); Avner Wishnitzer, *Reading Clocks, Alla Turca* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 2015); Vanessa Ogle, *The Global Transformation of Time, 1870-1950* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015).

<sup>95</sup> Kayt al-Dāvudī, *Untitled*, Maktabat Jāmi‘a al-Malak al-Sa‘ūd, MS 6783, ff.62-68.

<sup>96</sup> Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi, Defter 9101

<sup>97</sup> Ibn Aja, Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Qunawī al-Ḥalabī, *Umdat al-Nāsik fi’l-Manāsik*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya 1333. The book was distributed to one of the major public libraries of Istanbul in the eighteenth century movement to seed public libraries by the palace.

Gujarati ruler who attempted to ward off Portuguese threats to Mecca and Medina in the early sixteenth century. Produced in large numbers in Mecca and almost always accompanied by numerous schematic illustrations of the holy places of Mecca and Medina, they were bought by (presumably) rich pilgrims who brought many of them back to Istanbul in the late sixteenth century.<sup>98</sup> This text was then often the basis for late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century Ottoman verse pilgrimage guides (*manāsik al-hajj*), such as those of Ġubārī and Baḥtī, the original Persian transformed into eloquent Turkish and its illustrations redrawn into the Ottoman visual idiom.<sup>99</sup>

More important than the illustrated manuscripts or eloquent verses were the numerous and extremely popular pilgrimage guides written in a more colloquial Turkish. Taken as a whole, these pilgrimage guides went beyond a simple description of the core rites of the hajj found in the earlier Arabic works and introduced the readers to the hajj and the practicalities of completing it. Sināneddīn Efendi, a Ḥalvetī shaykh and close confidant of the imperial palace who was appointed to the position of the shaykh of the sanctuary of Mecca, wrote in the 1570s by far the most popular one, so popular that it was copied en masse until the early nineteenth century.<sup>100</sup> The book is a rather conversational rendition into Turkish of two Arabic books that

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<sup>98</sup> Rachel Milstein, “Futuh-i Haramayn: Sixteenth-Century Illustrations of the Hajj Route,” in *Mamluks and Ottomans: Studies in Honour of Michael Winter*, ed. David J. Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon (London: Routledge, 2006), 166–94. Milstein does not examine the collections in Istanbul in her study, but the pattern bears true for those documents as well. Nearly all the twenty copies or so of Futuh-i Haramayn in Istanbul were made and illustrated between 970h and 1000h in Mecca. One was apparently even copied inside or at the Ka’ba itself (Reşid Efendi 1176). See for example Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 3323, 3324; Reşid Efendi 1176; MS Lala Ismail 102; Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, MS 1869, MS 1870, MS 4129.

<sup>99</sup> See for example the beautifully illustrated version of Baḥtī, *Untitled*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Aşir Efendi 123, which seems to be primarily a translation of Muhyi’s text. For an illustrated Futuh al-Ḥaramayn in an Ottoman “style” see, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, MS 1870, though this one might have been produced for an Ottoman audience by a local artisan. For the text of the Ġubārī, see Amine Gül, “Abdurrahman Gubārī’nin Hayatı Eserleri ve Menāsik-i Hac Adlı Eseri (Edisyon Kritik)” (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi, 2006).

<sup>100</sup> Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought in the Ottoman Empire*, 77; John J. Curry, “The Meeting of the Two Sultans: Three Sufi Mystics Negotiate with the Court of Murad III,” in *Sufism and Society*:



the palace had collected, suggesting at least some imperial encouragement in its publication and spread.<sup>101</sup> It was meant to be accessible both in language and price. The author exhorts his readers to spare the five to ten akçe—equivalent to half or whole day’s pay by an unskilled laborer in the 1580s<sup>102</sup>—to have the book copied, lest they waste the hundreds of silver and gold pieces spent on undertaking the hajj by failing to complete the proper rituals. Portable knowledge of these canonical rituals was the main attraction of the books. After all, as the author of another late sixteenth-century pilgrimage guide, who was a resident of a major dervish lodge in Pécs (in modern-day Hungary) reminded his Rumi readers that one cannot simply assume that the locals of Mecca and Medina knew what the proper Islamic rituals were for the hajj. A book was simply more reliable and his was “heavy in wisdom, light in volume.”<sup>103</sup> The direct likeness the author drew between pilgrimage manuals and catechistic texts (*‘ilm-i hāls*) is worth emphasizing. Both were short, cheap texts aimed at a lay audience; both attempted to teach Muslims the most legally correct set of actions and beliefs and both saw true authority as emerging from books

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*Arrangements of the Mystical in the Muslim World, 1200-1800*, ed. John J. Curry and Erik S. Ohlander (London: Routledge, 2012), 235–37.

<sup>101</sup> The two books, *Ihyā’ al-Hajj* and *Qurrat al-‘Ayn* are listed in as still existing in Topkapı Palace’s library (Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, Ahmed III 3547) but this is a cataloging error. The text is just Sināneddīn’s *Menāsikü’l-Hacc*.

<sup>102</sup> Süleyman Özmucur and Şevket Pamuk, “Real Wages and Standards of Living in the Ottoman Empire, 1489-1914,” *Journal of Economic History* 62 (2002): 301.

<sup>103</sup> ‘Abdulkarīm, *Menāsik-i Hacc*, Bosnjack Institut, MS 316, ff. 2b-3a (non-foliated)

rather than people themselves.<sup>104</sup> The pilgrimage guides, like other cheap, pietistic books, were a means to invert the traditional relationship of pious Arab and impious Rumi.

The mass audience that these simple pilgrimage manuals drew in reflected the increasing emphasis for all members of the population to undertake the hajj. Women were expected participants, albeit in the company of a male guardian.<sup>105</sup> The legal technicalities of circumambulating while menstruating occupied a significant number of the legal opinions of chief jurist Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi on the hajj.<sup>106</sup> Slaves and minors accompanying their masters and parents, respectively were not deemed to have satisfied the requirement of completing the hajj from a legal standpoint, but this did not end the frequent questions to jurists about the possibility. The aforementioned Kayt al-Dāvudī specifically tailored his guide to the infrastructure of the hajj for those many poor souls who had no means of transportation other than their own feet.<sup>107</sup> Those too poor to undertake the hajj were exempt from the religious duty, as chief jurists and others frequently admonished, but the allure of the hajj was so great that numerous people deputized others to go on their behalf with whatever savings they managed to gather before their death or some serious illness. This spawned a voluminous legal literature on the act of undertaking the hajj in another's stead in the early modern period. The practice not only allowed those physically unable to perform the hajj to reap its spiritual rewards, but also, in a sense, sponsored the hajj of poorer Muslims, who following their proxy pilgrimage would

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<sup>104</sup> The same emphasis on reading as the main method of learning about the hajj is found in later works aimed at “lazy” readers. See Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abdullah es-Sākizī, *Menāzilü'l-Hacc*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yahya Tevfik 145, ff. 14-71

<sup>105</sup> Sināneddin Yūsuf Efendi, *Menāsik-i Hacc*, Atatürk Kitaplığı, MS Belediye Yazmaları K0986, f. 10a

<sup>106</sup> Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi, *Behcetü'l-Fetâvâ*, ed. Süleyman Kaya et al. (Istanbul: Klasik, 2011), 62.

<sup>107</sup> Kayt al-Dāvudī, *Untitled*, King Saud University Library, MS 6783, f. 3a

reside in Mecca for a year to undertake their own pilgrimage for themselves in the following year.<sup>108</sup>

The combined effect of this material and textual infrastructure for the hajj was that it turned the pilgrimage into an embodied, physical reality. The observation might strike one as self-evident, but it is belied by the often virtual or magical forms of pilgrimage that were commonly retold in the hagiographies of saints. Take the example of Şeyh Üftâde, who routinely transported himself and his followers to Mecca from Bursa in the blink of an eye in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>109</sup> Or the *majdhûb* that ‘Abd al-Ghanî al-Nābulusî encountered on the road in rural Lebanon, his ancestors famous for magically flying to Mecca.<sup>110</sup> Infrastructure allowed anyone to concoct their own miracles.

These investments in the infrastructure of the hajj were also viewed through the lens of inter-imperial competition. The Ottoman dynasty, instead of casting themselves as servants to the shrines of their ancestors or other saints—became servants to the sanctuaries of Mecca and Medina. The same grandiose gifts of gold and brocade the Safavids and Mughals lavished on their shrines were instead placed upon the Ka’ba and the Prophet’s mosque and other locations. Moreover, they kept other Muslim dynasties from patronizing these shrines, expelling Mughal noble ladies from Mecca and blocking Akbar’s gifts.<sup>111</sup> Among their supporters, the tactic seems to have won them accolades. Mar‘î b. Yūsuf notes that the highest honor the Ottomans possessed was their servitude to the Two Sanctuaries (*Haremeyn*). In his update to the text from 1671,

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<sup>108</sup> Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi, *Behcetü'l-Fetâvâ*, 66.

<sup>109</sup> Abdurrahman Yüenal and Muhammed Safî, eds., *Menâkıb-ı Hazret-i Üftâde* (Bursa: Celvet Yayınları, 1996), 122.

<sup>110</sup> al-Nābulusî, *al-Haqîqa wa'l-Majāz*, 202.

<sup>111</sup> Pearson, *Pious Passengers*, 124–25; Porter, *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam*, 171–72.

Aḥmad al-Ḥamawī compares the Ottomans' righteous belief to the Mughals and Safavids' impiety prior to addressing the topic of the hajj. He declares that the Mughal emperor Akbar refused to profess a religion and instead toyed with his own heretical Sufi order (this might be a reference to the aforementioned *dīn-i ilāhi* of Akbar) while the Safavids purposefully disinterred and burned the bones of scholars and righteous men.<sup>112</sup> Significantly, neither Mar'ī b. Yūsuf nor Aḥmad al-Ḥamawī mentions any Ottoman commitment to a saint, only their commitment to the hajj and the Haremeyn. The dynasty itself ordered the shaykh of the tomb of Sultan Süleyman in Hungary to move to Mecca and focus his spiritual and authorial energies on the grave of the prophet Abraham, situated right next to the Ka'ba.<sup>113</sup>

Over the course of the seventeenth century, both the government and the populace became more and more invested in the hajj. As military success abroad became rarer, the dynasty placed more importance and money on the "internal campaign" of the hajj, which often exceeded the amount spent on wars in Europe.<sup>114</sup> Along with military and financial investment, the imperial government pushed to make the hajj route morally pure as evinced by the order in 1648, shortly after the coronation of Mehmed IV, to continue the imperial policy of the previous two sultans in closing down the coffeehouses in Damascus, despite the fact that local governors and officials had allowed their operation in exchange for an 18,000-guruş yearly payment (*muḳāṭi'a*). The justification for this was that the city was the gateway to Mecca and Medina, frequented by

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<sup>112</sup> *al-Durr al-Manzūm fi Faḍl al-Rūm* (*Strung Pearls: On the Virtue of the Rumis*), Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Pertev Paşa 624, f. 219b

<sup>113</sup> See Ali Dede Bosnevi or Alaüddin Ali Dede b. Mustafa el-Mostarī el-Bosnevī el-Zigetvarī, Türbe Şeyhi el-Ḥalvetī, *Temkīnū'l-Maḳām fi'l-Mescidi'l-Ḥaram*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 3814, ff. 4-32

<sup>114</sup> Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus, 1708-1758*.

travelers, nomads, and pilgrims.<sup>115</sup> The investment must have left an impact of sorts as an intriguing late eighteenth-century collection of tales and stories that pilgrims told each other on the Syrian road often centered on the holy deeds and adventures of both the saints and the sultans of the seventeenth century.<sup>116</sup> The sultans had inscribed themselves on the landscape of the hajj route, despite the fact that no reigning sultan ever undertook the hajj until the twentieth century.

Popular actions in turn reinscribed the sanctity of the hajj at the center of religious life, both with and without the insistence of the imperial dynasty. One of the clearest examples of this was the increasingly prominent and popular images of the Ka'ba. Schematic images of the Ka'ba and its sanctuary, once confined to relatively elaborate manuscripts became produced in large numbers both by scribes and artists depicting the holy places in popular prayer books such as *Dalā'il al-Hayrāt* and by the ceramicists in the kilns of Iznik, Kütahya, Alexandria, and Damascus. The lack of massive imperial building projects in the seventeenth century, alongside the new potential customers and patrons from across the provinces, pushed the kilns to aim their production toward the popular market.<sup>117</sup> One of the most commonly commissioned objects was the large multi-piece tile murals of the Ka'ba that began to be produced in the mid-seventeenth century. Installed in mosques, private houses, libraries, and other public locations (see fig. 2), their adoption coincided with an imperial ban on depictions of the Ka'ba on prayer carpets

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<sup>115</sup> Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi, Evrak 11575/5

<sup>116</sup> İbrāhīm Hanīf, *Untitled*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Supplement Turc 1296.

<sup>117</sup> Nurhan Atasoy and Julian Raby, *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2008), 273–85.

(stepping on it was considered disrespectful).<sup>118</sup> Placed together, the pilgrimage guides, the infrastructure and the images of the hajj provided a material and textual vocabulary that was deployed and developed by Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

### The Christians' Hajj – The Hajj as a Trans-Confessional Phenomenon

The increasing sacralization of the hajj is written as an internal Muslim story by both contemporary

Muslim authors and modern scholars. Rarely, if ever, does a Christian or Jew appear in the textual representations that pilgrims and scholars produced. Yet, by the late seventeenth century, the hajj had become a central model of religious mobility for many of the inhabitants of the empire regardless of their religion. This section briefly touches upon how the new sanctity of the

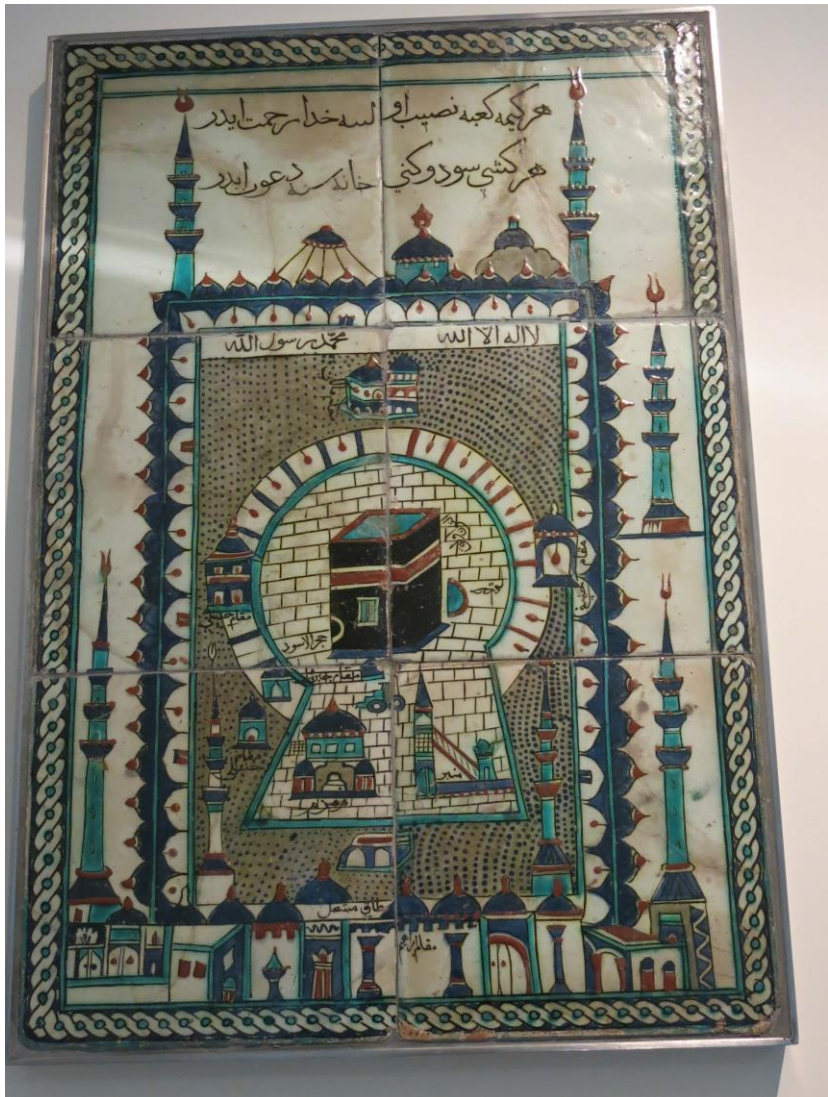


Figure 2: Multi-piece Ka'ba tile, most likely produced in Iznik in the mid seventeenth century. Benaki Museum, Athens. (photograph of the author).

<sup>118</sup> Sabih Erken, "Türk Çinçiliğinde Kabe Tasvirleri," *Vakıflar Dergisi* 9 (1971): 297; Kurt Erdmann, "Ka'bah-Fliesen," *Ars Orientalis* 3 (1959): 192–97.

Muslim hajj, a particular form of religious circulation that began to incorporate and transform Christian pilgrimage practices. These narratives have largely been written as independent phenomena, but textual and, especially, material evidence allows us to weave these threads together to gain a picture of the larger religious fabric of the period. The aim of these Christian pilgrims was Jerusalem, not Mecca, and their numbers were in the thousands, not tens or hundreds of thousands, but a reciprocal relationship developed nonetheless.

In the first quarter of the seventeenth century, Jerusalem's Armenian Patriarch, Grigor Paronter, turned the Jerusalem pilgrimage into an officially organized excursion. He established waystations along the main pilgrimage routes in the empire (and from Safavid Iran). Specially appointed "summoners" would be dispersed to Armenian communities throughout the empire to arrange mass caravans to Jerusalem for an Easter-time pilgrimage.<sup>119</sup> The famous mid-seventeenth century Armenian intellectual, Eremia Çelebi, was one of the first to record, privately, in his diary, his experience on part of this newly renovated pilgrim trail, though he, exceptionally, broke from the traditional, and much safer, overland route with the Muslim pilgrimage caravans (*sürre*) and hired a ship to take him and ninety other pilgrims from Istanbul to Jaffa in 1649 despite the dangers posed by the Franks (due to the Cretan wars).<sup>120</sup> Another patriarch, Martiros Lremic'i, had built in 1681 in Üsküdar (the city across the Bosphorus from Istanbul proper where the hajj pilgrims gathered every year) a "Jerusalem House" to aid

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<sup>119</sup> Roberta R. Ervine, "Changes in Armenian Pilgrim Attitudes between 1600 and 1857: The Witness of Three Documents," in *The Armenians in Jerusalem and the Holy Land*, ed. Michael E. Stone, Roberta R. Ervine, and Nira Stone (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 82–83 I would like to thank Sergio de Porta for bringing Ervine's article to my attention. Simeon Dpir Lehats'i, *The travel accounts of Simëon of Poland*, trans. George A Bournoutian (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 2007).

<sup>120</sup> Many thanks to Polina Ivanova for translating the relevant sections of Eremia K'eomiwrchean, *Oragrut' iwn Eremia Ch'elepi K'eomiwrcheani: Yaweluats; T'ught'er, Ugherdzner, Gandzer Ew Oghber*, ed. Mesrop Nshanean (Jerusalem: Tparan Srbots' Hakobeants', 1939), 7–8.

Armenian pilgrims, the premises of which were significantly expanded throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>121</sup> Once they reached Jerusalem, the pilgrims were generally taken under the wing of their respective church, but until that point different sects often shared travel facilities. The Coptic pilgrimage caravan, for instance, stopped at the Armenian monastery in Ramla that housed Armenian and Greek pilgrims coming from Jaffa.<sup>122</sup>

The Ottoman government involved itself in guaranteeing the safe passage of these pilgrims. Those traveling through Anatolia would most likely use some of the same routes, caravans, and khans that Muslim pilgrims used as they made their way to Damascus. The Coptic pilgrimage from Cairo to Jerusalem used the same set of intermediaries as the Muslim hajj administrators to pay off the Bedouin and contact local governors to ensure the safety of their pilgrims.<sup>123</sup> The land route, though, always seems to have been preferred, demanded even, as will be mentioned below. For those that did decide to approach from the sea, the Greek and Armenian communities had an agreement with the Ottoman government that any pilgrim who arrived at Jaffa by sea could receive a rental horse and military escort to Jerusalem in exchange for a seven-guruş tax, according to the Armenian patriarch who authored a pilgrimage guide for his flock.<sup>124</sup>

As the physical infrastructure of the Christian hajj between Jerusalem and the centers of the empire was strengthened, its textual foundations were similarly developed through pilgrimage guides. Bishop Hanna of Jerusalem wrote during the first quarter of the eighteenth

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<sup>121</sup> Irvine, "Changes in Armenian Pilgrim Attitudes," 83 Note 6.

<sup>122</sup> Armanios believes the monastery did not ordinarily host pilgrims, but it seems clear from Irvine's work that it did. Febe Armanios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 108.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 101–2.

<sup>124</sup> Irvine, "Changes in Armenian Pilgrim Attitudes," 85.



century a guide to convince and direct Anatolian Armenians on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.<sup>125</sup> Besides listing the holy places of Jerusalem, it provided the same type of instructions to pilgrims—to write a will, say goodbye to loved ones, make sure not fight with other pilgrims, etc.—found in Muslim guides.<sup>126</sup> The same type of literature that cataloged Jerusalem’s holy places and exhorted Christians to make pilgrimage was found rendered into comprehensible Arabic from ecclesiastical Greek, and similarly



Figure 3: Pilgrimage guide (proskynetarion) of Hajji Ioanni, 1693, Bodleian Library, MS cod. canon. gr. 127, fol. 32a. (photograph of the author)

recorded by Coptic Christians in Arabic in the seventeenth century.<sup>127</sup> In the eighteenth century,

<sup>125</sup> *Girk' patmue. Sby. ev metsi K'aghak'is Ay. Eēmis. ev sbts'. tnōrinknay tegheats' Tn. meroy Hi. K'i.* ([K. Polis]: [I Tparani Hōhannisi ew Pōghosi], 1782).

<sup>126</sup> Irvine, “Changes in Armenian Pilgrim Attitudes,” 84–85.

<sup>127</sup> Matar dates an Arabic treatise describing Jerusalem to the 1590s, but there does not seem to be any evidence for such an estimate. Given that the anonymous manuscript in question (Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arabe 312) is followed by a short verse encomium and travelogue to Moscow as well as a recollection of Sultan Ibrahim’s entrance to Aleppo in the 1640s, it would make sense to place it in the mid to late seventeenth century. Matar also casts the treatise as a defensive claim of Arabic Orthodox to Greek-speakers from Istanbul, but there is also no evidence for this in the treatise. Given the other treatises copied by the scribe, it is most likely a text to convince Christians from Aleppo to undertake pilgrimage to Aleppo and to seek new fortunes and patronage in Russia. Nabil I. Matar, “An Arabic Orthodox Account of the Holy Land, C. 1590s,” in *Through the Eyes of the Beholder: The*

Greek sources were compiled and translated into Church Slavonic, Bulgarian, and Serbian from Greek texts.<sup>128</sup> Simple Greek pilgrimage guides, illustrated by their scribes with schematic diagrams, began to be written and avidly copied in the second quarter of the seventeenth century (fig. 3).<sup>129</sup>

Visually, there was a shift from small private paintings of the sanctuaries of Palestine and Sinai to the painted tiles and icons dispersed to Christian communities around the empire and displayed publically. The parallel to the ceramic tile images of the Ka'ba that proliferated starting in the mid-seventeenth century suggests shared sites of production. Tiles depicting churches and holy sites were made in Kütahya and Iznik. In Kütahya, Armenian ceramicists in particular produced thousands of pictorial (and non-pictorial) tiles that went to decorate both imperial palaces in Istanbul, mosques, and churches.<sup>130</sup> Take for example, a tile made of the holy site of the Oak of Mambres (fig. 4), a site outside of Hebron where Abraham supposedly lived

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*Holy Land 1517-1713*, ed. Judy A. Hayden and Nabil I. Matar, trans. Mohammad Asfour (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 27–51; Armanios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt*, 99.

<sup>128</sup> Stefka Parveva, “Human Mobility and Transmission of Information in the Ottoman Empire from the Seventeenth to the Early Nineteenth Century,” in *The Influence of Human Mobility in Muslim Societies*, ed. Kuroki Hidemitsu (London: Kegan Paul, 2003), 109.

<sup>129</sup> Sotirios N. Kadas, *Hoi Hagioi Topoi: Eikonographemena Proskynetaria 17ou-18ou Ai* (Athens: Kapon, 1998).

<sup>130</sup> The most famous of these are the thousands of pictorial tiles depicting Biblical scenes that were commissioned for a total renovation of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, echoing the ceramic revetments that Süleyman had installed on the exterior of the Dome of the Rock. Due to sectarian differences, the tiles were never installed on the intended church and were instead placed in the Cathedral of St. James. John Carswell, *Kütahya Tiles and Pottery from the Armenian Cathedral of St. James, Jerusalem, Vol. 1: The Pictorial Tiles and Other Vessels* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); On the Ottoman renovation of the Dome of the Rock see Gülru Necipoğlu, “The Dome of the Rock as Palimpsest: ‘Abd Al-Malik’s Grand Narrative and Sultan Süleyman’s Glosses,” *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of The Islamic World* 25 (2008): 17–105.

and was ordered to sacrifice his son. The tile, most likely produced around the mid-seventeenth century in Iznik, points to a continued Ottoman Christian veneration of the site.<sup>131</sup> In spite of the fact that the few craftsmen who painted their names on the Ka'ba tiles only have Muslim names, it seems reasonable to assume that Greek, Armenian, and Muslim ceramicists, living and working next to each other in Iznik, would be familiar with one another's products.<sup>132</sup> The evidence is more than suggestive for Kütahya: the entire community of the city's ceramics artisans was Armenian which suggests that Ka'ba tiles produced there would have been made by



Figure 4: A tile most likely produced in Iznik in the mid-seventeenth century depicting the Oak of Mambres and the house of Abraham. The image is taken from illustrated Greek pilgrim guides according to accompanying tag. Today, the site is only regarded as a holy site for Russian Orthodox pilgrims. Benaki Museum, Athens (photograph of the author).

Armenians themselves.<sup>133</sup>

The emergence of Greek Orthodox icons of the city of Jerusalem provides an even clearer parallel to the Ka'ba tiles. The icons begin to appear in the early to mid-seventeenth century and initially depicted the city of Jerusalem and its Christian holy sites, also based on the images circulating in contemporary Greek pilgrimage guides.<sup>134</sup> By the

<sup>131</sup> The information regarding the tile is taken from the identification tag of the Benaki Museum.

<sup>132</sup> Erken, "Türk Çiniciliğinde Kabe Tasvirleri," 316.

<sup>133</sup> Dickran Kouymjian, "The Role of Armenian Potters of Kutahia in the Ottoman Ceramic Industry," in *Armenian Communities in Asia Minor*, ed. Richard Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2014), 114; Erken, "Türk Çiniciliğinde Kabe Tasvirleri," 319.

<sup>134</sup> Kadas, *Hoi Hagio Topoi*; Valentina Izmirliova, "The Title Hajji and the Ottoman Vocabulary of Pilgrimage," *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 28/29 (2013 2012): 141.

beginning of the eighteenth century, the icons had began to expand and include holy sites from the surrounding lands, reaching out to the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee and Gaza.<sup>135</sup> Similar icons and depictions followed for the monasteries of Mt. Sinai.<sup>136</sup> These map-icons might also have been produced for pilgrims to purchase under the orchestration of the Jerusalem patriarch and then gifted to churches across the empire.<sup>137</sup> Other times they were reproduced on the walls of major churches, as in the Văcărești Monastery, the largest church in the Southeastern Europe at the time of its construction by the first Phanariot ruler, and Ottoman vassal, of Wallachia, Nikolas Mavrokordatos, in 1716-22 (see fig. 5). The icons sacralized, literally, the lands between the Galilee and Mt. Sinai.

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<sup>135</sup> Rehav Rubin, "Greek-Orthodox Maps of Jerusalem from the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *E-Perimetron* 8, no. 3 (2013): 120–26.

<sup>136</sup> In the eighteenth century, printed maps of Mt. Athos were developed from these icon pictures.

<sup>137</sup> Rubin, "Greek-Orthodox Maps of Jerusalem," 124.



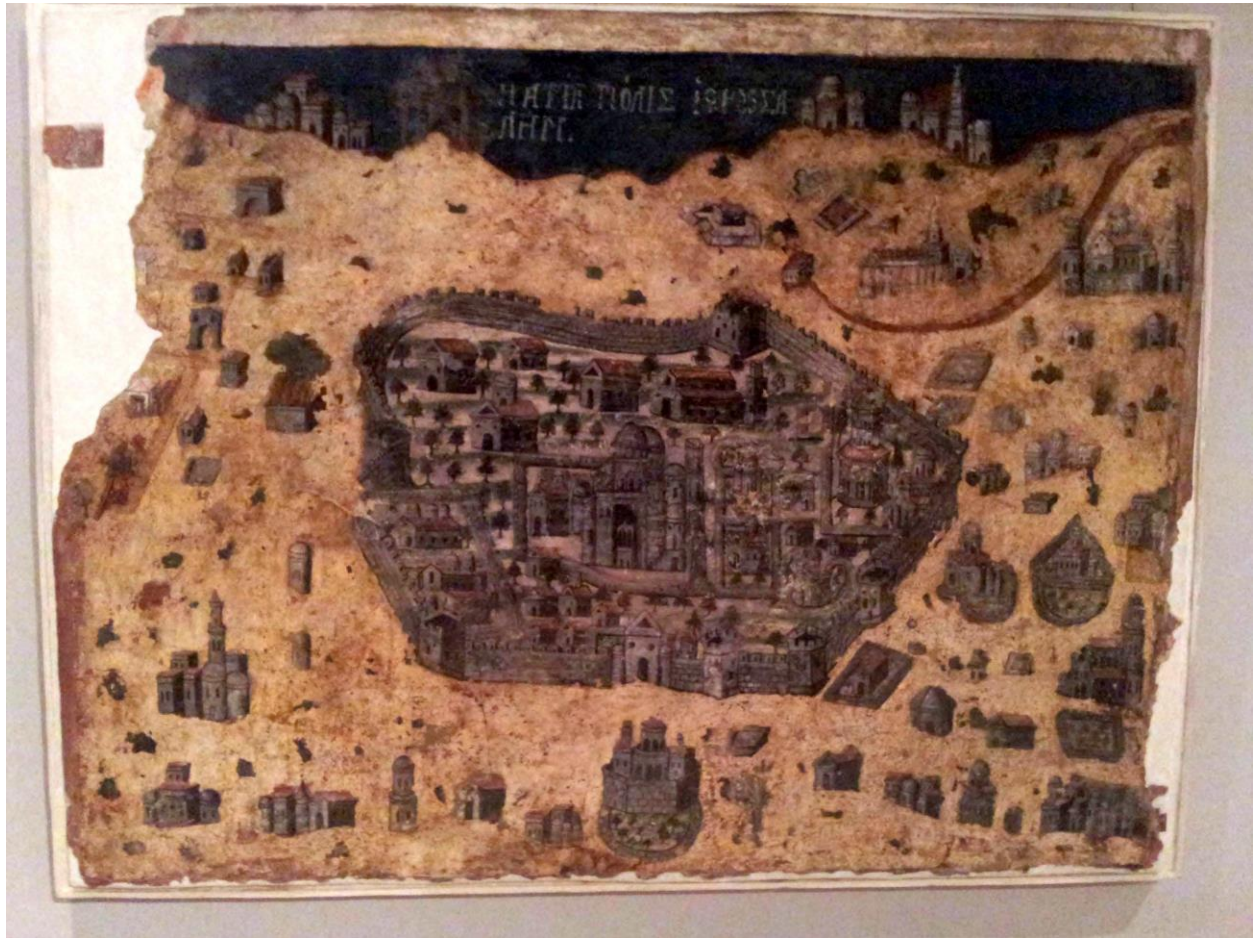


Figure 5: Remnant of fresco depicting Jerusalem from Văcărești Monastery, built outside of Bucharest in 1716-1722 by Nicolas Mavrocordatos. The Greek inscription simply states, “The Holy City of Jerusalem.” The image mirrors many of the icon depictions of the city of Jerusalem. The monastery was the largest in Southeastern Europe at the time of its construction but it was purposefully destroyed by Nicolas Ceausescu in 1985. Fragments of its formerly magnificent frescos are housed in National Museum of Art, Bucharest (photo taken by author)

As the icons suggest, the Christian holy land quickly expanded outside of the boundaries of the city of Jerusalem and into the countryside. One guide states, “The city is not the only place to be called holy, for the surrounding villages and nearby locations are also holy and are called in the Old Testament the Land of Prophecy.”<sup>138</sup> As with the Muslim pilgrimage, pilgrims taking the land route stopped in numerous spots in Syria and Palestine as they neared Jerusalem.<sup>139</sup> The

<sup>138</sup> Bibliotheque nationale de France, MS Arabe 312, ff. 1b-2a.

<sup>139</sup> Parveva, “Human Mobility.”

emphasis in both the Muslim and Christian holy lands was on (often overlapping) prophetic sites and formative figures or events in early Islamic or Christian history, rather than the pantheon of saints that had developed in the ensuing centuries. The sanctity of Jerusalem and its environs that these texts fashioned was not necessarily novel, but read together with Muslim and other Christian texts, it pointed to a larger consecration of the landscape between Damascus, Mecca, and Cairo. This was by no means a foregone conclusion. Christians, like Muslims, could avail themselves of other sacral landscapes. Take, for example, the numerous saint shrines around Egypt of the Copts, the monasteries of Mt. Athos, or the gigantic map of Armenian holy sites that Eremia Çelebi produced for the Habsburg ambassador, Luigi Marsigli, in 1691 that depicts through both text and pictures the numerous monasteries and sacred sites situated in Anatolia between the Safavid and Ottoman Empires.<sup>140</sup>

During the seventeenth century, the religious practice of all the Christians sects in the Ottoman Empire became increasingly centered on a hajj to a holy land that had been cultivated by both the Ottoman state and ordinary Muslims themselves. Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and its environs shifted from the supererogatory and uncommon action of individual Christians to a larger collective journey through a sacred landscape that was enjoined upon all of the faithful. As both Febe Armanios and Valentina Izmirlieva have noted, Christian pilgrimage practices were often directly modeled on those of the Muslims. From the pomp of the Coptic pilgrimage caravan setting out from the Cairo, to the establishment of numerous way stations from Istanbul for their Anatolian brethren, to the inscription of private images of sanctuaries on public tiles and

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<sup>140</sup> Armanios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt*, 65–90; Regarding the map, see Eremia Çelebi, *Untitled Map*, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, Rotulo 24. The map measures 1.5 m by 4 m or so. For an analysis of the map and detailed pictures, see Gabriella Uluhogian, *Un'antica mappa dell'Armenia: Monasteri e santuari dal I al XVII secolo* (Ravenna: Longo Angelo, 2000).

icons, Christians imitated, or, as in the case of the tiles, directly contributed, to this new Muslim religiosity. Ritually, materially, and textually, a Christian hajj was reproduced for the environs of Jerusalem. The most telling sign of this change was the widespread adaptation of the Muslim honorific for pilgrims, *hajji*, by Christians of all stripes in the seventeenth century for those who had completed the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.<sup>141</sup> The phenomenon actually mirrors a similar one for Muslims in Anatolia who may have restricted their application of the term *hajji* from all those who had undertaken a locally important saintly pilgrimage to only those who completed the hajj to Mecca and Medina.<sup>142</sup> In short, the hajj, having expanded to encompass much of the Levant, had become a central religious practice for all the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire. This history could be extended to Christians coming from outside of the empire, such as the state-sponsored pilgrims that Muscovy sent in the 1580s, fueling an obsession that led to the creation of the New Jerusalem outside of Moscow in the seventeenth century, or the increasing number of antiquarian accounts of the Biblical lands from Western travelers.<sup>143</sup> But this, for now, falls outside the scope of this study. The shared holy land led to many intersections between the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, and the next sections examine how this resulted in a variety of challenges and transformations of Muslim religiosity as well.

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<sup>141</sup> Interestingly, even Jews, or at least those in the Balkans, seem to have adopted this honorific upon completion of pilgrimage. Izmirlieva, “The Title Hajji and the Ottoman Vocabulary of Pilgrimage.”

<sup>142</sup> This is one of the suggestions of Suraiya Faroqhi to explain the decrease in the use of the honorific “hajji” in the tax registries, “Ottoman Documents concerning the Hajj during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *al-Hayah al-Ijtima’iyah fi’l-Wilayat al-‘Arabiyyah ithna’ al-‘Ahd al-‘Uthmani* 3 (1988): 160.

<sup>143</sup> See for example Galina I. Yermolenko, “Early Modern Russian Pilgrims in the Holy Land,” in *Through the Eyes of the Beholder: The Holy Land 1517-1713*, ed. Judy A. Hayden and Nabil I. Matar (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 53–74; Nabil I. Matar, “The Sufi and the Chaplain: ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi and Henry Maundrell,” in *Through the Eyes of the Beholder: The Holy Land 1517-1713*, ed. Judy A. Hayden and Nabil I. Matar (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 53–74, 165–84.

## Pilgrimages of the Hajj – The Hajj Incorporates Saintly Shrines

As the hajj expanded to include Christian pilgrimage practices it likewise began to incorporate an increasing variety of pilgrimages to the tombs of prophets in the seventeenth century. The pilgrimage guides from the late sixteenth and seventeenth century, whether in Arabic or Turkish, mostly explained the rites and rituals in Mecca to a newer audience. The works that started to appear in the mid-seventeenth century onwards focused on the journey itself, especially on the roads stemming from Damascus. The hajj increasingly become more than just a set of rites in Mecca and Medina, but a journey in a holy land between Damascus, Palestine, and Cairo.

To some degree, there already existed a preconception of this area as “*arḡ-ı muḡaddese*,” an expression that can be directly translated as the “sanctified” or “holy land.” Two early *fetvas* sent to the canonizing sixteenth-century chief jurist Ebussuud, and filed under the topic of “hajj,” queried as to the precise borders of the “holy land.” Did they differed from those of the Arab lands (*diyār-i ‘Arab*) in general, the petitioners wondered, and if it was so holy, should one permanently reside there to benefit from its sanctity? The somewhat haphazard response provided—“One can certainly say the lands of Syria are holy, Jerusalem, Aleppo, and the environs of Damascus are part of it. Some say Jericho as well and others just Damascus and Palestine,”—might not have been the decisive answer the petitioners sought, but it is interesting to note that “*arḡ-ı muḡaddese*” here did not include the sanctuaries of Mecca and Medina.<sup>144</sup> As Ebussuud elaborated, what distinguished this landscape from others was its prophetic heritage,

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<sup>144</sup> Ebussuud Efendi, *Fetāva*, British Library, MS Or. 7255, f. 19b. A slightly incorrect and rearranged transcription of some of these *fetvas* can be found in Mehmet Ertuḡrul Düzdaḡ, ed., *Şeyhülislām Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işıḡında 16. Asır Türk Hayatı* (Istanbul: Enderun Kitapevi, 1972), 171.



prayer performed there counted more, but he insisted that there was no need to physically live in it, one should always head home after visiting.<sup>145</sup> It was a space for travel, not residence.

This particular form of travel was specifically associated with an overland journey, rather than a sea journey, as revealed in the fears and anxieties of Muslim pilgrims. While potential capture by pirates must have certainly been a disincentive to boarding a boat from the lands of Rum and sailing to Cairo or Jaffa, the understanding of the hajj as a land-based trajectory was even stronger. Take the example of a Rumi who wrote to the Damascene scholar ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī in 1693 to ask whether it was acceptable to first perform the hajj as a proxy and then reside in Mecca until the following year to perform one’s own the hajj, given that he was too poor to afford the entire journey himself.<sup>146</sup> The question was a common one and repeated in *fetva* compilations of the chief jurists of the period.<sup>147</sup> While putatively about a pilgrim’s financial means, it also demonstrates how the hajj was believed to be as much the journey itself as the rites performed.<sup>148</sup> More telling is the insistence of Coptic Christians to perform their own hajj to Jerusalem by land, a goal that was at times difficult to accomplish as suggested by the fact that they celebrated the use of camels for the hajj instead of ships in 1709 after a twelve-year hiatus.<sup>149</sup> The significance of traveling by land was underscored in 1748 when a minor riot

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Daf‘ al-Ḍarūra ‘an Ḥajj al-Šarūra*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Çelebi Abdullah 385, ff. 188-89

<sup>147</sup> Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi, *Behcetü’l-Fetâvâ*, 66.

<sup>148</sup> Virtual pilgrims had to provide enough money to their proxy pilgrim to last for the entire duration of the journey, an expectation that also led pilgrims to question whether their hajj was valid if they were unable to pay for the entire passage from their homeland. Their anxieties reveals an interesting development as to how the practice of proxy pilgrimage transformed the hajj from an experience in Mecca itself to an entire journey. For more ruling regarding this particular issue, see Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi, *Fetâvâ-yı Feyziyye*, ed. Süleyman Kaya (Istanbul: Klasik, 2000), 21–22.

<sup>149</sup> Armanios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt*, 101.

erupted in Cairo as Muslims witnessed the festivities—complete with dancers and musicians like the Muslim hajj caravan—that accompanied the departure of the Coptic pilgrims.<sup>150</sup> They accused the Copts of attempting to emulate the Muslims and demanded that the soldiers put an end to their procession, ban them from traveling by land, and seize their possessions.<sup>151</sup> The Copts managed to save their possessions but the true punishment was being unable to complete their pilgrimage overland.

The attraction of the overland route was the possibility of visiting a variety of other tombs and shrines along the way and it was this landscape that ultimately came to be understood as an equally important to the hajj as visiting Mecca and Medina. The journey can be divided in two. First was the journey to the proscribed meeting places (*mīqāt*), which, as stated before, were, during the early modern period, in Damascus, Cairo, and Jeddah (for pilgrims coming from the south by boat). The second was the caravan journey to Mecca and Medina. Once it departed from Damascus or Cairo, the caravan route traversed empty desert dotted only with the continuously expanding forts and reservoirs. This meant that shrines and holy sites were primarily visited either while waiting in Damascus or Cairo or after the hajj itself, when there was the possibility of taking a different caravan back that would return to Cairo or wind its way through Gaza, Palestine and greater Syria. From Damascus, pilgrims could then take a return journey through Aleppo and visit even more tombs there.<sup>152</sup> Another option was to come to Damascus and then trek through Syria and Palestine to Egypt, where one could join the caravans

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<sup>150</sup> The scene is mentioned in *ibid.*, 3–4.

<sup>151</sup> Aḥmad al-Damurdāshī, *Al-Damurdashi's Chronicle of Egypt, 1688-1755: al-Durra Al-Muṣāna fī Akhbār al-Kināna*, trans. Daniel Crecelius and 'Abd al-Wahhab Bakr (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 368–69.

<sup>152</sup> Monjia al-Faz'i, "Darb al-hajj al-shāmī fī'l-qarnayn al-sabī' 'āshir w'al-thāmin 'ashir," *al-Majalla al-Tārīkhīya al-'Arabīya li'l-Dirāsāt al-'Uthmānīya* 35 (November 2007): 311–40.

departing from Cairo.<sup>153</sup> The culmination of these various shrine visitations was the *ziyāra* to the grave of the Prophet Muhammad and the circumambulation of the Ka‘ba.

The itineraries of these pilgrims are reflected in their notebooks and hajj guides. The pilgrimage guide works (*menāsik-i hacc*) written in Turkish from the seventeenth or eighteenth century, were often first-person travelogues that narrated the entire journey from Istanbul, paying special attention to the tombs of Damascus.<sup>154</sup> Mustakīmzāde, a major scholar who wrote the *The Pilgrims’ Gift* in 1717, detailed not only the water and rest-stop infrastructure of the hajj, for those pilgrims who had to worry about such minutiae, but also the tombs of major figures along the way.<sup>155</sup> His somewhat poetic description of Damascus introduced readers to the early Islamic history of its monuments and relics, pointing out the tombs of the prophets John, Khidr/Hızır (the green man, teacher of Moses and companion of Alexander), and Hūd and those of foundational Islamic figures like Bilal and Mu‘awiya. Mustakīmzāde’s description is to some degree a much simpler rendering of the high poetic language found in Nābī’s late seventeenth-century masterpiece, the wildly popular travelogue, *The Sanctuaries’ Gift*, which was copied for nearly every Turkish-speaking scribe, high official, and litterateur of the eighteenth century.<sup>156</sup> From the

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<sup>153</sup> This was the itinerary of many intellectual travelogue writers like Nābī and ‘Abd al-Ghanī Nābulusī in the late seventeenth century.

<sup>154</sup> Some examples include Abdurrahman Hibri, “Menāsik-i Mesâlik (pt. 1),” ed. Sevim Ilgürel, *Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 6 (Ekim 1975): 111–28; Abdurrahman Hibri, “Menāsik-i Mesâlik (pt. 2),” ed. Sevim Ilgürel, *Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi* 30 (March 1976): 55–72; Abdurrahman Hibri, “Menāsik-i Mesâlik (pt. 3),” ed. Sevim Ilgürel, *Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi* 31 (March 1977): 147–65. Anonymous, *Menāsiku’l-Hacc*, John Rylands Library, MS Turkish 88; el-Hacc “Abdullah b. Şālih b. Ismā‘il el-Eyübī, *Hediyetu’l-Huccāc*, Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, MS Or. 12380; Untitled, Gazi Husrev-begova Biblioteka, MS 1541; Mehmed Edib, *Behcetü’l-Menāzil*, Bibliotheque nationale de France, MS Supplement Turc 1276.

<sup>155</sup> Mustakīmzāde Süleyman Efendi, *Tuhfetü’l-Huccāc*, Millet Kütüphanesi, MS Ali Emiri Tarih 876, ff. 8a-9b.

<sup>156</sup> Most manuscript libraries with a Turkish collection hold a few copies of this work; ownership statements from remaining copies reveal the variety of owners. Nābī, *Manzum ve mensur Osmanlı hac seyahatnameleri ve Nābī’nin Tuhfetü’l-Harameyn’i*, ed. Menderes Coşkun (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2002).

back pages of these books and the many copies of basic pilgrimage guides, such as Sināneddin Efendi's, we can find the occasional pilgrimage itinerary.<sup>157</sup> One mid eighteenth-century reader copied the itinerary of a pilgrim from 1673/1084h which detailed the stops he undertook on the return journey from Mecca through Damascus. The tombs he visited were many of the same as mentioned by Mustakīmzāde, but with a heavier emphasis on the early Islamic period, making sure to visit the graves of numerous male and female companions of the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>158</sup>

In the case of pilgrimage to Jerusalem the visitation of prophetic sites became codified into a set of gestural and liturgical rites (*menāsik*) that paralleled those of the hajj in Mecca. Two separate Rumi pilgrims in the second half of the seventeenth century copied down in their notebooks a variety of pilgrimage guides to Mecca, but also copied down a "*menāsik*" for Jerusalem.<sup>159</sup> Starting at the one of the gates, the short text led pilgrims through the city, instructing its readers to prostrate twice and read certain prayers before a set of holy sites. Locations and relics that ranged from the prayer niches (*mihrāb*) of Solomon and the dome of the *mīrāj* (Muhammad's miraculous ascent to heaven), to the pomegranate tree of David and various sites (*maḳāms*) of different prophets and biblical figures like Jacob or Rebecca. Somewhat like the Via Dolorosa, the guide had them literally follow the footsteps of the prophets: the footprint relics of Jesus, Idrīs (a pre-Islamic prophet often cast as the equivalent of Hermes Trismegistus),

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<sup>157</sup> See for example Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Aşır Efendi 241, ff. 58-61 (this is the bibliophile's Aşır Efendi's personal copy of Nabî's *Tuhfetü'l-Haremeyn*, the back lists both the places he visited and the books he brought back to Istanbul from Mecca; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS A Tekelioğlu 930 ff. 1-3; Gazi Husrev-begova Biblioteka, MS R3615 (folios in the back of the non-foliated manuscript).

<sup>158</sup> Anonymous, *Untitled*, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS Or. Oct. 2940, ff. 83-88.

<sup>159</sup> Anonymous, *Ḳudus-i Şerîf Menāsiki*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yazma Bağışlar 2411 ff. 39b-40b; Gazi Husrev-begova Biblioteka, MS 1456 ff. 41a-49a. The first was copied in 1083h, but the second dates from either 1045h or 1161h, the two dates mentioned in the miscellany, though it is most likely the former. The two texts have minor differences in terms of inclusion of certain sites, ordering, and copyist errors but are clearly the same work, even down to the purposeful mix of *talih* and *naskh* scripts for the text's Turkish and Arabic respectively.

and Muhammad were stops in the text. As can be deduced from the list of stops, this was an overwhelmingly prophetic rendering of the city of Jerusalem. Even sites associated with initial Muslim decades were few and far between: a very large Qur'an, presumably one of the first copied by the Caliph 'Uthmān, the mosque of 'Umar, the shield of the hero Hamza, or the site of Salmān-i Fārisī, the first Persian convert to Islam. No saints were mentioned except as a generic whole, as when pilgrims were instructed to contemplate the saints (*evliyā Allah*) or holy mystics (*erenler*) before entering and departing the city.

The incorporation of these tombs of prophets and early Islamic figures signaled the increased centralization of the empire's religious life around the hajj. The constant stream of caretakers and Qur'an reciters appointed to these major tombs by the imperial foundations (*evkāfu 'l-ḥaremeyn*) was certainly a sign of their increasing importance, but the transformation went even further.<sup>160</sup> Not only was the hajj more significant in the pantheon of religious practices, but many other practices and sites began to migrate onto the hajj route itself. For instance, one early eighteenth-century legal response, scribbled onto a book about the debate over pilgrimage to saints' tomb asks the following: "*Question*: Close to one village, there is a big tree on hallowed earth that the villagers regard as a god. They come to it, beseeching it to grant their wishes. It is permissible for the shari'a judge to cut down the tree, although it might cause much discord? *Answer*: It is permissible."<sup>161</sup> However much the authorities might have attempted to ban tree worship, though, they could not stop Rumi pilgrims from circumambulating around a lone acacia tree a few days south of Damascus during the second half of the seventeenth and the

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<sup>160</sup> Some examples include: Başbakanlık Arşivi, İstanbul, C.EV 130-6464 - 1168 B 29; AE.SAMD.III 12-1130

<sup>161</sup> Marginalia in Katib Çelebi, *Mizān al-Ḥaqq fi Ikhtiyār al-Aḥaqq*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Çelebi Abdullah 393, f. 51b

first half of the eighteenth centuries.<sup>162</sup> By the eighteenth century, the nightly tales of pilgrims recalled the miracles of saints like Hūdaī, a major saint from late sixteenth century Istanbul, while on the hajj route itself.<sup>163</sup>

### **Contested Pilgrimages: The Hajj Contested between Rumis and Arabs**

This consolidation of the hajj as the central rite of a new Ottoman religious culture, and its concomitant realignment of the sacred prophetic landscape of greater Syria, did not occur without protests. The first emerged in response to the increased intersection of Christian and Muslim pilgrimage sites and practices at these shared prophetic shrines. Instances of such overlap are often not explicitly acknowledged, but they do appear in the margins of texts. For example, in 1677, a large group of pilgrims returned to Jerusalem stripped naked, beaten, and in tears. They had set out from Jerusalem for the nearby tomb of Moses—*Maqām Nabī Mūsā*—which lay half a day’s journey toward Jericho, when Bedouins waylaid them and robbed them of all their possessions, even killing a few of the unfortunate travelers. This particular episode was written down in the colophon of an Armenian Old Testament (one of the common places for recording notable events). The entry’s scribe identified the murdered pilgrims as two Armenians, a Copt, and two Muslims, part of a caravan of “Greek, Europeans, Armenians and Muslims.”<sup>164</sup> While the writer noted the incident down for its uncharacteristic violence, the modern reader’s eye is caught by the odd mix of pilgrims headed toward the tomb of Moses. The shrine is

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<sup>162</sup> Jan Schmidt, “Ottoman Hajj Manuals and the John Rylands Library MS Turkish 88,” in *The Joys of Philology: Studies in Ottoman Literature, History, and Orientalism (1500-1923)*, vol. 2 (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2002), 273.

<sup>163</sup> Ibrāhīm Hanīf, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Supplement Turc 1296, *Untitled*, f. 25a

<sup>164</sup> The Armenian text refers to the Muslims by the common epithet of *tajik*, which might suggest Turkish-speaking Muslims. The colophon, presumably from St. James Church in Jerusalem (J397), is quoted and translated in Ervine, “Changes in Armenian Pilgrim Attitudes,” 81 Note 2.

generally considered a particularly Muslim holy place; formally established by the Mamluk sultan Baybars in the thirteenth century,<sup>165</sup> pilgrims in the seventeenth century flocked there to be graced by visions of angels.<sup>166</sup> Yet, the colophon entry makes it clear that that Christian pilgrims also journeyed out to the grave and it even apparently appears on some of the aforementioned icons produced by Orthodox Christians.<sup>167</sup> Conversely, Muslims also continuously participated as witnesses to the miracles and holy events of Christians. One of the most prominent examples is the participation of Muslims in hanging lamps in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. On Easter Sabbath, a high Ottoman official would inspect the church to ensure that no contraption was present that would somehow reduce the yearly miracle in which the lamps and candles were miraculously lit as the pilgrims crowded into Jesus's tomb.<sup>168</sup>

Yet, as is often the case, any blurring of boundaries also established new limits and restrictions. The aforementioned riot in Cairo in 1748, set off due to the perceived imitation of the Muslim hajj by Christians, is just one extreme example of how shared rituals and symbols could easily provoke a need to differentiate one community from another. More common was the ambivalence that was so deeply felt in the seventeenth century as the constant debates as to what

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<sup>165</sup> Samuel Tamari, "Maqâm Nabî Mûsâ (Jericho)," *Revue Des Etudes Islamiques* XLIX (1981): 231–50; Joseph Sadan, "Le Tombeau de Moïse a Jéricho et a Damas: une compétition entre deux lieux saints principalement à l'époque ottomane," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* XLIX (1981): 59–99.

<sup>166</sup> For a discussion regarding whether these angels are real or simple apparitions and why the grave of Moses in particular displays this miracle see the mid-seventeenth century treatise, Ahmed Vecdi, *Risâle fî Beyân Eşbâh 'ala Qabr Mûsa, Beyazıt Kütiiphanesi*, MS Veliyüddin Efendi 809, ff. 213-219. For a description of some of the angel visitation see al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa'l-Majāz*, 1: 287-290. Nābulusī copied inserted the verses and impressions of an earlier traveler, Kibrīt, in his rough draft.

<sup>167</sup> The shrine later became the site of a large spring festival involving processions from local Muslim and Christian communities and in the twentieth century a sort of anti-colonial gathering until it was officially outlawed in the first Intifada. Rubin, "Greek-Orthodox Maps of Jerusalem," 122; Sadan, "Le Tombeau de Moïse," 75; Amnon Cohen, "Al-Nabi Musa—an Ottoman Festival (Mawsim) Resurrected?," in *Mamluks and Ottomans: Studies in Honour of Michael Winter*, ed. David J. Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon (London: Routledge, 2006), 34–44.

<sup>168</sup> Oded Peri, *Christianity under Islam in Jerusalem: The Question of the Holy Sites in Early Ottoman Times* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 119.

it meant to be Muslim increased scrutiny of daily actions, objects, and beliefs among Muslims. The Muslim community of Jerusalem, for instance, sent the Damascene scholar ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī a worried inquiry as to whether it was permissible for them to use candles to illuminate the mosques on holidays or was this too much of a Christian innovation?<sup>169</sup> Did the prodigious use of candles turn the Dome of the Rock into the Church of the Holy Sepulcher?<sup>170</sup>

Similarly, the overlap set off a need to prove and disprove the reality of miracles or the locations of holy events, to define certain sites as genuine and others as false. One Catholic monk, perhaps eager to dismiss the aforementioned miracle of lights at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on account of his recent conversion from Coptic Christianity, describes how the miracle was primarily aimed at aweing the gullible masses of Christians and Muslims, and engineered through the well-intentioned conniving between the Muslim keepers and Coptic vicar.<sup>171</sup> In one *fatwa* (legal opinion) that was included in the late seventeenth-century canonical imperial legal collections, a petitioner inquires about a village claiming to house the birthplace of Jesus.

In one site in a village, the Christians claim that Jesus, utmost peace and prayers upon him and our prophets, was born. They built upon this site a church and erected in it statues and paintings, but Jesus’s birth in that site is not confirmed by an authoritative and correct source (*riwāya saḥīḥa*). Is it acceptable for a Muslim to enter this church for the purposes of pilgrimage (*ziyāra*) or not?<sup>172</sup>

The chief jurist, lacking a jurisprudential precedent for this new case, demurred, replying only that it was acceptable, but frowned upon (*makrūh*), for a Muslim to enter a church or

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<sup>169</sup> ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Ajwabat al-As’ila waradat min Bayt al-Maqdis*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Çelebi Abdullah 385 ff. 73-87

<sup>170</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Haqīqa wa’l-Majāz*, 382–83.

<sup>171</sup> Josephi Abudacni, *Historia Iacobitarum Seu Coptorum, in Aegypto, Lybia, Nubia, Aethiopia Tota et Parte Cyprininsulae Habitantium*, 1783, 57–60; Armanios, *Coptic Christianity in Ottoman Egypt*, 111. Many thanks to Maya Maskarinec for deciphering the confusing Latin. .

<sup>172</sup> Çatalcalı Ali Efendi, *Fetava-ı Ali Efendi*, ed. Şālih b. Aḥmed el-Kefevī, 4th ed. (Istanbul: Tabhane-i Amire Matbaası, 1272h), 2:620.



synagogue.<sup>173</sup> The question, though, reveals the dangers and challenges that Muslims confronted as they journeyed through this holy land. A constant temptation lurked in these shared and overlapping sites, a temptation to be seduced into Christian practices, practices that resembled Muslim ones to a large degree. One resort, as the petitioner's anxieties reveal, was an increasingly turn to attempting to prove the authenticity of these holy sites.

Arguments about the authenticity of graves and definitions of sanctity were not only limited to sites where Christian and Muslim conceptions of a holy land intersected but also those of Rumi and Arab. Following the establishment of the new government under Ahmed III in 1703, the imperial government entrusted the governor of the area to conduct a thorough survey and investigation into the authenticity of the various shrines in this holy land, so as to identify which ones were worthy of restoration and continued patronage.<sup>174</sup> The turn toward an active interest in the veracity of these shrines was a distinct change from the benign upkeep and disinterest of the previous centuries and it was in part a result of the renewed protests of Arab writers, often in response to Rumi thinkers and officials, as to the composition of the holy land. Ibn Ḥabīb, a minor provincial scholar from Nablus in the mid-seventeenth century, was forced to publish a (somewhat disingenuous) retraction after insisting on the sanctity of Nablus and its saints in front of the *amīr al-hajj*, Süleyman Pasha.<sup>175</sup> After conversations with the Egyptian governor, Ali Pasha, and a visiting Rumi scholar, the Damascene Sālīḥ al-Ghazzī penned an

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<sup>173</sup> Şeyhülislam Çatalcalı Ali Efendi said that according to the *Hidāya* it was forbidden for judges to enter non-Muslim houses of worship in order to take oaths, but this was not applicable to the Muslims at large. The *al-Fatāwa al-Tatarkhāniyya* says that it is permissible but inadvisable for Muslims to enter churches, only because they are gathering places of demons rather than any particular ban on entering. The *şeyhülislam* notes that he himself had previously ruled that it was not permissible to accompany Jews into a synagogue though.

<sup>174</sup> Anonymous, *Ta'rīkh al-Quds wa 'l-Khalīl*, Bodleian Library, Oxford University, MS Clarke Or. 33.

<sup>175</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb, *Durr al-nizām fī maḥāsin al-Shām*, Princeton University Library, MS Yahuda 1862

inquiry as to the true boundaries of the holy land.<sup>176</sup> Yāsīn al-Faraḍī, a Damascene preacher from the late seventeenth century who wrote a rather damning screed to spur the “foreign (*mutagharrib*)” government to act against oppressive taxation practices in Syria and Lebanon, also wrote a new guide memorializing the saintly graves of Syria.<sup>177</sup> He emphasized that he collected the information current among the people of Syria, regardless of whether or not it was technically true.<sup>178</sup>

These protests emerged from the seeming erasure of that earlier holy land, constructed and cultivated in the wake of the Latin and Mongol invasions, in favor of a prophetic landscape. While the expanded hajj itineraries of Rumi pilgrims created shared sacred spaces at the tombs of Biblical prophets and well-known companions of the Prophet Muhammad, they overlooked the tombs of locally important saints or companions. For instance, Shaykh Arslān, whom one modern scholar dubbed the patron saint of Damascus,<sup>179</sup> seems to have been largely ignored by the Rumi travelers. These pilgrims also overlooked other famous places like the Grotto of Blood.<sup>180</sup> The graves and stations that they revered were those of the prophets like John the Baptist, Moses, Jonah, Abraham, and, to a lesser degree, Ḥizir. If saints or Sufi figures were

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<sup>176</sup> Ṣāliḥ b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullah el-Ghazzī, *al-Khabar al-Tamm fi Dhikr Hudūd ‘Arḍ al-Muqaddasah wa Filisṭīn*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 2212, ff. 6a-18b. There is also another copy at the Arab Manuscript Institute, Cairo, MS Jiografiya wa Buldān 99.

<sup>177</sup> On the screed see, Yāsīn al-Faraḍī, *Nuṣrat al-Mutagharribīn ‘an al-‘Awṭān ‘ala al-Ḍulma ve Ahl al-‘Udwān* (*Beseeking help from the foreigners to this land against oppression and people of enmity*), Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS Sprenger 907. On the pilgrimage guide see *Nubdha Laṭīfa fi’l-Mazārāt al-Sharīfa*, Princeton University Library, MS Yahuda 2307. I accessed it through an eighteenth century commentary by an eighteenth century mufti from Erzurum: Meḥmed Said b. Aḥmed b. Meḥmed Efendi, *Sharḥ al-Nubdhat al-Saniyya fi’l-Ziyārat al-Shāmiyya*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arabe 6007.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, BnF, MS Arabe 6007, ff. 3a-4a

<sup>179</sup> Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria*, 209.

<sup>180</sup> Though it is mentioned in the work of Mustakīmzāde. *Tuḥfetü’l-Huccāc*, Millet Kütüphanesi, MS Ali Emiri Tarih 876, ff. 9a

mentioned, it was often major and foundational figures like ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Gaylānī or Ibn Arabi.

One of the reasons prophetic, and early Islamic, graves received more emphasis and importance was that prophets were considered more verifiable than saints, a part of realignment of Islamic practice toward prophetic exemplars.<sup>181</sup> Most prominent in this regard was the contentious debate of the period regarding whether Muslims could identify themselves by the pre-Islamic prophets, calling themselves part of the “people of Abraham.” As stated in earlier chapters, the issue revolved around the place of non-Muslims and the pre-Islamic prophetic heritage in the political community of the empire. Popular reformers like Rūmī Aḥmed Aḫḫīṣārī, who led a fiery attack against the cult of the saints in the early seventeenth century, routinely emphasized that the miracles of prophets (*mu’jizāt*) were of a different ontological order than those of saints (*karamāt*) and therefore more epistemologically trustworthy.<sup>182</sup> The mania for biblical prophets as exemplars in the seventeenth century was found throughout society as preachers and authors constantly tried to meet the demand for hagiographic works about the prophets. Vānī Mehmed Efendi, another major Istanbul-based preacher associated with the attack on the Sufis and saints in the late seventeenth century, devoted his most substantial work to a total rewriting of the traditional “stories of the prophet” (*qisas al-‘anbiyā’*) genre by removing any Jewish or Christian sources (*‘isrā’iliyyāt*).<sup>183</sup> Even the biography of Muhammad was

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<sup>181</sup> Stories of the prophets had always been in important, but their relatively importance and usage can still be historicized. Regarding the use of stories of the prophets in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Gottfried Hagen, “From Haggadic Exegesis to Myth: Popular Stories of the Prophets in Islam,” in *Sacred Tropes: Tanakh, New Testament, and Qur’an as Literature and Culture*, ed. Roberta Sterman Sabbath (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 301–16.

<sup>182</sup> Rūmī Aḥmed Aḫḫīṣārī, *Risāla fī anna al-nubuwwa afdal min al-wilāya*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Harput 429

<sup>183</sup> Vānī Efendi (Mehmed b. Bistām b. Rüstēm), *‘Arā’is al-Qur’ān wa Nafā’is al-Furqān*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Harput 353. The second volume of the work integrates the biography of the Prophet Muhammad into the *qisas al-‘anbiyā’* framework.

rewritten in high poetic Turkish over the mid to late seventeenth century by a sequence of authors to emphasize his special miracles and their proof.<sup>184</sup> One of the authors of this reworking of Muhammad's biography was the aforementioned poet Nābī, the author of the most popular travelogue and description of the hajj in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a fact that reinforces the connection between the hajj and the reemphasis on a prophetic Islam.<sup>185</sup>

The most direct and successful response to the transformations created by the hajj came from the Damascene scholar 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī. Nābulusī, firstly, understood the hajj as a site of cross-cultural encounter, a meeting of Rumis and Arabs that not only entailed an emphasis on the prophetic graves but also a denial of the cult of saints. At the request of a number of friends and correspondents in Istanbul, he composed *The Damascene Sessions: Sermons for Rumis*. The title of the book is an indirect rejoinder to a collection of wildly popular sermons commonly known as *Mecālis-i Rūmīye*, or *The Rumelian Sessions*, by the aforementioned Rūmī Aḥmed Aḳḥiṣārī.<sup>186</sup> Rumi Ahmed's work, which, though poorly known, is found all over the Islamic world today, was comprised of one hundred sermons-discussions ignited by his disgust at the saint-worshiping practices of those around him.<sup>187</sup> Nābulusī in turn arranged a year's worth of sermons around the progression of Rumi pilgrims from the initial intention of undertaking hajj (which segued to a discussion of manumitting one's slaves) to

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<sup>184</sup> See Veysī Efendi, Üveys b. Mehmed, *Dürretü't-Tāc fī Sireti Şāhibi'l-Mi'rāc*, Nābī Yusuf Efendi, *Zeyl-i Siyer*, and Naẓmīzāde Hüseyin Murteza Efendi, *Zeyl-i Siyer*. There are hundreds of extant copies of this work. The latter two can be found bound together in Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Tercuman 201.

<sup>185</sup> Naẓmīzāde, an author and translator living in Baghdad, and the last of a chain of authors to rework the biography of the Prophet Muhammad, also wrote a fascinating guide to the saintly and prophetic graves of Baghdad, which is worthy of further study. See *Camī'u'l-Envār fī Menāḳibi'l-Aḥyār*.

<sup>186</sup> On Rūmī Aḥmed Aḳḥiṣārī, see Mustapha Sheikh, "Qāḏīzādeli Revivalism Reconsidered in Light of Aḥmad al-Rūmī al-Aḳḥiṣārī's Majālis al-abrār" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oxford, 2012).

<sup>187</sup> Rūmī Aḥmed Aḳḥiṣārī, *Majālis al-Abrār wa Masālik al-Aḥyār (al-Majālis al-Rumiyya / The Rumelian Sessions)*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Yazma Bağışlar 865

giving gifts upon returning from the hajj in order reconcile differences among Muslims.<sup>188</sup> Each of the topics addressed either Rumi Ahmed's claims or one of the many debates raging in the empire. For example, in a discussion about respecting filial bonds, which he connected to asking permission from one's parents before embarking on the hajj, he entered into the controversy over whether Muhammad's parents died as unbelievers.<sup>189</sup> In other sermons, he admonished Rumis returning on the hajj to visit the graves of saints and holy men and that the hajj required witnessing (*ru'yā*) the miracles of saints.<sup>190</sup> Like the aforementioned authors of the "virtues of the Rumis" genre, the book functioned as an extended dialogue over imperial and intercommunal relations, but in this case the hajj was the primary framework for this encounter.

Yet, there were also less hospitable reactions from Nābulusī, most readily seen in his pamphlet on the true location of Ibn Arabi's tomb. As stated earlier, the tomb was originally neglected by the people of Damascus and only after Sultan Selim's conquest was it rediscovered and rebuilt. Part of this work entailed building a congregational mosque over the tomb, which was located a few steps below in a depression of sorts. Nābulusī, unlike the some of the earlier Arab scholars, developed an attachment to Ibn Arabi, often dreaming of the holy man suckling him. Despite the familial connection he was hesitant to accept the tomb built originally built by Sultan Selim. In his pamphlet, Nābulusī argued that the tomb of Ibn Arabi was not actually in the mosque. Rather it was in the garden (*rawḍa*) located in the street before the mosque. He continued, saying that the people who approached the tomb through the mosque and the *mihrab* (prayer niche) would never actually see the grave; rather they would just see their own lowliness

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<sup>188</sup> 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *al-Majālis al-Shāmiyya fi'l-Mawā'iz al-Rūmīyya (The Damascene Sessions: Sermons for Rumis)*, ed. Hiba al-Masalih (Damascus: Dar Nur al-Sabah, 2011), 152–55, 179–84.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 184–90.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 141–52.

as they criticized graves. Adding fuel to the fire, he stated that those who were the “most prideful in prayer” denied the Great Shaykh (Ibn Arabi) and used the mihrab and mosque as an intermediary to God, in the process becoming polytheists by equating God with the mosque. His commandment to the faithful was to go out into the garden and experience God there and to drink from the cool mountain stream. Those who did so were the People of the Garden, those who did not were the polytheistic People of the Mosque. Nābulusī’s choice of gravesite became both a rejection of the imperial site of the grave, the push for certain imperially mandated forms of religiosity, and those who criticized the entire enterprise of saint worship itself.

Nābulusī’s ambivalent reception of Ibn Arabi’s graves was just a small part of a deeper disquiet with the changes wrought by the influx of pilgrims and continuous imperial investment in the Syrian hajj route. He wrote a set of three travelogues in the 1690s, each more ambitious than the last, to revive a different, and often older, pilgrimage. In the first, he set off for the graves of modern-day Lebanon, in the second he headed toward Jerusalem. In the third, he embarked on a year-long journey through Greater Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and the Hijaz that culminated in the hajj. (A fourth was written later at the request of a local grandee who seems to have used his increased independence and power to patronize the saintly graves of Baalbek, now beyond the purview of the imperial authorities.<sup>191</sup>) Nābulusī composed his itineraries to emphasize an earlier holy land of saintly graves, using many of the pilgrimage guides, geographies, and histories of this land written in the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. But he also constantly added graves to this landscape, including recently deceased scholars, even memorializing his saintly mother, whose death two months beforehand facilitated his travels by

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<sup>191</sup> ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *al-Tuḥfa al-Nāblusiyya fi’l-Riḥla al-Ṭarāblusiyya*, ed. Heribert Busse (Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1971).

lifting the plague epidemic preventing travel through Syria.<sup>192</sup> Yet, this did not entail a rejection of the increasingly popular prophetic graves necessarily, but rather an acceptance of all popular folk traditions of the graves, openly acknowledging that multiple graves of prophets like Yunūs (Jonah) existed in this holy land.<sup>193</sup> Throughout this journey, though, was the constant insistence and reminder that he was undertaking the hajj.<sup>194</sup> In this sense he departed from previous works which separated pilgrimage into tomb visitations (*ziyāra*) and the hajj. Nor did he agree with those that thought that circumambulating (*tawāf*) around the tomb of the saint was the equivalent to the hajj. As he repeatedly states in his second journey, the tomb visitations should be considered a smaller hajj and that his departure for the larger hajj was guaranteed by the promises and visions of the holy men he encountered outside of Jerusalem.<sup>195</sup> Nābulusī formally redefined the hajj in his travelogues as a set of encounters with graves in this greater holy land.<sup>196</sup>

Nābulusī's many students reanimated this holy land with their travels, often tracing his steps and authoring popular travelogues of their own.<sup>197</sup> One in particular, Muṣṭafa al-Bakrī, penned a very short travelogue as both a refutation of those attacking the visitation of graves and as an attempt to consecrate a pilgrimage to Abraham's grave outside of Damascus in the village

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<sup>192</sup> A majdhūb, or possessed holy man, comes miraculously from a nearby town to help with the burial, having sensed that a righteous woman had died. al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa'l-Majāz*, 1:66-67.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 1:299.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 1:202.

<sup>195</sup> 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaḍra al-'Unsiyya fi'l-Rihla al-Qudsiyya*, ed. Akram Hasan al-'Ulbi (Beirut: al-Masadir, 1990), 20–21.

<sup>196</sup> In some cases, in his *menasik al-hajj* text for a popular audience, he even fielded some Malikī jurists' opinions that visiting the grave of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina was more important than circumambulating the Ka'ba, thus reiterating the importance of the graves in the hajj route. 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *al-Ibtihāj bi-Menāsik al-Hajj*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Çelebi Abdullah 385, f. 319a

<sup>197</sup> Muṣṭafa As'ad al-Luqaymī, *Tahdhīb mawāniḥ al-'Uns bi-Rihlati li-Wādi al-Quds*, ed. Riyad Abdulhamid Murad (Damascus: Manshurat al-Ha'ya al-'Ama al-Suriyya lil-Kitab, 2012). Mustakimzāde, Tuḥfetü'l-Ḥuccāc, Millet Kütüphanesi, MS Ali Emiri Tarih 876.

of Barza.<sup>198</sup> The choice of Abraham was significant in that it was tied, as Bakrī hinted, to the aforementioned question of the “*millet-i Ibrāhīm*” or “Religion of Abraham.” In this treatise, Bakri cited a story that he credited to Ibn Arabi in which Abraham offers a weary traveler of a different religion (*ghayr millatihi*) hospitality only on condition of his conversion. God chides Abraham stating that he succored him for 77 years as an infidel before he converted, so why should he ask the traveler to do so for a morsel of food?<sup>199</sup> The choice of consecrating a grave of Abraham was an implicit rejection of the imperial position that Muslims should never call themselves the people of Abraham and an attempt to expand the political community of the empire to non-Muslims.<sup>200</sup> To do so, he felt that he needed to take apart those “deniers” of the saints and saintly graves, a group he identified, somewhat incorrectly due to his own lack of Turkish as the “*Zādaliyya*,” followers of the certain pious shaykh named “*Zādā*,” in other words, the Kadizadeli movement mentioned in previous chapters.<sup>201</sup> In this he was following in Nābulusī’s footsteps of pushing for a more inclusive vision of the empire through its holy land. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that the favor was returned by Rumi pilgrims as Nābulusī’s grave was one of few saintly graves that they visited when they alighted in Damascus.

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<sup>198</sup> On Bakri’s travelogues see Muhammad al-Ḥizmāwī, “al-Khamra al-Ḥasiyya fi’l-Rihla al-Qudsiyya (Rihlat Muṣṭafa al-Bakrī ila al-Quds),” *Majallat Ma’had al-Makhṭūṭāt al-‘Arabiyya* 48 (November 2004): 151–75; On the role of Barza see Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria*, 195–96.

<sup>199</sup> Muṣṭafa al-Bakrī al-Siddīqī, *Bur’ al-Asqām fi Ziyārat Barza wa’l-Maqām*, ed. Ghalib Anabsi (Kafr Qar’: Center of Arabic Literature Studies, Bet Berl, 2009), 83.

<sup>200</sup> Minkārīzāde Yahya Efendi, *Risāle fi Millet-i Ibrāhīm*, UCLA Young Research Library Special Collections, Collection 896, Box 109, MS 740; Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi, *Behcetü’l-Fetāvâ*, 12. In this collection, the very first legal opinion in the book is on this question.

<sup>201</sup> al-Bakrī al-Siddīqī, *Bur’ al-Asqām*, 116.



## Conclusion

I have attempted in this chapter to weave together many different narrative and analytical threads to tell the story of the hajj in the early modern Ottoman Empire. A major circulation of people, it impacted the life of all the empire's inhabitants regardless of religion or whether they actually embarked on the journey itself. What started as a hesitant and piecemeal arrangement for shrines in the wake of the initial conquest of the Arab lands by the Ottoman dynasty became instead a commitment to the infrastructure and sanctity of the hajj. This policy, though, was enacted and refracted through an imperial relation, in which Turkish-speaking *Rūmīs*, associated, formally and informally, with the government in Istanbul, moved through and developed this holy land. The continued investment in the infrastructure of the hajj, especially to accommodate the new flood of pilgrims to Damascus, and the sacralization of the pilgrimage itself had some unintended consequences. First was the appropriation and participation of Christians, both from Arab lands and from the central lands, in the act of the hajj. The second was the extension of the hajj into the biblical landscape of Greater Syria and with it the incorporation of a circuit of tomb visitations. The hajj simultaneously centralized religious sites and tombs along its extended route and became central to religious life of the empire's inhabitants. Together these processes created a new contested site of encounter in an Ottoman holy land—one between Christians and Muslims and another, at times intersecting, between Rumis and Arabs.

The hajj then is not simply a requirement, incumbent upon all Muslims ever since Muhammad willed it so, but a set of historicizable circulations that redefined both the landscape it traversed and all those who crossed its many paths. If we view pilgrimage as a form of embodied history writing then one of the lasting legacies of the early modern hajj might be the renewed and increased importance of prophetic and early Islamic history, at the expense of

saintly Islam, a transformation that is often associated only with the modernist Islamic revivals. It was the intellectual challenge of this embodied history and landscape that numerous authors explored in a variety of travelogues, histories, and geographies, as we shall see in the next chapters.

## Chapter 5 – Travel, Travelogues, and the Textual Expression of Circulation in the Ottoman Empire

Historians today often paint the Mediterranean as a space of connection and mobility. We emphasize the numerous encounters and flows between and across the two sides of the Mediterranean world that were previously seen as incommensurable and separate—the European Christian and Ottoman or Arab Islamic. These new histories that cast the Mediterranean as sea of mobility and exchange have been invaluable contributions, yet there are still a few small hiccups in writing this triumphalist history of connectedness. Francesca Trivellato posed the question, “what do we make of the differences between the often optimistic views of cross-cultural exchanges that emerge from studies of material artifacts and the more somber conclusions deriving from studies of written texts?”<sup>1</sup> In other words, while there may be many objects and ambassadors moving between the different coasts of the Mediterranean, the unity of the space is often never formally textually expressed, instead we continue to have a state of, if perhaps not enmity, then prodigious silence. Even when not silent, there is a distinct asymmetry in the written expression of these connections. While Europeans wrote many travelogues, captivity memoirs, and geographies of the Near East, very few exist from the pens of Ottoman subjects.<sup>2</sup>

These asymmetries point to an intriguing problematic in the relationship between circulation and its textual expression that needs to be addressed in order to understand the larger

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<sup>1</sup> Francesca Trivellato, “Renaissance Italy and the Muslim Mediterranean in Recent Historical Work,” *The Journal of Modern History* 82 (March 2010): 152.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the rare and scattered mentions of travelogues by Ottoman authors to the hundreds of European authors in Stefanos Yerasimos, *Les voyageurs dans l'Empire Ottoman, XIVe-XVIe siècles: bibliographie, itinéraires et inventaire des lieux habités* (Ankara: Société turque d'histoire, 1991).

effects of circulation in the Ottoman society. We assume that the texts known as travelogues demonstrate a connected world, but if this is the case then what does a relative lack of travelogues symbolize? I am less concerned here with simply demonstrating the connectedness of the Mediterranean or the early modern world at large or rehashing the tired questions whether Muslims or Arabs or Ottomans were interested in the “outside” world.<sup>3</sup> I address here, instead, the particular problem of recognizing what circulation meant to people within the seventeenth-century Ottoman society itself and how it was expressed textually. In other words, I am interested in the work that the concept of circulation performed in the seventeenth-century and how it is gauged by historians.

I examine in this chapter the work done by one particular, perhaps archetypal, form of circulation—travel—and one of its primary forms of textual expression—the travelogue. Due to the predominance of the European travelogue tradition, there is an assumption today among scholars that the nature and function of the travelogue is to describe distant and unknown locations, to represent the encounter with the Other, and that readers perused them for such geographical and ethnographic information. Moreover, as first-person narratives they were sites in which a modern self developed as it encountered the Other. However, before making such assumptions and launching into analyses of their representations, or preemptively diagnosing a case of early modernity, I examine first the social function of travelogues within early modern Ottoman society and the forms of circulation and imperial life they expressed.

My research departs from previous examinations of travelers in the Ottoman Empire in two crucial respects. First, it turns away from the relatively well-known exemplars of travel, both

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<sup>3</sup> Nabil Matar, *In the Lands of the Christians : Arabic Travel Writing in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

within and without the travelogue format. Figures like Pīrī Reis, Kātīb-i Rūmī (Sidi Ali Reis), ‘Āşık Mehmed, and, of course, Evliyā Çelebi are relatively well-known but current scholarship tends to study them under a general veneration of travel rather than within a social context.<sup>4</sup> These figures do appear, and deserve further detailed research, but are purposefully relegated to margins of this chapter because listing every figure that falls under the label of “Ottoman,” “Arabic,” or “Islamic” tends to produce descriptive, typological lists of travelogues.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, by focusing so much on these figures, we make them seem exceptional and create the impression that there was a rather anemic tradition of travelogue writing in the Ottoman Empire until the nineteenth century when the shock of European colonialism and steam engines forced Muslims to discover Europe.<sup>6</sup> In response, we need to reconstruct the complex culture of travel and travelogue writing that had emerged in the early modern period.

I focus instead to the tens, even hundreds, of extant travelogues that constituted the bulk of the travelogue tradition from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Most of these are in Arabic but a significant number are also in Turkish (many of which were dealt with in the fourth chapter on pilgrimage). These works, however, are not what scholars generally imagine when they think

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<sup>4</sup> e.g. Mahmut Ak, *Osmanlı'nın Gezinleri* (Istanbul: 3F Yayınevi, 2006); Aşık Mehmed, *Menâzırü'l-Avâlim*, ed. Mahmut Ak, 3 vols. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınevi, 2007); Seydi Ali Reis, *Mir'atü'l-Memâlik*, ed. Mehmet Kiremit (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 1999); Gottfried Hagen, “The Traveller Mehmed Aşık,” in *Proceedings of the XIIth Congress of CIEPO* (Praha: Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic - Oriental Institute, 1998), 145–54.

<sup>5</sup> Ralf Elger, “Arabic Travelogues from the Mashrek 1700-1834: A Preliminary Survey of the Genre’s Development,” in *Crossings and Passages in Genre and Culture*, ed. Christian Szyska and Friederike Pannewick, *Literaturen Im Kontext* 15 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2003), 27–40; Hilary Kilpatrick, “Between Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and Al-Taḥṭāwī: Arabic Travel Accounts of the Early Ottoman Period,” *MiEL Middle Eastern Literatures* 11, no. 2 (2008): 233–48; Bilgin Aydın, “XVI. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Seyahatnâmeleri Hakkında Bir Değerlendirme,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* XL (2012): 435–51.

<sup>6</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982); Nile Green, “Spacetime and the Muslim Journey West: Industrial Communications in the Making of the ‘Muslim World,’” *The American Historical Review* 118, no. 2 (April 2013): 401–29; Naghmeh Sohrabi, *Taken for Wonder: Nineteenth-Century Travel Accounts from Iran to Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

of travelogues. The majority of these works focus specifically on an area between Damascus, Cairo, Mecca and Medina, and, to a lesser degree, Istanbul and are thus ignored because these journeys are largely within the borders of the Ottoman Empire and thus fail to cross some imagined threshold of exploration. The objection becomes moot when one realizes that many portions of the empire remained undescribed; there are nearly no travelogues to the Balkans or Eastern Anatolia for instance. In other words, the high number of travelogues forces us to ask why travel in this particular area became expressed textually rather than why people in the Ottoman Empire failed to describe their travels outside the empire. More importantly, the overriding cultural encounter that they sought to depict—whether convivial or antagonistic—was not one between Ottomans and Europeans or Muslims and Christians, but between Arabs and Rumis, that is the Turkish-speakers from the central lands of the empire. In short, taking Ottoman travelogues seriously requires a reimagining of the relevant geography of encounter and exploration.

Second, I draw out the social function of these travelogues by examining the material life of these texts. Features like copy numbers, paper formats, page layout, writing style, illumination, binding, readership and ownership marks, marginalia, endowment records, library catalogs, copyist names and dates, and patronage statements, and more are valuable pieces of evidence for the usage of these books. It not only allows us to go far beyond generic designations of presentation or personal copies but also allows us to mark nearly all of the Arabic travelogues as part of an interconnected textual corpus when intertextual references are not present. It likewise allows us to trace out changes in the interpretation and reading of the travelogues over the centuries. Most importantly, looking at travelogues as material objects challenges, and complements, the predominant approach of viewing these works as disembodied and

disconnected acts of representation.<sup>7</sup> Travelogues in this chapter are not (just) signs of an outward-facing exploratory outlook, or literary symbols, or traces of an encounter, as they have been largely treated until now, but as documents that examine the work of circulation in Ottoman society. In other words, I look at relation between the representations of circulation expressed within the pages and how and the circulation of the books themselves as objects.

The chapter begins by arguing that the travelogue tradition in the Ottoman Empire was nearly completely independent from earlier travelogues of the Islamic lands. Early modern Ottoman subjects traveled far and wide, but they rarely if ever expressed these travels textually. The first travelogues emerged initially in the major urban cities of the Arab lands following the Ottoman conquest as poetic gifts that established a relationship between a Rumi patron and an Arab scholar. They were about displaying a rarified image of the social life of the empire through its poetry. By the early seventeenth century, these travelogues began to be targeted toward fellow Arab scholars and not Rumi patrons. They continued to be a site for the negotiation of imperial relationships, but focused on describing an interconnected world of Arab scholars, even occasionally branching beyond the confines of local scholars. They also developed methodological standards for the composition of travelogues. By the end of the seventeenth century, a culture of travelogue writing and reading had become well established among scholars.

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<sup>7</sup> Ralf Elger, *Glaube, Skepsis, Poesie : Arabische Istanbul-Reisende Im 16. Und 17. Jahrhundert* (Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut, 2011); Ralf Elger, "Mysticism and Skepticism in Ottoman Intellectual Circles: Muhammad Kibrit's Istanbul Travelogue (17th C.)," in *Le Soufisme À L'époque Ottomane XVIe - XVIIIe Siècle*, ed. Rachida Chih and Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen (Le Caire: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2010), 369–81; Nabil Matar, *Europe through Arab Eyes, 1578-1727* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Matar, *In the Lands of the Christians*; Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

The second part of the chapter examines how the Arabic travelogue tradition expanded throughout the empire as the tradition of Arab scholars in the Ottoman Empire intersected with new types of travelogues that were written in the increasingly confessionalized atmosphere of the seventeenth century. These included travelogues written by Christians from the Arab cities as well as Rumis. The travelogue of the Damascene ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī and Istanbulite Nābī become particular foci of attention for their capacity to reach large and varied audiences of readers. The chapter ends by examining how new attitudes toward books led to empire-wide reading publics for these travelogues and to new forms of virtual travel focused on description. By the mid-eighteenth century, newer and older travelogues were read by many, not so much for a description of a social world, but for the geographic descriptions of places within the empire and beyond it. In sum, I argue that travelogues initially started as textual expressions of a very specific form of circulation between a few select urban Arab scholars and their Rumi patrons in the capital. However, by the dawn of the nineteenth century, travelogues expressed the full range of Ottoman subjects’ circulation, resembling our traditional image of travelogues. This occurred not because people were necessarily traveling more often or further, but because of shifts in the social usage of the travelogue itself.

### **Remnants of Medieval Travel**

There is no such thing as an Islamic travelogue tradition or genre. Muslims, of course, wrote travelogues and quite a few of them since the late medieval period but there is no one united or continuous line of travelogues that served as a paradigmatic model. The travelogues from the Islamic world most widely known by scholars today are the celebrated travelogues of



late medieval figures like Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, Ibn Jubayr and Nāṣir-i Khusraw.<sup>8</sup> These medieval travelogues, though, were largely absent in the early modern Ottoman Empire, neither frequently copied nor heavily referenced. Take for example, the celebrated travelogue writer Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, who from his home in Morocco journeyed for over thirty years during the fourteenth century, visiting Anatolia, South Asia and apparently even China. His complete travelogue was largely resurrected due to efforts of nineteenth-century philologists in France, who acquired, published, and translated full copies of his work from Morocco where it circulated in a limited fashion.<sup>9</sup> In the Ottoman lands, the text never circulated as a full, two-volume copy between 350 to 500 folios; instead, it was picked up in the early seventeenth century by the Aleppan Muḥammad al-Baylūnī, who produced a shortened 100-folio abridgement, as part of a new interest in travelogue writing in the seventeenth century (see below).<sup>10</sup> Al-Jubayr's travelogue seems to have largely been absent. The travelogue of Abu Ḥāmid al-Gharnāṭī, an early twelfth-century Andalusian traveler, was translated into Turkish in the early sixteenth-century for an Ottoman prince, but was never widely copied in either Arabic or Turkish.<sup>11</sup> In short, the exemplars of the “Arabic” or “Islamic” travelogue tradition for scholars today were not necessarily models or exemplars of the genre for readers in the early modern Ottoman Empire. We should regard them not as generically

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<sup>8</sup> See for example the range of material in the collected volume of Ian Richard Netton, ed., *Islamic and Middle Eastern Geographers and Travellers* (London: Routledge, 2008); Ross E. Dunn, *Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century*, 3rd ed. (University of California Press, 2012); Nāṣir-e Khosraw, *Book of Travel (Safarnāma)*, trans. W. M Thackston (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> See the copies of Ibn Battuta, *Tuḥfat al-Nuẓẓār fī Gharā'ib al-Amṣār* in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MSS Arabe 2287-91. All are copied in the Maghrebi script in the seventeenth to eighteenth century and went through a few owners in the early nineteenth century before making their way to France. Another full two-volume copy can be found at Cambridge University Library, Or. 1469-70, which was hastily and quickly copied to order for a European reader in the early nineteenth century, rather than for a local reading public.

<sup>10</sup> On Muhammad al-Baylūnī's work, see below

<sup>11</sup> Sadık Yazar, *Gırnati Seyahatnamesi'nin XVI. Yüzyılda Yapılmış bir Tercümesi: Tercüme-i Tuḥfetü'l-Elbab ve Nuhbetü'l-A'cab* (İstanbul: Okur Akademi, 2012).

Islamic but perhaps as a part of a quite vibrant but specifically Maghrebi/Andulusi tradition of travelogue writing in the Mediterranean, one that seems to have continued well into the eighteenth century especially when writing about travels to southern Europe.<sup>12</sup> That said, there is more that can be drawn from the medieval Islamic tradition than a presumed continuity of genre.

The most thoughtful and thorough examination of the work performed by travel in the Islamic world has been in the writings of Houari Touati on the early medieval period. In his work *Islam and Travel in the Middle Ages*, he casts travel as more than the mere movement of people but a foundational practice of circulation that constituted the early Islamic community. He begins with an analysis of the initial circulation of Muslims who collected reports of the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad (*ḥadīth*) through the process of *ṭalab al-ʿilm*, or travel in search of knowledge. Scholars would move from communities in Kufa, Syria, Medina, Egypt, etc. compiling and memorizing stories of the Muhammad, and creating a nascent Islamic community from numerous different local sites and communities. As the argument progresses, he examines the usage of travel by grammarians, mystics, and geographers who employed travel to examine the temporal and geographical boundaries of the Muslim community. Interestingly, Touati stresses that pilgrimage was never a particularly important practice of travel in the early Muslim community.<sup>13</sup>

There are a few points that need to be drawn from Touati's analysis and that will be consistently revisited throughout the chapter. The first is that travel is not synonymous with travelogues. For many of the travelers he details, a travelogue was the least likely product of

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<sup>12</sup> See some of the selections in Matar, *In the Lands of the Christians*; Nabil I. Matar, *An Arab Ambassador in the Mediterranean World: The Travels of Muḥammad Ibn ʿUthman Al-Miknasi* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> Houari Touati, *Islam and Travel in the Middle Ages*, trans. Lydia G Cochrane (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010).

their circulation. Some produced collections of *ḥadīth* and subsequently biographical dictionaries, others produced grammars, and yet others geographies. To draw upon another example, the mobility of the Ḥaḍramī diaspora scattered across the Indian Ocean was textually expressed through genealogical charts.<sup>14</sup> In the Ottoman case, especially in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, hagiographies often functioned as expressions of such mobility. For example, detailing the movement of a holy man from Persia who established himself in eastern Anatolia, building in the process a city, a community, or a Sufi order. Or take the example of the hagiography of Dervīş Ḥākī.<sup>15</sup> The holy man's major accomplishment was his capacity to effortlessly dash between the major cities of the sixteenth-century empires. From Istanbul he jumps to Baghdad or to discussions with the Uzbek Khan. While Dervīş Ḥākī travels with a sort of unlimited mobility, the actual act or practice of travel is reduced to a purely virtual experience.

The emergence of a consistent tradition of travelogue writing only appears at the end of Touati's chronology. This is important to keep in mind because it points to the important fact that the travelogue is not a bygone conclusion to travel. Ottoman subjects and officials traveled throughout the empire and beyond, but essentially never left a trace of their travels. Numerous Ottoman subjects visited Venice throughout the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, though nearly no reports, much less travelogues, remain from their journeys.<sup>16</sup> Ottoman subjects and merchants moved from Southeast Asia to Venice and beyond but rarely felt the need to write about it.<sup>17</sup> In

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<sup>14</sup> Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Ḥākī Meḥmet Efendi, *Menākīb-i Dervīş Ḥākī*, Princeton University Library, Islamic Manuscripts, Third Series MS 494.

<sup>16</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, *Travel and Artisans in the Ottoman Empire: Employment and Mobility in the Early Modern Era* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 77–78.

<sup>17</sup> Cemal Kafadar, "A Death in Venice (1575): Anatolian Muslim Merchants Trading in the Serenissima," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 10 (1986): 191–218.

other words, the usage of travelogues had to be developed over time. In the European context, the culture of travelogue writing also had to be inculcated. The act of the training the eye to see, to report and circulate information, became an important part of late Renaissance culture, one that carried over into the seventeenth century.<sup>18</sup> And once a travelogue was written and published, they also entered into a specific market in which printers sold accounts of travel, fantastical and realistic, to an eager reading public.

### **An Ottoman Tradition of Travel Writing**

The birth of a consistent and recognizable tradition of travel writing in the Ottoman Empire is tied to the expansion of the empire itself, in particular to the expansion of the empire to the Arab lands in 1516-9. These are not expressions of a generic “Ottoman,” or, for that matter, “Islamic,” mentality, but rather textual products of certain circuits of empire initiated originally by the expansion of the Ottoman polity.<sup>19</sup> Families of local notables and scholars in the Arab cities produced the initial travelogues as they traveled to Istanbul to seek appointments and secure their standing in the new imperial system. But why were these first travelogues only produced by elite scholarly families in the Arab lands? After all, the empire had engulfed a large variety of new territories, but we have yet to come across any travelogues written in Greek by Christians setting out to secure concessions in the new capital or Turkish and Persian-speaking scholars from the east heading toward to Istanbul. Answering these questions requires an examination of the social purpose of the travelogue.

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<sup>18</sup> Joan-Pau Rubies, “Instructions for Travellers: Teaching the Eye to See,” *History and Anthropology* 9, no. 2–3 (1996): 139–90.

<sup>19</sup> Regarding the approach of travelogues revealing certain mentalities see Robert Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi* (Leiden: Brill, 2006) and the afterword of Gottfried Hagen, “Ottoman Understandings of the World in the Seventeenth Century.”

The first travelogues by these Arab scholars should be understood as a poetic gifts between themselves and their Rumi patrons. As will be described below, a travelogue was not meant to be a work published for a large public audience but a gift that sealed a pact between a scholar, his descendants, and his patron. The fact that there were no travelogues depicting unidirectional travel—for example, a scholar moving permanently from Damascus to Istanbul—strengthens the impression that the point of these texts was not to describe the road to the capital to others, but to create a poetic gift between patron and client, to describe the social world that bound them together. Arabic was the shared high literary language between these groups of clients and patrons. Despite the development of Turkish as a language of high culture over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Arabic was still valued as a site of religious and poetic discourse by the incoming Rumi governors and bureaucrats, who prided themselves on their linguistic skill in relation to their intellectual betters.<sup>20</sup> From the very beginning, travelogues by Arab Muslim scholars were a site to mediate an imperial relationship.

The marked role of demonstrating poetic and rhetorical mastery in these travelogues is one reason why scholars today have such a hard time recognizing and appreciating them. There are a number of texts that scholars in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries considered travelogues (*riḥla*) that we fail to recognize as such today and classify instead as biographical dictionaries or poetry collections. This was the case with the works of Būrīnī and Khafājī but also smaller works such as that of the mid seventeenth-century Damascene scholar Aḥmad al-Ṭālawī, a frequent reader of travelogues. Other than an eventual mention that he set out in 24 August 1662 (9 Muharram 1073h) with two good friends toward the mountains of Lebanon, he

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<sup>20</sup> On this see Helen Pfeifer, “To Gather Together: Cultural Encounters in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Literary Salons” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2014).

includes no details of travel other than quotations of poetry from friends and colleagues.<sup>21</sup>

Adding to our difficulty in appreciating these travelogues is our predilection to focus on prose in travelogues and gloss over the verse. When we examine the rough drafts of these works, however, we find as much, if not more, emphasis on minutely editing the poetry as on the prose.<sup>22</sup>

It is difficult to overemphasize the role poetry played in the construction of these scholars' social world, their sense of self, and even their masculinity. Encountering a scholar for the first time or meeting a long-absent friend would incite men to compose verses on the spot.<sup>23</sup> Cementing a friendship required the composition of a qasida.<sup>24</sup> When they wanted to insult and devastate one another, or bond over a colleague's incompetence, they would rail against his weak grasp of meter and rhetoric.<sup>25</sup> Before a boy was capable of producing his own poetry, he would recite his father's poetry in public meetings and would continue to keep his father's work in circulation. Take for example, the traveler Ibn Ma'sūm, who at the age of eleven was called by his father to move from Mecca to Hyderabad (detailed below). In the port of al-Mukhā, he came across a young litterateur named Ahmad and his father. Ahmad, like Ibn Ma'sūm, had moved to

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<sup>21</sup> Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭālawī, *Ithāf dhawī al-Inṣāf bi-Taḥā'if al-Inṣāf*, Bibliotheque nationale de France, MS Arabe 5048, f. 12b

<sup>22</sup> See the rough draft of Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *al-Maṭāli' al-Badriyya fi'l-Manāzil al-Rūmiyya*, British Library, MS Or 3621 and the rough draft of Nābulusī's *al-Ḥaqīqa wa'l-Majāz fi Riḥlat Bilād al-Shām wa Miṣr wa'l-Hijāz*, Zahiriya (Asad) Library, MS 'Aam 4304.

<sup>23</sup> Ibrāhīm al-Khiyārī, *Tuḥfat al-Udabā' wa Salwat al-Ghurabā'*, ed. Raja' Mahmud al-Samarra'i (Baghdad: Wizarat al-Thiqafa wa'l-Ilm, al-Jumhuriyya al-'Iraqiyya, 1969), 1:113-4 see for example the exchange between two penpals, 'Uṭayfi and Khiyārī, who meet for the first time in Damascus.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, the qasida Nābulusī recited to his close friend Zayn al-'Abidīn al-Bakrī 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa'l-Majāz fi Riḥlat Bilād al-Shām wa Miṣr wa'l-Hijāz*, ed. Riyāḍ 'Abdulḥamīd Murād (Dimashq: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1998), 2: 64-66.

<sup>25</sup> Here the Arab scholar Ḥamawī and his Rūmī patron Çivizāde make fun of Ibn Jum'a, Muḥibbaddīn al-Ḥamawī, *Ḥādī al-Az'ān al-Najdiyya ila al-Diyār al-Miṣriyya*, ed. Muhammad Adnan Bakhit (Mu'tah [al-Karak]: 'Imada al-Baḥth al-'Ilmi, Jāmi'a Mu'ta, 1993), 32.

India with his father at a young age and was temporarily returning for the hajj. Ibn Ma‘šūm requested that Aḥmad recite him some of his poetry, but the latter demurred and instead recited the poetry of Ibn Ma‘šūm’s father as a sign of respect and intimacy. In response, Ibn Ma‘šūm recited some of his own father’s work before recording down the work of Ahmad and Ahmad’s father.<sup>26</sup> On this occasion, as with many others, the poems functioned as means of mediating a relationship with others, a connection between generations, a recognizable symbol between certain men, and as a surrogate for the self.

The emphasis on linguistic and rhetorical mastery fashioned such a radically restricted notion of self that it severely altered the nature of the description found within the travelogue. Women, children, and non-Muslims—in other words, the Other which scholars today expect travelogues to reveal—were largely excluded from the social world described in these travelogues. This partially explains why the geography through which they ventured was in our own eyes so limited, extending only to South Asia and Istanbul at its furthest. Europe and Asia did not include humans worthy of mention. Even places like Persia or the Balkans, whose scholars very much read Arabic, were beyond the pale given their imperfect grasp of the language. The physical and material world likewise received relatively little attention. There were poems, couplets or quatrains here and there that were devoted to certain landscapes, especially brooks, streams, and gardens, and picturesque buildings. However, other than poetry dedicated to a landscape there was no attempt to deeply describe an unknown locale to others who might not have ventured there. Many of the following pages detail how this quite restricted world began to unravel over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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<sup>26</sup> ‘Alī Ṣadr al-Dīn b. al-Amīr Aḥmad Niẓām al-Dīn b. Muḥammad al-Madanī Ibn Ma‘šūm, *Riḥlat Ibn Ma‘šūm al-Madani aw Salwat al-Gharīb wa Uswat al-Arīb*, ed. Shākir Hādī Shukr (Beirut: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-‘Arabiyya, 1988), 95–98.

Early modern Arab scholars were themselves aware of the inherent tensions of their particular tradition of travelogues. The seventeenth-century scholar Khiyārī, in the introduction to his own travelogue, reflected on the conventions of travel writing, stating, “the learned agree and the noble minded concur that if one of them travels far and wide then he should put together a travelogue, but they differ as to what follows. For one of them focuses his travelogue on mentioning men of religion that he met, and the other mentions the lands.”<sup>27</sup> His comments expose the poles of description pulling writers in opposing directions. On one hand, the presumption was to detail the important scholars one met in each city, but at the same time a travelogue was meant to convey a first-person experience, to relate to others what the eye saw, whether that was the existence of a coffeehouse or a beautiful building. These observations highlight the fact that description and observation is by no means a neutral or self-evident act, an incidental byproduct of the journey, as we sometimes tend to assume. As the travelogue progressed from notes jotted down along the road to a formally composed and published piece, authors made intentional decisions as to the method and object of description and each had political implications.

### **Poetic Gifts of the Sixteenth Century**

When we examine the initial years following the Ottoman conquest of the Arab lands, travelogues only seem to appear in fits and starts. This was partly due to the fact that it took time for patronage relations between the new imperial rulers and their well-educated subjects to

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<sup>27</sup> al-Khiyārī, *Tuḥfat al-Uḍabāʾ*, 1:35 Due to a printing error, key pages of Khiyari’s travelogue, in which he describes his methodology, are left blank in many printed copies of his travelogues. The copy at University of Chicago Regenstein Library is the only complete copy I have been able find.



produce texts. Moreover, very few travelogues from the period managed to survive or did so only in a single copy or two. This is in turn a result of their intended usage as proprietary texts of the authoring family. Despite this, scanning biographical dictionaries and other texts reveals that over the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century a strong tradition of travelogue writing emerges. Ḥasan al-Būrīnī (1556-1615) apparently wrote three, one to Tarabulus, Aleppo, and the Hijaz in the 1610s (travelogues had a tendency to be written as trilogies for some reason).<sup>28</sup> The son of Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, whose travelogue is mentioned below, likewise composed a set of travelogues himself in the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>29</sup> Faḍlallah al-Muḥibbī, the father of the well-known biographer, wrote two short travelogues to Istanbul and Egypt.<sup>30</sup> He dedicated them to the Ottoman *ṣeyhülislām* Yaḥya Efendi Zekeriyezāde (r. 1625-32), calling him “my teacher and my father’s teacher, my shelter and refuge in the past and present (*fī ṭārīfī wa tālidī*).<sup>31</sup> The relationship that the father had formed with Zekeriyezāde continued with son, each of whom produced a travelogue.

Perhaps the first travelogue written during the Ottoman period, and maybe the best known, is the travelogue of Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ghazzī, a member of one of the famous Damascene scholarly families.<sup>32</sup> He finished the rough draft of the work, *The Full Moon’s Ascent: Waystations to Rūm* (the word for full moon [*badr*] being a reference to his own name),

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<sup>28</sup> al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad Būrīnī, *Tarājim al-a’yān min abnā’ al-zamān*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Munajjid (Dimashq: al-Majma’ al-‘ilmī al-‘Arabī bi-Dimashq, 1959), 15; al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa’l-Majāz*, 1:322. It seems that Nābulusī made use of Būrīnī’s observations of a Crusader or Roman aqueduct outside of Tarabulus.

<sup>29</sup> Pfeifer, “To Gather Together,” 94.

<sup>30</sup> Faḍllāh b. Muḥibballāh al-Muḥibbī, *al-Riḥlatān al-Rūmīyah wa’l-Miṣrīyah*, ed. ‘Imād ‘Abd al-Salām Ra’ūf (Dimashq: Dar al-Zaman, 2012).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>32</sup> Early Republican Turkish scholars began to unearth the tradition of Arabic travelogues but unfortunately it did not inspire further research. Ekrem Kāmil, “Gazzi-Mekki Seyahatnâmesi,” *Tarih Semineri dergisi* 1/2 (38 1937): 3–90.

in mid-June 1534, just over four years after he set out from Damascus to Istanbul in mid-May 1530.<sup>33</sup> Like the other travelogues of the sixteenth-century, it is organized around the cities through which he passes on his way to Istanbul. Ghazzī's travelogue, however, is a distilled product of literary sensibilities, its prodigious poetry describes the landscape and people he saw and testifies to the amount of work he invested in the piece. Although Ghazzī never explicitly states the reason for which he set out on the journey, he dedicated it at large to the Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520-1566). One imagines it functioned both as an artifact describing the way for those who had to undertake their own journeys as well an ornate description of the realm and the leaders who adorned it.<sup>34</sup> Thus, one encounters not only poetry about beautiful streams near Baalbek and the gardens of Adana, but also detailed descriptions of his meetings with the heads of the learned hierarchy in the Ottoman capital.<sup>35</sup>

Some journeys to the imperial capital resulted in neither success nor travelogue. One the earliest travelogues from the sixteenth-century was one that ultimately resulted in failure. Quṭb al-Dīn al-Nahrawālī (1511/12-1582) was a Hanafi Meccan born in Gujarat and well-versed in Turkish, who had close relations with a variety of visiting Ottoman dignitaries in Mecca. He had actually served as part of a small embassy from Mecca to Istanbul on behalf of the sultan of Gujarat, and perhaps for this reason he was chosen to lead a small expedition to Istanbul in 1557 to lobby for the Meccan Sharifs. Its main concern on the road was to describe the infrastructure available to the traveler as he made his way to Istanbul, an infrastructure that was often built by

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<sup>33</sup> Start date found on Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ghazzī, *al-Maṭāli‘ al-Badriyya fi’l-Manāzil al-Rūmiyya*, ed. al-Mahdī ‘Īd al-Rawāḍiyya (Beirut: al-Mu’assasa al-“Arabiyya li”l-Dirāsāt wa’l-Nashr, 2004), 23 End date of composition found in the autograph copy at British Library, MS OR 3621, f. 70b.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 39–44; For a more detailed description of Ghazzī's adventures in Istanbul see Pfeifer, “To Gather Together,” 65–100.

the imperial dynasty or local powerholders. For example, when passing through Adana, he mentioned the bridges coming in, the soup available at the inn, the local notable who hosted him, but little in the way of descriptions of natural landscape.<sup>36</sup> Instead, readers are given a feel for the fabric of imperial rule. They are told of the local potentates as well as the major imperial institutions such as madrasas and the pay-ranks for those they encounter. Even so, in each city he is sure to relate accurately all the poems he both offered and received.<sup>37</sup> Nahrawālī's short trip, though, ends with failure in that he was unable to achieve his mission of having the troublesome Delu Piri of Medina dismissed from his post. The mixed results of the travelogue might be the reason why Nahrawālī never converted his loose notes into a formally published travelogue.

These sixteenth-century travelogues, and the knowledge they collected, existed more as the proprietary legacy of the family, shared with close connections, clients, and patrons, rather than free-floating books for a larger reading public. This would explain the fact that they often only exist in rather limited copies and were not frequently cited by other travelogues. Take for example the travelogue of Nahrawālī with which I began this section. Only one copy exists today, and this is his own autograph copy. It is still bound in the original binding that Nahrawālī ordered, which suggests that it may not have been frequently read or circulated as bindings tend to break down with heavy use.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the format of the paper is not that of a normal book but of a ledger or notebook (*defter*) with folios that are quite long but of limited width. As the translator Blackburn admits, this was essentially his commonplace book, a *tadhkira*, a collection

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<sup>36</sup> Quṭb al-Dīn al-Nahrawālī, *Journey to the Sublime Porte: The Arabic Memoir of a Sharifian Agent's Diplomatic Mission to the Ottoman Imperial Court in the Era of Suleyman the Magnificent*, trans. Richard Blackburn (Beirut: Ergon Verlag, 2005), 105–10.

<sup>37</sup> e.g. *ibid.*, 37–42–80.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii. The current location of the travelogue is at Beyazit Kütüphanesi, MS Veliyüddin Efendi 2440.

of his notes from the journey alongside some Quranic interpretations and legal questions.<sup>39</sup> This, paired with the fact that only the author's copy exists, suggests that it might never have been meant for formal publication, that these were simply the personal notes of one writer. Yet, one of our seventeenth-century travelers, the Medinan scholar Kibrīt (see below), actually mentions Nahrawālī's journey. Kibrīt states that besides Nahrawālī's better known books on the history of the Ka'ba and Ottoman conquest of the Hijāz, he also wrote a *tadhkira* and went on a journey. He says he had not been aware of Nahrawālī's travelogue but it was brought to his attention by the amir Muhammad al-Suwaydan. He pithily summarizes Nahrawālī's experience as "a journey that achieved good results (*asfarat 'an maḥāsin al-wujūh*). His journey was in the year 965. He met a lot of learned scholars and gained a leading position, though he might have complained and cried."<sup>40</sup> Even if the travelogue was never formally published, or readily available, people who had been close to Nahrawālī had access to its contents until it was formally rediscovered in the eighteenth century.<sup>41</sup>

Ghazzī's travelogue, unlike that of Nahrawālī, was actually formally published, but it was kept relatively close to the family. At least three complete copies exist, one of them being the author's rough draft.<sup>42</sup> One copy, made in a vertically elongated and formal Arabic *naskh* (as

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> "...*wa-riḥla asfarat 'an maḥāsin al-wujūh. Akhbarani bihā al-amīr Muḥammad bin Suwaydān, wa lam 'aqif 'alayhā wa kānat riḥlatahu sana khamis wa sittīn wa tis'amā'īya, laqiya bihā al-afāḍil wa nāla al-riyāsa wa rubammā shaka fihā ou baka.*" Muḥammad b. 'Abdullah al-Ḥusaynī al-Mūsawī Kibrīt, *Riḥlat al-Shitā' wa 'l-Ṣayf*, ed. Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Ṭantāwī (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1965), 152.

<sup>41</sup> This travelogue was eventually collected by the eighteenth-century intellectual Veliyuddin Efendi. Kamil states that at the top of the travelogue was a biography of Nahrawālī by the seventeenth-century scholar Shihābaddīn al-Khafājī. Khafājī actually wrote his own sort of travelogue cum biographical dictionary but made no mention of Nahrawālī's travelogue, which suggests that knowledge of it had faded. Kāmil, "Gazzi-Mekki Seyahatnāmesi," 16; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Khafājī, *Rayḥanat al-Alibbā wa Zaharat al-Ḥayāt al-Dunyā*, ed. 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Hulw (Cairo: Matba'at 'Isa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1967), 1:408-16.

<sup>42</sup> This copy (British Library, MS OR 3621) was eventually acquired by John Lee, an astronomer and antiquarian, trained at St. John's College in Cambridge and who travelled through the Levant from 1810-1815, during which

opposed to Ottoman varieties of naskh), was apparently closely copied from the author's rough draft in 1656.<sup>43</sup> A much nicer and cleaner version of the text—a presentation copy made with gilded borders and four colors of ink, and carefully copied and collated in a rather nice Ottoman-style *talik* script—was written in the middle of the seventeenth century. The presumed copyist, a certain 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Shāmī (the last name translated as the Damascene or Syrian), wrote out a small biography of the Ghazzī family in the flyleaves of the volume, commenting on their immense learning.<sup>44</sup> More importantly for our purposes, 'Abd al-Laṭīf thanks Najm al-Dīn for granting him an *ijāza* in hadith before 'Abd al-Laṭīf embarked on his own trip to the lands of Rūm in 1042.<sup>45</sup> These details are telling because it reveals that the travelogue was essentially shared with clients of the Ghazzī family. It seems that 'Abd al-Laṭīf's travelogue was even collated (checked for errors) against an original by a local Damascene, perhaps even a close member of the family.<sup>46</sup> The travelogue was not just a text meant to be read for information on the road, but a gift given to the family's superiors in Istanbul and to their clients heading toward Istanbul. In turn, it seems that Abdullatif's presentation copy may have become a gift itself later in the seventeenth century when it entered the library of the influential vizierial family of the Köprülüs.

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time he acquired the manuscript. In 1888, the manuscript was bought at auction by the British Museum and thus entered the collections of the British Library.

<sup>43</sup> See the description of the MS B799 at the Russian Academy of Sciences in al-Ghazzī, *al-Maṭāli' al-Badriyya*, 16. The manuscript was copied in 20 Rabia II 1066 by Khalīl b. Zaynaddīn al-Ikhnā'ī.

<sup>44</sup> in particular Badr al-Dīn and his son, Najm al-Dīn, and Abu'l-Ṭayyib

<sup>45</sup> Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1390, f. iib

<sup>46</sup> Two different hands made corrections to the travelogue's text. The first is in the copyist's (Abdullatif's) hand (see f. 16a for an example) and the other is a simpler non-calligraphic Arab *naskh* hand (see f. 99a for an example). The latter might have been a member of the Ghazzī family given the peculiarly elided manner in which the "Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Muhammad" of Badr al-Dīn's name was copied on the title page of MS Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1390, f. 1 to Badr al-Dīn's autograph on British Library MS Or. 3621 f. 70b, which suggests that a family member who often had to write down his lineage often was involved.

## Dreams Deferred and Expanded: Travelogues in the Seventeenth Century

The sixteenth-century travelogue that writers like Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī penned were a stamp that sealed an implicit contract between the patron and writer. Fine lines of verse passed between father and son and patron and client, displaying to those involved the social relations and position gained in the imperial capital. But the contractual relationship slowly loosened. One could even argue that the supposed benefits of travelogues were largely illusory but they continued to hold sway on the imaginations of many writers. Although the aforementioned Nahrawālī was ultimately unsuccessful after his trip to Istanbul collapsed, Kibrīt declared that he had “a journey that achieved good results (*asfarat ‘an maḥāsin al-wujūh*)” and that “he met a lot of learned scholars and gained a leading position.” When Ibrāhīm al-Khiyārī found an imposter had come to Medina with an ersatz firman claiming the position that he and his father had held, he packed his bags and headed to the sultan’s court in Anatolia and promptly wrote a travelogue. Eventually, even Christians from greater Syria would take up this model of the travelogue to depict their journeys to new imperial patrons in Muscovy, as we shall see below.

Yet, the ultimate collapse of this idealized image of patronage resulted in the transformation of the travelogue genre itself, both its ends and means. It still attempted to display a social world but as it departed from an initial focus on describing the road to Constantinople and the elites and literati of the imperial capital it became much more focused on the act of travel itself. The itineraries became more local, the purposes more varied, and the social world they depicted much more diverse. Travel and travelogue writing became seen as an end unto itself, less a deleterious burden than an overwhelming joy and challenge. Many of the seventeenth

century travelogues were still largely read by a coterie of close friends and relatives, but they had transformed the affective and moral value of travel.

Why did this occur? Perhaps because the relatively insecurity and flexibility of the early years of Ottoman rule subsided. The families that were able to establish or maintain their elite status in the eyes of the new government usually maintained such positions and composing and gifting new travelogues to elites in the capital might have been unnecessary. As for those that did not, the possibility of traveling to Istanbul and securing a job at the expense of other local families was increasingly limited, not to mention that the number of educated people attempting to enter government service was growing. Writers like Kibrīt traveled to Istanbul in hopes of securing a position, but seemingly had little luck. Perhaps for this reason they changed the focus of their travelogues. The journey itself rather than the capital became the focus. Itineraries shifted toward Cairo or the countryside of Syria and Mecca and Medina.

Let us look at the fate of three, at times, quite unhappy, travelers from the seventeenth century: Ḥamawī, Kibrīt, and Khiyārī. I highlight them not only due to their experiences, but because they are united in the mind of one intrepid Damascene intellectual, Ramaḍān b. Mūsā al-ʿUṭayfī (1610-1684), who copied, read, and commented on all their travelogues, and eventually documented his own journey. These travelogues mark a moment when travelogues began to circulate more broadly among the still small but significant audience of other scholars in the major urban centers of the Arab lands. Their material remains corroborate an expansion of the travelogue to broader audiences.

The first travelogue purposefully aimed at a large audience was the second travelogue of Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ḥamawī (1542-1608): *The Camel Driver of the Najdi Litters to the Land of Egypt and Nomads with Blood-Red Tears in the Valley of Land of Rūm*. Although the two travelogues were written in the 1570s as separate pieces describing separate journeys, they were nearly always copied together and so functioned as a complete text.<sup>47</sup> In the text, Ḥamawī narrates his journeys with his patron and erstwhile friend, Çivizāde (ar. Jawīzāda), first to Cairo and then to Istanbul. The story, which Helen Pfeifer astutely examines, is ultimately a sad one. Ḥamawī is a quite learned but relatively provincial scholar from the small city of Ḥama, who tries to make a career for himself through his imperial patron. While the first travelogue details their constant gossip and shared literary taste, the second one displays his dismay when he not only fails to acquire a higher position, but is fired from that which he already held.<sup>48</sup>

Ḥamawī's travelogue departed from the relatively closed distribution of Ghazzī and Naḥrawālī in that he purposefully circulated his second travelogue among some major Damascene scholars of the period for their comments and endorsements. Generally, endorsements (*taqrīdāt* [ar.]/*taḳrīzāt* [tr.]) are appended or copied before the formal beginning of the text, and thus are copied at the discretion of the scribe.<sup>49</sup> Ḥamawī, however, included the endorsements of Isma'īl al-Nābulusī, 'Imād al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī and Shams al-Dīn al-Minqār

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<sup>47</sup> Although the two texts are nearly always copied together, a critical edition has been prepared for only the first of the travelogues. *Bawādi al-Dumū' al- 'Andamiyya bi-Wādi al-Diyār al-Rūmiyya* remains in manuscript. al-Ḥamawī, *Ḥādī al-Aẓ'ān al-Najdiyya ila al-Diyār al-Miṣriyya*. See for example Cambridge University Library, MS Qq 125 or Kutubkhāna Majlis Baladi Iskandariyya, Rihlat 916 - MS 7059

<sup>48</sup> Ḥamawī's tale is told in Pfeifer, "To Gather Together," 175–222.

<sup>49</sup> On the topic of taqrizat see Christine Woodhead, "Puff and Patronage: Ottoman Taḳrīz-Writing and Literary Recommendations in the 17th Century," in *The Balance of Truth - Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Lewis*, ed. Çiğdem Balım-Harding and Colin Imber (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2000), 395–406.



(Muḥammad b. Qāsim), within the text of the travelogue itself, and thus ensured that these endorsements would be copied.<sup>50</sup> For one, the endorsements demonstrate that Ḥamawī, already spurned by his prospective patron, ʿIvīzāde, had decided to aim his travelogue at the (slightly) broader audience of the scholarly circles of Damascus. Alternatively, Ḥamawī might have also been signaling his connections to the scholarly elite of Damascus by highlighting the review of Ismail al-Nābulusī, who had been a frequent correspondent and friend of his former patron Civizāde.<sup>51</sup> Nābulusī's encomium of Ḥamawī's travelogue praises not the base information but rather the "magic of its rhetoric (*siḥr balāghatihi*)," its "eloquence (*faṣāḥa*), and its lovely descriptions (*maḥāsin al-awṣāf*).<sup>52</sup> Ḥamawī failed to ultimately hold onto the social relationship with his patron ʿIvīzāde in the first travelogue but turned instead to the larger audience of learned scholars in Damascus.

The emphasis on reading the travelogues with an eye to the authors' poetic and rhetorical skills, rather than geographical information, is evident in the Damascene scholar, Ramaḍan b. Mūsa al-ʿUṭayfī reading of Ḥamawī's travelogue. ʿUṭayfī was quite an avid reader of travelogues which eventually propelled him to write his own, as will be explored below. ʿUṭayfī inherited the travelogue of Ḥamawī from his father, who copied it in 1630-1 (1040h) alongside another of Ḥamawī's texts.<sup>53</sup> As we saw in regard to the circulation of Ghazzī's texts, ʿUṭayfī's father copied the text from the author's (Ḥamawī's) autograph copy, which suggests that he was

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<sup>50</sup> Ḥamawī, Cambridge University Library, MS Qq 125, f. 264a-266b

<sup>51</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa'l-Majāz*, 1:335.

<sup>52</sup> Ḥamawī, Cambridge University Library, MS Qq 125, f. 264a

<sup>53</sup> The other text is Ḥamawī's commentary on the famous exegesis known as al-Kashshāf, see *Tanzīl al-Ayāt ʿala al-Shawāhid min al-Abyāt al-Wāqīʿa fi'l-Kashshāf*, Cambridge University Library, MS Qq 125, f. 197a. This copy of Ḥamawī's travelogue is often mistaken as Ḥamawī's autograph, but the copyist's mark here makes it clear that it was not.

relatively close to the Ḥamawī family, and subsequently passed down the copy to his son.

‘Uṭayfī—whose clear and relatively calligraphic and backward-tilted *ta’līk* is quite distinct from his father’s spindly and idiosyncratic scratches (see fig. 1)—in turn put his ownership mark and (visual) reading marks on both of the Ḥamawī texts.<sup>54</sup> Nearly all of ‘Uṭayfī’s comments on the travelogue are either side-headings marking the mention of significant figures in Damascus or Istanbul, e.g. Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ḥijāzī and Najmaddīn al-Ghayṭī,<sup>55</sup> the formal endorsement (*taqrīd*) of Ḥamawī’s travelogue by major Damascene intellectuals like Ismail al-Nābulusī, or poetic rejoinders to Ḥamawī’s own verses.<sup>56</sup> For instance, when Ḥamawī discourses on the nature of promises, ‘Uṭayfī quotes the lines of another poet that start, "You promised yesterday that you would visit but you did not visit. I persisted in my happiness, as I come and go. If you and I were to meet in a *majlis*, they would say... and I depart forever"<sup>57</sup> In this regard, ‘Uṭayfī follows the pattern of his father’s comments on the manuscript which are primarily poetic rejoinders (and copyist corrections). ‘Uṭayfī also analyzes the rhetorical prowess of the text, quoting at times the words of Ibn Mālik on the different rhetorical devices that Ḥamawī uses like *‘atf al-bayān* (explicative apposition) and *tawkid* (stylistic intensification).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ḥamawī, MS Qq 125 ff. 1a, 197a, 268a,

<sup>55</sup> Ḥamawī, MS Qq 125 ff. 215a, 250a-252a

<sup>56</sup> Ḥamawī, MS Qq 125 ff. 263a-265b

<sup>57</sup> Ḥamawī, MS Qq 125, ff. 243a wa ‘*adta ams bi-an tazūr fa-lam tazur fa zalaltu fī farḥī aji*’ wa *adhhab fa idhā ijtam’ata anā wa antā bi-majlis qālū musīla (?) wa hadhā ash’ab*

<sup>58</sup> Ḥamawī MS Qq 125, f. 217a

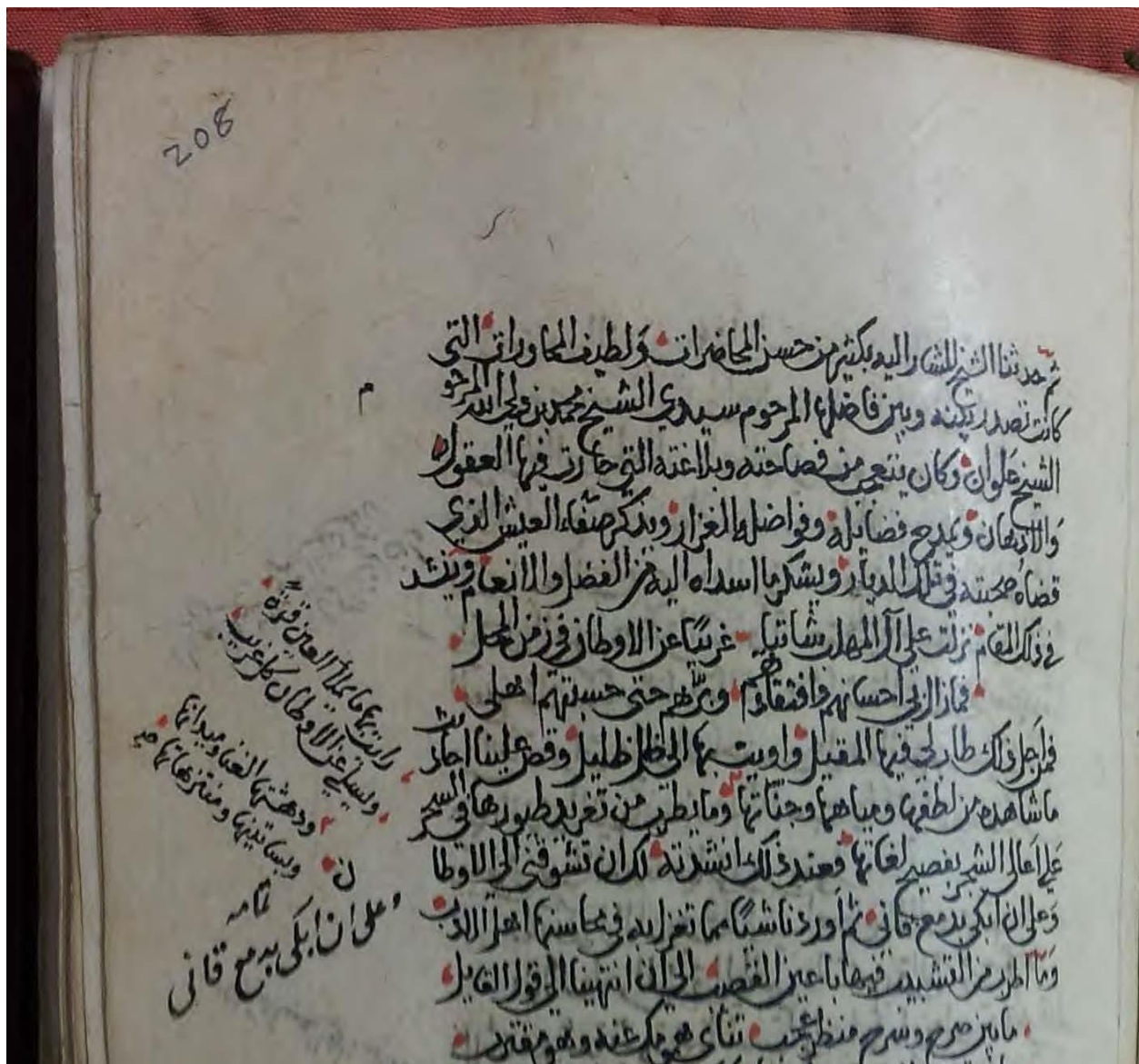


Figure 1: Ḥamawī's travelogue with marginal comments in 'Uṭayfī nice calligraphic hand (bottom left) and those of 'Uṭayfī's father (center left), who was also the original copyist. Cambridge University Library, MS Qq 125, f. 208a (photograph of the author).

'Uṭayfī's reading highlights the way travelogues, especially those written in the sixteenth century, were read not in relation to geographical information or wonders but with an eye to social relationships of well-known figures as embodied in their poetic capacities. It was much the same way that biographical dictionaries were read and, in fact, two early seventeenth century biographical dictionaries, those of Būrīnī and Khafājī, were written as quasi-travelogues, only mentioning people they met in their travels. The point that I would like to highlight here is that

the (successful) travelogues were deeply literary objects. They were not simply notes and observations jotted down but regarded as part of belle-lettres, *adab*. This does not solely mean that literary trope trumped or obscured the calculated observation of the eye, but that their literary value inserted them both into specific models of description and into particular forms of circulation as objects. This was not an attempt to describe the world for wide audiences but to display a certain set of social relations in ornate language, both to the patron in Istanbul but also to a close circle of acquaintances in Damascus.

### *Kibrīt*

The traveler Kibrīt (1603-1660), whose moniker literally means “sulfur,” casts himself as “one of those that fate (*zamān*) declared an enemy, and that misfortune (*hidhān*) bore down upon with the sword of its injustice.”<sup>59</sup> Tussled by the continuous blows of a cruel fate, he finds that he has no choice but to travel to the imperial capital and so he states that “I mounted the steed of hope to the foreign land (*ghurba*) and I boarded the ship of sorrow and lowliness with the intention of requesting a favor from gloomy fate and beseeching that tyrannical and indomitable destiny, letting myself be deluded into thinking that travel (*ḥaraka*) is a blessing and that exile brings gain.”<sup>60</sup> His journey, in the years 1630-1 (1039-40h) took him from his home in Medina to Cairo, across the Mediterranean to Istanbul and then south through Syria. In spite of his rather woeful mien, Kibrīt realizes that he can grab hold of his destiny through the act of

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“wa kuntu mimman nāwūhu al-zamān wa karra ‘alayhi bi-sayf ḥayfihi al-ḥidhān” Kibrīt, *Riḥlat al-Shitā’ wa ‘l-Ṣayf*, 4.<sup>59</sup> “wa kuntu mimman nāwūhu al-zamān wa karra ‘alayhi bi-sayf ḥayfihi al-ḥidhān” Kibrīt, *Riḥlat al-Shitā’ wa ‘l-Ṣayf*, 1965, 4.

<sup>60</sup> “fa imtaṭaytu ghārib al-amal ila al-ghurba wa rakabtu marākib al-madhalla wa ‘l-kurba qāṣidan ista ‘tāb al-dahr al-kālīh wa ista ‘taf al-zamān al-ghushūm al-jāmiḥ iḡtirāran bi-anna fi ‘l-ḥaraka baraka wa-anna al-iḡtirāb dā‘iyat al-iktisāb.” Ibid., 5.

He realizes that

Then his solace lies only in his notebook  
and the witty sayings that come to mind<sup>62</sup>

Kibrīt's travelogue is important because it marks a slight but significant shift in the nature of travelogues. First, he addresses his travelogue to his wider audience and friends before his prospective patron, *şeyhülislam* Yahya Efendi Zekeriyaẓāde (r. 1634-43), the person who he regards as a "refuge in the cooling shade (of patronage) from the oppression of tyrannical fate and the darkness of the nights of this gloomy destiny."<sup>65</sup> In fact, it seems that Kibrīt, at the time of writing seems to have been unsure of the final success of his journey, unsure if the gift

<sup>65</sup> Kibrīt, *Rihlat al-Shitā' wa 'l-Sayf*, 1965, 8.

(*hadiya*, *ʿaṭiya*) of the travelogue would help his pitiful state. He states, “maybe good fortune will notice it and honor it with a reading by [Yaḥya Efendi] and my faithless fate will inform me after our parting. If the grandeur of his stature stops him from doing so, or my own shortcomings, then he will answer, ‘I am not there.’”<sup>66</sup> In spite of this uncertainty, Kibrīt continues with the act of composing the travelogue for a general readership, and as we shall see, it was actually quite widely read. It is this understanding of the potential of travelogues for personal and societal transformation—through its composition and reading—that is quite novel. Kibrīt’s work slowly decouples the travelogue from the role of a small poetic gift circulated among friends to a notion of travel as an act to be enjoyed, whether as a traveler or as a reader. For this reason, perhaps he combines the eloquent language of the litterateur with an interest in geography and wonders (which we associate more closely with the travelogue tradition today).

### *ʿUṭayfī*

One of the Kibrīt’s more devoted readers, among many, was the aforementioned Ramaḍan al-ʿUṭayfī.<sup>67</sup> What ʿUṭayfī seized from these travelers, however reluctant, was a deep joy of travel. ʿUṭayfī was a scholar of good repute who lived in Damascus for most of the seventeenth century. His biography mentions that, besides possessing a special capacity to captivate hearts, he was a much beloved bibliophile of wide-ranging interests and many people benefited from the books he copied (which would help explain why so many of his books

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<sup>66</sup> “*wa ʿasa an yalḥaḥza ḥaẓẓ fatuṣṣharraf bi-muṭālaʿatihi wa yaṣilnī dahri al-khaʿūn min baʿd muqāṭaʿatihi wa idhā kāna uluww maqāmihī yamnaʿ min dhalik wa mā bī min al-quṣūr yaqūl lastu hunālik.*” *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>67</sup> “ʿUṭayfī was always beguiled by the figure of Kibrīt, later in life, he asks the Medinan Ibrāhīm al-Khiyārī to compile a biography of his friend Kibrīt for him. al-Khiyārī, *Tuḥfat al-Udabāʾ*, 1:113-4.

managed to be dispersed to European libraries).<sup>68</sup> He did not seem to leave much to posterity, but he did write a travelogue, one that was quite short. ‘Uṭayfī’s travelogue on the face of it does not seem like much—ten odd folios, split into two chapters—but it is representative of a larger shift in the meaning and usage of travel in the early modern Ottoman Empire.

‘Uṭayfī’s first chapter was a collection of quotes, essentially a commonplace book, about the benefits of travel. Interestingly, most of these come not from the hadithmen, the people who pushed travel as a formative Muslim practice, but from a variety of medieval Arab litterateurs, *udāba*. Through his selection of quotations he makes one point clear: travel is not just a burden or an unfortunate necessity, it is something to be celebrated, something that strengthens the character and the body. For instance, in the beginning of his chapter he quotes a generic “wise man (*hakīm*).” He starts off with a perhaps expected defense of travel: “Among the virtues [of travel] is that the traveler sees the wonders of lands and the marvels of countries and beautiful ruins.” More interesting is what comes afterwards, the mental and physical benefits of travel.

[travel] invites [the traveler] to count his blessings, hear of the unheard (*yasma‘ al-ajā‘ib*), gain experience, set off on roads, make profits, and strengthen the body. It energizes the lazy, consoles the bereaved, drives away illness, stokes the appetite, reduces the ravages of pride (*sawrat al-kibr*) and stimulates the capacity for memory.<sup>69</sup>

What we see here is ‘Uṭayfī highlighting the capacity of the act of travel to develop the self and the body. Travel now even has medical benefits, benefits that were referred to by many travelers

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<sup>68</sup> Among his surviving books is an exchange of letters between Khayr al-Dīn al-Ramlī and şeyhulislam Minkārīzāde detailed in Chapter 2, see Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arabe 669. For his biography see Muḥammad Amīn b. Faḍl Allāh al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-Athar fī A‘yān al-Qarn al-Hādī ‘Ashar* (Cairo, 1284), 2:168-170.

<sup>69</sup> Ramāḍān b. Mūsā al-‘Uṭayfī, “Rihla min Dimashq al-Shām ila Ṭarābulus al-Shām,” in *Rihlatān ilā Lubnān*, by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Munajjid and Stefan Wild (Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979), 2.

themselves. This connects to the second point that ‘Uṭayfī made in his work, that travel revealed character, that it was “*mīzān al-akhlāq*,” the “scales of character” that gauged one’s mettle and separated those of golden nature from those made of lesser metals: “It was said to Ibn al-A‘rābī, ‘Why is travel called *safar*? And he said, because it ‘*safars*’ the character of men, that is, it reveals it.”<sup>70</sup> Sentiments like these appeared in the prologues to many travelogues and even morality manuals for intellectuals.<sup>71</sup>

For all his contemplation of the benefits of travel, ‘Uṭayfī, undertook what seems today like a remarkably timid journey. He set out from Damascus on 23 May 1634 (25 Dhi’l-Hujja 1043) and headed over the mountains to Tarabulus (modern day Tripoli in Lebanon) and stayed there for two months whereupon he returned home to Damascus and wrote his short travelogue. He admires the overwhelming greenery of Tarabulus, whose verdant gardens led one local to call the city a “small India.”<sup>72</sup> He discusses the view from the cliffside castle, the resplendence of the houses of the Ottoman officials, his discussions with a variety of local scholars and notables, all of whom wish to host him. Like many travelers of the seventeenth century, he is particularly captivated by viewpoints and landscapes, describing “the most wondrous day of my life” at a marvel called “Ra’s al-Nahar (the Riverhead)” in which one can see (the optical illusion of?) boats on the ocean and the field.<sup>73</sup> Later on, he describes how when the sun rises, its rays pass through the star-like colored glass windows embedded in the ceiling of the Barṭāsiyya Mosque

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> e.g. Ḥusayn b. Fakhraddīn b. Korkmaz al-Ma‘nī Ibn Ma‘n, *Kitāb al-Tamyīz*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Adnān Bakhīt, and Nūfān al-Ḥammūd al-Sawārīh (Amman: Dar al-Shuruq, 2001), 370–77.

<sup>72</sup> al-‘Uṭayfī, “Riḥla,” 15.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 18.



and fall upon the dappled marble walls, creating a wondrous sight.<sup>74</sup> The mosque was one of his favorite places to linger; another was a place where

The water would flow into a water wheel built where its waters mix in a pool and then flow into the river. And I used to spend most of my days [in Tarabulus] going to this place and sitting there, in order to spend some time alone in worship, stroll along the riverbanks, and gladden the heart (*l'akhtali bi'l- 'ibāda wa anazzih al-taraf wa afarriḥ al-qalb*).<sup>75</sup>

And, there, on the river bank of Tarabulus and its mosques, 'Uṭayfī leaves the reader.

The importance of 'Uṭayfī's travelogue lies in its very prosaicness. It was essentially the first travelogue in the early modern tradition that depicted travel not to impress a patron but for its own sake. It constructs a purpose of travel beyond securing a position. It continues to describe a social world, one that is composed of scholars and learned officials, but is detached from professional aims. It still comprises a poetic gift but one dedicated to the author himself or to the landscape of Syria than to a prospective patron. Thus it often turns to describing a deep level of personal reflection or description of a wondrous building or landscape that affected the author. The travelogues of writers like Kibrīt and 'Uṭayfī provided a foundation upon which to build more elaborate and geographically ambitious travelogues. Perhaps two examples of this direct influence are the Meccan Ibn Ma'sūm and the Medinan Khiyārī.

### *Ibn Maḥāsin*

This subtle but significant shift in the work that travelogues performed, initiated by authors like Kibrīt and 'Uṭayfī, can be found in the writings of a number of travelers in the

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

seventeenth century. We can see an expansion of the geographical scope and the stated purpose of the travelogues. For example, on 26 Nov 1638 (19 Rajab 1048) four years after ‘Uṭayfī’s journey, a member of the noted Damascene Maḥāsini scholarly family, Yahya b. Abi’ş-Şafā, known as Ibn Maḥāsin,<sup>76</sup> also set out for Tarabulus from Damascus. The stated purpose of the journey was simply to visit a friend he missed dearly, Murād Efendi, the former *defterdār* (treasurer) of Damascus who had been reassigned to Tarabulus. Ibn Maḥāsin’s travelogue, which like the rest, devoted much of its time to describing the various notables he met in Tarabulus, also spent a good amount of time describing the wonders and gardens of the city. More intriguingly, he cast his journey as one of sadness and loss as he witnesses the ruined villages near Baalbek, destroyed at the hands of the Druze warlord Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ma‘nī. Evoking the recently introduced tropes and imagery of al-Andulus (see below), he compared the ravaged countryside of what is today eastern Lebanon to destruction of the Muslims of Spain by the Christians.<sup>77</sup> This depiction of the lands of Syria sullied by Christians is one he repeats on occasion. For instance, when he inquires about a monumental (presumably Roman) pillar his group encounters outside of the village of Sha‘th, one of his companions explains that it is a remnant from ancient times and at the top of the pillar is a chain that stretches out to a similar pillar in a monastery near Baalbek and that is used during Christian prayers. Seemingly offended by the Christian association of pillar, he mentions offhand that “the soil of this land is said to be very good, that is, until the Franks arrived and seized it, consecrated it, and sowed their seed in

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<sup>76</sup> He apparently died relatively young in 1643-44/1053h al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-Athar fī A’yān al-Qarn al-Ḥādī ‘Ashar*, 463 Vol. 4.

<sup>77</sup> Yahya b. Abi’ş-Şafā Ibn Maḥāsin, *al-Manāzil al-Maḥāsiniyya fī l-Rihla al-Ṭarābulusiyya*, ed. Muhammad Adnan Bakhit (Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, 1981), 40.

it.”<sup>78</sup> The image of a land defiled by Christians is intriguing because it is one of the first examples of the confessional diversity of the Middle East, especially in regard to the mountains of Lebanon which are replete with Christian, Druze, and Shi’a communities. Indeed, it is a brief intrusion of the Other into the other purely Sunni social world of the travelogues.

### *Ibn Ma‘sum*

Ibn Ma‘sum (1642- c.1710) was a fourteen-year old boy in Mecca when fate dealt him a cruel blow. His father had secured a plum promotion as *‘ayn al-malik* to Muḥammad Quṭb Shāh in Hyderabad and been given the sultan’s daughter as a wife. In celebration, the father, who Ibn Ma‘sum had last seen when he was two years old, summoned the family from Mecca to the palace at Golconda. Forced to leave his home (*waṭan*) and friends, he fumed at fate, declaring that “I have been tested by the travails of exile .... it has insistently tossed me off my intended course and took from me the best of God’s blessed lands and gave instead the lands of India, a land so far and distant, a country whose people are brutish infidels (*kafara ṭāghiya*).”<sup>79</sup> Perhaps he had picked up the leitmotif of a man betrayed by a treacherous fate from reading Kibrīt’s travelogue, a work that he would later cite, but he also took from it the notion that he could seize control of his fate through writing.<sup>80</sup> In the course of his writing, perhaps in an attempt to gird himself against the journey, he copied out (but did not officially cite) ‘Uṭayfī’s long and aforementioned praise of travel.<sup>81</sup> The point being that by the mid-seventeenth century a well-

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 46–47.

<sup>79</sup> Ibn Ma‘sum, *Salwat al-Gharīb*, 17.

<sup>80</sup> For the later citation of Kibrīt see *ibid.*, 106.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 23–29.

read boy had the expectation of documenting his travels and composing a travelogue when he returned home.

Ibn Ma‘šūm’s travels with his family led him overland through Yemen until they reached the port of al-Mukhā (the eponymous origin of today’s Mocha). News of military action in Hyderabad forced the family to sojourn in Mukhā for fourteen months and six days before setting out to the coast of India.<sup>82</sup> They landed first in Jaitapur and then moved up the river to the port of Rajapur, where they eventually went inland through Bijapur and Gulbarga until they reached the palace of Golconda. Like many of the other travelogues, it describes the social world they encountered mediated through the exchange of poetry and witticisms. Throughout his journey in Yemen and the Deccan he was able to meet a number of learned scholars and teachers whose poems he appreciated and recited and so it was not difficult to expand the travelogue to these lands. It was also, however, an entirely Arabic-speaking world in which nary a peep of Persian, the presumptive language of the Deccan courts he passed through, is heard. He likewise touched upon many of the now common experiences mentioned in the travelogues: coffee and the case against it,<sup>83</sup> that sweet first lick of sugarcane,<sup>84</sup> rivers, gardens, and the odd plant or two a traveler might encounter.<sup>85</sup>

At the same time, there is also a freer character to Ibn Ma‘šūm travelogue that evaded some of the established patterns of travelogues. Perhaps it is his young age which manifested

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 102–6.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 151–55.

itself in a stark pride in the father he had never formally met.<sup>86</sup> Or his speculation as to the precise composition and location of the throne of Bilqis, decorated with rubies and emeralds.<sup>87</sup> Or his recollection of a fiery comet he saw as a small boy.<sup>88</sup> Or his tendency to go on digressions into Abbasid history.<sup>89</sup> Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that like Ibn Maḥāsin he expanded the scope of his travelogue to start describing a variety of non-Muslim peoples, namely, the various religious sects of Yemen and India, whether Hindu or Shi‘ī. In his description of the Zaydīs of Yemen he attempts to typologize the different sects.<sup>90</sup> Elsewhere, he describes the raucous Ashura celebrations in Hyderabad.<sup>91</sup> He even turns his eye to the Hindu temples he visited in Rajpur, giving a broad description of the stone temples with their human-shaped idols. In his attempts to understand the people as a whole though he turns, as any learned person of the time would, to the sources available to him: al-Ma‘ṣūdī’s explanation of the Indians and Chinese and al-Shahrastānī’s description of world religions (for the Ottoman life of Shahrastānī’s work see Chapter 2). In all of this, he takes a quite non-judgmental view. Indeed, had he disapproved, he probably would simply not have mentioned it. But by the end he realizes that he is dealing with something beyond his own powers of cognition when he concludes that “in sum, the Indians (*hunūd*) have a boundless number of sects and different beliefs (*la yudrikhā*

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 95–96, 221.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 107–8.

<sup>89</sup> e.g. ibid., 31–35.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 76–77.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 274.

*al-ḥaṣr*). I have seen among them those who worship fire, and those who worship trees and those who worship rivers, and those who worship idols."<sup>92</sup>

Ibn Ma‘šūm eventually decided to transform his notes into a travelogue at the age of twenty two, over the years 1664-5 (1074-5h). Perhaps having realized that he would never come back to Mecca, he leaves the reader in a rather unstable moment of his life. Contrary to his expectations, he had not returned to his original home, the moment when most travelogue writers would compose their work. But he did not seem quite at home in the Deccan either, hinting at some unspoken complaints and reciting the letters of those fellow immigrants who had found the land lacking.<sup>93</sup> Ibn Ma‘šūm did eventually return to the Hijaz. After the death of Muḥammad Quṭb Shāh, and the eventual death of his father, he fled the court under the cover of night and went into the service of Aurangzeb in the Deccan as the head of his chancellery. After almost two decades of service to the Mughals he eventually fled with his family on the pretext of undertaking the hajj in 1702 (1114h) and moved back to Mecca. Not surprisingly, he found that it did not resemble in the least the image of his boyhood home. And so he left, again. First to the shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala and eventually to Baghdad before moving to Isfahan, a city he apparently loved, but which he had to leave after some disagreements with the Safavid shah. He ended up in a teaching position in Shiraz where he died around 1707 (1120h).<sup>94</sup> These later adventures, though, he never felt the need to record down in a travelogue.

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 193, 273–74, 311.

<sup>94</sup> Ibn Ma‘šūm ‘Alī Ṣadraddīn b. al-Amīr Aḥmad Nizāmaddīn b. Muḥammad Ma‘šūm al-Madanī, *Riḥlat Ibn Ma‘šūm al-Madani aw Salwat al-Gharīb wa Uswat al-Arīb*, ed. Shākir Hādī Shukr (Beirut: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-‘Arabiyya, 1988), 5–6.

## Travelogues Develop a Methodology

### *Khiyārī*

Even when a writer depicted a journey to the imperial capital to secure a position back home the journey itself took precedence and the travelogue was never dedicated to a prospective patron. The best example of this is the travelogue of Ibrāhīm al-Khiyārī (1628-1673/ 1037-1083h) titled, *The Gift to the Learned and the Solace to Strangers*.<sup>95</sup> Khiyārī set out on 22 June 1669 (22 Muharram 1080h) from Medina to Damascus and then up to Anatolia to find the wandering court of Mehmed IV, before wintering in Istanbul and heading back south. The reason was that he had heard news, by way of Egypt, that a total unknown, a man with no affiliations or social connections, had somehow secured, or even possibly forged, a firman granting him access to the teaching position Khiyārī and his father had held.<sup>96</sup> Despite the crisis, it is actually a moment of celebration for Khiyārī because he had always wanted to see Damascus and greater Syria and all the fuss around his job was the perfect impetus. Thus he bid a bittersweet farewell to his family and friends, and “noticing that as I left the mosque, having said farewell, it was as if I were a prosodist, scanning/rending the verse of my heart,” and set out to travel not to please a patron but for his own sake.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> al-Khiyārī, *Tuḥfat al-Udabāʾ*.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>97</sup> Fa-fāraqtu al-masjid baʿd al-tawdīʿ wa ana alāḥiẓ kaʿanni min al-ʿaruziyīn li-bayt qalbi al-taqīʿ ibid. 1:31.

Khiyārī had had direct access to travelogues of both ‘Uṭayfī and Kibrīt. Khiyārī and ‘Uṭayfī had fallen deeply in love over years of correspondence, which included a request by ‘Uṭayfī for Khiyārī to compile a biography of Kibrīt, the aforementioned traveler and Khiyārī’s friend.<sup>98</sup> The penpals only met in person when Khiyārī had to travel through Damascus on his journey, but Khiyārī, soon after the completion of his journey, shared his travelogue with ‘Uṭayfī, who dutifully copied, read and occasionally commented on it, even in his old age.<sup>99</sup> It was a gift among friends for their own edification and less for the professional advancement of the author.

It was the act of writing itself that drove Khiyārī’s desire to travel ever further. Like Kibrīt and Ibn Ma‘ṣūm, travelogue writing became a means for Khiyārī to seize control of his fate, and so what began as a set of rough notes and observations jotted down in the “tussles” of the journey, shifted into something more than a visit to Damascus and the procurement of a firman securing his position. Unlike others, he did not wait to return home to begin to compose his travelogue. Instead, as he traveled he read out sections to those he met and with their feedback started creating a fair copy at the end of his first volume, when he decided to winter in Istanbul.<sup>100</sup> Having observed and written so much, he realized that he kept making excuses (*kuntu ata ‘allul*) for his continued writing, instead of heading home. So he decided to “turn around my bridled horse (‘*aṭaftu min al-jiyād al-‘inān*) and set out to those [other] lands and I said ‘It is no wonder that I brought out what I had collected and wrote it down as fair copy from its rough

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 113–14.

<sup>99</sup> This copy is now found in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS WE 125. Examples of ‘Uṭayfī’s comments can be found on f. 195b, 196b

<sup>100</sup> He was consistently drafting poetry about his experience and turning it in fair copy. See for example, his poems about missing home (diyār) on al-Khiyārī, *Tuḥfat al-Udabā’*, 1:346.



copy, and shined the jewels of its speech to luminous stars and garden flowers.<sup>101</sup> Having traveled through Damascus and come eventually to Eskisehir where the sultan's camp was stationed, he decided to extend his trip further. In spite of his new dedication to travel, he apologizes to the reader for not describing in detail the "cities beyond Constantinople and their people" for as he pithily recites, "

When I arrived in Istanbul (*Rūm*) I exclaimed, 'he who comes to the sea, thinks little of waterwheels.'"<sup>102</sup>

Khayyārī's new dedication to travel comes with broader reflection on the nature of travelogue writing itself, mentioned briefly in the beginning of this chapter, and a dedication to the role of the eyewitness. First, he contemplates the two aspects of travelogues that have taken hold, stating that

The learned agree and the noble minded concur that if one of them travels far and wide then he should put together a travelogue, but they differ as to what follows. For one of them focuses his travelogue on mentioning men of religion that he met, and the other mentions the lands. Both of these aims are desired aspects and sought after aims (*amr marum wa qasd ma'mum*). I myself like to include in my compilation these two aspects and I string together in my lines the two aims. Certainly two modes of knowledge (*'ilmayn*) are better than one?<sup>103</sup>

The passage first demonstrates that by the mid-seventeenth century a culture of travelogue writing among scholars had emerged. So common was the practice that it led to deeper reflection on the act of travelogue writing. In this regard, Khayyārī is explicitly addressing the tension that rankles many modern readers of early modern Islamic travelogues. Namely, why were travelers of the period so particularly obsessed with depicting the social world they encountered. Indeed, there were actually scholars like Damascene al-Būrīnī and the Cairene Khafājī who essentially wrote biographical dictionaries that only included scholars they met on their travels and were

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 1:32.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 1:35 See earlier footnotes for information where to find a printed copy with this particular quote.

organized according to the chronology of their journey. In Khiyārī's case, his claim rings true. He does in fact have much more elaborate prose descriptions of sites, such as coffee and coffeehouses, than in many other previous travelogues, though it is still heavily situated in sets of poetic exchanges with various people.<sup>104</sup>

Khiyari then moves on to a particular critique of travelogue writing as it turns out that not all descriptions are equal. He draws attention to one particular travelogue writer who “when he wrote about those that he named in his travelogue, he did not go into the particulars of those he met in person and saw with his own eye, rather he multiplied those that he did not actually see, regardless of whether they were before his time or beyond his reach.”<sup>105</sup> With these remarks, Khiyārī is accusing this mystery writer of using the travelogue to fabricate a social world, of including people who had died long ago or in places to which he had never gone. Khiyārī attempts to add to his sense of outrage by quoting or paraphrasing the offending author as stating that “the opportunity to meet them with magnanimity and generosity might have passed me by but the chance for me to meet them in a book did not pass... for hearing descriptions is one of the two forms of sight, and that suffices as a substitute or trace of seeing the very person.”<sup>106</sup>

### *Khafājī*

The mysterious travelogue writer who offended Khiyārī so much was Shihābaddīn Aḥmad al-Khafājī (~1571-1659). Writing conventions of the time held Khiyārī back from directly naming the target of his critique but one copyist or reader was kind enough to opine that

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<sup>104</sup> For Khiyari's description of coffee see *ibid.*, 1:172-4.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:35.

<sup>106</sup> “*qā'ilan mā ma'nahu inna fātini al-ijtimā' bi-hum fī'l-andiya wa'l-riḥāb fa-lā yafūtni an ajtami' anā wa ayāhum fī kitāb wa qāla inna samā' al-'awṣāf aḥad al-ru'yatayn wa annahu yaktafi bi'l-athar li-fawāt al-ayn*” *ibid.*

the identity of the writer was Khafājī.<sup>107</sup> Khafājī, though, is an odd choice as he is not commonly known to have written a travelogue but rather a biographical dictionary named *Sweet Basil for the Wise and the Blossoms of the Worldly Life*.<sup>108</sup> The work actually turns out to be a sort of mad mix of biography, autobiography, and deep discussion of the poetics and rhetorical devices of classical Arabic verse. Khafājī organized the work chronologically around the journeys in his life but these travels are really just a skeletal framework to quote the poetry of friends and scholars, past and present. The first section details the various scholars and friends he met during his travels; the second, however, turns darker as Khafājī wrote it after being dismissed for a final time and exiled to Egypt. He writes about his initial birth in Cairo, his studies in Istanbul, and his different careers as a successful madrasa teacher, governor, and candidate for the office of *şeyhülislam*. The person against which his ambition ultimately ran aground was şeyhülislam Yahya Efendi Zekeriyezāde, the patron to whom Kibrīt and Faḍlallah al-Muḥibbī (mentioned briefly in the beginning of the chapter) dedicated their travelogues. His work then can be regarded as a twist on the traditional imperial relationships established in the travelogue genre.

Khafājī uses his travels as a means to guide the reader across the provinces, highly praising Arab scholars and deeply damning Ottoman Rumi society and intellectual life. Written at the pinnacle of a deeply productive and professionally ambitious life, it was a magnum opus of a man who felt that he had been maligned and not given his due.<sup>109</sup> Mentioning authors of

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<sup>107</sup> This particular manuscript is located in the library of the former şeyhülislam ‘Ārif Hikmet in Medina (which should be currently housed in the King Abdulaziz Library in Riyadh). It was read by the author of the first article on Khiyārī, written in the early Damascene cultural journal of *al-Thaqāfa*, vol. 4, p. 54.

<sup>108</sup> Khafājī also gives the alternate title of *The Basil of Intimate Companions and the Muskmelon of the Witty Littérateurs and the Fruit of the Notable Sages* al-Khafājī, *Rayḥanat al-Alibbā*, 2:208-9. There are many manuscript copies of this travelogue/biography present today, perhaps 50-60 extant copies, 30 in Istanbul alone.

<sup>109</sup> More specific information on the biography of Khafājī can be found in Geert Jan van Gelder, “Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khafājī,” in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography, 1350–1850*, ed. Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 251–62.

famous works of scholarship, he states the motivation behind his work: “the one who wins in every age is the one who remains alive after his death and makes his house thrive beyond his own time.”<sup>110</sup> If he could not achieve fame and fortune through the staid hierarchy of the Ottoman state, then he would do it by becoming a famous author. If the earlier travelogues of the sixteenth century were paeans to the intellectual brotherhood between Arab scholars and their imperial betters, then Khafājī’s book was a withering critique. He spends long pages describing how Ottoman Rumi society has become intellectually corrupt and weak, and even includes the *Maqāma al-Rumiyya*, an initial insult piece that led to his fall from grace.<sup>111</sup> Even his title, *Sweet Basil for the Wise*, he explains, is a jab at the “ignorant Rumis,” whose chief jurist Kemālpāšāzāde argued against the common practice of placing basil at the graves of intimate family members. With his book Khafājī was placing basil at the graves of Arab scholars he admired, beseeching their help against an unfair state.<sup>112</sup>

The animus Khafājī displayed for Ottoman Rumi intellectual life was returned in full by Ottoman chroniclers and writers. Naima used the example of Khafājī, or Şihāb Efendi, as he was known in the capital, to demonstrate the dangers of misplaced ambition.<sup>113</sup> Others cast him as a cruel and despicable governor, “full of injustice and harshness,” who had a total “inability to contain his bad temper... and hold his tongue,” which eventually led him to be permanently dismissed and exiled by the imperial government, twice.<sup>114</sup> Ibn Ma‘şūm, the aforementioned

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<sup>110</sup> al-Khafājī, *Rayḥanat al-Alibbā*, 5.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 2: 281-307, 316-19, 330-339, 341-354. Al-Maqama al-Rumiyya can be found as an independent text as well, see Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, MS Or. 6292.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 2:308-12.

<sup>113</sup> Naima Mustafa Efendi, *Târih-i Na‘îmâ (Ravzatü’l-Hüseyn fî Hulâsati Ahbâri’l-Hâfikayn)*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2007), 3:961-2.

<sup>114</sup> Abou-el-Haj translates segments of Khafājī’s biography from Şeyhi’s biographical dictionary and the chronicler Na‘îma’s mocking retelling of his dismissal, Rifa‘at Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman*

litterateur and traveler who wrote an account of his travels to India, read Khafājī's work and while appreciating its technical merit thought he was quite conceited.<sup>115</sup> Everyone agreed that he was a talented scholar without peer, though he was destined to be better known for his commentary work on jurisprudence than his still quite popular travelogue.

It is never quite clear why Khiyārī disliked Khafājī's loose approach to travelogue writing. It was most likely not a personal grudge. Khafājī identified Khiyārī's father as a close and dear friend worthy of encomium, and one presumes he met Khiyārī as a young boy.<sup>116</sup> Khiyārī's claim that Khafājī's included people he never met is true though. Take for example the scholar 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-'Abbāsī (d. 1555), about whom Khafājī admits that "although I never met him, I heard stories about him because he was close in time."<sup>117</sup> By doing so, Khafājī had violated the solidifying standards of the travelogue, as opposed to works such as biographical dictionaries, which routinely include people before the author's time). Against the foil of Khafājī, Khiyārī casts himself as the "Bukhārī" of reporting in travelogues, equating himself with that famous compiler and classifier of trustworthy hadiths. He states that "I did not mention any save those that I actually met with and adorned my hearing with their jewels, as I adorned their ears with the pearls of my words."<sup>118</sup> And he only made an exception when the necessity of crafting a good rhyme forced him to do so or if the person he was describing were a prophet or a

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*Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 121–24; Şeyhi Mehmed Efendi, *Şakaik-i Nu'maniye ve Zeyilleri: Vekayii'l-Fudalâ*, ed. Abdülkadir Özcan (Istanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1989), 1: 267–9; for a partial English rendition see Ali Uğur, *The Ottoman 'ulemâ in the mid-17th century: an analysis of the Vaḳā'i 'ü'l-fuṣalâ of Mehmed Şeyhî Ef.* (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1986), 219–20.

<sup>115</sup> van Gelder, "Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khafājī," 260–61.

<sup>116</sup> al-Khafājī, *Rayḥanat al-Alibbā*, 1:445–8.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 2: 60–66.

<sup>118</sup> al-Khiyārī, *Tuḥfat al-Udabā'*, 35.

saint.<sup>119</sup> We tend to think that the veracity of the eye is only important in describing things unknown, such as distant lands or people, but in Khiyārī's case, we see the social world and its poetry required equal trustworthiness.

### *Baylūnī and Kātib Çelebī*

Khiyārī's interest in ensuring the trustworthiness of travelogues and the sanctity of the role of the eyewitness was part of a larger shift in the seventeenth century to cast a more critical eye on travelogues. One excellent example of this shift is the reintroduction of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's travelogue to the lands of the Ottoman Empire. As mentioned earlier, the complete version of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's work does not seem to have existed in the Ottoman Empire and instead remained in circulation only in the cities of the Maghreb. Instead a relatively large number of copies of Muhammad b. Faṭḥullāh al-Baylūnī's abridgement of the Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's travelogue survive from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Baylūnī was a middling scholar from Aleppo during the first half of the seventeenth century, who wrote, besides his abridgement, a variety of texts on varied subjects such as plague or the veil or creeds.<sup>120</sup> Khafājī claimed to have met him (or his father) in his travelogue as well.<sup>121</sup> It is possible that he was introduced to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's text by the Maghrebi scholar Aḥmad al-Maqqarī, who in the 1620s and 1630s taught hadith in Cairo, Medina, and Damascus and

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> See for example the treatises on the plague and magic squares at Muḥammad b. Faṭḥullāh al-Baylūnī, *Khulāṣat Mā Taḥṣīl aleyhi's-Sā'un fī Adwiyat Daf' al-Wabā wa'l-Ṭā'ūn* at Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Bağdatlı Vehbi 1366, MS Hacı Ahmed Paşa 186, ff. 1-36, MS Esad Efendi 3567 ff. 1-19, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS Lbg. 1044 ff. 161-188.

<sup>121</sup> al-Khafājī, *Rayḥanat al-Alibbā*, 2:203-4.

impacted a generation of scholars with his massive biographical dictionary cum travelogue of al-Andulus.<sup>122</sup> It was Maqqarī who introduced the aforementioned Ibn Maḥāsin to the tropes of al-Andulus and lectured Kibrīt on hadith in Medina, leaving his mark on his travelogue.<sup>123</sup> The same qasida decrying the ruin of Muslim lands by Christians in al-Andulus is found in Khafājī's acerbic travelogue; he claims that the poem was sent by the scholar Yaḥyā al-Qurtubī, held prisoner by the Christians, to the Sultan of the Rūm, Suleyman the Magnificent, and his scholars, all of whom ignored the clear and direct oppression of the Iberian Muslims by the Catholic monarchy.<sup>124</sup> Baylūnī, like the other three, studied closely with Maqqarī, copying from Maqqarī's verified autograph copies in his presence and submitting his own work to Maqqarī for endorsement.<sup>125</sup> Indeed, we see a marked influx of Maghrebi thought and books in the early seventeenth century, which find mention in the works of Kibrīt and others.<sup>126</sup>

Baylūnī's did not abridge Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's travelogue for length but rather for veracity. He stated that "I only sifted out (*intaqaytu*) what was obscure and not well known or what was well attested but might not have been reliable due to its obscurity."<sup>127</sup> The word I have translated here

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<sup>122</sup> For a biography of al-Maqqari see Sabahat Fatima Adil, "Memorializing Al-Maqqarī: The Life, Work, and Worlds of a Muslim Scholar" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2015).

<sup>123</sup> Kibrīt, *Riḥlat al-Shitā' wa'l-Ṣayf*, 1965, 121, 223.

<sup>124</sup> Scholars now believe that it was actually the work of an earlier Maghrebi poet named Salih b. Yazid al-Randi. See footnote on Ibn Maḥāsin, *al-Manāzil al-Maḥāsiniyya*, 40; al-Khafājī, *Rayḥanat al-Alibbā*, 1: 370-374.

<sup>125</sup> Evidence of this can be found in a surviving copy of Baylūnī's miscellany in Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Hekimoglu 439. Baylūnī's attestation can be found on f. 1a and Maqqarī's endorsement can be found on ff. 280b-281a.

<sup>126</sup> Khaled el-Rouayheb explores the increased presence of Maghrebi scholars in the seventeenth century in *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>127</sup> I consulted three copies of Muhammad b. Faṭḥullah al-Baylūnī's abridgement, see Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Fatih 5459; John Rylands Library, MS Arabic 44; Cambridge University Library, MS Qq 203; Princeton University Library, MS Garrett 270H

as “obscure” and “obscurity,” *gharīb and gharāba*, has a definition that includes the concepts of strangeness and rarity, a concept that is used in other contexts for words that appear only once or twice in the Qur’an or the hadith, and therefore require further linguistic investigation. The point being that Baylūnī attempts to remove material that was deemed unverifiable. The reason for this, he explains in a slightly disparaging remark to the profession, is that “generally historians are not terribly particular in regard to their sources, whereas the very purpose of the travelogue writer is to establish sources truthfully. He writes down reports that he has witnessed from other peoples and lands. Reporting the veracious brings about close observation and consideration.”<sup>128</sup> Perhaps expecting some skepticism on the part of his readers, he states that “some of what he (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa) reports might contradict what others mention, like his descriptions of the medicines of India that he witnessed. Indeed, some of it contradicts what the doctors themselves say in their descriptions but one presumes truthfulness from the shaykh (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa).”<sup>129</sup>

While many were happy to champion the travelogue as the trustworthy space of first-hand observation, there were some that had a more skeptical outlook. Katib Celebi’s skepticism over the power of travelers was not that their eye could not be trusted, but that one traveler could only know so much. It was an attack from the point of view of geography on the travelogue as individual knowledge rather than subjective knowledge. He wrote within the first few lines of his *Cihānnümā (Worldview)* in the 1650s:

It is not hidden from minds of the wise that of the branches of astronomy, the art of geography—that is, the black and white flat images that are drawn in maps—is a good art and a desired skill. When the connoisseur who has a taste of it sits upon his cushions in [his] familiar and secure manor, in a single moment he travels around and circumambulates the world like those world travelers who embark on distant journeys. That virtual travel (*seyr u sulūk-i ma’nevī*) brings about so much complete knowledge that those who travel for their entire lives are incapable of achieving

<sup>128</sup> *Wa tasāmmuḥ al-mu’arrikhīn fi’l-naql ghāliban fa-athbatahu kawn ṣāḥib al-riḥla thiqtan – wa kataba mā shāhida min akhbār al-umum wa’l-aqtār – fa-naql al-ṣadūq awqa’a fi’l-i’tibār wa’l-istibṣār*

<sup>129</sup> Muhammad b. Faṭḥullāh al-Baylūnī, *Riḥlat al-Faqīh Abī ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Fatih 5459, f. 1b



such visualization (*istihizār*) and total comprehension (*iḥāṭa*). This is because by continuously applying oneself to one book after another, the lands of the Earth, from corner to corner, are drawn in their entirety upon the internal panel [of the mind]. If one faces the mirror of the mind when visualizing one part, immediately that part's state occurs as if it was entirely witnessed and sensed through its forms/images in the senses and imagination.<sup>130</sup>

For Kātib Çelebi, the science of geography, and particularly maps (a form of visual representation that was rarely practiced in the Ottoman Empire), was a means by which to create a method of “virtual travel.” At the heart of this was a greater reliance on books and written reports rather than personal first-hand observation of the world. Kātib Çelebi presumed a dichotomy between the experiences of the traveler with that of the reader, yet as will be shown in the next chapter, later travelogues largely effaced this distinction.

We can actually trace some of the travelogues that Kātib Çelebi read, or at least was aware of, thanks to his massive bibliography, *Kashf al-Ẓunūn*, compiled in the 1650s. The list of travelogues listed under “*riḥla*” is surprising in that it highlights Arabic travelogues that are actually quite old—such as the *riḥla* of Ibn Khaldūn and Ibn Ṣālīḥ and a few other Persian scholars—and made no mention of the works of his Arab contemporaries save for the travelogue of Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī from the early 1530s.<sup>131</sup> He does not list much information beyond their title and date, which suggests that he might have just found reference to them rather than read them himself, though it is possible that he came across Ghazzī's travelogue when it arrived a few years prior in the library of the Köprülü family whose collection of antiquarian books formed one site of his research. The antiquarian slant might have precluded frequent mention of more recent

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<sup>130</sup> Kātib Çelebi, *Kitāb-i Cihānnumā*, p. 1

<sup>131</sup> Hājji Khalīfa Muṣṭafa b. ‘Abdullah (Kātib Çelebi), *Kashf Al-Ẓunūn ‘an Asāmi Al-Kutub Wa’l-Funūn* (Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1941), 1:835-6.

works, but his geography, *Cihānnüma*, makes it clear that most of his sources are Turkish geographies like that of Āşık Meḥmed and in the second draft, translated Latin works.<sup>132</sup> Even travelogues that do not start with the word *riḥla* are not listed. This absence should not necessarily be surprising. Although Kātib Çelebi was extremely well-read litterateur he may have been outside the circuits in which Arabic travelogues were exchanged. At the same time, the travelogues were as much works of high literature as they were geographies, and so Katib Çelebi's partial reading demonstrates the continued role of travelogues as poetic gifts between friends.

### **The Material Connections of Seventeenth-Century Travelogues**

By the middle of the seventeenth century a quite vibrant culture of travelogue writing had emerged in the Arab cities of the Ottoman Empire. Initially written to solidify a relationship between the author and his patron, the expansion of the social community depicted within led to a creation of a world that was relatively divorced from Rumi patrons. At times, travelogues even imagined a world comprised largely of Arab scholars, separate from the imagined corruption of the Rumi government. These seventeenth-century travelogues emphasized a close-knit world of friends of equal standing who, although they might have never seen each other in person, read each other's books and letters. While still extremely devoted to detailing the world through the lens of masterful poets and rhetoricians, their interests began to branch out, discussing figures like non-Muslims and developing a greater descriptive repertoire. They even began to actively contemplate the proper methodology and epistemology of travelogues.

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<sup>132</sup> Gottfried Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph bei der Arbeit : Entstehung und Gedankenwelt von Katib Celebis Gihannüma* (Berlin: Schwarz, 2003); Gottfried Hagen, "Katib Çelebi - Historians of the Ottoman Empire," *Historians of the Ottoman Empire*.

The transformation of this social community and readership of the travelogue is reflected in the material evidence of these works. While there were many that did not survive or only exist today in a few copies, there were also many travelogues which were quite frequently copied. For these, around four to six copies exist, often copied relatively soon after the author finished his work. Ḥamawī's work, purposefully geared to a broader audience of his peers, actually was copied a number of times over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Kibrīt's work became a touchstone, surviving in a number of copies, copied well into the nineteenth century and cited in nearly every travelogue. For example Ibn Ma'ṣūm's travelogue of his boyhood journey to Hyderabad was formally completed on 18 January 1665. Surviving copies testify that scholars in India and Iraq started copying his travelogue within three months of its completion in 15 April 1665 and kept copying it for the next thirty years, and in 1672 and 1691.<sup>133</sup> These numbers reflect not a massive market of travelogue readers, but a well-sized community of highly educated and active readers.

The material remnants of these travelogues likewise allow us to link them together into a united corpus. Although not all of the travelogues are directly intertextual, all of the above authors can be linked to one another directly through relationships of friendship, parentage, or readership. Ḥamawī was the grand-uncle of Faḍlullah al-Muhibbī who also wrote a travelogue. 'Uṭayfī inherited the travelogue of al-Ḥamawī from his father. He requested a copy of the Kibrīt's biography from Khiyārī, presumably after reading Kibrīt's travelogue. Khiyārī, a long-time correspondent with 'Uṭayfī, read his travelogue and then sent him a copy of his own travelogue. Khiyārī and Ibn Ma'ṣūm had read both 'Uṭayfī's travelogue but also that of Khafājī.

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<sup>133</sup> Ibn Ma'ṣūm, *Salwat al-Gharīb*, 9–11 See also another manuscript copy copied in 1672 and remade in 21 Jumada 1158 housed in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS Petermann I 579.

Another anonymous reader bound together and read the travelogues of ʿUṭayfī and Ibn Maḥāsīn.<sup>134</sup> Ibn Maḥāsīn’s travelogue was copied by the father of Aḥmad al-Ṭālawī, who wrote a travelogue to Lebanon.<sup>135</sup> Ibn Maḥāsīn, Ṭālawī, Baylūnī, Kibrīt, and Khafājī studied with the visiting Maghrebī scholar Aḥmad al-Maqqarī. Kātib Çelebi read and knew none of them.

### Arab Christians Travelers in the Seventeenth Century

By the mid-seventeenth century a vibrant and deeply intertextual culture of travel writing had firmly emerged among learned scholars in the Arab world. Muslim scholars had slowly started to expand the scope and social world of the travelogue, integrating descriptions of Christians and Hindus and Shi’a as they traveled further and further. At the same time, however, there were other, parallel, traditions of travelogue writing emerging.

Christians writing in Arabic from the very same urban centers as their Muslim brethren also began producing travelogues. One major difference, though, is that these travelogues, which currently number far fewer than those by Muslims,<sup>136</sup> are all to places outside of the Ottoman Empire. Moscow, Peru, Paris, and Venice comprise their destinations, rather than Constantinople or Cairo. For this reason, the travelogues of figures like Elias of Babylon to the Americas and

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<sup>134</sup> See the miscellany at Princeton University Library, MS Garrett 4670Y

<sup>135</sup> Ibn Maḥāsīn, Yaḥya b. Abi’ş-Safā, *al-Manāzil al-Maḥāsiniyya fi’l-Riḥla al-Ṭarābulusiyya*, Istanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserleri Kütüphanesi, MS A4329

<sup>136</sup> The cause for the discrepancy in numbers might be a result of the fact that libraries of Christian Arabic texts, which are either in European collections or local church and monastic collections, tend to be less accessible to scholars than those of Muslim authors, which tend to be housed in large state libraries. In short, there might be many more

Paul of Aleppo to Moscow have received much more scholarly attention over the past two centuries than those by their Muslim contemporaries. It likewise gives the impression that Christians were somehow more open to the outside world, more mobile and more cosmopolitan than their Muslims compatriots. The travelogues of Christians, in other words, pose a small intellectual quandary: were these travelogues part and parcel of an emerging culture of travelogue writing in the Ottoman Empire? If so, then how do they relate?

The Christian travelogue tradition in Arabic can be seen as having emerged out similar exigencies of empire that led to the flowering of Muslim travelogues. Muslims' travelogues emerged from the contested interactions between Rumi and Arab intellectuals following the Ottoman conquest. The difference though is that while Rumis and Arabs were negotiating a relationship in a new, shared legal and intellectual system established by the Ottoman state, Christians in the Arab lands were neither in the same system as Muslims nor subjects of their Greek-speaking coreligionists to the north. They were largely autonomous from the patriarchate in Constantinople and moreover did not share a learned language, thus the travelogue did not emerge as a space for the negotiation of that relationship. Yet, at the same time, they looked for succor from sources beyond the imperial center. The most common source was Muscovy, which by the mid to late sixteenth century was already establishing connections to Orthodox Christian communities in the Levant and Egypt for its own purposes. It was in this context that in the sixteenth century a short travelogue in verse (the author called it a *qaṣīda*) that loosely related the details of travels of Patriarch Yuwākīm to Moscow was produced. The author, who seems to be the archbishop ʿĪsa, wrote it sometime after his teacher, the patriarch, Yuwākīm had passed away, presumably as a justification for further engagement with Muscovy. The justification is relatively crude, however. It mostly relates the overwhelming resplendence of the churches and

domes—“In [Moscow] there are churches made of silver! Their altars (*hayākil*) | inlaid with pearls, diamonds, and rubies! | How many monasteries, how many domes, how many shops | built upon on the streets of Moscow!”<sup>137</sup> In other places, he highlights the political power of Muscovy, “All the kings of earth bow down to its sultan | who makes all the grandees of his lands pashas | and all the kingdoms of the Franks (*Franjīqa*) bow down to him | Poland (*Līkh*) and Austria (*Bīh*), the people of Germany (*Namsā*) and the Hungarians.”<sup>138</sup> So, in short, the point of the travelogue was to display the power of an (Orthodox) Christian land, and the political possibilities for those that ventured there.

The most celebrated example of the Arabic travelogue tradition—the travelogue of Paul of Aleppo (Būlus Ibn al-Za‘īm al-Ḥalabī, 1627-69)—was not merely a paean to Muscovy or an expression of worldly ambition but also a means to establish a new Arabic Greek Orthodox community within the confessional milieu of competing Christian communities.<sup>139</sup> Over the course of the seventeenth century, the Arabic Greek Orthodox church was increasingly trying to create its own separate confessional identity, finding a separate space for itself between the Greek Orthodox communities in Istanbul and Venice and Catholic missionaries from Rome who had begun to proselytize Christians in the 1620s. In this charged milieu, most of the work of Paul of Aleppo’s grandfather and father was to establish new confessional boundaries—whether by denouncing Christians who refused to fast in times of famine or writing refutations of Calvinism

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<sup>137</sup> ‘Īsa, Travelogue Poem to Moscow, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arabe 312, ff. 19b-20a

<sup>138</sup> ‘Īsa, Travelogue to Moscow, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arabe 312, ff. 21b

<sup>139</sup> Tendency to think of the emergence of these writings as a spontaneous irruption of the Arabic Christian writing, an early Renaissance or Nahda of sorts, or merely as a response to the monetary and political pressures of living under Muslim rule, but I believe that main context is a set of interimperial confessional transformations with the Middle East at the time.

and other heresies.<sup>140</sup> Part of this was creating a new liturgy in Arabic by composing or translating from Greek a large number of texts into a new demotic language known to scholars today as “Middle Arabic.”<sup>141</sup> This was the language in which Paul of Aleppo crafted his travelogue as he and his father, the Greek Orthodox patriarch Makāriyūs III (~1600-1672) journeyed in search of allies and patrons in the Romanian principalities, Muscovy, and Georgia.<sup>142</sup> The tsars of Muscovy and the Romanian princes (vassals to the Ottomans) needed the religious legitimacy of the Patriarch of Antioch for their own confessional policies. This new interest in confessional difference and similarities was the reason that Paul of Aleppo and his father spent so much time detailing the various ritual practices of Orthodox communities north and east of the Black Sea, an attention to religious ritual that was nearly fully excised by the first English translator of the work.<sup>143</sup> The travelogue seems to have found its intended audience as manuscript copies of the text, five of which are known to exist, often give rough and uneducated Arabic renditions of the Greek words that the author inserts into the text or Turkicize words like Romanian “slujer (سلجار)” into “silahdār (سلحدار).”<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Hilary Kilpatrick, “Makāriyūs Ibn al-Za‘īm and Būlus Ibn al-Za‘īm (Paul of Aleppo),” in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography, 1350–1850*, ed. Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 265; Makāriyūs Ibn al-Za‘īm, “al-Ṭawā’if al-Sharqiyyah wa-Bid‘at al-Kalwīniyyīn,” ed. Anṭun Rabbāt, *al-Mashriq* 7 (1904): 766–73, 795–802.

<sup>141</sup> Ioana Feodorov, “Middle Arabic elements in two texts from Macarius Ibn al-Za‘īm’s Maḡmu‘ Laṭīf,” *Romano-Arabica*, New Series, 3 (2004): 81–92.

<sup>142</sup> A basic description and selected translation of the journey can be found in Ioana Feodorov, “Paul of Aleppo,” in *The Orthodox Church in the Arab World, 700-1700: An Anthology of Sources*, ed. Samuel Noble and Alexander Treiger (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014), 252–338. Many thanks to Ioana Feodorov for sharing with me selections of her published work and for continuing to work on the first full critical edition and translation of Paul of Aleppo’s travelogue; Kilpatrick, “Makāriyūs Ibn al-Za‘īm and Būlus Ibn al-Za‘īm (Paul of Aleppo).”

<sup>143</sup> Paul of Aleppo, *The Travels of Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch*, trans. F. C. Belfour, vol. 1 (London: Printed for the Oriental Translation Fund of Great-Britain and Ireland, 1829), v–vi; For examples of some of Paul of Aleppo’s observations on liturgy and ritual see Ovidiu Olar, “The Travels of Patriarch Makāriyūs of Antioch and the Liturgical Traditions of the Christian East,” *Revue Des Études Sud-Est Européennes* LII, no. 1–4 (2014): 275–88.

<sup>144</sup> For slippages between Greek and Arabic Paul of Aleppo, *The Travels of Macarius*, 1:v; For a close comparison of lexical shifts between the manuscripts and a description of the manuscripts see Yulia Petrova, “The Travels of

The only travelogue to the Americas written by an Ottoman subject in the early modern period, namely, that of Ilyās b. Ḥanna al-Mawsilī, commonly known as Elias of Babylon, was likewise written to bring about the confessional transformation of Christians in the Levant.<sup>145</sup> He states so directly at the end of his long introduction: “And our purpose (*sabīl*) is to explain and show definitive proof for the return of these aforementioned peoples (*tawāʾif*) to the true faith and their embrace of the holy church to that point that now, after their entry into the faith of the Christ, many of them are counted among its saints.”<sup>146</sup> The formerly lost people to whom he is referring were the native peoples of the Americas who had fully embraced Christianity, whose example he hoped would inspire his fellow Nestorian Christians to convert to the true Christian church of the Catholics. John-Paul Ghobrial has recently reinterpreted Elias’s travelogue as a work not motivated by some intrinsic desire to explore the outside world but by the confessional dynamics of Counter-Reformation Europe, whose missionaries had spread into Christian communities in the Middle East starting in the 1630s. One key part of this reinterpretation is reintegrating the second half of Elias’s travelogue, ignored and untranslated, into our understanding of the text. It comprises of a history of the Americas translated from Spanish sources interspersed with personal observations that emphasize the role of the Catholic empires in spreading true Christianity throughout the world, and the Americas as a particular space of

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Macarius: Relationship between the Manuscript Versions,” in *Europe in Arabic Sources: “The Travels of Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch”: Proceedings of the International Conference “In the Eyes of the Orient: Europe in Arabic Sources” (Kyiv, 22-23 September 2015)*, ed. Yulia Petrova and Ioana Feodorov, vol. LII (Kyiv: A. Krymsky Institute of Oriental Studies of the NASU, 2016), 11–32; Yulia Petrova, “The Travels of Macarius: Return of the Forgotten Manuscript of A. Krymskyi,” *Revue Des Études Sud-Est Européennes* LII, no. 1–4 (2014): 357–76. See also a sixth manuscript of Paul of Aleppo’s travelogue that I came across at Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, MS Or. 1602.

<sup>145</sup> A translation of the first half of Elias’s text can be found in Matar, *In the Lands of the Christians*, 45–111.

<sup>146</sup> Ilyās b. Ḥanna al-Mawsilī, British Library, MS India Office Islamic 3537, f. 3a



divine miracles.<sup>147</sup> Through Ghobrial's close research, a picture emerges of Elias as the nephew of the Nestorian patriarch, forced to find a new livelihood in Rome, Paris, and Spain either due to a succession dispute that went sour and ended with murder or genuine pro-Catholic sympathies.<sup>148</sup> Eventually, he crossed the Atlantic to support himself as an itinerant alms collector seeking donations from various Spanish courts for the sake of the Chaldean church suffering under the Muslim yoke. When he returned to Europe, he first published in Rome a Catholic Arabic prayer book in 1692 with the help of his nephew, Andrawūs, who later also helped him write the travelogue around 1699. The nephew seems to have eventually returned to Aleppo and his descendants married into the prominent Rassam merchant family, who played a key part in propagating Catholicism among Nestorian Christians. One of these Catholic proselytizers from the Rassam family eventually managed to acquire a copy of Elias's travelogue produced in 1751, writing down on the title page above the large Karhsuni benediction, "'Hurmuz son of the deacon 'Īsa al-Rassām has bought this book for himself and no one else (*li-nafsuhu dūn ghayrihi*), in the year of the Lord, 1786, for the renewal of the faith (*lil-tajdīd al-īlāhī*).'"<sup>149</sup> A hundred years on, Elias's text was used precisely for what he intended—as a means for spiritual conversion and reflection.

Despite the above evidence, the intended audience of Elias's travelogue is difficult to decipher. Ghobrial posits a few scenarios, including that the work might have been written to

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<sup>147</sup> This second half starts with a description of how the King Felipe IV set sail for China. See British Library, MS India Office Islamic 3537, f. 61b.

<sup>148</sup> John-Paul Ghobrial, "The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory," *Past and Present* 222 (February 2014): 74–84.

<sup>149</sup> The ownership statement can be found in British Library, MS India Office Islamic 3537, f. 1a. For some reason, Ghobrial did not mention that it was meant for religious proselytizing in his otherwise astute analysis of the text. *Ibid.*, 86–88.

secure him a position in the Spanish court, perhaps as a librarian or translator of Arabic manuscripts, a position filled by many Eastern Christians during the eighteenth century.<sup>150</sup>

Indeed, Elias's travelogue, more so than any other, seems especially informed by the tropes and traditions of European travelogues. Even the physical layout of the manuscript suggest that the original was prepared according to the graphical conventions of printed European books. Chapter headings, illustrations (which were never included in any of the other travelogues), and a table of contents placed at the end of book suggest a readership at home with European book formats.<sup>151</sup>

On the other hand, the Arabic is clearly written in the simple demotic of the local Christian population, the same Middle Arabic that Paul of Aleppo used for his flock. It includes a variety of common Turkish expressions that had seeped into the demotic classical Arabic often used by Christian authors such as *yennī dūnyā* (The New World), *celālī* (in the general sense of rebel or traitor), *arḏuḥāl* (petition),<sup>152</sup> something that never really occurred in the more pristine Arabic of the learned Muslim writers. Thus, on the field of language and poetics, there exists not even a family resemblance between the travelogues of Christians and Muslims of the seventeenth-century Levant. Whereas those of Muslim authors were finessed works of literature, sets of witty and emotional poetic exchanges between friends, the works of Christians like Elias of Babylon and Paul of Aleppo contain hardly any literary ambitions whatsoever. Paul of Aleppo even lamented his poor literary skills. Other than a few lines of stray verse, the constant cycle of poetry is entirely absent. In its place is prose description, with no reference to a vast corpus of past literature and little mention of other scholars.

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 90–92.

<sup>151</sup> For the illustrations see, al-Mawsilī, British Library, MS India Office Islamic 3537, ff. 105a, 108b

<sup>152</sup> For instances of these words see al-Mawsilī, British Library, MS India Office Islamic 3537, ff. 51a, 103a, 132b

While it would seem that the two contemporaneous traditions are quite far apart, the chasm is not as distant as imagined. First, they both arose out of shifts in imperial patronage and competition in the seventeenth century. Arab Christians became interested in understanding the transforming confessional landscape spurred by competition between the three Romes—Moscow, Constantinople, and the Vatican—over Christian followers in the Levant. Arab Muslim scholars who had previously used the travelogue to negotiate a space within the new Islamic structure of the Ottoman Empire had turned it on its head, looking for new opportunities and literary spaces. They mixed a description of a social world with a new support for travel and travelogue writing. Within this atmosphere, there emerged a greater emphasis on the description of a larger segment of the population and they became interested in understanding the confessional landscape of the Near East that had been developed by the Ottoman investment in the hajj.

We should not be too quick to attribute this uptick in travelogues to increased circulation or engagement with Europe. Complicating the picture is the fact that no other group of Christians in the Ottoman Empire appears to have written travelogues. The authors of these travelogues came from some of the major urban centers of the Levant—Mosul, Aleppo, Tarabulus—and so far no analogous tradition of travelogue writing has been found in Greek, Turkish, or Armenian-speaking Christian populations from the Ottoman Empire, who were increasingly pulled into the orbit of Italian universities and seminaries in Padua or further afield. The above travelogues were being produced in a broader cultural environment that supported the personal recording of first-person journeys. Glimpses of this larger culture can be found in short travelogue of the Aleppine Christian merchant Raʿd and his friend ʿAbd al-Masīḥ from Tarabulus to Venice in 1655-6 (the only known account of an Ottoman subject to Venice) or the recorded observations of the

chronicler of the Druze emir Fakhr al-Dīn al-Maʿnī to Livorno in 1023h.<sup>153</sup> Unlike all the works mentioned above, these writings were never formally published and distributed but the fact that a merchant's brief travelogue to Venice was recorded and survived, suggests that there was a general interest in the act of travelogue writing.

### **Confessional Travels in an Islamic Landscape**

The use of the travelogue to detail new confessional landscapes was not simply the prerogative of Christians, but also found a happy home among Muslim travelogue writers in the late seventeenth century. The two most popular travelogues in the early modern Ottoman Empire, works that were read far and wide by a much broader spectrum of readers than the travelogues we have seen so far, were precisely documents that arose in response to the new confessional pressures of the period. These are the travelogues of ʿAbd al-Ghani al-Nābulusī (1641-1731) and Nābī Yūsuf (1642-1712). They built off of an emergent tradition of hajj narratives to recast the social and religious relations of the empire.

Nābulusī was mostly likely developing themes first broached in the travelogues of his close friends, the Bakrī clan of Cairo. The family first appeared on the political and intellectual scene of Cairo in the sixteenth century, one of many such Sufi lineages establishing itself in the newly minted Ottoman province. Claiming an ancestor in the caliph Abu Bakr, they solidified their powerful position over the seventeenth century as close advisors to the Ottoman governors,

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<sup>153</sup> Carsten-Michael Walbinder, "Rihlat «Raʿd» min Ḥalab ila al-Bunduqiyya," in *Majmūʿ abḥāth wa-maqālāt muhdāh ilā al-muṭrān Nāwfiṭūs Idlibī, 1920-1995*, ed. Nagi Idlibi and Pierre Masri (Beyrouth: Université St. Joseph, 2005), 367–83; Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Khālidi al-Ṣafadi, *Lubnān fī ʿAhd al-Amīr Fakhraddīn al-Maʿnī al-Thānī wa huwa Kitāb Tārīkh al-Amīr Fakhraddīn al-Maʿnī*, ed. Asad Rustam and Fuʿād Afrām al-Bustānī (Beirut: Manshūrāt al-Jāmiʿa al-Lubnāniyya, 1969), 208–41. This last text was apparently not part of the main chronicle but survived in as informal notes, which were eventually integrated into manuscript copies in the nineteenth century.

incredibly prolific writers, and mystical advocates of the people.<sup>154</sup> Perhaps as part of their role as litterateurs, they began to compose travelogues, though on a topic that had largely been avoided by previous authors—the hajj. First was Ahmad b. Zayn al-‘Abidīn (d. 1639), the nephew of the dynasty’s founder. His short opus, *Brightly-Shining Star: Guidance for Pilgrims* written in 367 verses, describes his own pilgrimage in 1632 (1042h) in the form of a versified first-person narrative, focusing on both the events of the pilgrimage and his emotions as he explores them. In pleasant verse he tells of the commander of the hajj, the soldiers maintaining order, and the different rituals they undertook, telling readers lines like “happiness and bliss spread far and wide among the pilgrims | Until we thought that we were upon Mina.”<sup>155</sup> His skillful lines, are largely divorced from the deeply intertextual and interpersonal traditions of contemporary travelogues in Arabic, but they did veer away from the didactic hajj instruction books and strengthened the family’s image as pious participants.

Thirty years own, another Bakrī, Muḥammad Zayn al-‘Abidīn b. Zayn al-‘Abidīn (d. 1676) would narrate his journey to Mecca and Medina, or rather let his close follower Badr al-Dīn b. Sālīm b. Muḥammad narrate it for him. Badr al-Dīn suggests that this occurred for two succinct reasons: he loved Muḥammad Zayn al-‘Abidīn and his family and Muhammad Zayn al-‘Abidīn likewise loved and protected him.<sup>156</sup> Writing the travelogue was a great gift granted by the Bakrī lord to his follower, an act of trust and faith to let him represent him in literature that

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<sup>154</sup> On the start of the Bakrī family see Adam Sabra, “Household Sufism in Sixteenth-Century Egypt: The Rise of al-Sada al-Bakriya,” in *Le Soufisme à l’époque ottomane XVIe - XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Rachida Chih and Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, Cahier des Annales islamologiques 29 (Le Caire: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2010), 101–19; For a collection of texts about the family see Mustafa Mughazy and Adam ‘Abd al-Hamid Sabra, eds., *Manāqib al-Sāda al-Bakriyya: Majmu‘at Naṣūṣ* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 2015) One can also find miscellanies of their writings in Suleymaniye Library, MS Esad Efendi 3527.

<sup>155</sup> Aḥmad b. Zayn al-‘Ābidīn al-Bakrī, *Kawkab al-Wahhāj fī Hidāyat al-Hujjāj*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 3527, f. 197a

<sup>156</sup> Mughazy and Sabra, *al-Majāz fī Ḥaqīqa*, 400.

no other author dared to undertake. The travelogue, *The Figurative in the Literal Journey of Shaykh Muhammad Zayn al-‘Abidīn al-Ṣiddīqī to the Lands of the Hijāz*, turns more toward demonstrating the power and stature of the Bakrī family. This ranged from telling the readers of the startling “state” that he fell into while on a pleasant garden stroll that led to set out on the hajj to the lowly but beloved holy fool (*majdhūb*) who declared the Bakrī lord to truly be *ṣāhib al-waqt*, the lord of our times. This was in addition to his descriptions of the many dignitaries and scholars Bakrī met in Mecca and Medina itself, and how he was beloved by all of its population. The travelogue, which veered away from solely describing the hajj itself, established the claims of the Bakrī family to this piece of Ottoman religious life. Neither of the travelogues seem to have been heavily copied, though, existing in small pockets of one or two.

On the surface, Nābulusī’s travelogue, or rather, travelogues, read much like those before him. They meander over the same territory—Damascus, Tarabulus, Jerusalem, Cairo, Medina—while rehearsing the same constant social visitation of earlier travelogues. The first two travelogues, short journeys from Damascus to Tarabulus in 1689 and to Jerusalem in 1690, were experiments, a constant expansion of itinerary and ambition.<sup>157</sup> The third, perhaps his magnum opus, was a year-long self-reflexive odyssey tellingly titled *The Literal and the Figurative* that started in Damascus in 1693 and made its way through modern-day Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, and eventually the Hijaz, where he undertook the hajj.<sup>158</sup> While he often spent only a few hours drafting most of his more than three hundred works, he spent over two years crafting his main travelogue. The fourth and final travelogue was in a sense a coda, a return to Sayda and

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<sup>157</sup> ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nābulusī, ‘Ḥullat al-Dhahab al-Ibrīz fī Riḥlat Ba‘lbakk wa’l-Biqā’ al-‘Azīz,’ in *Riḥlatān ilā Lubnān*, by Stefan Wild and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Munajjid (Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979); ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaḍāra al-‘Unsiyya fī l-Riḥla al-Qudsiyya*, ed. Akram Hasan al-‘Ulbi (Beirut: al-Masadir, 1990).

<sup>158</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaḳīqa wa’l-Majāz*.

Tarabulus written in 1701.<sup>159</sup> Nābulusī was deeply familiar with the work of earlier travelogue writers: the work of Kibrīt and Khafājī was frequently cited; even Būrīnī's now lost travelogues to Aleppo make an appearance. He counted Khiyārī among his friends, visiting his son when he was in Medina, and stopped at the graves of many more. Zayn al-‘Ābidīn al-Bakrī (d. 1701) was one of his closest friends, a man who studied under him in Damascus and with whom he stayed for months in Cairo.<sup>160</sup> Not only that, it was a deeply literate work, citing hundreds of other books. Nābulusī was a hub for the social world of the Arab provinces in the seventeenth century.

While Nābulusī engaged deeply with the Arabic travelogue tradition, he introduced a rather radical shift by reframing the social world of the travelogue much more broadly. As he makes explicitly clear in his introduction, his purpose was to visit the righteous, both living and dead (*al-ṣāliḥīn min al-aḥyā’ wa’l-amwāt*) while at the same time including all the other aspects of travel: “We meet with people of good piety and religion, and we socialized with men of perfection and certitude, we made pilgrimage to the saints (*awliyā’*), and found ourselves blessed at the graves of true friends (*aṣfiyā’*), and we held discussions with scholars, and we spoke with learned students of sciences.”<sup>161</sup> Often, Nābulusī's particular emphasis on visiting the graves of saints and prophets is seen as just an example of a sort of generic Sufi interest in saintly shrines,

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<sup>159</sup> ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *al-Tuḥfa al-Nāblusiyya fi’l-Riḥla al-Ṭarāblusiyya*, ed. Heribert Busse (Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1971).

<sup>160</sup> See the correspondence between the two in Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Intimate Invocations: al-Ghazzi’s Biography of ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641-1731) (al-Wird al-Unsī)*, ed. Samer Akkach (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 390–402; and the letter of condolence that Nābulusī sent to Bakrī’s family upon hearing of his death from plague: ‘Abd al-Ghanī Nābulusī, *Letters of a Sufi Scholar: The Correspondence of ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641-1731) (Wasā’il al-Taḥqīq wa Rasā’il al-Tawfīq)*, ed. Samer Akkach (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 291.

<sup>161</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa’l-Majāz*, 1:37-8.

one that he expressed by integrating a reverence for Ibn Arabi and emphasis on dreams.<sup>162</sup> But his choice to bring the dead into the travelogue, to place his first-person observations, which he recorded in a diary format (a first), was actually quite novel. Like Khafājī's mixture of the biographical dictionary and travelogue to condemn elite ranks of the empire, specifically the Rumi aspects, fifty years earlier, Nābulusī used the travelogue for quite political ends—to comment on the nature of Islam, the confessional transformation of the empire, and its political constituency.

To understand Nābulusī's texts as an attempt to redefine empire and its confessional landscape, it is worthwhile to look at his actions before his travelogue phase. His moment of travelogue writing, which spanned the last decade of the seventeenth century (1689-1701) proceeded a period of intensely prolific, and extremely polemical, writing. This was the period in which he sealed himself in his house, refused to meet with many people in public, and wrote deeply divisive and provocative tracts, whether about the major controversies of the day, from smoking tobacco to hummus cauterization (see Chapter 3).<sup>163</sup> The traveler Khiyārī visited him in this state in 1669, and was refused a face-to-face visit, but Nābulusī did honor with him an exchange of verses though and later regarded him as a friend.<sup>164</sup> Travelogue writing was a purposeful shift away from this anti-social period toward a moment of purposefully engaging and depicting the social world. In other words, travelogue writing was a political choice rather

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<sup>162</sup> Elizabeth Sirriyeh, "The Mystical Journeys of 'Abd Al-Ghani Al-Nabulusi," *Die Welt Des Islams*, New Series, 25, no. 1 (1985): 84–96; Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascus: 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nabulusi, 1641-1731* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005).

<sup>163</sup> There many of examples from the period of intellectuals going into seclusion (*i' tizāl*) and setting out stern rebuke of the society and government such as Nābulusī's contemporaries, Nābī and Niyaz-i Mişrī. Regarding Nābulusī's manifesto on this practice, see 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Takmil al-Nu'ūt fi Luzūm al-Buyūt*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Çelebi Abdullah 385, ff. 356b-376a

<sup>164</sup> al-Khiyārī, *Tuḥfat al-Udabā'*, 123–25; al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa'l-Majāz*, 3:248.



than an incidental product of his peregrinations. He had actually set out in his youth to Istanbul, to seek out an appointment, but never chose to narrate those experiences as a travelogue. Instead, he was thirty-six when he wrote about them in 1677, as part of his commentary on the Üsküdar shaykh Hüdā'ī's *Revelations*.<sup>165</sup> So when he set out to write travelogues, he undertook two trial runs of a sort, heading to Tarabulus and then Jerusalem in 1689 and 1690, respectively. He then undertook his “big journey” through the major urban and rural areas of the Arab provinces in 1693-4, in which he cited his earlier travelogues as sources, creating an organic textual whole.<sup>166</sup> His travelogues were a shift away from his acerbic and polemical period, one that was defined by social experiences and encounters, but no less political.

Nābulusī's major aim in his travelogues was to redefine the confessional landscape of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. He wrote the first travelogue, to Tarabulus, Baalbek and the Biqa Valley, titled *Raiment of Pure Gold* (*Hullat al-Dhahab al-Ibrīz*) to depict a holy land inscribed by the deeds of the Biblical prophets that was distinguished from that of better known holy land being supported by the Ottoman government and visited by the hordes of pilgrims who passed from Istanbul through Damascus, a process discussed in earlier chapters. Even in the benediction he emphasizes the prophets:

The lands of Syria are among the best of all lands  
For indeed in [Syria] all of them are buried

Thanks to the prophets, so rightly guided  
Save Taha, the prophet of all mankind

Then he says that just as the prophets are heavily concentrated in Syria, the scales are tipped in favor of the Hijaz in terms of written revelation, and the holy men, saints, and companions of the

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<sup>165</sup> There are quite a few copies of this text, but I use Hudā'ī Mahmud b. Faḍlallah, *Tajalliyāt*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Şehid Ali Paşa 1134; 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Lum'āt al-Barq al-Najdī Sharḥ Tajalliyāt Maḥmūd Afandī*. Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Dügümlü Baba 298

<sup>166</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Haqīqa wa'l-Majāz*, 1:38-9.

Prophet are scattered throughout the world.<sup>167</sup> This was meant as a purposefully different holy land than that based around the Hijaz, with its emphasis on Muhammad's revelation and the events of the early Muslim community. As part of this task of redefinition, he produces the first antiquarian investigation, by a Muslim author, of the Roman ruins of Baalbek, which he insists, contrary to the belief of locals or that of new European antiquarians, was the remnant of the palaces the jinns built for Solomon.<sup>168</sup> He repeated the same exercise, with a travelogue to Jerusalem and its environs the following year, titled *Familiar Presence (al-Haḍra al-'Unsīyya)*.<sup>169</sup> Again, the travelogue emphasizes that visiting the world of saints and prophets was no less important than that of the hajj itself. The role of these writing were explored in the earlier chapter on the hajj. Like the ruins of Baalbek, he puts forward contrarian interpretations of the built landscape, claiming, for instance, that the Dome of the Rock, in particular the edifice that the Ottomans and other Muslim rulers had built, was actually a Crusader construction.<sup>170</sup>

The third travelogue, intriguingly titled *The Literal and the Figurative (al-Ḥaqīqa wa'l-Majāz)*, was undertaken over the years 1693-4, extending Nābulusī's redefinition of the landscape through the full cycle of the hajj. The work is so massive that he consistently mentions omens or signs, often given by holy fools (*majdhūb*), to remind the reader that he is actually on the hajj.<sup>171</sup> He separates the work geographically into three volumes (nearly always bound as a

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<sup>167</sup> al-Nābulusī, 'Ḥullat,' 55.

<sup>168</sup> On this topic see Nir Shafir, "Toward an Ottoman Antiquarianism: Materiality, History, and Antiquity in 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī's (1641-1731) Interpretation of the Ruins of Baalbek", forthcoming

<sup>169</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Haḍra al-'Unsīyya*.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 115–16; Samer Akkash introduces this episode in his article "The Poetics of Concealment: Al-Nabulusi's Encounter with the Dome of the Rock," *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World* 22 (2005): 110–27.

<sup>171</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa'l-Majāz*, 1:96, 106, 182, 202, 412-3; 2:109, 151, 190.

single volume), one on Greater Syria, one on Egypt (mainly Cairo) and finally the Hijaz, which he travelled over a period of 388 days, by his own count.<sup>172</sup> The travelogue as a whole exceeds 400 folios in all copies and although he began composing it upon his return it took him over five years to complete, spending about a year on each volume. This first volume, on Syria, was finished around 17 September 1697 (end of Safar, 1109) but the second volume was completed over a year later on 9 Oct 1698 (3 Rabī‘a II 1110).<sup>173</sup> Unlike many of his short pamphlet writings, which he produced effortlessly over the course of an hour or two, the travelogue was a major investment of time and energy. This becomes even clearer when we compare the finished product to his initial draft, which was only 160 folios of his scribbled hand and full of alterations, additions, and deletions.<sup>174</sup> The additional folios comprised biographies and quotations from other texts, but he also heavily edited many of his poems, even the ones that he improvised on the spot.<sup>175</sup> The deeply literary and varied aspect of the work led him to declare it a “collection of varied genres and conversations, drifting from one to another.” The final product was a “luxurious robe with which fate has garbed itself, embroidered with wondrous reports that are like hidden pearls, and superb lines of poetry, unadulterated discussions of the belle-lettres, unique intellectual questions ... descriptions of some of the prophets, and biographies of the saints and the holy ones, by whose presence we were blessed when they visited us....”<sup>176</sup> Readers

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 3:407.

<sup>173</sup> These writing completion dates are not found on all the copies. See in particular Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arabe 5043, f. 45b; Österreichisches Nationalbibliothek, MS Mixt 712, v. 1, f. 148b; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS Wetzstein II 1123, f. 157a, 268b; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 2376, f. 109b, 233b. I have not yet found the final end date of composition of the manuscript.

<sup>174</sup> I had to rely on editor’s description of the rough draft in al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa’l-Majāz*, 1:13, 19 The original manuscript can be found in Zahirīyya (As’ad) Library, MS ‘Ām 4304.

<sup>175</sup> e.g. ibid., 2:116.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 1:39.

agreed, deeming the work a “garden of the arts and sciences”<sup>177</sup> and read it closely, one of them taking over three months to delve into its contents.<sup>178</sup>

Nābulusī’s insistence that the social world of the travelogue had to expand to encompass the dead as well as the living was a response to the confessional transformation of the empire. Earlier travelogues had made mention of the occasional grave of a prophet encountered on the side of the road, or those famous within a town, but Nābulusī turned this into an obsession. Defining the location of the dead was not an act of asserting their existence, but also a claim as to their importance to the past and present of the Islamic community. As has been detailed in the other chapters, the existence and importance of saints and prophets, and their capacity to interact with the here and now as active beings, was one of the major controversies in the seventeenth century that could explode into larger conflagrations of urban violence and invective. Nābulusī used the travelogue, in a subtle but unmistakable fashion, to rally against the “deniers (*munkirīn*), declaring that “*Oh that despicable state of the deniers, full of malice / How can dung beetles trifle with roses?*” and including legal opinions against their attempts to turn saint worship into a heretical act.<sup>179</sup> It was also a claim against the imperial claim on certain graves, such as those of Ibn Arabi, whose location he repeatedly disputed, as mentioned in earlier chapters. Moreover, the preliminary tour of the graves of Damascus on the first day of the travelogue also functioned as an introduction to Nābulusī’s own family history since the Ottoman conquest, from his great-grandfather to his father. He includes how his mother rubbed the dirt of Damascus onto him when he was born and how upon his her death two months before he sets out on his journey, a

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<sup>177</sup> See the footnote on *ibid.*, 2:277 and see also the copy at British Library, Or. 14295, f. 212b.

<sup>178</sup> A certain Sayyid Ahmad Husayni al-Husayn read it visually and individually over between June and September, 1867, according to his reading marks on the flyleaf of the copy at Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Arabe 5042.

<sup>179</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaḳīqa wa’l-Majāz*, 1:77; 2:221.

dervish arrived unprompted to her corpse-washing. The dervish stated that the plague that was ravaging Syria would be sealed and buried in her body.<sup>180</sup> The dead then were interlocutors to the history and state of the empire, Islam, and Nābulusī himself.

Nābulusī also transposed the confessional politics of the period onto the set of relations of Rumi and Arab life that were often the province of these travelogues. The tensions of empire are most readily apparent in the heated atmosphere of Cairo and the best example stems from Nābulusī's visit to the tomb of 'Umar Ibn al-Fāriḍ for Friday prayers. Following the prayer, more and more people began to crowd into the mosque and recite the Qur'an, read out prayers, and perform *dhikr*. When everyone had crowded together one person after another would rise and recite the poetry of Ibn Fāriḍ. Audience members would yell out for certain hemistiches to be repeated again and again until they began to weep, mutter, and yell, and passion overwhelmed them as states (*ḥāl*) suddenly overcame everyone present. Then suddenly someone would scream out and tear off his clothes, and run out of the shrine, trampling upon the heads of people lost in ecstasy. Nābulusī tells the reader that the spiritual presence (*rūḥāniya*) of the Prophet is palpable.<sup>181</sup> Nābulusī himself is caught up in this spiritually overwhelming exchange of poetry between the dead and the living and he recognizes the practice as newly controversial when he exhorts readers to "oppose the words of the ignorant deniers."<sup>182</sup> A few months later, before he leaves Cairo for the Hijaz, Nābulusī returns to the same mosque and he narrates the same ritual and is even more overwhelmed, as he and his companions start weeping and sobbing loudly in spiritual ecstasy. This time he mentions that "even those Rumi deniers (*munkirīn min al-Arwām*)

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 1:66-7.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 2:67.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 2:69.

could not have restrained themselves from this ecstasy that descended upon them and emotion that overcame them.”<sup>183</sup> He then relates how once, after another Friday prayer when he came to the tomb, one of these Rumis asks Nābulusī whether “this thing that they are doing, is it permissible or not?” Nābulusī immediately becomes silent and waits for the recitation to begin until even this doubter is overcome. The moment then becomes a point for Nābulusī to declare a full defense of all Sufi practices, whether dhikr or dancing around graves, quoting his father’s refutation of Ibn Taymiya and stating that “God has no greater instrument than the souls of his pure and good saints and the shining lights of their graves.”<sup>184</sup>

In this case, Nābulusī clearly identifies a particular ethnicity as the antagonist in these confessional debates. Of course, Nābulusī’s travelogue is by no means an obsessive rant against Rumis like that of Khafājī, and Nābulusī often demonstrates his friendships with a large number of the Rumi intellectuals both in the Arab world and beyond. He even included Rumi scholars in the constant poetic exchanges that marked these travelogues. For instance, when sitting around the town of Baalbek, he included the meager Persian lines of the *defterdār* whose Arabic was not quite at the point of composing or reciting Arabic poems.<sup>185</sup> But at these emotional climaxes within the travelogue, the reader is clearly told who the enemy is and the fraying of imperial bonds becomes clearer when he narrates a tale of holy relics coming back from Rum.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 2:250.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> al-Nābulusī, “Ḥullat,” 87.

<sup>186</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa’l-Majāz*, 2: 193.

Part of Nābulusī's confessional reordering of the landscape of the Arab lands is his slow and subtle push to efface the companions of the Prophet Muhammad. As mentioned in earlier chapters, in the wake of the Crusades commoners and elites created a holy landscape that heavily emphasized the graves of the prophets and the companions of Muhammad. The first part of his travelogue has a particular obsession with reconciling the fact that many of these holy dead, most often the companions of the Prophet Muhammad, inhabited multiple graves, both within Syria and in Iraq and the Hijaz. For example, he encountered in a Damascus cemetery an edifice over what the people of the city commonly claimed to be the grave of 'Abd al-Raḥman, son of the caliph Abu Bakr. He states that the correct location is in Mecca, as he died in al-Ḥubshī and his body was later brought to Mecca. To prove this point he cites around ten different sources or so and suggests that it is far more likely the grave of a random man named 'Abd al-Raḥman b. Muḥammad b. Abi Bakr, not the son or grandson of the caliph.<sup>187</sup> He continues subtly casting doubt on the veracity of graves, noting for instance, the fact that the grave of the famous companion of the Prophet, Ka'b al-Aḥmār has a "Hebrew of Syriac" chronogram (*tārīkh*) which he then spends a few pages attempting to explain.<sup>188</sup> Steadily and slowly he desacralized certain parts of Damascus.

This pattern of skepticism and verification continues until he narrates a small personal intellectual conversion about a month into the travelogue. On September 25, 1693, Nābulusī is forced off course and into a small village, Minya, in the countryside near Tarabulus. He finds out that the town houses the grave of the Prophet Joshua. However, when he arrives at the tomb a stone inscription clearly states 'this is the grave of the humble servant Shaykh Joshua, erected by

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 1:70-3.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 1:114.

the Sultan al-Malik al-Muqtafi al-Sāliḥī in Tarābulus in the year 684 (1285-6).’<sup>189</sup> More damning than the date, which could refer to the construction of the tomb, was the fact that the deceased was referred to as ‘Shaykh Joshua’ instead of ‘Prophet.’ Here Nābulusī, who had spent the preceding days questioning tombs that did not concur with textual sources, was forced to confront directly the contradiction between his own personal perception of the grave as full of “awe” and the textual reality in front of him. After consulting a variety of books and finding no evidence that the Prophet Joshua was buried in the village except for what was told to him in the village, he ultimately chose to believe his own perception of the grave as that of a prophet, attributing the inscription to the fact that the scribe did not know the proper titles for prophets.<sup>190</sup> He now abandoned his authenticating stance and began to renarrate his own life, interpreting his arrival in the village as a reenactment of the miracle of Joshua—the delay of sunset for an hour as the Israelites invaded Jericho on the Sabbath eve.<sup>191</sup> The story functions as both a sort of breaking point, in which he narrates shifts in his own self, but also a continuous reminder of the fact that he was still very much living in a land of prophetic legacy. A month later he arrives at a village named Maṣḥḥad al-Nabī Yūnus (*Tomb of the Prophet Jonah*), near Safad, named after the prophet’s supposed resting place. Nābulusī realizes that the tomb occurs repeatedly in many different places and is most certainly false.<sup>192</sup> He decides, however, that ‘in any case, the location is ascribed and set down, and the people of the village must be respected,’ and then quotes the

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 1:195-6.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 1:197.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 1:194-200.

<sup>192</sup> For the other locations of the tomb he visited see *ibid.*, 183–84, 364. Nābulusī has actually decided that the “real” grave of Prophet Jonah is in the village of Jabal Ṣaḥyūn (Mt. Zion) on the Lebanese coast, as suggested by a dream of another saint.



famous hadith that ‘deeds are considered only by their intention...’<sup>193</sup> His attitude toward tombs of these Prophets in villages is radically different than that which he displayed toward the graves of the companions of the Prophets earlier and it marks an end to his obsession with verifying the literal veracity of graves and instead he accepts their figurative significance.

Nābulusī’s emphasis on village life, and his particular insistence on accommodating the religious life of peasants, is a purposeful choice of itinerary and narration. Whereas other travelogues only saw villages as waystations to the larger cities, and therefore provided only the briefest of descriptions, Nābulusī spent quite a bit of time detailing their tombs and sanctuaries, situating important events in the travelogue in the villages. He proudly states that he (and his many traveling companions and servants) were hospitably hosted at every village and town they visited, and that he never needed the protection of any government official, and whenever they provided him letters of introduction and protection he declined to show them.<sup>194</sup> In fact, although most of the travelogue’s events occur in the city, the city as an entity is largely inconsequential. There are no attempts to describe the city as a whole, as in the works of Khiyārī or Evliya Celebi, and instead the city, like the countryside, is simply a larger collection of gardens and tombs. The point becomes clearer in Nābulusī’s description of coffee—by that point a common topoi of travelogue literature—in that coffee is never drunk in that premier urban institution of the seventeenth century, the coffee-house. Rather, it is only drunk in close meetings such as when he shared a cup with a naked holy fool named Shaykh Zāyid living in a cave.<sup>195</sup> Close to the cave was a village named ‘Arrāba whose residents believed in a holy fool name Shaykh Ṣālīḥ, who

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 1:299.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 1:38, 283-4.

<sup>195</sup> Compare al-Khiyārī, *Tuḥfat al-Udabā’*, 1:172-4; to al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa’l-Majāz*, 1:302.

walked around beating a drum and armed to the teeth, calling himself the “guardian of the armory (*wakīl al-zardkhāna*).” (Perhaps he wandered around armed because the village was beset by bandits and rapacious officials.) They offered Nābulusī and his posse the utmost hospitality, “in spite of their struggles with the rulers, their deprivation, and difficult circumstances.”<sup>196</sup> While he spent much of his time in discussions with learned scholars and supportive officials, he never sought out their patronage. He threw himself at the feet of saints, prophets, holy fools, and commoners.

Nābulusī’s expansion of the social world of the travelogue to these figures reveals a palpable and deep populism that runs through his writing. In a particularly touching moment, a partially educated shaykh named “al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā‘īl Abu’l-Qasim al-Najjār came to visit us and he brought a qasida of his own composition praising us, and we accepted it from him, and we were blessed by him even though he was someone that God had not instructed in poetry and he did not need to do this as the poem was out of meter and it is facile and rough on the ear (*khārijatun ‘an al-wazn fa-tasluk bi-sāmi’iha masālik al-sahl wa’l-ḥazn*).”<sup>197</sup> Nābulusī’s gracious acceptance of the poem—which he wrote down in the rough draft but did not include in the fair copy, presumably to avoid humiliating his semi-educated follower—marked a difference from other travelogues that only included astute poems from a small coterie of friends, unless they wanted to humiliate someone. In turn, it seems that the populace loved him, with hundreds if not thousands of city-folk accompanying him out of Gaza as he headed toward Egypt.<sup>198</sup> Nābulusī

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<sup>196</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa’l-Majāz*, 1:303.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 1:347.

<sup>198</sup> 428 or so

did not provide a blanket acceptance of all people and walks of life. He laughs at the imam who delivers his sermon in grammatically incorrect Arabic and he rails against the heretical sects in the mountains of Lebanon.<sup>199</sup> His approach, however, is best summed up with the word “write and be a champion of the people (*iktab wa unṣur al-qawm*), a command he took from the biography of a fifteenth-century Sufi.<sup>200</sup> In short, he exhibited a form of populism that, while a far cry from that of, say, twentieth-century social realists, was quite palpable for the time. For this reason, he was asked by “one of the governors” to undertake and write a fourth and final travelogue in 1701 to Tarabulus province “for the public good.”<sup>201</sup> Nābulusī does not name the governor who made the initial request, presumably to avoid suggesting a patronage relationship, but he does produce one last travelogue titled *Nābulusī’s Gift*, less for the governor than to the people and the holy landscape.

### **Travelogues reach new audiences**

The wider social world Nābulusī cultivated in his travelogues is clearly reflected in his quite broad readership. For such a voluminous travelogue, there are a surprising number of (manuscript) copies, far more than nearly any other Arabic travelogue from the early modern or modern period.<sup>202</sup> First, it should be noted that reproducing the manuscript of Nābulusī’s “big travelogue”—which was nearly always over 400 folios long—required mobilizing a number of

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<sup>199</sup> The imam thinks that the smiles between Nābulusī and his friends are signs of approval. When he later learns of his mistakes he breaks into colloquial Arabic and admits that he had taken too much hashish before the sermon. In terms of heretics of the mountains of Lebanon, he’s particularly troubled by the ancestral village of the Druze warlord Ibn Ma’n. al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa’l-Majāz*, 1: 212-5, 217-8, 251-2; 2:108-9.

<sup>200</sup> The quote comes from a conversation between Qādī Zakariya b. Aḥmad Zaynal‘ābidīn al-Anṣārī al-Shāfi‘ī and the majdhub Shaykh Muḥammad al-Iṣṭanbūlī *ibid.*, 2:59.

<sup>201</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Tuḥfa*, 1.

<sup>202</sup> There are at least thirty to forty known copies of the travelogue, of which I have examined twenty.

different social and labor relations. It does not seem to have been produced by booksellers and professional copyists (though copies were later sold on the market). Instead, it was often commissioned by or gifted to major figures such as governors and their descendants. Nābulusī's own descendants, his grandsons and great-grandsons, were often the copyists and distributors of these works.<sup>203</sup> As with his other works, this helped ensure the continued distribution of reliable texts and the ongoing reputation of the family. Another family, the 'Ajlūnīs of Damascus also copied Nābulusī's travelogues over generations.<sup>204</sup> Other copyists were students of their shaykhs or teachers, in which the copy functioned as a gift or act of fealty. Given how often it was copied for others, it is not surprising that some made sure to note that they copied it simply for themselves, an act of spiritual devotion to the author.<sup>205</sup> The vast majority of manuscripts of the travelogue were copied in the second half of the eighteenth century. This reflects both the fact that the travelogue had become canonical by this point but also that many of the manuscripts copies from the early period seem to have been partially destroyed in the process of reading.<sup>206</sup>

The patrons who commissioned these large manuscripts—and who became the initial owners and readers of the manuscripts—were from a different group of people than the traditional set of the scholars who formed the normal audience for the travelogues. We do find certain shaykhs and scholars commissioning manuscripts but we also find a number of governors

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<sup>203</sup> See Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS Mixt 712 v. 1-2; Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS M. 524; Dar al-Kutub, MS Jioghrafya 344, Zahiriyya Library, MS 4753

<sup>204</sup> The copy at Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS Wetzstein II 1123 was copied by Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad al-'Ajlūnī and completed on 26 Mar 1754. The copy at British Library, MS Or. 14295 copied by Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-'Ajlūnī and completed on 21 Sep 1767.

<sup>205</sup> Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Kiliç Ali Paşa 758, ff. 1a, 442a

<sup>206</sup> See the incomplete copies at British Library, MS Or. 14295; Bibliothèque nationale de France MS Arabe 5043. The copies at Zahiriya Library, MS 4642 and Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS Wetzstein 1745, ff. 83b-85a are also partial but seem to be just select parts that were copied out (the section on Syria and the introduction, respectively).

of Syria, viziers, grand viziers, the grand vizier's employees, and an *amir al-hajj* among these patrons.<sup>207</sup> While earlier travelogues were dedicated to major government figures such as Sultan Süleyman or *şeyhülislam* Zekerîyezâde, essentially functioning as a gift to those dignitaries, Nābulusî's travelogue was the first travelogue felt to be a general good for society, for which one had to hire a reliable copyist. For this reason, the famous governor of Damascus, Süleymân Paşa al-ʿAẓm endowed a copy made by Nābulusî's disciple and later collated against the author's copy, for the general benefit of students (“*ʿala ṭalabat al-ʿilm*”) in the 1730s.<sup>208</sup> Other copies were likewise endowed into public collections, such as that of the Yāghūshiya Madrasa in Damascus and the endowment library founded by a woman named Ayşe, of the Cabbārzāde family in the central Anatolian city of Tokat.<sup>209</sup> Most surprising was the fact that even an eighteenth-century merchant (*tājir*) named Yusūf Çelebi decided to commission a copy of one of the travelogues, a type of reader that is never seen.<sup>210</sup> The fact that they were deposited in public libraries—whether those of mosques, madrasas, or otherwise—signaled a shift in the usage and function of the travelogue.

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<sup>207</sup> For the scholar see Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 2376, copied in 1768 by a ʿUmar b. ʿAbdullah commission by Shaykh Muḥammad Amīn b. Muḥammad al-Ṭarābulusī. For governors see Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, MS M. 524 (commissioned in 1803 from one of Nābulusî's descendants by Bākīr son of Derviş Paşa, the former governor of Damascus and the *amīr al-hajj*); British Library, MS Or. 14295 was commissioned by Derviş Beğ son of vezirü'l-vüzera (grand vizier?) Osman Paşa in 1767. İbrāhīm Debbāğzāde, who was at one time the auditor (*müfettiş*) of the grand vizier, both owned one copy of the manuscript (Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Kiliç Ali Paşa 758, see ownership statement on f. 1a) and then had another copy made for himself in 1790 (İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserleri Kutuphanesi, MS A746).

<sup>208</sup> Zahirîya Library, MS 3226. This description taken from al-Nābulusî, *al-Ḥaḳīqa wa'l-Majāz*, 1: 13-4.

<sup>209</sup> That copy is Zahirîya Library, MS 3225 *ibid.*, 1:14 For the manuscript owned by Ayşe Hatun see Tokat İl Kütüphanesi Collection at Milli Kütüphane in Ankara, MS 60 Hk 284. Having not seen the endowment seals myself, I cannot say when this woman endowed the library, but another book with a date suggests that it was in the mid-nineteenth century (see 60 Hk 394 f. 219b).

<sup>210</sup> Title is written as “al-tajir al-fata al-hajj Yusūf Çelebi ibnū'l-merḥūm Sayyid Aḥmedzāde” in Cambridge University Library, MS Qq 300, f. 358b

This mix of owners and commissioners demonstrate that Nābulusī's travelogues had broached a much larger audience. His work, like those that followed it, had pushed the travelogues from texts that circulated among a small number of scholars who often personally knew each other to a larger reading public, an audience that continued to increase over the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The travelogue was now seen, by some of its supporters, as part of the public good, something to be read by people across the empire. Like all of Nābulusī's writings, it found a wide audience in both the Turkish and Arabic-speaking areas of the empire. We even find on occasion the comments of Turkish readers on his travelogues.<sup>211</sup> One of the most interesting set of readers, though, is a few generations of poorly educated and possibly rural clerics who left a number of scrawled and misspelled reading statements from the early nineteenth century on the flyleaf of one manuscript. The first of these reading statements state "Teacher Muhammad son of the deceased Teacher Ahmad read this [book] and contemplated its hidden meaning/rhetoric. (*naḍara fīhi wa taqammala ma 'ānihi Ḥojā Muḥammad ibn Marāḥūm Ḥoja Aḥmad* [نضر فيه وتكمل معانيه حجا محمد ابن مراحم حجا احمد])." This set of readers, though, betrayed their insecure grasp on proper written Arabic by overcorrecting the two words used for 'reading', *naḍara* and *ta'ammala* as well as misspelling his (Persian) title *khwāja* (خواجه) according to its colloquial pronunciation, "ḥoja (حجا)."<sup>212</sup> Despite their lack of education, it is clear that these country clerics treasured their copy of the travelogue and saw

<sup>211</sup> See the varied Turkish comments in the copy of the second travelogue, *al-Ḥaḍra al-'Unsiyya*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arabe 5960, ff.39-97, but especially ff. 80b-81b

<sup>212</sup> In many colloquial dialects of Arabic the *qāf* (ق) is pronounced as a glottal stop (hamza ء) and the *dād* (ض) is pronounced as a 'z.' In this case, the word "to read (*ta'ammala* تامل)" actually has a hamza in the correct spelling, and the other word for "to read (*naḍara* نظر)" has ظ in its spelling. The poor shaykh, knowing these alterations and attempting to appear educated, overcorrected his spelling and thus revealed his lack of learning. Despite this he still misspelled the word "hoja," "deceased," and "year." The statements date from 1809-10/1224h, 1816-7/1232h, and 1834-5/1250h and continue radically misspelling pieces throughout. Statdbibliothek Berlin, MS Wetzstein II 1123, f. 1a

reading it as a form of spiritual practice, going so far as to identify themselves as belonging to the “school (madhhab)” of Nābulusī.<sup>213</sup>

There is also evidence that Nābulusī’s travelogue crossed confessional divides as the copy of the “big travelogue” made its way into the library of the Patriarch of Antioch, sitting alongside that of the aforementioned Paul of Aleppo, until it was gifted to the Russian tsar.<sup>214</sup> The fact that Nābulusī’s travelogue was housed in the library of a Christian reader might suggest that its confessional argument found resonance beyond Muslim readers. At first glance, this is an odd development because the travelogue itself has very little to say about Christians, hardly if ever mentioning them save when a group of Christians possibly accosted the travelers in Nazareth.<sup>215</sup> Yet, the overall message of creating a holy land centered on the graves of Biblical prophets, as demonstrated in previous chapters, was an act of fashioning a joint world. Take for example, one reader of Nābulusī’s first travelogue to the Tarabulus. Setting out from Jerusalem to Damascus to visit his shaykh, he copied read Nābulusī’s travelogue but also copied alongside a spiritual biography of John the Baptist.<sup>216</sup> These types of connections would explain why Nābulusī would, late in his life, join with the Patriarch of Antioch (who lived in Damascus) to write a sort of duel fatwa on the nature of *wujūd*.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Stadtbibliothek Berlin, MS Wetzstein II 1123, f. 1a

<sup>214</sup> The manuscripts are currently housed in St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. Nābulusī’s dates from 1789/1204h and can be accessed as MS B1231 Yuri Pyatnitsky, “‘...will Have Their Day!’ The Collection of the Christian Arabic Manuscripts of Gregory IV of Antioch in St. Petersburg,” *Eastern Christian Art in Its Late Antique and Islamic Contexts* 8 (2011): 139, 147.

<sup>215</sup> al-Nābulusī, *al-Ḥaqīqa wa ’l-Majāz*, 1:300.

<sup>216</sup> John the Baptist is buried in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, which is why the traveler most likely copied down the work. *Nubaydha min Manāqib Sīdī Yahya al-Huṣūr*, Princeton University Library, MS Garrett 263Y, ff. 1b, 44b-46a

<sup>217</sup> Bakri Aladdin, “Deux fatwā-s du Ṣayḥ ‘Abd al-ḡanī al-Nabulusi (1143/1731): présentation et édition critique,” *Bulletin d’études Orientales* 39–40, no. 1987–1988 (1989): 7–37.

Nābulusī's travelogue likewise inspired many of his students to write their own polemical and confessional travelogues of the region. Earlier chapters examined how Muṣṭafa al-Bakrī (d. 1749), Nābulusī's student from Egypt and Damascus, set out and wrote a number of travelogues to Jerusalem and Damascus in the 1710s and 1720s, seeking out for example, the tomb of Abraham in the countryside of Damascus, conducting *dhikrs* there with the villagers while he denounced those who denied the verity of the saints.<sup>218</sup> Others include Muṣṭafa As'ad al-Luqaymī's (d. 1765) travelogue from Egypt (he was from Dimyat) to Damascus or Ḥusayn b. Tu'ma al-Baytimānī's (d. 1761) fiery combination of travelogues and Sufi polemics,<sup>219</sup> something that he and the other students in the period attempted to do by creating specific creeds (*aqīda*) around their beliefs in Ibn Arabi and saints.<sup>220</sup>

## A Travelogue without People

Nābulusī responded to the confessional transformation of the empire, and the controversies over which practices constituted Islam, by expanding the social world of the travelogue. A few years before his journey, though, a poet from Istanbul set out to do the same,

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<sup>218</sup> Muṣṭafa al-Bakrī al-Siddīqī, *Bur' al-Asqām fī Ziyārat Barza wa'l-Maqām*, ed. Ghalib Anabsi (Kafr Qar': Center of Arabic Literature Studies, Bet Berl, 2009); Muhammad al-Ḥizmāwī, "al-Khamra al-Ḥasiyya fī'l-Rihla al-Qudsiyya (*Rihlat Muṣṭafa al-Bakrī ila al-Quds*)," *Majallat Ma'had al-Makhṭūṭāt al-'Arabiyya* 48 (November 2004): 151–75. I consulted manuscript copy at Istanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserleri Kutuphanesi, MS A3371.

<sup>219</sup> Muṣṭafa As'ad al-Luqaymī, *Tahdhīb mawāniḥ al-'Uns bi-Rihlati li-Wādi al-Quds*, ed. Riyad Abdulhamid Murad (Damascus: Manshurat al-Ha'ya al-'Ama al-Suriyya lil-Kitab, 2012). I also consulted manuscript copies at British Library, MS Or 7712 and Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS Wetzmann II 1126. Ḥusayn b. Tu'ma al-Baytimānī, *Rihlat al-Sālikīn ilā Bāb Rabb al-'Alamīn*, Princeton University Library, MS Garrett 499Y, ff. 150b-173a; For more information on these disciples of Nābulusī, see Barbara Von Schlegell, "Sufism in the Ottoman Arab World: Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731)" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1997), 55–63.

<sup>220</sup> See Ḥusayn b. Tu'ma al-Baytimānī, *Ḥabal Allah al-Matīn fī Aqīdat al-Shaykh al-Akbar Muḥyīaddīn*, King Saud University Library, MS 6524, ff. 7b-20a,



to create a textual representation of the very same holy land that Nābulusī would traverse. The poet known as Nābī (1642-1712) would write what was perhaps the most popular travelogue ever in the Ottoman Empire, in terms of sheer copies produced.<sup>221</sup> His travelogue, *Tuhfetü'l-Haremeyn*, carried both the meaning of *The Gift to the Two Sanctuaries* and *The Gift of the Two Sanctuaries*.<sup>222</sup> Nābī's travelogue was not in formal dialogue with the tradition of Arabic travelogues, although he did originally come from the Arabic-speaking city of Rūhā (today's Urfa), later lived in Aleppo, and was well-versed in the language. Nor was there any direct connection to the smattering of first-person Turkish pilgrimage narratives that often existed more as personal notes than formally published pieces.<sup>223</sup> Instead it was in dialogue with the same human and holy landscape Nābulusī would traverse only ten years later. He set out over the winter of 1678-79 to Aleppo, Damascus, Jerusalem, Cairo before heading to Mecca and Medina.<sup>224</sup> The travelogue is only about 40-50 folios on average but its relative brevity belies a wildly complex and ornate Ottoman Turkish.

The elaborate usage of rhetorical devices itself was one of the underlying aims of Nābī's text. It took the new sanctified landscape of the empire between Damascus, Cairo, and Medina and clothed it in the tropes and imagery of high Persianate culture. This was not just an act of

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<sup>221</sup> There are many works on Nābī and his writings. One of the better ones is Meserret Diriöz, *Eserlerine Göre Nâbî* (İstanbul: Fey Vakfı, 1994).

<sup>222</sup> A critical edition of the text, with a little bit of contextualization and analysis, was published by Menderes Coşkun in Nābī, *Manzum ve mensur Osmanlı hac seyahatnameleri ve Nâbî'nin Tuhfetü'l-Haremeyn'i*, ed. Menderes Coşkun (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2002); Coşkun wrote some of his findings in English in the following articles and in his dissertation. Menderes Coşkun, "The Most Literary Ottoman Pilgrimage Narrative: Nâbî's Tuhfetü'l-Haremeyn," *Turcica* 32 (2000): 363–88; Menderes Coşkun, "Ottoman Pilgrimage Narratives and Nâbî's Tuhfetü'l-Haremeyn" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Durham, 1999).

<sup>223</sup> On these, see Chapter 4 on landscapes of the hajj in the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>224</sup> There is a bit disagreement over the precise date of composition of the text, but it seems that it was written within ten years of completing his journey Nābī, *Tuhfetü'l-Haremeyn*, 68–71.

making devotional literature accessible for Turkish speakers in Istanbul, Cairo, or Belgrade—the highly literary and extremely Persianized language could have just the opposite effect—but an act of elevating the landscape and its holy dead to a poetic level they deserved. It was an act that he would repeat again when he completed the second part of the Prophet’s biography in high Turkish with his addendum to Veysī Efendi’s *Sīra*, which was frequently grouped with the travelogue.<sup>225</sup>

When one reads Nābī’s text, one feels a sense of being led along from place to place as the author directs the reader eye to various scenes. From a coffeehouse in Damascus where the opium addicts’ heads droop like overburdened poppies, to marbled walls of the Ummayyad Mosque or the bird’s eye view of the Nile Delta meeting the sea, the readers’ gaze is constantly being directed by the rhetorically vast description.<sup>226</sup> The prolific and compounded use of metaphors is so overwhelming that the text can be close to impenetrable, for modern readers at least. Take for example, the relatively straightforward description of the Nile.

First, the lip of the Nile kisses the hem of the skirt of that holy place (the shrine of the Prophet’s footprint in Cairo) and then after it passes in front of ancient, inhabited Cairo, performing the rites of fealty, like a page from a copy of the seven heavens, in the heartwarming shade of that promenade named Qasr-i ‘Ayn which ornaments the meeting of the white eye and black iris (*hawr-i ‘ayn*) it makes a shelter from the blows of the fists, and afterwards, gaining joy from the sight of the paradise-like promenade in the town of Bulaq, when it arrives at the outskirts of Alexandria and Dimyat and Rashida, it splits in two, striking a blow in the form of Zulfikar (the two-tongued sword) on the round shield of the White Sea (the Mediterranean).<sup>227</sup>

Nābī’s quite metaphorical prose, always viewing the world from a distance, gives quite disembodied views of the landscape and buildings. In this passage, as with many others, he

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<sup>225</sup> There are tens, if not hundreds of copies of this text. The title is commonly called *Zeyl-i Siyer-i Nābī*. See for example the collection of the two together in Istanbul Araştırma Enstitüsü, MS Şevket Rado 617.

<sup>226</sup> Nābī, *Tuhfetü’l-Harameyn*, 198–203.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 202–3.

describes the world as if it were “a page from a copy of” a book and he was a reader gazing at its illustrated wonders.

What is lost in the disembodied description of Nābī’s travelogue is the social world of the inhabitants of these holy lands. Nābī makes a purposeful choice to eschew any people from its midst. It is a startlingly imperial view of these lands. Not in the sense that he is concerned with the markers of imperial power or categorizes the inhabitants as a colonial Other, but by the fact that none of the inhabitants emerge as actors or characters. No scholars or shaykhs appear. Even when people are mentioned, like, for instance, the opium addicts in the coffeehouse, they are mere set pieces in the garden of Nābī’s description, objects to be gazed at rather than actual people with names or purposes. The only people mentioned by name are the patrons to which the travelogue is dedicated: his prospective patron, Sultan Mehmed IV; his current patron, Muṣāhib Muṣṭafa Paşa; and the governor of Egypt, prominent litterateur and future grand vizier, ‘Abdurrahman Paşa.<sup>228</sup> Nābī’s severe choice—obscured by our own current presumptions as to the form and content of a travelogue—is not apparent unless juxtaposed against contemporaneous travelogues in Arabic.

The imperial bent of Nābī’s travelogue becomes more evident when we examine its main audience—Ottoman (i.e. Rumi) bureaucrats. Indeed, over the course of the eighteenth century it became a requisite text for many of the top bureaucrats and leaders of the empire. (This is particularly the case with the scribal-bureaucratic corps which emerged as its own political entity over the late seventeenth century and took Nābī as one of its poet-laureates.)<sup>229</sup> This was not

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 161–63.

<sup>229</sup> On the rise of the scribal corp see Ekin Emine Tuşalp Atiyas, “Political Literacy and the Politics of Eloquence: Ottoman Scribal Community in the Seventeenth Century” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 2013). On the relationship between Nābī and a new political ethos see my forthcoming article.

simply the case with his travelogue, but with many of his other works as well. It is difficult to overstate the radical popularity of Nābī's works, whether one looks at his travelogues or poetry. Copies of his work are essentially found in every Islamic manuscript library with Turkish collections. Some readers were such ardent followers of Nābī's work that they would analyze copies for evidence that it was the author's autograph.<sup>230</sup> Beneath this veneer of a mass reading public, however, the material remains of the copies themselves attest to a quite different world of readers than other travelogues.

As one browses through copy after copy of *Tuḥfetü'l-Ḥaremeyn*, a clear pattern emerges of a manuscript created as much for display as for its content. The relatively high level of ornamentation is one indicator. Some, of course, were copied for personal use in a quite plain manner but many of the copies are gilded on the borders of the text book and have well-done illumination on the title page [see fig. 2-5].<sup>231</sup> Yet, none of them contain any illustrations or levels of decoration that would make them too difficult to replicate. They are almost universally written in a particular version *talīk/ta'liq* script unique to the Turcophone Ottoman lands, suggesting that the books were copied for or by a Rumi audience. At the same time, however, relatively few of the many copies have colophons that identify the copyist. Likewise, none of them are collated against an original and thus have relatively few corrections, suggesting that the reliability of the copyist or the text was not determinant of its worth or quality.<sup>232</sup> These signs

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<sup>230</sup> See the fascinating note that one unidentified reader left on his copy of *Tuḥfetü'l-Ḥaremeyn*, in which he tries to justify his suspicion that copy in front of him was in Nābī's own hand. John Rylands Library, MS Turkish 134, f. 4a. Unfortunately, this statement was taken at face value by Coşkun Menderes and designated the official autograph.

<sup>231</sup> Examples of personal copies, written without a ruling board on small notebooks can be found at İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserleri Kütüphanesi, MS T5088, ff. 1-66, and MS T649

<sup>232</sup> Most copies lack any commentary in the margins, but marginalia was too rare in all manuscript to be a reliable marker of usage.

point to the fact that many copies of Nābī's travelogue were produced by booksellers specializing in such production, or were taken to professional scribes, and that they circulated through market mechanisms. The fact that relatively little information about the copyist is given in the colophon would support this. The marginalia of Nābī's travelogue is particularly sparse, even when we take into account the fact that readers in the early modern Middle East generally did not leave their personal impressions or comments in the margins of works. A few it seems, took it on the hajj with them, letting it guide their eye, but none really countered or contributed their own observations to Nābī's prose.<sup>233</sup> Others left dictionary definitions of the many obscure words in the text.<sup>234</sup> Compare this to the copies of Nābulusī's travelogue, which are usually written in the *nesih/naskh* script particular to the Arab provinces rather than the Ottoman *nesih*, and which nearly always mention the copyist, who could sometimes be easily tied back to the author. His readers in turn, would leave little reading marks, the “*qif!* (قف)” that signaled to other readers or themselves to stop and pay attention. The owners of Nābī's travelogue, on the other hand, would quite often leave their names on the cover pages and flyleaves of the manuscripts, reflecting Rumi naming patterns, with a high coincidence of Ottoman bureaucratic or military

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<sup>233</sup> Aşır Efendi, the late eighteenth century intellectual and bureaucrat, actually did leave his description of the stops on the hajj route, and wrote what books he brought back from Mecca at the end of the notebook. See Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Aşır Efendi 241.

<sup>234</sup> E.g. İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserleri Kütüphanesi, MS T2521

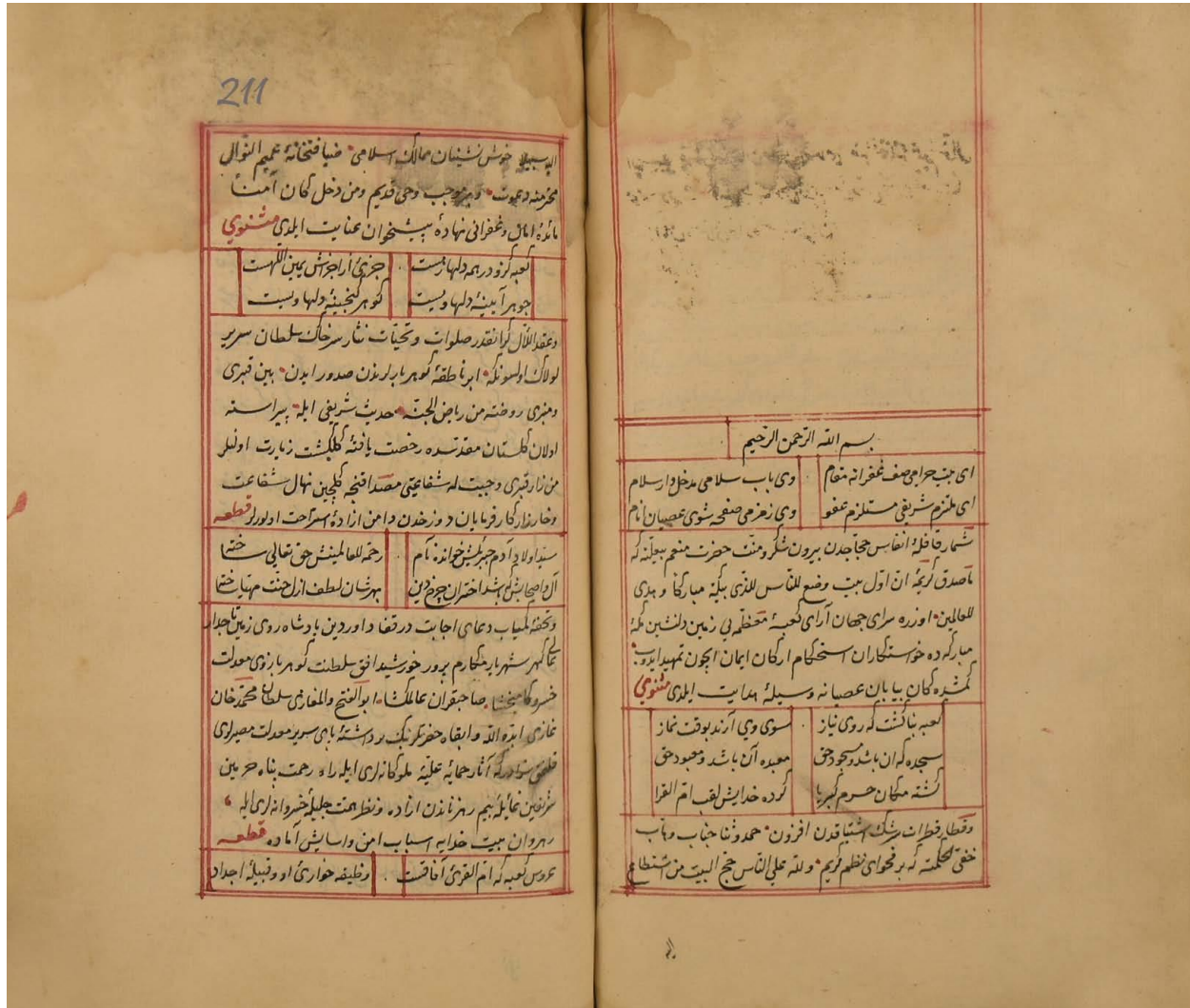


Figure 2: First page of a plain but professionally made copy of Nābī's *Tuhfet'ü'l-Haremeyn*, İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, MS Sevket Rado 617, ff. 210b-211a

<sup>235</sup> There are too many copies of Nābī's travelogue to give exhaustive lists of the owners, but see for example, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Supplement Turc 378, ff. 8-64, which was owned by Ismail Fehim Ömer Efendizade, one of the chiefs of the Imperial Secretarial Corps (*hacegân-i dīvân-i humâyûn*); The copy at Topkapı Sarayı Library, MS R2010, f. 1a-53b, 83a, was owned by Süleyman b. Mehmed el-Sofyavi (from Sofya, Bulgaria) who was part of the Mustahfzan unit of Rumi troops in Cairo but stationed in Mecca. Alongside it he later copied a history of Mecca by the Fumi author el-Bursevî; The copy at Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Aşır Efendi 269 was owned by Mir Mehmed Ferid Süleyman Beğ, who apparently used it on the hajj in 1158h. It later ended up as property of Aşır Efendi (see the next footnote), who also made another copy that he took on the hajj with him, see Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Aşır Efendi 241.



Figure 3: First page of a professionally made copy with minor illumination, Nābī's Tuhfetü'l-Haremeyn, Marmara Üniversitesi Nadir Eserleri Kütüphanesi, MS İlahiyat Fakültesi YZ0200



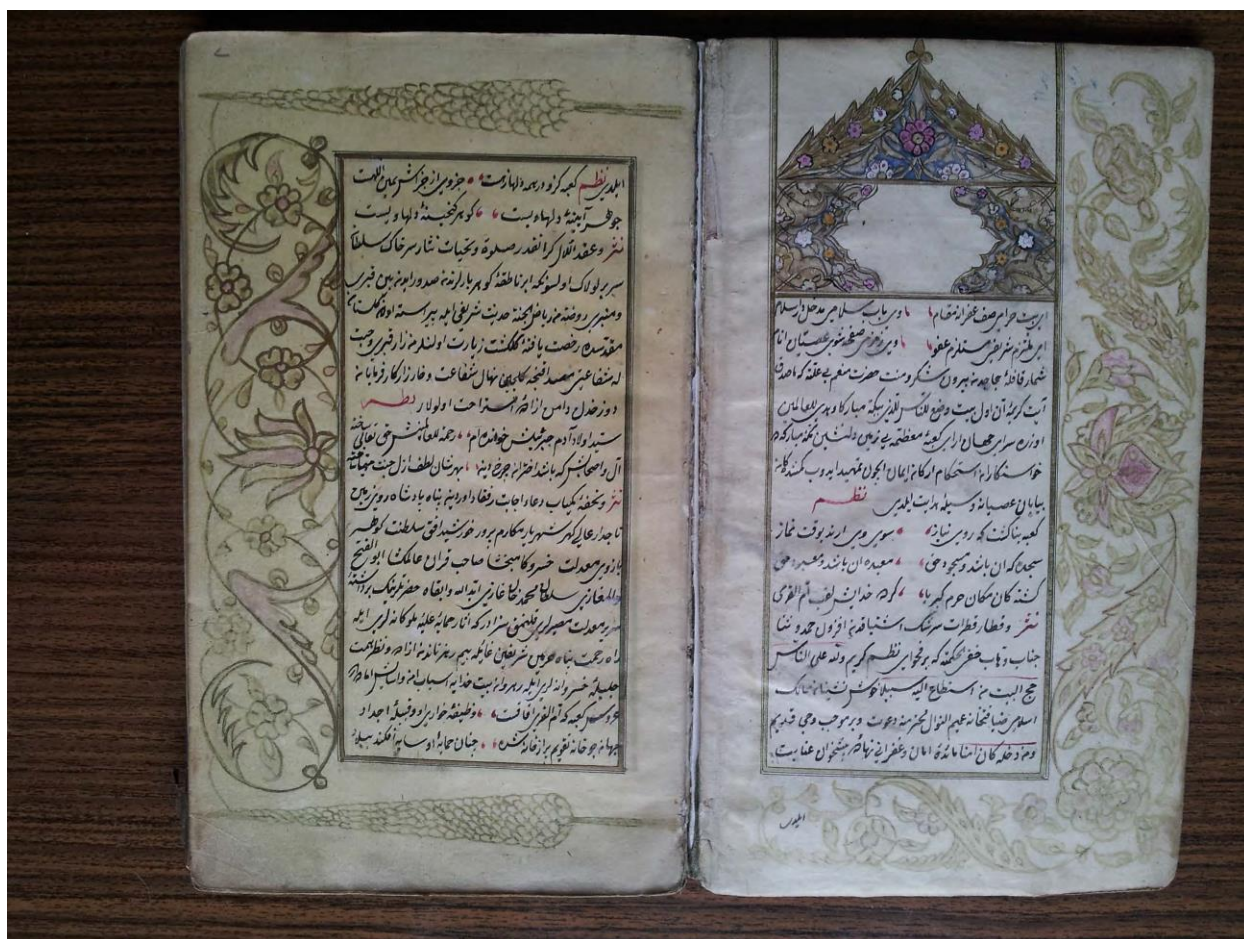


Figure 4: First page of a professionally made copy with extensive and unique but somewhat amateurish illumination, *Nābī*, *Tuhfetü'l-Haremeyn*, İbrahim Hakki Konyalı Kütüphanesi, MS 247 (photograph of the author).





Figure 5: First page of a professionally made copy with extensive and high-quality illumination, Nābī, Tuhfetü'l-Haremeyn, John Rylands Library, MS Turkish 134. An eighteenth-century reader claimed that this copy was Nābī's autograph. (photograph of the author).

While all of this suggests that the book more often sat listlessly on shelves rather than enthusiastically perused, there definitely was a number of committed readers. I would argue, however, that the representation of this holy land found its corollary in the type of reading that it engendered. Distant and disembodied, readers were meant to passively imbibe the images that

Nābī proffered rather than interact with a cast of different scholars, poets, and saints by commenting on their poetry or graves. It was part of the process of replacing social relations with the Arab world with books, of eschewing the people from the countries in which one travels. Nābī, in turn, does not seem to have been terribly well-received by Arab litterateurs. Two or three lines about his life appear in the biographical dictionary of al-Murādī; he is recognized as one of the leading bureaucrats of the time but among his many intellectual achievements all that is mentioned is a sole couplet in Arabic.<sup>236</sup>

Works like those by Nābī, and Nābulusī, marked a point in which travelogues reached much broader reading publics. Whether through market mechanisms or otherwise, they were no longer aimed at a relatively small coterie of scholars in the Arab lands. Confessional circumstances helped bring the travelogue to new audiences and uses. The forms of engagement with travelogues that Nābī's work engendered, in spite of its political and social implications, would be found in many more works in the future.

### **The Power of Description**

Yūsuf al-Maylawī (d. 1720), also known by the name Ibn al-Wakīl, kept trying to set out on a journey.<sup>237</sup> Maylawī, like all the intellectuals of the period, knew the benefits travel provided: it would add to his experience, make him a better person, and allow him to break out

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<sup>236</sup> Muḥammad Khalīl b. 'Alī al-Murādī, *Silk al-Durar fī A'yān al-Qarn al-Thānī 'Ashar* (Bulaq: Husayn Basha Husni & Muhammad Husni Beg, 1883), 4:264.

<sup>237</sup> For reasons that are unclear, Maylawī's name has been recorded in a variety of different spellings. Some say that Maylawī (or Milevī or Meylevī in Turkish) is an adaptation of Mawlawī/Mevlevī. In other places he is called al-Mallawānī or Millawānī presumably after the Nile Delta town. But the name Ibn al-Wakīl (tr: Ibnū'l-Vekīl) seems relatively stable.

of his melancholy (*sawdā*).<sup>238</sup> Moreover, if he could only leave Cairo he would ideally gain a higher position. Even so, he was never able to push himself to set out on these journeys. He slowly reconciled himself with the fact that he would never be famous or rich, and fade into obscurity. As was the fashion at the end of the seventeenth century, he decided, like Nābī and Nābulusī, to seclude himself in his house out of disgust with corrupt society and make books his only friends. “I resolved to remain (*hils*) in my house and seclude my person from my visitors and to substitute my friends with the lone reading of books. Make your salon companion (*jalīsak*) an open volume!” he screamed to his readers but he eventually grew bored with this and with the start of the new hijri century in 1688 he thought that maybe he could regain his faith in humanity.<sup>239</sup> However, the moment he would venture beyond the city gates he would start wailing and weeping, and with tears streaming down his face, he would return to the familiar and beloved streets of Cairo and to his dear family.<sup>240</sup> This was a pattern that would repeat itself again and again, until finally in 1704 (1116h) he was ready to travel again.<sup>241</sup>

In 1706 Maylawī had finally completed his travelogue titled *The Stranger’s Journey and the Clever Man’s Gift* but he never stepped a foot outside of Cairo. In fact, he had undertaken the entire journey from the library of his employer and patron—the governor of Egypt, Rāmī Mehmed Paşa. Rāmī had arrived in Egypt in 1704, shortly after a stint as grand vizier in Istanbul that had witnessed the overthrow of Sultan Mustafa II and the defacto ruler, şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi. Rāmī had lost his position in the ensuing tumult but managed eventually

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<sup>238</sup> Ibn al-Wakīl Yusūf al-Maylawī, *Riḥlat al-Gharīb wa Niḥlat al-‘Arīb*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reisülküttab 798, ff. 3b-4a

<sup>239</sup> *Riḥlat al-Gharīb*, MS Reisülküttab 798, f. 3b

<sup>240</sup> *Riḥlat al-Gharīb*, MS Reisülküttab 798, ff. 6a-7a

<sup>241</sup> *Riḥlat al-Gharīb*, MS Reisülküttab 798, f. 7b

secure a final position following the 1703 revolution as governor of the empire's most populous and important province. Among his many belongings was a massive and astounding private library (*khizāna*) and Maylawī made sure to find employment there.<sup>242</sup> Rāmī himself was an accomplished litterateur, who besides writing a book of poetry and correspondence himself was the first member of the secretarial corps to attain the position of grand vizier.<sup>243</sup> He was actually a protégé and close companion of the poet Nābī, and had accompanied the poet on the journey that led to his famous travelogue.<sup>244</sup> As governor of Egypt, Rāmī commissioned Maylawī to write not only the travelogue but also a history of the famous Abbasid secretarial family, the Barmakids.<sup>245</sup> At the same time, Maylawī was quite a fan of the learned Arabic tradition of travelogue writing and had himself copied and freely quoted Kibrīt's *A Winter and Summer's Journey*.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> *Riḥlat al-Gharīb*, MS Reisülkütab 798, f. 8a. There is a larger question here as to what an extremely learned Ottoman official's library would have contained at the turn of the eighteenth century. I would guess that given similar collections by contemporaneous figures like Feyzullah Efendi or the Köprülü family that exist today (see the collection lists at Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Fotokopi 31 and Köprülü Library, MS 4/2447) it would have prioritized the collection of medieval Arab works. As a secretary, Rami would have emphasized preserving works of *adab*/belles lettres, which is to some degree reflected in Maylawī's travelogue.

<sup>243</sup> For a brief biography of Rāmī Mehmed Paşa see Tuşalp Atıyas, "Political Literacy," 9–20. For Rāmī's literary correspondence collection see İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi MS T5942 and Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS AF 159. A *siyasetname* of Rāmī can be found in Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi MS Esad Efendi 3835 around f. 176.

<sup>244</sup> See Tuşalp's dissertation for the many moments of connection between the two. *Ibid.*, 207–8. One can, of course, find many letters between Nābī and Rāmī Mehmed in their anthologies of correspondence see Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS AF 159 f. 35a and Bibliothèque nationale de France MS Supplement Turc 378, f. 178.

<sup>245</sup> The autograph copy of travelogue, with the clear indication of the commission can be found in Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2401, f. 1a. The autograph copy of work on the Barmakids, *Aḥsan al-Masālik li-Akḥbār al-Barāmik*, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS Ahmed III 2616 with Rami's commission statement on fl. 1a. (There are a few other copies of this work including the autograph at Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arabe 2107) The books probably made their way to the palace library after Rami's death, the point at which the Ottoman government would seize all of its servants' possessions.

<sup>246</sup> Muḥammad b. 'Abdullah al-Ḥusaynī Kibrīt, *Riḥlat al-Shitā' wa'l-Ṣayf*, ed. Sāmīr al-Shinwānī (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-Arabiyya li'l-Dirāsāt wa'l-Nashr, 2004), 14. Maylawī's manuscript copy was sighted in the early twentieth century but has not been fully recovered yet.

Maylawī's travelogue uses the (Arabic) books found in Rāmī's library to write a description of Cairo and its environs. It is a sprawling and intense dialogue between the author, the reader, and his numerous sources that combines at times the genres of the taxonomy of the sciences and poetry collection. It is difficult to summarize or even sample, but through constant quotation from the library's books it slowly builds a picture of Cairo, from the Nile to the island of Rawḍa and all the mosques and graves that ornament the city.<sup>247</sup> He most likely visited all these places himself, but the conceit of the travelogue is that he does all this travel through the words of others. His is a form of virtual travel, espoused by the likes of Katib Celebi in his attempt to dismiss travel entirely, but conducted on the familiar landscape of Cairo. Nor was it the miraculous virtual travel of a mystic shaykh, jumping between here and there. Maylawī substitutes books for the social relations embedded in earlier travelogues, simply citing their poetry and descriptions, rather than needing to interact with them in person, whether in the salon or the shrine. It was a concept of travel that would find physical representation in the very furniture of the new public libraries, in Istanbul at least, in the eighteenth century. The books would be kept in a giant, black cubical bookcase in the center of the room, either on the floor or lifted into the air. Librarians and readers would circumambulate around this Ka'ba as they retrieved whatever books they desired, conducting their pilgrimage through the act of reading.<sup>248</sup>

Maylawī was perhaps the ideal person for this form of virtual travel. Like other intellectuals of the time, he had followed the fashion of the time and sealed himself away from the world to only interact with his books. More importantly, in all his various books—whether

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<sup>247</sup> e.g. *Riḥlat al-Gharīb*, MS Reisülküttab 798, f. 128a, 238b, 243b, 263b

<sup>248</sup> Yavuz Sezer, "Architecture of Bibliophilia: Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Libraries" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2016), 111–34.

his travelogue or his history of the Barmakids or his collections of stories about the miserly figure of Ash‘ab to his histories of Ottoman Egypt—he referred to himself not as an author (*mu‘allif*) but as a compiler (*jāmi‘*).<sup>249</sup> He saw himself less as a creator of new knowledge than curator of already existing facts, and books were the key actors in his life. This is made abundantly clear by the fact that he seems to have made his living as a copyist and occasional translator of weighty Arabic books for Rumi patrons in Cairo, writing in a perfect Ottoman-style *nesih* that they most likely preferred.<sup>250</sup> These connections are important because, one, they demonstrate the intersections of the learned Arabic tradition of travelogues that had fully developed over the past century with its (less coherent) Rumi counterpart. Second, given that these travelogues were a traditional site of negotiating imperial relationships between Rumi patrons and Arab clients, it was a different vision of those relations than say, what Khāfajī had pessimistically described over half a century earlier. It was a moment of shared appreciation of medieval Arabic books.

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<sup>249</sup> Ibn al-Wakīl Yūsuf al-Maylawī, *al-Ṭirāz al-Mudhahhab fī Nawādir Ash‘ab*, ed. Ghaleb Anabseh and Nader Masarwah (Zahāq: Dar al-Huda, 2012); Yūsuf al-Millawānī (Yūsuf al-Maylawī) known as Ibn al-Wakīl, *Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb bi-Man Malaka Miṣr min al-Mulūk wa‘l-Nawāb*, ed. al-Shushtawī Muhammad al-Shushtawī (Cairo: Dār al-Afāq al-‘Arabiyya, 1999). This text was used in the second chapter regarding fights in Cairo over religion.

<sup>250</sup> For Maylawī’s Turkish rendition of Egyptian history see Ibn al-Wakīl, *Kitāb Ṭurf al-Majālis bi-Ṭaraf min Akhbār al-Sulṭān Salīm wa‘l-Jarākasa*, British Library, MS OR 3211. A surprising number of works copied by him survive, perhaps due to the pleasing and clear nature of his script and the bountiful illumination. See Nūh b. Muṣṭafa al-Ḥanafī, *Tārīkh Miṣr wa‘l-Qāhira*, Library of Congress, MS SM 7; Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn al-Hamadhānī, *al-Maqāmāt*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reisülkuttāb 912; a *majmu‘a* (miscellany) containing a variety of texts, located Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS EH 1726; Ahmed b. Süleyman, Turkish translation al-Suyūṭī’s *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara fī Akhbār Miṣr wa‘l-Qāhira*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Damād Ibrahim 910; Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. Muṣṭafa, (Translation of) *Mir‘āt al-‘Ajā‘ib al-Makhlūqāt wa Kashf al-Ghārā‘ib al-Mawjūdāt*, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS Or. Fol. 2562;

## Reading Travelogues Geographically: An Eighteenth-Century Coda

Maylawī's travelogue marks a shift in the way that readers in the Middle East encountered travelogues during the eighteenth century. His own travelogue was certainly not a motor for this change—so far I have only found two copies of this work and no references to it in any other literature—but it signals an increasing desire among readers to focus on the description of places, both distant and closeby. In other words, in the eighteenth century, the function of travelogues seems to have changed quite radically. In the sixteenth century, following the Ottoman conquest of the Arab lands, travelogues reflected a set of close social relations between Arab intellectuals and Rumi conquerors. They were not textual mirrors reflecting the overall connectivity of the world in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as we traditionally presume. In the eighteenth century, however, they did start to focus on describing landscapes and peoples. In other words, they were read geographically rather than socially. This transformation did not occur *sui generis* but rather reflected social transformations over the seventeenth century such as the increasingly provincialization of Arabs from imperial governance, the increasing interest in confessional difference, the integration of populist narratives, new relationships with books, and the development of a larger reading public for travelogues. Over the course of the eighteenth century, the different currents of travelogue writing would intertwine to create new trajectories in the role of travelogues.

We can see this shift in the revival and rediscovery of a variety of earlier travelogues. The most famous one of these is the work of Evliya Çelebi, the courtier from Istanbul who wrote a massive ten-volume travelogue over the course of the mid to late seventeenth century.<sup>251</sup> Today

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<sup>251</sup> There is an overwhelming amount of literature on Evliya Çelebi and yet his work has still not been adequately explored beyond a set local observations. Evliya Çelebi et al., *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi* (Beyoglu, Istanbul: Yapi

he has become the most celebrated symbol of travel and travel-writing for the early modern Ottoman Empire, which is one reason why I have relegated him to a few paragraphs toward the end of this chapter rather than place him in the figurative limelight. The second reason is that his travelogue seems to not have been read or circulated during his lifetime. There was only one copy that he completed with the help of an amanuensis and it seems to have remained in Cairo following his death there in 1683.<sup>252</sup> It was only in 1742 that it was brought to Istanbul and duplicated by the orders of the chief black eunuch, Beşir Ağa.<sup>253</sup> From this copy, a few more partial copies were produced over the eighteenth century, including a five-volume abridgement of the text in 1742 as well. It only took fifty days to copy out this abridgement versus the eight months for the entire manuscript.<sup>254</sup>

Most of the manuscript work on these copies of the *Seyāhatnāme* has been focused on determining the proper copies for preparing a critical edition. But there are hints as to how readers—the very few who actually knew of its existence—actually used this book. First, the fact that the librarian or scribe classified it as a “history (*tārīḥ*)” rather than belle-lettres (*adab*) is reflective of the broader change in the status of travelogues during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>255</sup> Second, if one turns to the little red dots that line one particular set of

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Kredi Yayinlari Ltd. Sti., 1996); Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality*; Nuran Tezcan, Semih Tezcan, and Turkey. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, *Evliyâ Çelebi : dogumunun 400. yilinda* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2011).

<sup>252</sup> Pierre MacKay, “The Manuscripts of the Seyahatname of Evliya Çelebi: Part I: The Archtype,” *Der Islam* 52 (January 1, 1975): 278–98; Robert Dankoff, “Where Is Evliya Çelebi in the Autograph of the Seyahatname?,” *Unpublished Article*, accessed July 21, 2016, [https://www.academia.edu/12820485/Where\\_is\\_Evliya\\_%C3%87elebi\\_in\\_the\\_autograph\\_manuscript\\_of\\_the\\_Seyahatname](https://www.academia.edu/12820485/Where_is_Evliya_%C3%87elebi_in_the_autograph_manuscript_of_the_Seyahatname).

<sup>253</sup> See the chart of its history at MacKay, “The Manuscripts of the Seyahatname,” 297 For Hacı Beşir Ağa’s ownership statement see Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi. MS B304, f. 6a.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., 279.

<sup>255</sup> For example, Nābulusī’s ‘big travelogue’ was categorized as “a book of history” by the librarians of the Topkapı Palace; Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS M. 524, f. 1a



manuscripts—the five-volume abridgement—and follow the red dots across the manuscripts, one notices that they always mark distances written within the unit of hours.<sup>256</sup> In other words, the travelogue was being used as a text-based map, presumably by a military commander or bureaucrat on a campaign of sort. In this case, we can connect and confirm this particular usage. The copy was made in 1142 by a member of the Balılcı corps (Çāvūş İbrāhīm b. Balıacı Hācī Mehmed b. Halīl) at the suggestion of a certain Rākım Efendi (the only person who knew of the manuscript's existence) for the commander (*silahdār-i şahriyār*) Baltacızāde Muştafa Paşa, who took it on campaign with him to the Morea.<sup>257</sup>

The rediscovery and reuse of Evliya Çelebi's travelogue finds parallels with the contemporaneous rediscovery of other earlier texts. For example, the main source about China for much of the early modern period, the travelogue of the Timurid ambassador 'Abd al-Razzāq's, was extracted from its larger text, *Maṭla' al-Sa'dayn*, and translated into Turkish.<sup>258</sup> Similar shortenings occurred to manuscript copies of Paul of Aleppo's travelogue in the eighteenth century: the voluminous descriptions of differences in Orthodox Christian rites were excised and only geographic descriptions of the Russian Empire and Wallachia were kept.<sup>259</sup> Even when we look at eighteenth-century readers of the Arabic corpus of travelogues, we find a greater emphasis on geographic description. For example, one early eighteenth century reader of

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<sup>256</sup> Here I am referring to the dots in Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, MS B300-303.

<sup>257</sup> MacKay, "The Manuscripts of the Seyahatname," 279–80.

<sup>258</sup> The history of this text is a bit unclear. While it was known, in Persian, to Katib Celebi and others, the Turkish translation was commissioned by certain Damadzāde Ibrahim under the reign of Sultan Ahmad, which points to either the early seventeenth century or the mid-eighteenth century. This text was eventually printed in the late nineteenth century under the title *'Acā'ibü'l-Laṭā'if (Hitay Sefaāetnāmesi)*, and its commissioning was attributed to Çelebizade Ismail, which would place it in the mid-eighteenth century. The only manuscript copy of this text I can find is Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Supplement Turc 1169.

<sup>259</sup> Petrova, "Relationship," 17.

Kibrīt's work left reading marks throughout the margins focusing on geographical features and histories of the lands he traversed rather than on its literary or poetic virtues.<sup>260</sup> Similarly, the sixteenth-century travelogue of Naḥrawālī to Istanbul, which was never formally published, was rediscovered by the Istanbulite Velīyüddīn Efendi in the eighteenth century.

This general shift in the usage of travelogues in the eighteenth century is also seen in the widespread popularity of *sefāratnāmes*, diplomatic accounts of Ottoman ambassadors—whether to Iran or France or Austria. After Evliyā Çelebi's travelogue, these *sefāratnāmes* have been some of the most intensively discussed examples of travelogues from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>261</sup> Often, their emergence is interpreted as an indicator of greater circulation and interaction between the Ottoman Empire and the outside world. However, without denying a general shift in inter-imperial diplomacy over the eighteenth century,<sup>262</sup> these travelogues built upon the audiences and expectations of the earlier travelogues. When the *sefāratnāmes* first began to appear, in the late seventeenth century, they were private diplomatic reports from negotiations with the Habsburgs. But the reports of figures like Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi to France

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<sup>260</sup> Princeton University Library, MS Garrett 160H, e.g. ff. 81b

<sup>261</sup> The sefaratname tradition has been the most studied site of travelogues and has led to the impression that travelogues only developed with European intrusion Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri*, ed. Bekir Sıtkı Baykal (Ankara: Türk Tarihi Kurumu Basımevi, 1968); Fatma Muge Göçek, *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Hasan Korkut, "Osmanlı Sefaretnâmeleri Hakkında Yapılan Araştırmalar," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 1, no. 2 (2003): 491–511; Norman Itzkowitz, *Mubadele an Ottoman-Russian Exchange of Ambassadors*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

<sup>262</sup> Cemal Kafadar, "The City That Ralamb Visited: The Political and Cultural Climate of Istanbul in the 1650s," in *The Sultan's Procession: The Swedish Embassy to Sultan Mehmed IV in 1657-1658 and the Ralamb Paintings*, by Karin Adahl (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 2006), 58–73.

and others actually circulated widely with many manuscript copies made.<sup>263</sup> They were even summarized and translated into Arabic.<sup>264</sup> These ambassadors' travelogues were read alongside earlier travelogues as well, which points to new ways of reading older versions. Take for example the travelogue of Elias of Babylon to the Americas, which I argued was actually aimed at demonstrating the confessional transformation of the Middle East rather than describing the Americas as new lands. One of the remaining copies, which is or was kept in the Syriac bishopric in Aleppo, was copied in the eighteenth century alongside an Arabic translation of Yirmisekiz Mehmed Efendi's travelogue, and with notes on the discovery of the Americas by European travelers.<sup>265</sup> The original owner and presumed compiler of this manuscript was a certain Hanna Di'āb, who was driven at the end of his life to write a travelogue of his own journey to France fifty years earlier.<sup>266</sup> Even the older Arabic travelogues, such as that of Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī from the early sixteenth century, and which I argued largely circulated as poetic gifts between patrons and clients, entered into a new market exchange of manuscripts alongside these *sefāratnāmes*. By the end of the eighteenth century, a certain "Sīnūr (Señor) Ibrāhīm" was easily able to purchase the travelogue of Yirmisekiz Mehmed Efendi alongside that of Badr al-

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<sup>263</sup> Zülfikâr Paşa, *Zülfikâr Paşa'nın Viyana Sefâreti ve Esâreti (1099-1103/1688-1692) (Cerîde-i Takrîrât-ı Zülfikâr Efendi Der Kal'a-ı Beç)*, ed. Mustafa Güler (Istanbul: Çamlıca, 2008); Richard F. Kreutel, *Viyana Önlerinde Kara Mustafa Paşa*, trans. Müjdat Kayayerli (Ankara: Akçağ, 2006).

<sup>264</sup> Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arabe 2296

<sup>265</sup> Matar, *In the Lands of the Christians*, 48. Unfortunately Matar seems a bit confused as to the relationship between the sefaratname to the other travelogue.

<sup>266</sup> This work which ended up in the Vatican library was recently translated into French. Hanna Dyâb, *D'Alep À Paris: Les Pérégrinations D'un Jeune Syrien Au Temps de Louis XIV*, trans. Paule Fahmé-Thiéry, Bernard Heyberger, and Jérôme Lentin (Paris: Sinbad, 2015); A short English description can be found in Paule Fahmé-Thiéry, "Writing and Building Self-Awareness: Access to Modernity through Bûlus Al-Zaïm and Hanna Dyâb's Travelogues," in *Europe in Arabic Sources: "The Travels of Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch"* 95–107.

Dīn al-Ghazzī in the book markets and bring them to Europe.<sup>267</sup> These small interactions between manuscripts and their readers suggest that these diplomatic travel accounts, the *sefāratnāmes*, which so often are taken as a sign of a new stage in interaction with Europe, responded to and relied upon the market for travelogues created by earlier works. Obviously, these are just glimpses rather than detailed inquiries into the histories of eighteenth-century travelogues, but they hint at the continuities that are possible to trace when we examine the material life of these manuscripts.

## Conclusion

This chapter began with the problematic of how circulation and connectivity are textually expressed. As mentioned earlier, it often seems that the Ottoman Empire is not terribly connected to the rest of the world because some of the main proxies for connection, such as travelogues to distant lands, are seemingly absent. I argued, however, that Ottoman subjects traveled far and wide but often chose to represent in texts only a small portion of these movements. Indeed, when we looked at the corpus of travelogues from the period, the majority of them trace a common circuit between the major urban centers of the Arab lands such as Damascus, Cairo, Medina, and the imperial capital, Istanbul. These were not a continuation of an earlier Islamic travelogue genre, but a new one that was forged in the wake of the Ottoman conquest as Arab scholars presented poetic gifts—the travelogues—to their Rumi patrons. Readers focused not on the geographic information of the travelogues but on the verse and its rhetorical qualities. Over the course of the seventeenth-century, shifts in inter-imperial relations, the usage of books, and an

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<sup>267</sup> Corfu Reading Society Archive (Corfu Town), Document titled “fī bayān ‘iddat al-kutub alladhi ishtirāhum Sīnūr Ibrāhīm.” The travelogues are listed toward the end.

increasingly confessional atmosphere, expanded the scope and audience of the travelogue genre. The travelogue continued to be a site for the articulation of imperial relations between Rumis and Arabs, but it could often be quite a negative or caustic relation. Others simply turned toward writing about the pleasures of travel in general. For these reasons, travelogues ceased to be private gifts possessed by a notable family but texts that were read far and wide by a large number of readers. Especially when travelogues began tackling the confessional transformation of the Syrian and Hijazi holy lands, they reached new levels of popularity and reader engagement. These new audiences and expectations carried over to the mid-eighteenth century travelogues, which were written and read for geographic information. Even older travelogues were reinterpreted through this lens. In other words, I argue that there was a reciprocal relationship between the usage of travelogues as objects and the circuits that they textually represented. It was not that people were necessarily traveling further or more often between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, but the function of travelogues, as both texts and objects, changed.

## Conclusion

I have elaborated here a set of interconnected case studies regarding the relationship between the material world, circulation and religious and intellectual life in the early modern Middle East. Islamic religious and cultural history is so often written as a history of ideas or representations traced over time. In response, some scholars, at times in ways that come across as quite instrumentalist, have pointed to the socio-economic factors or the disciplinary mechanisms of the state that have molded Islamic orthodoxy and religiosity over the ages. Using as a backdrop a period of intense polemical debates over the nature of proper Islamic practice in the seventeenth century, I have highlighted how entanglements with the material world helped spur and transform Islamic religious thought and practice. This type of explanation has never meant to be purely materialist, but to incorporate the social, the historical, and the contingent. In doing so, I have drawn upon scholarly literature on movement and exchange of people and objects during the early modern period to demonstrate the particular importance of regimes of circulation between Rumis and Arabs in the Eastern Mediterranean. The point is not merely to prove that flow and movement existed, but to demonstrate how such circulation transformed the culture, thought, and practices of the people within the empire.

Following the introduction, the second chapter attempted to find a proper analytical vocabulary for Islamic religious change in the early modern world and assessed the various social constructivist and socio-economic approaches for understanding religious change in the Ottoman Empire. Discarding the conventional framework of the Kadizadeli movement, it focused instead on the polarization of Ottoman society during the seventeenth century, when fellow Muslims were willing to anathematize their co-religionists at a moment's notice. The third

chapter argued that one of the reasons for this polarization was the wide-scale adoption and use of polemical, manuscript “pamphlets.” Both scholars and lay readers became increasingly dependent on these pamphlets and their entanglement with these objects led to the proliferation of purposeful false ascriptions and individual reading, practices which ran counter to traditional forms of knowledge transmission. In response, some scholars tried to forge new methods of manuscript dispersion and analytical reading. The fourth chapter examined how the particular religious practice of the Ottoman hajj emerged through the interactions of the Ottoman state, Rumi pilgrims, and the Syrian landscape of saintly and prophetic shrines. In short, the hajj came to include numerous saintly shrines, both before and after Mecca and Medina. The intensively land-based infrastructure that the Ottoman state developed for the hajj also pulled in Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem who began to call their own itineraries “hajj.” Muslims even recognized this Christian adoption of the hajj, rebelling and rioting at this blurred boundary. The fifth chapter also looks at travel, but this time from a more removed point of view, examining the manner in which circulation was textually expressed in the Ottoman Empire. Taking as a starting point the fact that Ottoman subjects traveled far and wide but only chose to represent a certain segment of their travels, I looked at the large corpus of mainly Arabic travelogues detailing early modern travels between Syria, Egypt, and Istanbul. Tracing the usage of the travelogues as material objects, I examined how their purpose shifted from poetic gifts granted by scholarly families in Damascus to their patrons in Istanbul to general descriptions of travel read by increasingly large audiences. Rather than argue that more travelogues were written because Ottoman subjects traveled further and more frequently, I suggested that the circulation and travels represented within the travelogue expanded as its social and material role grew over the

seventeenth century. The chapter is a capstone to a series of connected reflections on the role that circulation and material entanglement played in transforming early modern Ottoman religiosity.

The regimes of circulation that emerged from the Ottoman Empire produced just one form of Islam, what one might term an Ottoman religiosity. As mentioned earlier, this is not due to any sort of cultural predilection or purposeful state policy, but an unintentional product of the material and social networks instantiated by the empire over a particular landscape. Different empires and locations, such as the Safavid Empire or the Indian Ocean would produce different networks and therefore different forms of Islam. While the large early modern empires provided one motor for this increased circulation, future work will hopefully also examine networks that are not directly defined by a polity, such as the commercial and environment forces that brought tobacco to the Eastern Mediterranean.

The leap in mobility and circulation initiated by the technological transformations of the nineteenth century brought an end to some of the early modern regimes of circulations and enabled other new and unexpected interactions. It often seems that the scalar shift found in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries renders all that came before irrelevant. We should remember, however, that “[t]he seemingly radical transitions that created the modern world emerged out of nested hierarchies of pattern and form; they were additive as well as transformative.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, the entanglements that were created in the early modern period often left a strong mark on our current world. For example, I would argue that the social infrastructure developed to accommodate the manuscript pamphlet and the new forms of readership it engendered continued

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Shryock, Daniel Lord Smail, and et al, *Deep History: The Architecture of Past and Present* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2011), 246.



into the nineteenth century. This meant that when print was adopted, piecemeal and haphazardly and at the great insistence of the government, in the mid-nineteenth century its disruptive social effects were relatively minimal.<sup>2</sup> The necessary transformation of learned and semi-learned society to accommodate larger groups of dispersed, individual readers had already occurred.

Other nineteenth-century innovations could ultimately be transformative and disruptive. Take for example the breakdown of the particular Ottoman culture of the hajj that had emerged through the interaction with the saintly and prophetic shrines of the Syrian landscape, a hajj culture that pulled in Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The introduction of steam travel by ship ultimately sidelined the land route that so many Muslims, Christians, and Jews followed together. Muslims in Istanbul could now depart relatively directly for Mecca and Medina and Christians for Jerusalem. Of course, the steamships stopped in new ports of call which produced new encounters, but the particular Ottoman network that had formed over the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries was irreparably altered and along with it a particular religiosity. Even so, the overland hajj comprising of both a visit to the Ka‘ba and saintly shrines in Syria and elsewhere was revived during the era of cheap bus travel in the second half of the twentieth century as pilgrims from Turkey and the Balkans flowed to the various shrine cities of the Arab world.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> On the introduction of print in Egypt and its social impact see Kathryn Anne Schwartz, “Meaningful Mediums: A Material and Intellectual History of Manuscript and Print Production in Nineteenth Century Ottoman Cairo” (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> I thank Yavuz Sezer and Kadir Filiz for reminding me of the importance of bus travel to Turkish pilgrims.

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