Aca'ib

Occasional Papers on the Ottoman Perceptions of the Supernatural

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Abbreviations

BL: British Library (London)
BnF: Bibliothèque nationale (Paris)
BOA: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Istanbul)
İÜK: İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi
SK: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi
TSK: Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi (Istanbul)
TSMA: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi (Istanbul)

ActOrHung: *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*
ArchOtt: *Archivum Ottomanicum*
BSOAS: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
EB: *Études Balkaniques*
IJMES: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*
IJTS: *International Journal of Turkish Studies*
JAOS: Journal of the American Oriental Society
JESHO: *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JOTSA: *Journal of Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*
JTS: *Journal of Turkish Studies*
OA: *Osmanlı Araştırmaları – The Journal of Ottoman Studies*
RMMM: *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée*
ROMM: *Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée*
SF: *Südost-Forschungen*
SI: *Studia Islamica*
TED: *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*
THR: *Turkish Historical Review*
TSAB: *The Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*
TSAJ: *The Turkish Studies Association Journal*
WZKM: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*

EI: *E.J. Brill's First Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1913-1936*
EI^{2}: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition* (Leiden, 1960-2002)
EI^{3}: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam Three* (Leiden, 2007-)
İA: *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 1940-1979)
TDVİA: *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 1988-)

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A. EDITORIAL

Ottoman Esotericism in a Global Perspective

Marinos Sariyannis (Rethymno)

It is with great pleasure that we present the third issue of "*Aca'ib*: Occasional Papers on the Ottoman Perceptions of the Supernatural", in the context of our five-year (now six-year, since ERC granted an extension to the difficulties presented by the pandemic) research project, GHOST, that is to say "Geographies and Histories of the Ottoman Supernatural Tradition: Exploring Magic, the Marvelous, and the Strange in Ottoman Mentalities", funded by the European Research Council under the program Consolidator Grant 2017. The research team consists of Marinos Sariyannis (Institute for Mediterranean Studies/FORTH, Rethymno, Greece), as Principal Investigator, Zeynep Aydoğan (Institute for Mediterranean Studies/FORTH, Rethymno, Greece), N. Işık Demirakın (Institute for Mediterranean Studies/FORTH, Rethymno, Greece), Feray Coşkun (Özyegin University, Istanbul, Turkey), Güneş Işıksel (Medeniyet University, Istanbul, Turkey), Bekir Harun Küçük (University of Pennsylvania, USA), Ethan Menchinger (Manchester University, UK), Aslı Niyazioğlu (Oxford University, UK), and Ahmet Tunç Şen (Columbia University, USA), as well as three Ph.D. candidates (Aylin Çakı, Dimitris Giagtzoglou, Markos Litinas), some MA students and our technical staff. In the year that elapsed between this and the previous issue, we tried hard to make up for all the delays the COVID-19 brought about: for the presentations and conferences we par-

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.26225/nahq-a253

ticipated, the reader is advised to check the "News" section of our site (https://ghost.ims.forth.gr/news/). On 14–17 January 2022, the eleventh "Halcyon Days in Crete" international symposium, organised by the Department of Ottoman History of the Institute for Mediterranean Studies/Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas, took place (virtually) with the topic "Enchantments and disenchantments: early modern Ottoman visions of the world". A report on the symposium can be found in the present issue, and the proceedings will be published in due course (hopefully before the end of the project, in early 2024) in a peer-reviewed volume. We plan to organise yet another conference in the context of the GHOST project within 2023.

The first conference organised by the GHOST project, back on December 2019, had tried to tangle the Ottoman concepts of nature and the supernatural; assembling a team of scholars via an open call for contributions, it sought to map an emerging field in Ottoman studies, one that tries to trace the varying conceptions and techniques pertaining to the hidden world in an early modern Islamicate empire, following the recent boom of such studies concerning late medieval Middle Eastern cultures. The second conference enlarged its view to encompass visions of the world and of nature in the Ottoman Empire (including non-Muslim populations), with an emphasis in the well-known debates on Enlightenment(s), the Weberian disenchantment (and/or re-enchantment) of the world, and the way these notions may be applied in non-European environments. The question that this *problématique* raises is almost self-evident: how can we place Ottoman perceptions of the nature and of the ways human agency can handle its hidden powers (be them natural properties or supernatural entities) in a global context?

Very briefly, we know that Islamicate science up to the twelfth century CE (with major works such as the epistles of the Brethren of Purity/*Ikhwān al-Safā'* or the famous *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*) had formulated a theory of magic based on natural hierarchies and correspondences, where talismanic techniques could use powers inherent in nature yet hidden from the common intellect. However, a major revolution had occurred by the early thirteenth century: the astral magic of *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*, combined with a strong Sufi strand of letter science (especially through Ibn ʿArabī's tremendously influential works), gave rise to what has been called lettrism, i.e. a theory of nature and magic in which Arabic letters, being essential elements of the cosmos and its divine order, dominate both the universe and the ways to exert human influence on it. The work of al-

Būnī (d. 1225?), together with a series of works attributed to the same scholar or, alternatively, to Hermes Trismegistus, established a talismanic magic based on magic squares (*wafḳ*), letters and numbers. This approach, which has been named "Neo-Pythagorean" due to its mathematical dimension, was popularised through a network connecting Egypt, Anatolia, Iran and Central Asia under figures such as Ibn Turka or ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī (d. 1454). As revealed by Matthew Melvin-Koushki and Noah Gardiner, it appears that throughout the fourteenth century CE several scholars, including Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and of course Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) fought bitterly against this trend,[1] only to be defeated in favor of an increasingly "occultist" trend that tended to include more and more powers, which older scholars (e.g. Ibn Sīnā or the Brethren of Purity) considered natural, into a supernatural sphere of angels, demons and jinn. In a series of articles, Matthew Melvin-Koushki has recently postulated that this Neo-Pythagorean, mathematicised perception of the hidden actually catalysed an occultist turn, which functioned in tandem with the formation of the major Islamicate empires of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Timurid, Ottoman, Safavid, Mughal) to form an "occult-scientific imperialism".[2]

In a parallel course, in Western Europe, the translation of classical Arabic works such as al-Kindī's *De radiis* or *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* (famously known as *Picatrix*) into Latin led to the rise of a scholarly tradition of natural or astral magic, connected with the ideas of Hermeticism; this tradition coexisted with another, namely ritual or demonic (Solomonic) magic, based not on powers and properties of nature but on handling and manipulating demonic forces.[3] From the late

1 M. Melvin-Koushki, "In Defense of Geomancy: Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī Rebuts Ibn Khaldūn's Critique of the Occult Sciences", in M. Melvin-Koushki – N. Gardiner (eds), *Islamicate Occultism: New Perspectives, special double issue of Arabica,* 64/3–4 (2017), 346–403; N. Gardiner, *Ibn Khaldūn versus the Occultists at Barqūq's Court: The Critique of Lettrism in al-Muqaddimah* (Berlin 2020).

2 M. Melvin-Koushki, "Astrology, Lettrism, Geomancy: The Occult-Scientific Methods of Post-Mongol Islamicate Imperialism", *Medieval History Journal*, 19/1 (2016), 142–501; idem, "Toward a Neopythagorean Historiography: Kemālpaşazāde's (d. 1534) Lettrist Call for the Conquest of Cairo and the Development of Ottoman Occult-Scientific Imperialism", in L. Saif, F. Leoni, M. Melvin-Koushki and F. Yahya (eds), *Islamic Occultism in Theory and Practice* (Leiden 2020), 380–419.

3 On the history of magic and astrology in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, see J.-P. Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance. Astrologie, divination et magie dans l'Occident médiéval (XIIe–XVe siècle)* (Paris 2006); R. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge

fifteenth century onward, Renaissance scholars often turned to natural magic, combining it with Neoplatonism, Hermeticism and Kabbala: in the work of scholars such as Marcilio Ficino (d. 1499) or Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (d. 1494) the world is a continuum, in which human soul is capable of influencing its environment, since macrocosm and microcosm correspond to one another. These ideas culminate during the sixteenth century, with Pietro Pomponazzi (d. 1525), Agrippa of Nettesheim (d. 1535) and of course Paracelsus (d. 1541). The Renaissance ideas about the human Magus and his powers over the natural world have been held responsible for the Scientific Revolution, a theory enhanced by the occultist occupations of major scientists such as Johannes Kepler (d. 1630) or Isaac Newton (d. 1726); yet, these views are now considered outdated, although the history of science now places more attention on the development of occult sciences and their role. The definitive (or not-so-definitive) marginalisation of magic began with Descartes' (d. 1650) rationalism and the Enlightenment philosophers throughout the eighteenth century.

No doubt, the Ottomans were influenced by and participated in the global occult turn during the fifteenth and the early sixteenth century. From Akşemseddin (d. 1459) to the şeyhülislam Kemālpaşazāde (d. 1534), major figures of Ottoman intellectual life wrote lettrist treatises and prophesied universal dominion; palace circles were heavily influenced by occultists such as the geomancer Haydar, who apparently managed to convince young Suleyman I that he was destined to perform a Messianic mission in spreading Islam worldwide.[4] At the turn of the sixteenth century, Murad III was captivated by astrological predictions and firmly believed that he was the Chosen of God, constantly receiving messages from the Hereafter.

Yet, even if we accept that in other Islamicate empires the occult turn maintained its momentum throughout the seventeenth century, Ibn Khaldūn seems to have exacted a belated revenge on his occultist opponents: starting with

1989); B. P. Copenhaver, *Magic in Western Culture: From Antiquity to the Enlightenment* (Cambridge 2015).

4 Melvin-Koushki, "Toward a Neopythagorean Historiography". Cf. C. H. Fleischer, "Seer to the Sultan: Haydar-i Remmal and Sultan Süleyman", in J. L. Warner (ed.), *Cultural Horizons: A Festschrift in Honor of Talat S. Halman*, 2 vols (Syracuse 2001), 1:290–299; idem, "Shadow of Shadows: Prophecy in Politics in 1530s Istanbul", in B. Tezcan – K. Barbir (eds), *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World: A Volume of Essays in Honor of Norman Itzkowitz* (Madison 2007), 51–62.

Kâtib Çelebi's (d. 1657) historical works, Khaldunist historical sociology permeated the understanding of history of the Ottoman elite and drove away messianic considerations of occult power. The seventeenth century was one of disenchantment, as the Ḳāḍızādeli movement sought to banish the supernatural from everyday life and pietist brotherhoods such as the Naḳşibendīs (Naqshbendīs) arose among both the elite and common folk. In this regard, one could argue that the Ottomans also followed a global trend: this time, comparisons can be made with European puritanism and the debates between Protestant and Jesuit scholars about miracles and miracle-working.

During this period, intellectual elites followed a course reminiscent of contemporary European developments. Under the heavy influence of al-Suhrawardī's Illuminationism, itself very akin to Neoplatonism, scholars such as Taşköprüzāde (d. 1561) or Kâtib Çelebi developed a theory of natural magic that strongly resembles Renaissance authors such as Ficino or della Mirandola, as it is based on secret hierarchies and correspondences of the microcosm and the macrocosm. Yet they never seem to have really engaged in such magic, neither in theory nor in practice. This "natural turn" may therefore be entirely unrelated to the parallel developments in European esotericism and could perhaps more fruitfully be regarded as an antiquarianist interest in pre-lettrist Islamicate astral magic. Indeed, the few Greek-speaking Ottoman specimens of occultist treatises do display affinities with Renaissance Neoplatonic musings.[5] However, most Ottoman treatises on occult topics are either collections of lettrist talismans and prayers (a rare systematic exposition of lettrist theory and method is Saruhani's mid-sixteenth century *Ḳavāʿid-i tesḫīrāt*)[6] or essays on ritual magic, closer to the *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* tradition (such as Uzun Firdevsī's early sixteenth-century *Daʿvetnāme*). Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century magic, preserved mostly in vernacular manuscripts, consists mainly of alphanumeric calculations and lettrist talismans; and an Egyptian sorcerer, tried in Malta in 1605, seems to have used mostly al-Būnī's techniques and magic squares,

5 See the work in progress by Mr. Markos Litinas, PhD candidate and cf. his M. Litinas, "The Views of Gerasimos Vlachos on Astral Influences: Aristotelic, Hermetic, and Astrological Approaches to the Heavenly Bodies", *Aca'ib: Occasional papers on the Ottoman perceptions of the supernatural,* 2 (2021), 147–168. https://doi.org/10.26225/2mpd-7x13

6 E. Kaçar, "İbn-i İsa'nın *Ḳavāʿid-i tesḫīrāt* isimli eseri: inceleme ve metin", unpublished M.A. thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2019.

although he claimed to be practicing more "Renaissance-like" occult methods such as astrology and geomancy.[7]

Thus, Ottoman esotericism and occultism seems to have proceeded in tandem with the general developments in other Islamicate empires, rather than in the European cultural environment, as far as its contents and methods are concerned. However, it departs from these developments (or at least it seems so; the history of Iranian or Mughal occultism in the early modern period has barely been studied)[8] insofar occultist preoccupations lose their grip on power games and imperial policy after the late sixteenth century, making the occult/lettrist turn more of a moment in this case. On the other hand, if Taşköprüzade's or Kâtib Çelebi's occultism may be considered antiquarian, there is a parallel with Safavid trends. What seems to bear some similarities with the European experience is the manner in which Ottoman society (or, to be more precise, part of it) arguably underwent a disenchantment of sorts after the seventeenth century. This also dealt a strong blow to the prestige of occult sciences, including the highly respected ones such as astrology. "Practical naturalism" and technology transfer in the artisanal strata of the big cities throughout the eighteenth century, although one will meet major difficulties trying to compare this development with Enlightenment or the Scientific Revolution.[9]

A more thorough analysis of these global dimensions would surely exceed the limits of a simple editorial. More secure and detailed conclusions will hopefully be reached at the end of the GHOST project. For the moment, we hope that the reader will find the material collected in the present issue satisfying and that we will be able to produce an equally interesting fourth and (perhaps) last issue, scheduled for Fall 2023.

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7 See A. Mallett – C. Rider – D. A. Agius (eds), *Magic in Malta: Sellem Bin al-Sheikh Mansur and the Roman Inquisition,* 1605 (Leiden 2022), especially the chapter by L. Saif, "Magic and Divination Lost in Translation: A Cairene in a Maltese Inquisition", 419–451.

8 For the Moroccan case, see now J. K. Stearns, *Revealed Sciences. The Natural Sciences in Islam in Seventeenth-Century Morocco* (Cambridge 2021).

9 See H. Küçük, *Science without Leisure: Practical Naturalism in Istanbul,* 1660–1732 (Pittsburgh 2019) and cf. the interesting discussion that ensued: N. Shafir, "The Almighty Akçe: The Economics of Scholarship and Science in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies,* 58 (2021), 251–280 and H.Küçük, "Response to Nir Shafir", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies,* 59 (2022), 261–272.

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B. Papers

Into the Deep Past of the Ottoman Istanbul: The Bronze Horseman of Constantine in Sixteenth-Century ʿAcāʾibs

Aslı Niyazioğlu (Oxford)[1]

Exploration of a vast geography and a deep past awaits the readers of Ottoman cosmographical encyclopedias. Generically entitled *ʿAcāʾibü'l-maḫlūḳāt ve Ġarāʾib al-mevcūdāt* (Wonders of creation and oddities of existence; *ʿAcāʾib*, from now on), these works are attempts to present the wonders of the cosmos in

1 This paper is based on research carried out under the project "GHOST: Geographies and Histories of the Ottoman Supernatural Tradition: Exploring Magic, the Marvelous, and the Strange in Ottoman Mentalities," funded by the European Research Council Consolidator Grant Scheme (CoGr2017 No. 771766). I am grateful to all members of the Ghost team with special thanks to Feray Çoşkun for invaluable feedback for my on-going project. I would like to thank Güneş Işıksel, Melis Taner, Marinos Sariyannis and my father Erhan Altunel for their wonderful feedback on the first draft. And many thanks to Elana Boeck for her book on the bronze horseman of Justinian, without which this article could not have been written.

Note on the transliteration: In the passages cited from published editions, the authors' conventions, even when very different from each other, were followed to be faithful to the edition.

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a single volume.[2] As explained by one writer, they offer tours around the globe "so that there will be no need to travel the world in this short life, during such seditious times."[3] In addition to distant lands, the writers of *ʿAcā'ibs* guide their readers to distant pasts and urge contemplation on ancient civilizations. When describing the ruins of Baalbek, a writer asks, for example, "Now, when did they do it? How did they bring so many stones? What kind of a people were they? How could they be this strong"?[4]

This article follows these sixteenth-century Ottoman Turkish cosmographers in their exploration of the deep past of early modern Istanbul. Although *ʿAcā'ib* writers included information regarding Istanbul's contemporaneous Ottoman monuments, such additions did not challenge the dominance of the city's ancient past. On the contrary, the authors in question were especially interested in late antique statues and columns. Istanbul is a city of ancient statuary in their works and this article explores why. We begin with an examination of Ottoman interest in antiquities and how Ottoman ʿAcā'ib writers continued to transmit medieval Arabic stories about Byzantine statuary in their Istanbul entries. While the previous scholarship dismissed Ottoman ʿAcā'ibs as highly repetitive, in this article I aim to show how each ʿAcā'ib has its own unique way of depicting Istanbul. After identifying these differences through three examples, I focus on a major landmark which all the ʿAcā'ibs fixated on.

Among all of Istanbul's Byzantine monuments, a colossal sculpture of a bronze horse and its rider elevated by Justinian (r. 527–65) on a column in front of Hagia Sophia was the most significant for *ʿAcā'ib* writers. Arguably one of

2 See F. Coşkun, "Working paper: *ʿAcā'ib wa Garā'ib* in the early Ottoman cosmographies", *Aca'ib, Occasional Papers on the Ottoman Perceptions of the Supernatural*, 1 (2020), 85–105; idem, "Osmanlı Coğrafya Literatürü ve Acâibü'l-Mahlûkât Janrı", *TALID*, 33.17 (2019), 269–286; M. Sariyannis, *Perceptions Ottomanes du Surnaturel, Aspects de l'histoire intellectuelle d'une culture islamique à l'époque modern*, (Paris 2019), 21–39; idem, "Ajā'ib ve gharā'ib: Ottoman Collections of Mirabilia and Perception of the Supernatural", *Der Islam*, 92.2 (2015), 442–467; G. Kut, "Türk Edebiyatında Acâibü'l-mahlûkât Tercümeleri Üzerine", *Beşinci Milletler Arası Türkoloji Kongresi, Tebliğler: Türk Edebiyatı*, vol.1, (Istanbul 1985), 185–193.

3 *Dürr-i Meknûn* (İnceleme-Çeviriyazı-Dizin-Tıpkıbasım), ed. A. Demirtaş (Istanbul 2009), 89; "bu azacıḳ ʿömr içinde fitne zamānında cihānı geşt idüp görmeğe iḥtiyāç olmaya."

4 *Tercüme-i Acâ'ibü'l-Mahlûkât ve Garâ'ibü'l-Mevcûdât*, ed. B. Sarıkaya (Istanbul 2019), 223; "İmdi bunı ne zamānda ėtdiler ola? Buncılayın ṭaşları nice getürmiş olalar? Ve bular ne ḳavm-idi, ne ḳuvvetleri var-ımış?"

Fig. 1 The bronze horseman between Hagia Sophia and the obelisk of Theodosius, *Tercüme-i Cifrü'l-Cāmī*, İUK TY6624, fol. 92v, early seventeenth-century manuscript, Photo courtesy of Istanbul University Library

the largest metal equestrian sculptures anywhere, it stood atop the tallest free-standing column of the premodern world for almost a millennium.[5] It was removed by Mehmed II (r. 1444–46 and 1451–81) sometime after the conquest, was reportedly seen by a European antiquarian on the palace grounds, and was possibly melted down by the 1550s.[6] Regardless, it continued to attract interest even a century after its destruction, in an early seventeenth-century depiction of the Hippodrome (Fig.1). It was also included in the *ʿAcāʾibs* and presented as

5 E. N. Boeck, *The Bronze Horseman of Justinian in Constantinople: The Cross-Cultural Biography of a Mediterranean Monumen*t (Cambridge 2021).

6 On the removal of the sculpture, see J. Raby, "Mehmed the Conqueror and the Equestrian Statue of the Augustaion", *Illinois Classical Studies*, 12.2 (1987), 305–313 and Boeck, *The Bronze Horseman of Justinian in Constantinople*, 317–334.

an embodiment of preternatural forces and an admonishment for the futility of this-worldly pursuits. Through the example of the bronze horseman in the *ʿAcā'ibs*, I aim to illustrate how the ancient monuments of sixteenth-century Istanbul were not the insignificant remains of a remote past, as is often assumed, but rather, they contained enduring messages for their Ottoman audiences.

Why study stories about Istanbul's talismanic antiquities in Ottoman ʿAcā'ibs?

In this paper, my aims are three-fold. My first goal is to introduce an exciting corpus as a source for the history of Ottoman Istanbul. The sixteenth century, when the majority of Ottoman *ʿAcā'ibs* were composed, was a time of intense building and writing activity in Istanbul; Monumental mosque-complexes arose in the growing skyline and were discussed by numerous poets, scholars, and historians of diverse genres.[7] Sixteenth-century Ottoman *ʿAcā'ib* writers, as we will see, contributed to this literature, but unlike most of their contemporaries they were also interested in Istanbul's ancient statuary. Thus, Ottoman *ʿAcā'ibs* provide us with a distinct source material as well as a different perspective with which to look at the sixteenth-century Istanbul.

My second goal, which relies on the realisation of the first, is to better understand how Ottomans engaged with Istanbul's antiquities. The conventional way of thinking about Istanbul's rich and long history involves thinking about the layers which constitute the city: Pagan Roman, Christian Byzantine, Muslim Ottoman, Turkish Republican and so on. Each layer is often perceived as separate from the next and assumed to be unintelligible or uninteresting to those who built atop it. Following Byzantinists who have challenged this conventional view and offered exciting studies of the afterlives of ancient monuments during the long period of Byzantine history, a pioneering group of Ottomanists have questioned the assumption of a cultural rupture between Byzantine and Ottoman pasts of Istanbul.[8] Moreover, new research on early modern Ottoman

7 For the representation of Istanbul in sixteenth-century Ottoman literary and geographical works, see H. Aynur, "Şehri Sözle Resmetmek: Osmanlı Edebî Metinlerinde İstanbul", in H. Aynur (ed. et al.), *Antik Çağ'dan XXI. Yüzyıla Büyük İstanbul Tarihi* (Istanbul 2015), vol. 7, 128–145 and P. Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Farnham and Burlington 2014), 76–88.

8 For works of pioneering Ottomanists on the afterlife of Byzantine monuments in Ottoman Istanbul, see for example, S. Yerasimos, *Légendes d'empire: La fondation de Constantinople*

writing about the antiquities of Athens, Alexandria, and Baalbek began to explore why the ancient past mattered to Ottomans.[9] In-depth study of Ottoman *ʿAcā'ibs,* as I hope to demonstrate, have much to offer this body of research.

And my final goal is to listen to the stories about Istanbul's antiquities from a diverse body of writers whose voices are not easily heard. Our knowledge about Ottoman *ʿAcā'ib* writers is meagre. Many remain anonymous. However, those who did sign their works are an interesting of group of experts from various corners of the empire. They include, for example, a timekeeper of an imperial mosque in Istanbul, a retired scribe at Damascus, or a Quran reciter in Bosnia. While they composed their texts with the patronage of the ruling elite in mind, they also wanted their whole communities to benefit from their works. Some managed to reach the broad readership they desired. Numerous *ʿAcā'ib* copies circulated in different parts of the empire and can be found in diverse types of library collections at palaces, Sufi lodges, and the medreses. Thus, by studying Istanbul entries in the *ʿAcā'ibs*, we can observe the knowledge of ancient monuments which were presented by diverse writers and circulated among wide reading publics.

To date, scholarship on the *ʿAcā'ibs* has explored intriguing examples of the corpus, which spread across vast geographies, languages, and periods of the Islamic world from the twelfth century onwards.[10] In the case of Ottoman

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et de Sainte-Sophie dans les traditions turque (Paris 1990) and Ç. Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital* (University Park, PA 2009).

9 For recent approaches to the study of Eastern Mediterranean cities and their ancient past, see contributions in E. Fowden (ed. et al.), *Cities as Palimpsests? Responses to Antiquity in Eastern Mediterranean Urbanism* (Oxford and Philadelphia 2022). For inspiring studies of early modern Ottoman interest in the ancient histories of Alexandria, Athens and Baalbek, G. Casale, "Time and the Other: Ottoman Encounters with Egypt's Ancient Past", in A. Abu-Husayn, (ed.), *1516: The Year that Changed the Middle East and the World* (Beirut 2022), 150–175; E. Fowden, "The Parthenon Mosque, King Solomon and the Greek Sages" and G. Tunalı, "An 18th-century Take on Ancient Greece: Mahmud Efendi and the Creation of the Tarih-i Medinetu'l-Hukema", in M. Georgopoulou and K. Thanasakis (eds), *Ottoman Athens: Archeology, Topography, History,* (Athens 2019), 67–95 and 97–121; E. Fowden, "The Parthenon, Pericles and King Solomon: a case study of Ottoman archaeological imagination in Greece", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 42 (2018), 261–274; N. Shafir, "Nābulisi explores the Ruins of Baalbek: Antiquarianism in the Ottoman Empire the Seventeenth century", *Renaissance Quarterly,* 75 (2022), 136–84.

10 The literature on the long tradition of *ʿAcā'ibs* in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman is vast. See,

Turkish studies, however, while many of the surviving manuscripts have been catalogued, and some critical editions and art historical studies on selected illustrated manuscripts have been published, the work is still in its beginnings, and analyses of the texts are rare.[11] This neglect is due in part to the difficulty of understanding the complex world-view which *ʿAcāʾib* writers offer to their pre-modern readers. *ʿAcāʾib* writers entreat their readers to observe the world relying not only their physical senses but also though "the eye of discernment" to contemplate divine order. [12] Their work combines fact and fiction, history and legend, real and the imagined. As Pancaroğlu shows in a pioneering study of a thirteenth century Persian work, the depiction of statues serves to convey not only visual data but also to render the reader cognizant of the ominous signs hidden from the eye.[13] This chapter aims to explore what Ottoman *ʿAcāʾib* writers wanted to show their readers about Istanbul's ancient past.

Ottoman Istanbul: A City of Ancient Statuary

Ottoman *ʿAcāʾibs* invite their readers to a city of ancient statues and columns. Following earlier Arabic and Persian works, entries about Istanbul in the Ottoman *ʿAcāʾibs* begin with the depiction of the city gates decorated with sculptures and proceed to the monuments displayed at major public squares, such

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for example, P. Berlekamp, *Wonder, Image, and Cosmos in Medieval Islam* (New Haven 2011); S. von Hees, "The Astonishing: a critique and re-reading of 'Aǧā' ib literature", *Middle Eastern Literatures,* 8.2 (2005), 101–120; T. Zadeh, "The Wiles of Creation: Philosophy, Fiction, and the *ʿAjāʾib* tradition", *Middle Eastern Literatures*, 13.1 (2010), 21–48; V. Gupta, "Wonder Reoriented: Manuscripts and Experience in Islamicate Society of South Asia (ca. 1450–1600)", unpublished DPhil dissertation, School of Oriental and Asian Studies, 2020.

11 In addition to the scholarship cited in Footnote 2, see the excellent catalogue E. İhsanoğlu (ed. et al.), *Osmanlı Coğrafya Literatürü Tarihi (History of Geographical Literature During the Ottoman Period)* (Istanbul 2000); and for art historical studies, see K. Rührdanz, "An Ottoman Illustrated Version of al-Ṭūsī's *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt*", in A. Temimi (ed. et al.), *Mélanges Prof. Machiel Kiel,* (Zaghouan 1999), 455–75 and R. Milstein and B. Moor, "Wonders of a Changing world: Late Illustrated *ʿAjaʾib* manuscripts (Part I)", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 32 (2006), 1–48.

12 For contemplating wonders and the capacity of by-gone civilization to induce wonder, see Çoşkun, "Working Paper", 94–95 and 101–102. For the "eye of discernment", see G. Necipoğlu, "The Scrutinizing Gaze in the Aesthetics of Islamic Visual Cultures: Sight, Insight, and Desire", *Muqarnas*, 32 (2015), 23–61.

13 O. Pancaroğlu, "Signs in the Horizons: Concepts of Image and Boundary in a Medieval Persian Cosmography", *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics,* 43 (2003), 31–41.

as the bronze horseman, the serpent column, the Egyptian obelisk, and the columns of Arcadius and Constantine. Although information about Istanbul's contemporaneous Ottoman architecture is also included, the focus is on the antiquities. This focus is perhaps not surprising. Late antique Constantinople was once a unique showcase for statuary and praised as such in medieval Islamic geographical literature for centuries. To build his new capital, Constantine (r.306–337) carried out one of the most extensive decorative campaigns in history: he adorned Istanbul with hundreds of sculptures brought from 23 cities around the Roman empire.[14] The collection grew in the following centuries with newly-erected colossal monuments. While Theodosius I (r. 379–395) erected a twenty-meters-high two-thousand-year-old obelisk almost at the Hippodrome, Justinian (r. 527–65) placed an immense bronze horseman in front of Hagia Sophia. Medieval Arab and Persian geographers, like many other travelers of the time, were impressed by this display and transmitted stories about Istanbul's statuary across the Islamic Mediterranean for centuries. [15] By the time Ottomans conquered Constantinople, many of the statues and columns had been burnt down, fallen after earthquakes, or plundered during the Fourth Crusade. Still, several remarkable examples remained standing in the 1450s and a persistent written tradition about them had survived through Arabic ʿAcāʾibs. Thus, the Ottomans inherited both a city of ancient statuary as well as a rich tradition of writing about them.

Ottoman *ʿAcāʾib* writers were committed to transmitting medieval Arabic stories about late antique Byzantine monuments almost verbatim. As Taeschner demonstrated almost a century ago, the entry of Istanbul in one of the earliest surviving Ottoman Turkish *ʿAcāʾibs* by a fourteenth-century writer from Edirne is almost identical to the entries of Istanbul in earlier Arabic *ʿAcāʾibs*.[16] Since the publication of Taeschner's article in 1929, there has not been another attempt to study how Ottoman *ʿAcāʾib* writers portrayed Istanbul and whether this depiction changed after the conquest. Ottoman *ʿAcāʾibs* were overlooked as mere

14 S. Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge 2004) and P. Chatterjee, *Between the Pagan Past and Christian Present in Byzantine Visual Culture, Statues in Constantinople, 4th-13th Centuries CE* (Cambridge 2021).

15 N. El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Cambridge 2004), 139–52.

16 F. Taeschner, "Der Bericht des arabischen Geographen Ibn al-Wardi über Konstantinopel", in H. Mžik (ed.), *Beiträge zur historischen Geographie, Kulturgeographie, Ethnograhie und Kartographie, vornemlich des Orients* (Leipzig and Vienna 1929), 85–91.

repetitions of earlier sources. A closer look through a diachronic perspective, however, reveals significant dynamism and difference, as well as remarkable continuities.

When we compare two of the earliest surviving Ottoman *ʿAcā'ibs,* for example, we are able to discern two distinct approaches to Istanbul's antiquities. For the fourteenth-century *ʿAcā'ib* writer Ali b. Abdurrahman, Istanbul is an enchanted city of antiquities adorned with exceptional beauty and occult power.[17] The anonymous writer of a fifteenth-century Ottoman Turkish *ʿAcā'ib*, however, opposes the depiction of such a beautifully decorated city. Translating from the Persian *ʿAcā'ib* of Tusi (d. sometime after 1196), the anonymous writer cites the hadith report of Ka'b al-Ahbar (d. 652 or 654) according to which "the Constantinople shall be destroyed to such an extent that not a rooster will crow. The earth will move. Three fires will come out; one from pitch, one from naphtha, and one from sulfur. They will burn the city with its people. Their cries will reach the skies."[18] Although a brief note states that "there are many wonders there; among them is the lack of snakes," no wonder is depicted. Rather than a site for amazing sculptures of Ali b. Abdurrahman, this *ʿAcā'ib* writer's Istanbul is a city to be consumed by great fires. The difference between the two earliest surviving Ottoman *ʿAcā'ibs* is striking. It is also remarkable that the later Ottoman *ʿAcā'ib* writers, who wrote after the Ottoman conquest, did not draw on Tusi at all.[19] As the following three examples will show, for all sixteenth-century *ʿAcā'ib* writers whether they were the timekeeper of a mosque, Qur'an reciter, or retired bureaucrat, Istanbul was a city of ancient statues and columns. Rather than the impending doom, they celebrated enduring statues and columns.

17 Ibid.

18 *Tercüme-i Acâ'ibü'l-Mahlûkât ve Garâ'ibü'l-Mevcûdât*, ed. B. Sarıkaya, 258; "Allāhu Taʿālā aña vaʿde ėtdi ki anı şöyle ḫarāb ėde ki ḫurūs daḫı bañlamaya ve yėr ḫareket ėde. Üç od peydā ola: biri zifit ve biri nefṭ ve biri kibrįt. Daḫı şehri ḳavmi-y-ile yaḳa. Anlaruñ feryādı 'inān-ı semāya ėrişe". I am yet to identify this report. Although Ka'b al-Ahbar has a well-known report about the conquest of Constantinople it is not the report here. For traditions which link the conquest of Constantinople with the last hour, see El-Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, 66–71.

19 Tusi's work, as far as we know, was translated only once and survived in three known copies.

Ancient Statues of a Muslim City

Mustafa b. Ali (d.1571), the timekeeper of Sultan Selim Mosque in Istanbul, is one of the first writers who included information about contemporaneous Istanbul's Muslim life in an Ottoman *ʿAcāʾib,* i.e. his *Tuḥfetü'z-Zamān* (*Gift of Time*, c. 1526).[20] In his introduction, he argues that every new thing has a taste and presents his project as the product of a new rule (*ḳāʿide-yi cedīde*), which he had applied to the (old) information gathered from respectable books.[21] The *Tuḥfe's* Istanbul entry follows this rule; it is a combination of the new and the old. It begins with depictions of pre-Ottoman monuments based on earlier *ʿAcāʾibs* and ends with the contemporaneous Muslim life with the author's calculation of prayer times.

Like all earlier Arabic *ʿAcāʾib* writers, Mustafa b. Ali opens his entry with a depiction of ancient gates, columns, and sculptures, which he describes as wonders with significant messages and exceptional powers.[22] For example, he writes how a sculpture of a bronze horseman on top of a monumental column, as we will see in detail later, presents both a moral lesson and talismanic protection. After this section on antiquities, he presents a thriving Muslim town. "This city's food, fruits, fountains, mosques, masjids and markets are abundant," he writes, "May its blessing be multiplied."[23] He then draws on his expertise as a timekeeper and includes detailed information on prayer times and Istanbul's geographical location vis-a-vis Mecca.[24] Thus, his Istanbul entry threads together the depictions of ancient statues from earlier *ʿAcāʾibs* with information about Istanbul's new place within the Muslim world.

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20 The work was presented to Sultan Süleyman. For the *Tuḥfe,* see Ş. İstanbullu, "Osmanlılar'da Coğrafta Bilimi ve Mustafa b. Ali'nin *Tuhfetü'z-Zaman ve Haridetü'l-Evan* Adlı Eseri (Transkripsiyon)", unpublished MA thesis, Karabük University, 2019. See also Mustafa b. Ali, *Tuḥfetü'z-Zamān,* Nuruosmaniye 2993.

21 *Tuhfetü'z-Zaman*, ed. İstanbullu, 50. See also Mustafa b. Ali, *Tuḥfetü'z-Zamān,* fol. 5b.

22 *Tuhfetü'z-Zaman*,"ed. İstanbullu, 217–18. See also Mustafa b. Ali, *Tuḥfetü'z-Zamān,* fol. 196b-197b.

23 *Tuhfetü'z-Zaman,* ed. İstanbullu, 217. See also Mustafa b. Ali, *Tuḥfetü'z-Zamān,* fol. 196b-197b; "Bu şehrin etimesi [sic. at'ime] ve meyvesi ve çeşmeleri ve şimdi camileri ve mescitleri ve pazarları ziyadedir. Dahi ziyadeler müyesser ola."

24 *Tuhfetü'z-Zaman*, ed. İstanbullu, 217–18, See also Mustafa b. Ali, *Tuḥfetü'z-Zamān,* fol. 197b-198b. For this section, he uses a treatise he composed a year before the *Tuḥfe* on the coordinates of one hundred cities in the Northern Hemisphere and their distance from Istanbul. See Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge*, 80–82.

A city as it was, rather than as it is

In addition to the writers such as Mustafa b. Ali, who shaped Istanbul entries according to their particular interests, there were also those who did not make any changes and presented Istanbul only as a city of ancient statuary. In 1563, Mahmud al-Hatib, a Qur'an reciter, presented one such *'Acā'ib* to a recently appointed governor of Bosnia.[25] This was a translation of the early fifteenth-century Arabic work entitled the *Kharīdat al-'Ajā'ib wa Farīdat al-Gharā'ib* (Pearls of Wonders and the Uniqueness of Strange Things). Although Mahmud el-Hatib does not disclose his reasons for translating this particular *'Acā'ib*, the *Kharīdat*'s warm reception among sixteenth-century Ottoman learned circles might have made it a suitable gift for a young governor.[26] Like its original Arabic, the translation was well-received, and reached beyond the governor's court. Circulating first in neighboring Southeast European towns such as Novi Pazar and Plovdiv, it then moved to various other cities of the empire such as Konya and Cairo.[27]

Mahmud el-Hatib's Istanbul entry is a verbatim translation of the *Kharīdat*. Since the Arabic work was written before the Ottoman conquest, it did not feature descriptions of Ottoman architecture or Muslim life. Significantly, Mahmud el-Hatib did not include any information about the changes in Istanbul's urban life since 1453. In other parts of his work, as Feray Çoşkun and Sema Yaniç have demonstrated, he was keen on "updating" the *Kharīdat*. For example, he included his observations of early sixteenth-century Ottoman restorations in the Holy Lands and eye-witness accounts of fellow Ottoman scholars about a "dragon" seen in Macedonia.[28] Yet, he did not include even a

25 F. Çoşkun, "An Ottoman Preacher's Perception of a Medieval Cosmography: Maḥmud el-Haṭīb's Translation of Kharīdat al-'Ajā'ib wa Farīdat al-Gharā'ib", *Al-Masaq: Islam and Mediterranean*, 23.1 (2011), 53–66 and idem, "A Medieval Cosmography in Ottoman Context: Maḥmud el-Haṭīb's Translation of Kharīdat al-'Ajā'ib", unpublished MA thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2007. See also the critical edition by S. Yaniç, "Hace Hatib Mahmud er-Rumi ve Haridetü'l 'Acayib ve Feridetü'l- Garayib Tercümesi İsimli Eserinin Edisyon Kritik ve Tahlili", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Selçuk University, 2004 and idem, "Hâce Hatib Mahmud Er-Rûmî, Eserleri ve Osmanlı İlim Hayatındaki Yeri", *Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 16 (2004), 411–23.

26 It was recommended for "the edification of the soul" in a renowned encyclopedia of the time. Çoşkun, "A Medieval Cosmography in Ottoman Context", 83.

27 Ibid., 148–52.

28 Ibid., 88–90, 93–97 and 133.

sentence to share his own views about the contemporary state of the capital. Perhaps because he lived in Bosnia and wrote mainly for the audience there, he did not find it necessary to include Istanbul's Ottoman present. In this word-by-word translation, his Istanbul is only a city of ancient monuments without any mention of its contemporaneous Ottoman life.

Old ʿAcā'ibs and New Histories

Lengthy depictions of mosque-complexes, imperial buildings, and pleasure grounds of Ottoman Istanbul appear among the city's ancient monuments in Mehmed Aşık's *Menāzırü'l-ʿavālim* (Perspectives of the Worlds), (c. 1598).[29] Mehmed Aşık explained his reasons for composing the *Menāzır* as not to forget what he had learned during his long career in Ottoman administration. While serving as a scribe, he had traveled around the empire and studied its geography and history in depth. But, at one point, he realized that he had begun to forget his readings and observations. Thus, during his retirement in Damascus with access to a well-stocked library, he set out to write down all he had seen and read. The result is an extensive compilation in three volumes presented to Sultan Mehmed III (r. 1595–1603). [30]

The *Menāzır*'s Istanbul entry brings to light an erudite scholar's extensive research and reflections. This is a remarkably lengthy section, many times longer than all other *ʿAcā'ib* Istanbul entries. It is also unique in the depth of its coverage. Mehmed Aşık not only evaluates the information in three Arabic geographical works in depth but also includes a lengthy citation from the contemporaneous Ottoman Turkish history of Hoca Saadeddin (d.1599) about ancient Istanbul. This section is followed by an account of the early Islamic sieges and the Ottoman conquest as well as detailed descriptions of mosque-complexes, commercial buildings and public spaces of the Ottoman city.[31]Unlike the earli-

29 Mehmed Aşık, *Menâzırü'l-Avâlim,* ed. M. Ak (Ankara 2007), vol 3, 1054–1098. For Mehmed Aşık, see also G. Hagen, "Traveler Mehmed Aşık", in *Essays on Ottoman Civilization. Proceedings of the XIIth Congress of the Comité International d'Études Pré-Ottomanes et Ottomanes (CIÉPO*) (Prag 1998), 145–54.

30 For the *Menāzır,* see the extensive introduction in Mahmud Ak's meticulous critical edition.

31 For Mehmed Aşık's use of sources, see M. Ak, "Menâzırü'l- Avâlim ve Kaynağı Takvîmü'l-büldân", in M. Kütükoğlu (ed.), *Prof. Dr. Bekir Kütükoğlu'na Armağan* (Istanbul 1991), 101–20.

er Ottoman *ʿAcā'ibs*, contemporaneous Ottoman monuments occupy a significant place in this work. Still, Mehmed Aşık also does not minimize the place of ancient statuary in the city. On the contrary, he meticulously translates from Arabic works such as Abu'l-Fida's (d. 1331) *Taqwīm al-buldān* (Geography of Abu'l-Fida) (c. 1321) and Zakariya Qazwini's (d.1283) *Āthār al-bilād wa-akhbār al-ʿibād (*Monuments of the Lands and Reports of God's Servants*)* as well as the *Kharīdat al-ʿAjā'ib,* and compares these earlier sources with contemporaneous Ottoman books as well as his own observations.

When stories about a sculpture of a bronze horseman intrigue him, for instance, he sets out to locate it. Combining information from Arabic and Ottoman works with his own personal observations of Istanbul, he conjectures whether such a monument still exists in his time and if so, where it could be found. He notes that although many earlier writers mentioned the sculpture's location as a place near the Hippodrome, it cannot be found there. Considering whether the sculpture stood somewhere else, he asks whether it used to be on top of the column located between "the Mosques of Ali Paşa and the bathhouse Valide Sultan," in other words, Çemberlitaş.[32] Noting that "there is no bronze rider nor horse on top of it in our times," he concludes that the sculpture must have "either fallen down before the conquest or perished during the days of conquest."[33] In short, in Mehmed Aşık's Istanbul entry, differing reports from diverse sources about the ancient Constantinople and Ottoman Istanbul, as well as his own observations, are woven together in an all-encompassing compilation. Here, as with the previous Ottoman *ʿAcā'ib* writers, he does not overwrite stories of an ancient city but transmits earlier stories about the pre-conquest past along with a contemporary commentary.

Mehmed Aşık's Istanbul entry must have appealed to other contemporaneous Istanbulites who were also interested in the city's lost ancient monuments. For instance, Şerif b. Seyyid Muhammed, who translated an Arabic book of prognostication into Turkish in 1597–98, also transmitted a detailed description of the bronze horseman based on the *ʿAcā'ibs* with a brief commentary on whether the monument had in fact existed. "Those mechanical and constructed wonders that we see have been completely destroyed and are no longer

32 Mehmed Aşık, *Menāzirü'l-ʿavālim,* 3:1070: "fî-zemânînâ Câmi'-i Alî Paşa ile Hammâm-ı Vâlide Sultân beyninde olan..."

33 Ibid.: "bu fâris ile feres bu iki sütundan birisinin res'inde var idüğünün takdîr-ı sıhhati üzre ya kable'l-feṭḥ sâkıt olmışdur veyâhud eyyâm-ı feṭḥde zâyi' olmışdur."

extant," he writes, "but how many ancient talismans and old buildings that are actually here for example the obelisk and the serpent column in Atmeydanı [the hippodrome]. The fact that these things still remain points that the author and other histories have conveyed."[34] Thus, like Mehmed Aşık, Şerif b. Seyyid Muhammed considers earlier works as reliable sources and consults these works to learn about a lost ancient monument. A lingering question remains as to why ancient monuments and their stories mattered to them. To address this question, let us now turn to our case study: the Bronze Horseman.

Bronze Horseman of Constantine

It is not surprising that it was the sculpture of the bronze horseman that intrigued Mehmed Aşık and drew him to seek it out in Istanbul. As the sculpture was removed almost a century before and the column demolished at some point during the 1550s, Mehmed Aşık was unable to find any trace of it. However, the bronze horseman had an exceptional place in Arabic *ʿAcāʾibs*, which he meticulously studied. Among the hundreds of ancient sculptures and columns, as well as monumental gates, palaces, and churches that adorned the medieval Constantinople, for many medieval Arabic *ʿAcāʾib* writers, the major landmark of the city was the bronze horseman. It was also this sculpture that was described in greater detail than any other in Ottoman ʿAcāʾibs and included in almost all of them even a century after its demolition.

As Boeck shows in her fascinating new book, this "Eiffel tower of its epoch" impressed its medieval observers with its size, elevated location, artistic qualities, and enduring message across cultures.[35] The sculpture was also laden with rich symbolism for diverse audiences and eulogized in numerous Byzantine, Slavic, Crusader, and Islamic accounts of the city. While it acquired new meanings in time and meant different things for people from different places, for many, it was a profound display of, and a warning about, power.[36]

34 Translated by C. Fleischer, in Boeck, *The Bronze Horseman*, 378. See also *Tercüme-i Cifrü'l Cāmī*, İUK TY6624, fol. 92v: "Bu zikr olunan ʿAcāʾib ve ṭılsımāt ve ṭevārīḫde masṭūr gördügümüz ġarāʾib-i binā ve sınāʿāt ḥālā biʾl-külliye münhedim ve münʿadim olub İstanbul'da bunlardan āsar bāḳī degüldür āmmā nice ṭılsımāt-ı ḳadīme ve eski binālar vardır. Dikilü taşlar ve At Meydanı'nda olan ejderler gibi ki muṣannifiñ zikr itdüginiñ vuḳūʿuna ve ṭevārīḫde yazduklarınuñ sıḥḥatına delālet ider."

35 Boeck, *The Bronze Horseman*, 3.

36 Ibid., 314–335 and 366–383.

For Ottoman *ʿAcāʾib* writers as well the sculpture was both an embodiment of preternatural forces and an admonishment for the futility of this-worldly pursuits. Following Arabic sources almost verbatim, they identify the rider as Constantine, who had placed his tomb on a monumental column marked with an equestrian sculpture of himself.[37] After admiring the horse's life-like features, they focus on the hands of the rider and describe what it held. Mustafa b. Ali, for example, writes, "Constantine has a talisman in his hand to keep away the enemies. According to some, the following is written on his left hand: 'I could not hold fast to the world. All I have is what is left on my palm.' It means 'I left the material world, unable to hold on to it.'"[38] Thus, two interpretations of the raised hands are provided together. In one of them, the hand holds a talisman and the gesture towards the East protects the city from an invasion. The other open hand, which could not hold the worldly possessions, illustrates the emptiness of worldly ambition.

Mustafa b. Ali's depiction of the bronze horseman is almost a word-by-word translation from the *Kharīdat al-ʿAjāʾib*, which is reproduced very similarly by Mahmud el-Hatib and Mehmet Aşık as well as by almost all other sixteenth-century Ottoman ʿAcāʾib writers.[39] It is interesting to find such verbatim descrip-

37 See El-Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, 208–209 and S. Yerasimos, "De l'arbre à la pomme: Généalogie d'un thème apocalyptique" in B. Lellouch and S. Yerasimos (eds), *Les traditions apocalyptiques au tournant de la chute de Constantinople* (Paris 1999), 165–170.

38 *Tuḥfetü'z-Zaman*, ed. İstanbullu, 217. See also Mustafa b. Ali, *Tuḥfetü'z-Zamān,* fol. 197a: "Konstantin'in elinde tılsım vardır. Düşman gelmeyi men eyler ve bazıları dedi ki sol elinde yazılmıştır ki dünya mülkü elinde kalmadı. İlla şu avucum içinde ne var ise bu kaldı. Yani işbu mülk-i dünyadan çıktım bir nesneye kâdir olmadım demektir."

39 While almost all Ottoman ʿAcāʾibs include the same description of the bronze horseman, there were also a few exceptions, which I plan to examine later. A late sixteenth-century Ottoman Turkish collection of wonder stories, for example, follows Ibn Rustah's (d. after 903) Persian account. Here the bronze horseman is the son of Hagia Sophia's architect and welcomes people to the church. In the same collection, there is also the description of a sculpture of Constantine (without a horse) who stands outside the city walls and points towards Maghrib. The gesture is interpreted as a sign of the city's destruction by winds from that direction. See BL Harleian 5500, fol. 29b & 183b–184a and G. Gürel, "Picturing Wonders, Magic and Antiquities in Ms. British Library Harleian 5500, ca.1595–1600", PhD dissertation under preparation, University of Oxford. I am indebted to G. Gürel for generously sharing her research with me. There are also works like the early fifteenth-century translation of Tusi and the *Dürr-i Meknūn* which do not have any description of the bronze horseman.

tions in almost all Ottoman ʿAcāʾibs. Did not the Ottoman writers perceive the sculpture's talismanic power problematic after the armies from "the east" began to rule Istanbul? And why did they urge their readers to look at the empty hand of a colossal sculpture rather than its grandeur in their new capital?

A threat or protection? An interpretative debate in the fifteenth-century

Let me begin to address these questions by discussing the aspects of the bronze horseman which would have been controversial to fifteenth-century Ottoman observers which the sixteenth-century *ʿAcāʾib* writers overlooked. When we look at late-fifteenth century Ottoman works other than the *ʿAcāʾibs*, we observe a lively discussion about the sculpture's power and whether it was a threat to Ottomans. By contrast, sixteenth-century Ottoman *ʿAcāʾibs* are conspicuously silent about such a harmful talisman. They completely neglected the concerns of the fifteenth-century Ottoman writers and wrote about the bronze horseman as a beneficial talisman instead. Let us see what they did not cover.

Medieval *ʿAcāʾibs* presented the bronze horseman as a protection of the city for centuries. The sculpture's power, as Boeck discusses, was understood not solely symbolically but also as an actual force. Drawing on Roman traditions that attributed preternatural forces to the statues of emperors, many medieval Byzantine historians as well as Arab travelers to Constantinople noted that the bronze horseman's raised hand was to stop invasion from the East.[40] Medieval ʿacāʾib writers joined them.[41] Although none elaborated on how exactly this power worked, it must have been what Persis Berlakamp terms "efficacy by symmetry."[42] Like lion and dragon reliefs that were intended to guard early thirteenth-century Bagdad, Konya, and Aleppo by frightening off monstrous enemies and misfortunes, the emperor on his horse was to stop the invading armies.

Shortly after the conquest, however, the talismanic power became a source

40 Boeck, *The Bronze Horseman,* 72–97.

41 Numerous other antiquities were also seen as talismans in around the medieval Islamic world. See S. Redford, "The Seljuks of Rum and the Antique", *Muqarnas*, 10 (1993), 148–156 and J. Gonnella, "Columns and hieroglyphs: Magic Spolia in medieval Islamic architecture of Northern Syria", *Muqarnas,* 27 (2011), 103–120.

42 P. Berlekamp, "Symmetry, Sympathy, and Sensation", *Representations (Special Issue: Images at Work)*, 133 (2016), 67–68.

of concern for some who claimed that the bronze horseman could deliver the city back to its Greek inhabitants. According one late-fifteenth century observer, they warned the sultan about the stories circulating among the former Byzantines and even succeeded in destroying the threat.

"Story-mongers gossiped about [the bronze horseman]," wrote Dervish Karamani, "and on their word Sultan Mehemmed Han Gazi (may God's extensive mercy be upon him) had it pulled down."[43]

It is difficult to ascertain whether there were indeed such stories about the sculpture's talismanic power circulating among the Greek inhabitants of Istanbul. The sculpture must have been important for the city's non-Muslim inhabitants as a memory place, but we do not know whether it was associated with any portent about the city's recapture.[44] There were other sites associated with an apocalyptic victory. The last Byzantine emperor Constantine XI (r. 1449–53), for example, was believed to have been turned into marble at a cave near Golden Gate from which he would emerge to liberate the city.[45] The bronze horseman, however, was noted more as a portent for the decline of Byzantine fortunes rather than their revival. Castilian traveler Pero Tafur (d. c. 1484), who visited Constantinople in 1437–38, for example, narrated how the toppling of the orb from the hand of the bronze horseman was viewed as an ominous sign of the impending fall of the city.[46]

A story about the bronze horseman as a talisman against the plague, which late fifteenth-century Ottoman Turkish anonymous chronicles report from Greek sources, further complicates our understandings. A late fifteenth-century

43 Derviş Şemseddin Mehmed Karamani, *Tārīḫ-i Ayāṣofya,* TSK Revan 1498, Fol. 27b, translated and cited in J. Raby, "Mehmed the Conqueror and the Equestrian Statue of the Augustaion", 309: "Onu ġammāzlar ġamz idib söziyle Sulṭan Meḥemmed Ḫan Gāzī (raḥmat Allāh ʿalayhi raḥmatan wāsiʿatan) yıkdırdı." See also Boeck, *The Bronze Horseman,* 331.

44 In an Armenian elegy by Abraham Akiwracʿi, who was probably in Istanbul in 1453, for example, Justinian and his bronze horseman are praised as signs of the grandeur of the city's Byzantine rulers. See A. K. Sanjian, "Two Contemporary Armenian Elegies on the Fall of Constantinople, 1453", *Viator, Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 1 (1971), 223–262.

45 A. Papayianni, "He Polis healo: The Fall of Constantinople in 1453 in Post-Byzantine Popular Literature," *Al-Masāq*, 22.1 (2010), 41–42. See also D.M. Nikol, *Immortal Emperor, The Life and legend of Constantine Palaiologos the last Byzantine Emperor* (Cambridge 1992), 101–118 and G. Necipoğlu, "Volatile Urban Landscapes between Mythical Space and Time," in S. Hamadeh and Ç. Kafescioğlu (eds), *A Companion to Early Modern Istanbul* (Leiden 2021), 197–232.

46 Boeck, *The Bronze Horseman,* 257–258.

Ottoman historian notes that "some people say that it was a talisman. According to Infidel belief, the plague did not enter Istanbul."[47] Although the writer does not include further information nor describe how the talisman works, it is interesting to find such a beneficial use in these books for two reasons. First, as discussed at length by several modern historians, anonymous chronicles expressed Turco-Muslim ghazi sensibilities and opposed Mehmed II's close ties to the members of the former Byzantine aristocracy.[48] Thus, one would have expected them to present a Byzantine sculpture associated with the city's non-Muslim inhabitants as the source of a threat rather than protection. And second, the writer clearly identifies the belief as "infidel" (*kāfir*) and attributes the story to the Greek inhabitants. Thus, according to these Muslim ghazi chronicles, the bronze horseman of the Greeks was not a talisman for the reconquest of the city from the Ottomans but rather provided protection from the plague. [49]

It is possible that stories, which eventually resulted in the sculpture's destruction, were just what contemporary writers like Dervish Karamani claimed them to be: "gossips of story-mongers." Those uncomfortable with the colossal sculpture's pronounced place at a major Istanbul square and discontent with the power of the former Greek aristocracy in Mehmed's court might have evoked *'Acā'ib* stories about the sculpture's talismanic power, presented it as a threat, and demanded its destruction.[50] And even if there were Greek stories in

47 Yerasimos, *Légendes d'empire,* 28. For the Ottoman Turkish text, see S. Yerasimos, *Türk Metinlerinde Konstaniyye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, trans. Ş. Tekeli (Istanbul 1993), 31: "Bazılar dirler kim ol bakır at tılsım idi kim, yani kâfirler itikadı üzerine kim İstanbul'a ta'un girmezdi."

48 The literature is vast. See for example, C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley 1995).

49 Stories about bow-bearing sculptures of Heraclius and Apollo offering protection against plague circulated in ancient Thrace. They could have been still around when Ottoman chroniclers lived and wrote in Thracian cities and known in Istanbul. For the bow-bearing sculptures as talismans against the plague, see C. A. Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses: Guardian Statues in Ancient Greek Myth and Ritual* (New York 1992), 61.

50 Late fifteenth-century Istanbul, as Molly Greene reminds us, was a remarkably Byzantine city that the former elite continued to enjoy positions of power. See M. Greene, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1453 to 1768: The Ottoman Empire* (Edinburgh 2015), 24–28. For the discontent voiced by late fifteenth-century Muslim historians about the grand vezir from a Byzantine elite family, see H. İnalcık, "The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers,* 23/24 (1969), 244–45.

circulation about such a power, it was likely this familiarity with *ʿAcā'ib* stories which transformed the bronze horseman into a source of danger and resulted in its destruction.

Significantly, Arabic *ʿAcā'ib* stories were harnessed not only to destroy but also vindicate the bronze horseman in the fifteenth century. In fact, Derviş Karamani's translations of the history of Hagia Sophia from Greek into Persian and Turkish completed in 1480s is an elaborate defense of the bronze horseman. Neither the original Greek nor an earlier Turkish translation by a certain Yusuf b. Musa includes any mention of the bronze horseman.[51] Yet, the sculpture's destruction seems to have prompted Derviş Karamani to include a lengthy story into his translations. Here, he identifies the horseman as Justinian and presents the sculpture's patronage as the last will of a pious ruler. According to him, Justinian ordered the sculpture on his death bed to leave behind a useful public work. While including this explanation about the bronze horseman's construction, Derviş Karamani omits any mention of its talismanic use. In his account, the bronze horseman is not a talisman at all, but only a source of admonishment.[52]

After Derviş Karamani, the bronze horseman's controversial memory as a talisman seems to have been forgotten. The only Ottoman Turkish ʿAcā'ib writer who mentioned Mehmed II's destruction is Ibrahim b. Bali, a late fifteenth-century traveler to Istanbul from Antioch.[53] Later Ottoman *ʿAcā'ib* writers did not perceive any danger. They also did not discuss why, or how, it was destroyed. At a time when neither fear from an immediate military invasion nor discontent about an imposing landmark existed, the bronze horseman's talismanic legacy was no longer a threat. The story's appeal now seems to concentrate on its moral message.

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51 Yusuf b. Musa, *Ṭārīḫ-i Ayasofya*, SK Yazma Bağışlar 02057. See also G. Necipoğlu, "The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium", in R. Mark and A. Çakmak (eds), *Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present* (Cambridge 1992), 198–202.

52 Historians such as İdris-i Bitlisi (d.1520), who used Derviş Karamani as a source for his Persian chronicle, and Hoca Saaddedin (d. 1599), who translated Idris-i Bitlisi's work into Ottoman Turkish, transmitted this version of bronze horseman in their chronicles.

53 In his ʿAcā'ib written in 1488, İbrahim b. Bali, praises the bronze horseman noting that Mehmed II removed it from the column after the conquest. İbrahim b. Bali, *Hikmet-Nâme*, ed. M. Altun (Ankara 2017), 178: "Meger sultân Muhammed ibn-i ʿOsmân/ Kılıcak ol yiri âhir müselmân/ Kopardı mîlden düşürdi anı/ Turupdur şimdi mîl üzre nişânı". https://ekitap.ktb.gov.tr/Eklenti/56530,ibrahim-ibn-i-bali-hikmet-name-ipdf.pdf (accessed 11 April 2022).

An ancient ruler's enduring message in the sixteenth-century

According to sixteenth-century Ottoman *ʿAcā'ib* writers, Constantine erected his sculpture not to announce his sovereignty or dazzle his onlookers but to warn them about the transitory nature of the world. He addressed them with an inscription. Many of their contemporaneous readers must have found the story familiar as ancient inscriptions admonishing their viewer was a common trope in Ottoman literature. For example, in Ahmedi's popular narrative poem (d.1413) *İskendernāme* (Book of Alexander), Alexander discovers an inscription left for him by an Egyptian pharaoh in his tomb. The pharaoh commands him:

> You who say I have the East and the West
> You, who always fight with anyone,
> Do not be careless with the unaffectionate fortune
> It gives respite to none.[54]

The pharaoh then introduces himself and tells how he ruled the whole world for a thousand and two hundred years, collecting immense wealth and a massive army. But he warns,

> My possessions were of no use
> See me, draw a lesson; It should suffice.
> The wealth and treasure I had gathered with sweat and strife
> Grass has them all, leaving me with snakes and aches."[55]

54 Ahmedi, *İskendernāme*, ed. Yaşar Akdoğan (TC Kültür Bakanlığı Kütüphaneler ve Yayınlar Genel Müdürlüğü, published online, 2019), 466. http://ekitap.yek.gov.tr/Uploads/ProductsFiles/9f71ce80-6562-4152-a39e-c202f5d25f43.pdf (accessed April 2022):

"7455 K'iy benüm ola diyüben şark u garb
İns ü cinn-ile iden peyveste harb
7446 Garre olma çarha k'ol nâ-mihrûbân
Kimseye virmedi vü virmez emân"

55 Ibid. :

"7464 Mâl u mülküm fayid' itmedi baña
Bini gör ibret yiterem ben saña
7465 Zahmet-ile dirdügüm ol mâl u genç
Ayrug almış baña kalmış mâr u renc"

According to Ahmedi, the lesson from an ancient inscription plays a key role in Alexander's spiritual transformation. After reading the poem in tears, Alexander sets out for the Ka'ba, directs himself solely towards God, and attains spiritual perfection.[56]

Examples of ancient inscriptions providing moral instruction abound in Islamic literature. There are also records of several inscriptions, now lost, which admonished their viewers. For example, during a visit to the Persepolis in 1471 an Akkoyunlu ruler had inscribed on the ancient walls his message for other visitors. "Do not seek the kingdom of Solomon, for that is [now] dust," he wrote, "Of these jewels and treasures which were beyond counting, what has [the hero] Jam carried away."[57] Similar verses were also displayed on Anatolian city walls. A now lost Arabic inscription at a castle near Manavgat in Southern Anatolia, for example, stated "be not vain of thy splendid apparel: I have experienced those delusions: the world is open to people of all ranks."[58] In both cases, the inscription speaks directly to the observer and warns about vanity, a lesson which is frequently brought up for other contexts in earlier Arabic as well as Ottoman works.[59]

We cannot ascertain whether readers of Ottoman *'Acā'ib* entries would have

56 For the Ottoman Books of Alexander as a *bildungsroman*, see C. Goodwin Sawyer, "Alexander, History and Piety: A Study of Ahmedî's 14th-Century Ottoman *Iskendernâme*", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1997 and D. Kastritsis, "The Alexander romance and the rise of the Ottoman Empire", in A. C. S. Peacock and S. N. Yıldız (eds), *Islamic Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth-and Fifteenth-Century Anatolia* (Würzburg 2016), 243–284.

57 The inscription did not survive, but was recorded in a collection during medieval times. R. P. Mottahedeh, "The Eastern Travels of Solomon: Reimagining Persepolis and the Iranian Past" in M. Cook (ed. et al.), *Law and Tradition in Classical Islamic Thought: Studies in Honor of Professor Hossein Modarressi* (New York 2013), 259.

58 S. Redford, "The water of life, the vanity of mortal existence and a penalty of 2,500 denarii: Thoughts on the reuse of classical and Byzantine remains in Seljuk cities", in E. Key Fowden (ed. et al.), *Cities as Palimpsests,* (published online 2022), 93–94.

59 For examples of admonishment for vanity and its contemplation through ruins in Arabic sources, see E. Zychowicz-Coghill, "Medieval Arabic archaeologies of the ancient cities of Syria", in *Cities as Palimpsests,* 344–345. For an early seventeenth-century Ottoman example of site/monument/object becoming a cause for warning, see M. Taner, "Two Paths to Power: Sokolluzade Hasan Paşa and Hadım Yusuf Paşa and their art patronage in early seventeenth-century Bagdad", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 54 (2019), 85–86.

also seen words of admonishment inscribed on ancient monuments or knew stories about them, and if so, whether they would make any connections with the message of the bronze horseman. We also do not know whether *ʿAcā'ibs* were read aloud in gatherings and used as prompts for further discussion during which participants could brought up examples from the places they had visited and books they had read. Still, these stories remind us of the significance of the lessons to be drawn from ancient monuments for the Ottoman audiences. Following a well-known topos, the bronze horseman invited his Ottoman observers to look at his empty hand and contemplate the transitory nature of life.

Concluding Remarks

The story about the bronze horseman is an example of the variety of the ways in which Ottoman *ʿAcā'ib* writers took their readers on a journey into the deep past of Istanbul. In her study on medieval guidebooks to Rome, Anna Blennow discusses how *mirablia* present ancient Rome to fifteenth-century readers by making the invisible visible.[60] Similarly, Ottoman *ʿAcā'ibs* display the lost monuments of ancient Istanbul to their sixteenth-century readers and tell why they matter. While some writers such as Mustafa b. Ali and Mehmed Aşık include lengthy depictions of contemporaneous Ottoman and Muslim life, none overlook the antiquities and their messages. We need further research to understand why they transmitted stories about ancient monuments from Arabic and how their narratives supported, or challenged, accounts in other Ottoman works such as anonymous chronicles, Stories of Hagia Sophia, or the chapters on ancient civilizations in sixteenth-century universal chronicles. We are also yet to explore whether there were any other readers like Mehmed Aşık who set out to observe the antiquities in the sixteenth-century urban fabric and how their tours compare with those of the city's European antiquarian visitors. A rich body of material, as this article has aimed to show, awaits the researcher interested in discovering vivacious afterlives of Byzantine antiquities in Ottoman Istanbul. The deep past mattered to many Ottoman writers, and they urged their readers, now us, to pay attention to it.

Engaging with this material, however, is not easy. To appreciate what *ʿAcā'ib*

60 A. Blennow, "Wanderers and Wonders. The Medieval Guidebooks to Rome", in A. Blennow and S. Fogelberg Rota (eds), *Rome and the Guidebook Tradition, From the Middle Ages to the 20th Century* (Berlin and Boston 2019), 71.

writers are doing, we need to suspend our contemporary expectations from a "correct" historical account of an antique monument and be open to understand what Ottoman writers wanted to tell about them. Drawing on Arabic *ʿAcā'ibs,* they transmitted centuries old stories about Istanbul's major landmarks as known at the time. Like us, they were interested in providing information about who erected these monuments and why. Yet, unlike us, they did not situate the ancient monuments in a distant time which was separate from their own. For them, the history was alive in the contemporary urban fabric. They urged their readers to observe this history and contemplate (*tefekkür*) on its lessons. In the case of the bronze horseman, for example, they transmitted an enduring message from antiquity to compel the reader to reflect on the display of power over the cityscape. They would have surely been amazed, if they knew that today Ottoman history could be clearly separated from the Byzantine history and that for us stories about the ancient monuments had lost most of their power.

Ottoman Occultism and its Social Contexts: Preliminary Remarks

Marinos Sariyannis (Rethymno)[1]

The history of occultism (or, to use a slightly different term, esotericism) has largely been limited to a field of intellectual history. The history of Islamic occultism duly follows this rule.[2] Nevertheless, as with all cultural phenomena, occultism is imbued with the specific cultural and social connotations of the

1 Earlier drafts of this paper were read at to the 2021 Meeting of the European Network for the Study of Islam and Esotericism (ENSIE) (29 September – 1 October 2021 on Zoom): "Islam and Esotericism: Societies, Politics, and Practices", and at the 34. Deutsche Orientalistentag (Berlin, 12–17 September 2022). I wish to thank all participants in both venues for their suggestions, as well as Dimitris Giagtzoglou for his important help. Research for this article was made under the research project "GHOST: Geographies and Histories of the Ottoman Supernatural Tradition: Exploring Magic, the Marvelous, and the Strange in Ottoman Mentalities" (funded by the European Research Council, CoGr2017 no. 771766).

2 Here I prefer "occultism" in order to avoid confusion with the common Sufi doctrine of "esoteric knowledge" (*bāṭın*). I take it as the belief in the possibility of manipulating natural forces and states (including visions of the future) by the use of (usually, but not always, secret) knowledge and supernatural powers (through magic, miracle-working, appealing to supernatural entities etc.). See the relevant discussion by L. Saif, "What is Islamic Esotericism?", *Correspondences* 7/1 (2019), 1–59.

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various contexts in which it is situated. Examining it from a broader perspective of cultural or, even better, social history will help us locating it within the interplay of various social and cultural actors and explaining the motives and aims of those adopting certain occultist ideas. To understand how occultism functioned in a given society, we should examine which social groups favoured esotericism and why and in what cultural context they did so. Furthermore, it is important to investigate who fought against occultism and why, as well as why certain authors revert to specific traditions, Lastly, understand the manner in which occultism functioned requires clarity regarding the role of vernacular culture and the role of social status.

This paper proffers some ways in which the study of Ottoman occultism can benefit from looking at its social context. It poses the following questions: how did occultism, closely bound with palace politics in the sixteenth century, become a mainly Sufi occupation from the seventeenth century onwards, and what does this mean for its place in society? What was the attitude of the "Salafist" trends vis-à-vis esoteric beliefs, and what social strata did each of these groups represent? Which authors emphasised hermetic ideas of knowledge as revelation, and who kept advocating reason as the main source of knowledge? How did vernacular culture, with its spectacular rise from the late seventeenth century on, deal with occult sciences and esoteric beliefs?

Such questions inevitably lead to the thorny problem of methodology: how do we identify social strata represented in books and epistles dealing with metaphysical questions and arcane tools for establishing contact with the supernatural? An even cursory review of these sources will show that rarely do they mention the name of their author, and it is even more rare to find any kind of information on whoever author is named. The path we chose here was to emphasise the Sufi affiliations of our sources. The reason is two-fold: firstly, identifying the Sufi attachments of an author of an even anonymous treatise is much easier, especially in texts of esoteric tendencies: when they do not list Sufi fraternities showing a more or less clear preference for one among them, they almost always will take sides in debates heavily coloured by intra-Sufi conflict. Secondly, Ottoman society was deeply integrated through Sufi culture, and as it has been said, by the eighteenth century "membership of the religious orders was practically synonymous with the profession of Islam".[3] This means that

3 H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West: A Study of the Impact of West-*

these affiliations also played a role of social statement: although we know very well that differentiation within a fraternity was extremely important, we can identify some major fraternities with specific, albeit fluid, social groups. It is up to the reader to judge if the results of our investigation justify this approach; for the moment, we have to stress that this is a preliminary study, and more evidence will surely be needed for more definitive conclusions.[4]

For various reasons, mainly for the sake of brevity, I limit myself largely to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when information on the Sufi and intellectual currents is less scarce and also when occultism somehow becomes more differentiated and debated. Until the very end of the sixteenth century, it seems like occult sciences were quite widespread, from the palace (from Bayezid II's to Murad III's occultist quests)[5] to the most vernacular dervish brotherhoods, to the degree that some scholars (in particular, Matthew Melvin-Koushki) have talked of a "lettrist imperialism" as a characteristic of Ottoman politics.[6] In this

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ern Civilization on Moslem Culture in the Near East, volume One: *Islamic Society in the Eighteenth Century*, Part II (Oxford 1957), 76. For an overview of Ottoman Sufism, see A. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200–1550* (Salt Lake City 1994); A. Y. Ocak (ed.), *Sufism and Sufis in Ottoman Society: Sources-Doctrine-Rituals-Turuq-Architecture-Literature-Iconography-Modernism* (Ankara 2005).

4 Scholarship on the social basis of particular Sufi brotherhoods is surprisingly scarce. One may envisage a research agenda cataloguing sheikhs and their social backgrounds, texts and their contexts, lodges and their locations. On this last aspect, cf. A. Y. Yüksek, "Sufis and the Sufi Lodges in Istanbul in the Late Nineteenth Century: A Socio-Spatial Analysis", *Journal of Urban History 0*(0) (2021) https://doi.org/10.1177/00961442211025253; on the study of Sufi texts with a view to highlight political or social tensions, the work of scholars such as Derin Terzioğlu, Aslıhan Gürbüzel or Betul Yavuz is promising. Extensive lists of sheikhs, their affiliations and their tekkes may be found in N. Yılmaz, *Osmanlı toplumunda tasavvuf: Sûfîler, devlet ve ulemâ* (Istanbul 2001).

5 On the former, see A. T. Şen, "Reading the Stars at the Ottoman Court: Bāyezīd II (r. 886/1481–918/1512) and His Celestial Interests", *Arabica* 64 (2017), 557–608; various chapters in Gülru Necipoğlu, Cemal Kafadar and Cornell H. Fleischer (eds), *Treasures of knowledge: an inventory of the Ottoman Palace Library (1502/3–1503/4)*, Leiden 2019. On the latter, Ö. Felek, "(Re)creating Image and Identity: Dreams and Visions as a Means of Murad III's Self-Fashioning", in Ö. Felek and A. Knysh (eds), *Dreams and Visions in Islamic Societies* (New York 2012); Ö. Felek, *Kitâbü'l-menâmât: Sultan III. Murad'ın rüya mektupları* (Istanbul 2012).

6 M. Melvin-Koushki, "Toward a Neopythagorean Historiography: Kemālpaşazāde's (d. 1534) Lettrist Call for the Conquest of Cairo and the Development of Ottoman Oc-

regard, the Ottoman Empire was no different from the other great Muslim states of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, intellectually dominated by a rise of a lettrist occultism based on alphanumerical calculations, on the footsteps of Abdurraḥman al-Bisṭāmī (d. 1454), who spread al-Būnī's ideas and practices in the Ottoman lands.[7] Throughout the sixteenth century, lettrist divination or medicine was practiced by personalities such as the historian Idrīs Bidlīsī (d. 1520), the şeyhülislam Kemālpaşazāde (d. 1534) or the judge, biographer and encyclopaedist Taşköprüzāde Aḥmed (d. 1561).[8]

Among the Sufi orders, one may postulate that the Bayrāmī brotherhoods were the keenest on spreading the lettrist cause, as witnessed by scholars and sheikhs such as Akşemseddin or İlyas b. Īsā Sarūḫānī (d. 1559).[9] The Bayrāmī-

cult-Scientific Imperialism", in L. Saif, F. Leoni, M. Melvin-Koushki and F. Yahya (eds), *Islamic Occultism in Theory and Practice* (Leiden 2020), 380–419. Cf. C. H. Fleischer, "Seer to the Sultan: Haydar-i Remmal and Sultan Süleyman", in J. L. Warner (ed.), *Cultural Horizons: A Festschrift in Honor of Talat S. Halman*, 2 vols (Syracuse 2001), 1:290–299; Idem, "Shadow of Shadows: Prophecy in Politics in 1530s Istanbul", in B. Tezcan – K. Barbir (eds), *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World: A Volume of Essays in Honor of Norman Itzkowitz* (Madison 2007), 51–62; Idem, "Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences: Prophecies at the Ottoman Court in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries", in M. Farhad and S. Bağcı (eds), *Falnama: The Book of Omens* (Washington 2009), 231–244.

7 D. Grill, « Esotérisme contre hérésie : 'Abd al-Rahmân al-Bistâmî, un représentant de la science des lettres à Bursa dans la première moitié du XVe siècle », in G. Veinstein (ed.), *Syncrétismes et hérésies dans l'Orient seldjoukide et ottoman (XIVe-XVIIIe siècle). Actes du Colloque du Collège de France, octobre 2001* (Paris – Louvain 2005), 183–195; Fleischer, "Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences"; J.-Ch. Coulon, *La magie en terre d'Islam au Moyen* Âge (Paris 2017), 229–232; Idem, "Building al-Buni's Legend: The Figure of al-Buni through Abd al-Rahman al-Bistami's *Shams al-afaq*", *Journal of Sufi Studies*, 5:1 (2016), 1–26; N. Gardiner, "Esotericist Reading Communities and the Early Circulation of the Sufi Occultist Ahmad al-Buni's Works", *Arabica*, 64 (2017), 405–441.

8 Melvin-Koushki, "Toward a Neopythagorean Historiography"; idem, "Taşköprīzāde on the (Occult) Science of Plague Prevention and Cure", *Nazariyat* 6/2 (2020), 133–168.

9 A. Gölpınarlı, *Melâmîlik ve Melâmîler* (Istanbul 1931); V. R. Holbrook, "Ibn 'Arabi and Ottoman Dervish Traditions: The Melāmī Supra-Order", parts I-II, published in https://ibnarabisociety.org/Melāmī-supra-order-part-one-victoria-rowe-holbrook/ and https://ibnarabisociety.org/Melāmī-supra-order-part-two-victoria-rowe-holbrook/ (accessed September 2022); N. Clayer, A. Popovic and T. Zarcone (eds), *Melâmis – Bayrâmis: Etudes sur trois mouvements mystiques musulmans* (Istanbul 1998); F. Betul Yavuz, "The Making of a Sufi Order between Heresy and Legitimacy: Bayrāmī-Malāmis in the Ottoman Empire", unpublished Ph.D. diss., Rice University 2013; Eadem, "Bayrāmīye", *Encyclopedia of Islam Three*. On Sarūḫānī, more particularly, see A. Özgül, "İlyas b. Îsâ-yı Saruhânî'nin 'Rumûzü'l-künûz' adlı eserin transkripsiyonu ve değer-

Melāmīs, then mainly based on the Balkan provinces rather than Istanbul, often were also proponents of the *tenāsuḫ* or reincarnation theory, which, it seems, they were sharing with the more rural Bektaşīs.[10] The latter, sharing a great deal of common esoteric and indeed lettrist beliefs with the Ḥurūfīs of Azerbaijan,[11] were transformed from a predominantly rural and nomadic brotherhood to an urban one through their connection with the janissaries (but also due to a conscious effort of appropriation by the state, in order to control nomadic populations) throughout the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[12] To put an end to this enumeration, a brotherhood that was to play a major role in the seventeenth century was the Ḫalvetīs, also of an urban and artisanal background: many Ḫalvetī sheikhs (of the Balkans) originated as simple artisans.[13] By the end of the sixteenth century, they had gained access to the higher echelons of power: Şeyh Şücā' (d. 1582), Murad III's spiritual counselor and dream inter-

lendirilmesi", unpublished MA thesis, Kırıkkale University 2004; cf. I. Tamdoğan-Abel, "Le futur dans le *Rumuz-i kunuz* de Mejdeddin Ibn Isa: une utopie, une prophétie, un livre à mystères", in Clayer, Popovic and Zarcone (eds), *Melâmis – Bayrâmis*, 145–152; M. Sariyannis, "Knowledge and Control of the Future in Ottoman Thought", *Aca'ib: Occasional papers on the Ottoman perceptions of the supernatural* 1 (2020), 49–84 at 67–70.

10 Yavuz, "The Making of a Sufi Order", 174–180; Eadem, "The Cyclical Time and *Burūz* (Projection) of the Saint: Thematic Connections in the Early Modern Islamic Landscape", *Journal of Early Modern History* 24 (2020), 136–161; Eadem, "From the *Hamzaviyye* to the *Melāmiyye*: Transformation of an Order in Seventeenth-century Istanbul", in V. Erginbaş (ed.), *New Perspectives on Ottoman Sunnism* (Edinburgh 2020), 121–145 at 130–131 (on a mid-seventeenth century effort to make this idea more orthodox); I. Mélikoff, *Sur les traces du soufisme turc. Recherches sur l'islam populaire en Anatolie* (Istanbul 1992), 30, 68–69.

11 A. Y. Ocak, *Osmanlı toplumunda zındıklar ve mülhidler (15.-17. yüzyıllar)* (Istanbul 1998), 134–135; S. Karahüseyin, "Bektaşîlik geleneğine Hurufî bir dokunuş: Nesîmî örneği", *IV. Türkiye Lisansüstü* Çalışmaları *Kongresi – Bildiriler Kitabı IV* (Istanbul 2015), 233–252. Melāmīs were also influenced by Hurufism: see F. B. Yavuz, "Orality in the *Tekke* and the Circulation of 'High' and 'Low' Cultures of Sufism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul", *History of Religions* 62/1 (2022), 49–72 at 63–64.

12 Ocak, *Osmanlı* İmparatorluğunda *marjinal Sûfîlik: Kalenderîler (XIV.-XVII. yüzyıllar)* (Ankara 1992), 205–215.

13 N. Clayer, *Mystiques, état et société. Les Ḫalvetīs dans l'aire balkanique de la fin du XVe siècle à nos jours* (Leiden 1994), 145–146. This seems to have changed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the sheiks' post became more of hereditary or, alternatively, open to the ulema and to members of the military or the administrative class (ibid., 241–243).

preter was after all a *Ḫalvetī* sheikh, although one most *Ḫalvetīs* found difficult to endorse.[14]

I. The Salafi reaction: Ḳāḍızādelis, Ḫalvetīs, Naḳşibendīs and the supernatural in everyday life

The intellectual landscape, at least in Istanbul and arguably other large cities, changed considerably in the following centuries. For one thing, even if we accept that "lettrist imperialism" had prevailed in the palace and elite circles throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it seems to have completely ebbed away by the early seventeenth century. Beginning with Kâtib Çelebi (d. 1657), Ibn Khaldūn's rationalist sociology, deeply hostile to such ideas, gradually assumed command of the worldview of the elite. Its approach to the problems of the empire did not allow for much reliance on divination or lettrist protection (still, this did not apply to astrology, which continued to flourish in the palace and found a great advocate in Muṣṭafā Naʾīmā (d. 1716), chief expounder of Ibn Khaldūn's theories).[15]

Already in the first half of the seventeenth century, large segments of urban society had begun to take sides in what has been named the Ḳāḍızādeli debate. In very short words, the Ḳāḍızādelis were the followers of Meḥmed Ḳāḍızāde (d. 1635), a preacher in the steps of Meḥmed Birgivī's (d. 1573) "fundamentalist" opposition of the mid-sixteenth century who struggled against a series of "innovations" including the dancing rituals of certain Sufi orders. Their primary targets were the Ḫalvetī sheikhs, starting with Ḳāḍızāde's archenemy ʿAbdülmecīd

14 J. J. Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought in the Ottoman Empire: The Rise of the Ḫalvetī Order, 1350–1650* (Edinburgh 2010), 279. See also D. Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism: Naqshbandīs in the Ottoman World, 1450–1700* (Albany 2005), 57.

15 M. Sariyannis, "Ottoman Ibn Khaldunism Revisited: The Pre-Tanzimat Reception of the *Muqaddima*, from Kınalızade to Şanizade", in M. Sariyannis (ed.), *Political Thought and Practice in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon Days in Crete IX: A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 9–11 January 2015* (Rethymno 2019), 251–286. On Ibn Khaldun as an opponent of occultism see M. Melvin-Koushki, "In Defense of Geomancy: Šaraf al-Dīn Yazdī Rebuts Ibn Ḫaldūn's Critique of the Occult Sciences", *Arabica* 64/3–4 (2017), 346–403; N. Gardiner, *Ibn Khaldūn versus the Occultists in Barqūq's Court: The Critique of Lettrism in* al-Muqaddimah (Berlin 2020). On Naʾīmā's astrological interests see Sariyannis, "Knowledge and Control of the Future", 79; G. Şen, "Das Ereignis von Edirne (1703). Astrologie as Strategie zur Herrschaftlegitimation und Kontingenzbewältigung", *Das Mittelalter* 20/1 (2015), 115–138.

Sivāsī (d. 1639). The Ḫalvetīs took up the challenge and emerged as their main opponents although they often shared similar ideas on various matters; the Mevlevīs were also targeted, due to their rituals considered as innovations.[16] The Ḳāḍızādelis themselves never denied Sufism wholesale; they were associated with orders such as the Naḳşibendīs (Naqshbendīs), who by that time had established themselves in the Ottoman towns,[17] despite the reputation of the latter as defenders of Ibn Arabī well into the seventeenth century.[18]

The question remains as to what happened to occultism in these debates. Birgivī had been adamant in rejecting magic (*siḥr*) as one of the seven grave offences, among murder or taking of interest. Furthermore, he rejected Sufi claims of "seeing [heavenly] lights and having visions of great prophets", arguing that no miracle-worker should be credited access to supernatural power unless the true believer has checked "how he behaves in terms of commanding [right]

16 A Mevlevī-Ḫalvetī cooperation can be documented in many ways, see e.g. Curry, *The Transformation*, 134–136; A. Gürbüzel, "Bilingual Heaven: Was There a Distinct Persianate Islam in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire?", *Philological Encounters* 6 (2021), 214–241.

17 Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism*, 150–156; Eadem, "Ḳāḍızādelis, Nakşbendis, and Intra-Sufi Diatribe in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul", *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 28 (2004), 1–28; I. Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition* (London 2007), 134–135; M. Sheikh, *Ottoman Puritanism and its Discontents: Aḥmad al-Rūmī al-*Āqḥiṣārī *and the Qāḍīzādelis*, Oxford 2016, 56–66; M. Gel, "Debating Sufi Knowledge in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Thought", 141–144; B. Tezcan, "The Portrait of the Preacher as a Young Man: Two Autobiographical Letters by Ḳāḍızāde Meḥmed from the Early Seventeenth Century", in Sariyannis (ed.), *Political Thought and Practice*, 187–250 at 230. The eponymous hero of the movement, Ḳāḍızāde Meḥmed, seems to have had Naḳşibendī allegiances (ibid., 202). On the introduction and establishment of the Naḳşibendī order in the Ottoman Empire see Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya*, 44–47, 73–78; B. Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidīyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early Nineteenth Century", *Die Welt des Islams* 22/1 (1982), 1–36; M. Gaborieau, A. Popovic and T. Zarcone (eds), *Naqshbandis. Cheminements et situation actuelle d'un ordre mystique musulman* (Istanbul and Paris 1990); Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism*.

18 Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism*, 93, 112, 123–127; P. Bruckmayr, "The Particular Will (*al-irâdât al-juziyya*): Excavations Regarding a Latecomer in Kalâm Terminology on Human Agency and its Position in Naqshbandi Discourse", *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 13 (2011) http://journals.openedition.org/ejts/4601, 13. Naḳşibendīs would also be very critical against the Ḳāḍızādelis' attack against tomb veneration (Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism*, 120–121, 153) and the famous Naḳşibendī sheikh ʿAbd al-Ġani al-Nābulusī (d. 1731) had defended smoking (J. Grehan, "Smoking and 'Early Modern' Sociability: The Great Tobacco Debate in the Ottoman Middle East (Seventeenth to Eighteenth Centuries)", *American Historical Review* 111 (2006), 1352–1377 at 1355–1356 and 1369–1372).

and forbidding [wrong], guarding the *hudud* and carrying out the law".[19] Followers of the Ḳāḍızādeli movement were much more vehement against such claims: thus, Aḥmed Aḳḥisarī (d. 1632) argued that "unnatural events" may often be false miracles produced by the Satan (*istidrāc*).[20] What the Ḳāḍızādelis actually achieved, in some respects reminiscent of Protestant attacks against miracle-working in contemporaneous Europe, was a banishment of the supernatural from the present and from everyday life. Miracles were performed by the Prophet, a millennium ago and in Hijaz; there was very little probability for a miracle to be seen in the present century.[21] A parallel to European Puritanism can be drawn;[22] in both cases, scholastic discourse was criticised for unduly engaging human mind and experimental knowledge with useful ends was praised, as each individual should discover the essentials of faith favouring orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy.[23] This non-scholastic naturalism, as termed by Harun Küçük,[24] was accessible to and indeed practiced by large urban strata, offering a thriving alternative to esoteric and occultist interpretations of the world. It is probably no coincidence that Naḳşibendīs, the Ḳāḍızādelis' Sufi (even occasional) allies gave little importance to miracle-working, stating that a saint's true function would be observing the law and attracting people to the

19 K. A. Ivanyi, *Virtue, Piety and the Law: A Study of Birgivī Meḥmed Efendī's* al-Ṭarīqa al-muḥammadiyya (Leiden 2020), 126–129.

20 Sheikh, *Ottoman Puritanism*, 73–76. But the same formulation could also be used by a contemporaneous Ḫalvetī sheikh to defend true Sufi miracles: Curry, *The Transformation*, 211.

21 For some implications of this development see M. Sariyannis, "The Limits of Going Global: The Case of 'Ottoman Enlightenment(s)'", *History Compass* 2020;18:e12623. https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12623; Tezcan, "The Portrait of the Preacher", 237–241. On the discussion on "Islamic/Ottoman Enlightenment", apart from the literature cited in these papers, see also T. Artan, "El yazmaları ışığında bir çevre ve çehre eskizi: Kadızâdeliler, Müceddidîler ve Damad İbrahim Paşa (1730)", *Müteferrika* 50 (2016/2), 51–143 esp. 58–88.

22 M. Sariyannis, "The Ḳāḍızādeli Movement as a Social and Political Phenomenon: The Rise of a 'Mercantile Ethic'?", in A. Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Political Initiatives From the Bottom-Up in the Ottoman Empire. (Halcyon Days in Crete VII. A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 9–11 January 2009)* (Rethymno 2012), 263–289 at 282–289; idem (with a chapter by E. Tuşalp Atiyas), *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Leiden 2019), 300–301.

23 Cf. B. H. Küçük, "The Compass and the Astrolabe: Empiricism in the Ottoman Empire", in Seyfi Kenan – Selçuk Akşin Somel (eds), *Dimensions of Transformation in the Ottoman Empire from the Late Medieval Age to Modernity* (Leiden 2021), 257–284.

24 Ibid., 275.

right path (although, as all Sufi orders indeed, they too maintained that it was possible to communicate with the ʿālam *al-ghayb*).[25]

Such a denial of easy access to the supernatural must inevitably have had an impact on esoteric beliefs and practices and acceptance of them. It has been remarked that by the end of the eighteenth century even Sufi sheikhs, and not only those of the Naḳşibendī order, had ceased to claim miracles and knowledge of the hidden world.[26] And this was broadened among the Ḫalvetīs, the Ḳāḍızādelis' prime adversaries: in an early eighteenth-century biography of Ḫalvetī sheikhs, we read of a saint who "did not like miracles that broke the custom" (*iẓhār-ı ḫarḳ-ı ʿāde kerāmeti sevmez idi*).[27] İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī (d. 1725), a member of the Celvetī order (derived from and similar to the Ḫalvetīs), explains at length that miracles of knowledge (*al-karamāt al-ʿilmīyya*) are superior to miracles of this cosmic world (*al-karamāt al-kawnīyya*); because the former are related to the essence and names of God, whereas no good comes from the latter.[28] Melāmī-Bayrāmī sheikhs also had an unfavorable attitude toward miracles and demonstration of extraordinary powers already by the mid-seventeenth century.[29]

On the other hand, it would be a gross exaggeration to state that under the influence of the Ḳāḍızādelis occultism and the supernatural were banned from Ottoman culture in the seventeenth century. On the contrary, a striking example of occultism alive and kicking can be seen in the case of Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī (d. 1694). Niyāzī, a Ḫalvetī sheikh whose visionary and passionate politics saw him banished repeatedly to Limnos, wrote a number of works among which is an

25 Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism*, 120–123; Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya*, 59–60.

26 C. Mayeur-Jaouen, "The Small World of Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī (1761–1825), an Egyptian Khalwatī Sheikh", in R. Elger – M. Kemper (eds), *The Piety of Learning: Islamic Studies in Honor of Stefan Reichmuth*, (Leiden 2017), 105–144 at 125–127.

27 Enfî Hasan Hulûs Halvetî, *"Tezkiretü'l-müteahhirîn": XVI.-XVIII. asırlarda İstanbul velileri ve delileri*, eds. M. Tatcı – M. Yıldız (Istanbul 2007), 83.

28 İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, *Tamâmü'l-feyz fî bâbi'r-ricâl: Atpazarî Kutup Osman Efendi menâkıbı (*İnceleme – Çeviri – *Tıpkıbasım)*, eds R. Muslu – A. Namlı (Istanbul 2020), 213–214; cf. ibid., 96, 231–232. This distinction comes back to Ibn Arabi and other medieval mystics: E. Geoffroy, "Attitudes contrastées des mystiques musulmans face au miracle", in D. Aigle (ed.), *Miracle et* karāma. *Hagiographies médiévales comparées* (Turnhout 2000), 301–316 at 311–313.

29 A. Erken, "A Historical Analysis of Melāmī-Bayrāmī Hagiographies", unpublished M.A. thesis, Boğaziçi University 2009, 68–69.

impressive diary full of esoteric calculations and prophecies based on the science of letters and numbers.[30] Notably, Niyāzī's sworn enemies seem to have been not only Vanī Efendi, the champion of the Ḳāḍızādeli movement at the time, but also the Melāmī-Bayrāmī Sufis.[31] Apparently this hostility had nothing to do with the presence of the supernatural in everyday life, as (partly) in the case of the Ḫalvetīs vs. the Ḳāḍızādelis and/or Naḳşibendīs, but rather (if we choose to see it in these terms) with conflicting claims to a privileged access (and, thus, mediation) to the supernatural. The two orders may have also had different preferred ways to communicate with the hidden world: we know that Ḫalvetīs were partial to dream interpretation and visionary manifestations, as illustrated in the example of the infamous Şeyh Şücā'.[32] The Bayrāmīs, on the other hand, had led the way in the lettrist understanding of the world throughout the sixteenth century (as exemplified in the example of Sarūḫānī, father and son); the prominent Bayrāmī-Melāmī sheikh Oğlan Şeyh Ibrahim (d. 1655) specifically states that Bayrāmīs did not prefer dream interpretation, regularly practiced by the Ḫalvetīs.[33] Further research might perhaps reveal whether Ḫalvetī and their branches developed their own revelatory path, harnessing dreams and visions to access the supernatural, in an effort to compete with the Bayrāmīs' more mechanical ways of using alphanumerical methods and a lettrist view of the world.

30 H. Çeçen (ed.), *Niyazî-i Mısrî'nin hatıraları* (Istanbul 2006). Cf. D. Terzioglu, "Sufi and Dissident in the Ottoman Empire: Niyāzī-i Mısrī (1618–1694)", unpublished PhD diss., Harvard University 1999; Eadem, "Man in the Image of God in the Image of the Times: Sufi Self-Narratives and the Diary of Niyâzî-i Mısrî (1618–94)", *Studia Islamica* 94 (2002), 139–165; Sariyannis, "Knowledge and Control of the Future", 70–71.

31 On the complex relationship of the Bayrāmī-Melāmī order with other Sufi paths see Erken, "A Historical Analysis", 76–105.

32 See also C. Kafadar, *Asiye Hatun: Rüya mektupları* (Istanbul 1994) = idem, "Müstereddit Bir Mutasavvıf: Üsküplü Asiye Hatun'un Rüya Defteri 1641–1643" in idem, *Kim var imiş biz burada yoğ iken. Dört Osmanlı: Yeniçeri, Tüccar, Derviş ve Hatun* (Istanbul 2010), 123–191.

33 B. C. Deveci, "Sunʿullāh Ġaybī - Ṣoḥbetnāme (İnceleme – Metin – Dizin)", unpublished MA thesis, Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi 2020, 154–157; Erken, "A Historical Analysis", 60; Yavuz, "Orality in the *Tekke*", 66fn60. Still, Nevʿīzāde ʿAṭā'ī (d. 1637), whose collection of biographies is full of dreams and their interpretation, seems to have been affiliated to the Bayrāmī-Melāmī order: A. Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives in Ottoman Istanbul: A Seventeenth-Century Biographer's Perspective* (London 2017), 34–35. Other Bayrāmī sheikhs who interpreted dreams or had their own dreams interpreted include Akşemseddin (d. 1459), Yāvsī (d. 1514), Hacı Efendi (d. 1537 or 1538) (ibid., 7, 35, 95 and 99–100)—all belonging to the period before the mid-sixteenth century.

Nevertheless, practices were to become quite mixed across Sufi allegiances in the centuries to follow, as exemplified by Niyāzī's self-fashioned lettrist or rather numerical sort of divination.

Now, how can we establish any correspondence of these currents with social groups? Elsewhere I have argued that the Ḳāḍızādelis, especially during their "second wave" in the 1650s that mobilised significant urban crowds, relied on middle and upper mercantile strata, the "people of the market" but also (and mainly) those designed as "profiteering merchants".[34] This is why they seem not to have rejected interest-taking, contrary to their mentor Birgivī, following more generally a free-trade approach that favored aspiring upcomers at the expense of more traditional petty tradesmen organised in guilds.[35] Naḳşibendīs, the single Sufi fraternity most friendly disposed toward the Ḳāḍızādelis, may have begun their Ottoman life as an ulema and bureaucrat order (the lack of merchants in a mid-sixteenth century list of *waqf* founders is striking[36]) but seem to have evolved quickly to a predominantly merchant brotherhood. To quote Baki Tezcan,

> The cash *waqf*s established to support Nakşibendi institutions would have financed craftsmen and small businessmen who had to compete with their peers who enjoyed a connection with th eJanissary corps and were thus able to borrow from their 'Common Bank'. It is also not difficult to imagine that those who would borrow from the Nakşibendi cash *waqf*s could grow sympathetic towards the Nakşibendi order and eventually contribute to the social base of the Ḳāḍızādelis, one of whose targets in the seventeenth century were the Janissaries, who not only enjoyed the financial resources of their bank but also privileged positions in trade and guilds, and thus made it difficult for others in the world of small business to make a place for themselves.[37]

Their main precepts, *ḫalvet der encümen* (solitude within society) and *sefer der vaṭan* (journeying within the homeland, as opposed to seeking spiritual enlightenment in faraway lands),[38] was well suited to the mercantile ethos. Thus,

34 Sariyannis, "The Ḳāḍızādeli Movement".

35 Ibid., 282–289.

36 Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism*, 59. The Naḳşibendīs were also in a certain degree "the order of the ulema" (Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism*, 55ff.).

37 Tezcan, "The Portrait of the Preacher", 233.

38 Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya*, 27–28; Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism*, 119; Sheikh, *Ottoman Puritanism*, 62–63.

especially after the Mujaddidī reform by Ahmad Sirhindī (d. 1624), which emphasised orthodoxy substituting Ibn Arabī's unity of existence with "unity of perception" (*waḥdat al-shuhūd*),[39] it is not surprising that, in Tülay Artan's words,

> In the later eighteenth century both sufis and *ulema* seem to have been using Sirhindī's ideas to underpin their initiatives. Included in their agenda were elements pointing towards land privatization, a locally commercialized and monetized economy, the formation of a new and more capitalistic urban elite, and the progressive reintegration of the provinces into a recentralized political order.[40]

On the other hand, the Ḫalvetīs of the same period seem to have been associated with the janissaries, then emerging as a mixture of newcomers to the guild system and a refuge for what Cemal Kafadar has called the *lumpenesnaf*, the lower strata of artisans and petty tradesmen. In some sources, such as the now well-known diary of Seyyid Hasan, a Sünbülī (a Ḫalvetī branch) dervish from the 1660s, their ranks include merchants and artisans, as well as low-to-mid-level members of the military.[41] The lower merchant and artisan class seems to have supplied followers to various *tariqa*s that were often in conflict with each other: so the Bayrāmī-Melāmī (often known as Ḥamzevī after 1561), heirs to the rich lettrist tradition of the sixteenth century and chief target of many Ḫalvetī

39 See e.g. Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya*, 49–63.

40 T. Artan, "Forms and Forums of Expression: Istanbul and Beyond, 1600–1800", in Ch. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (London 2012), 378–406 at 380. On the non-Mujaddidī branches of the Naḳşibendī who continued their activities in the Ottoman Empire see A. Papas, "Refonder plutôt que réformer : la Naqshbandiyya non-mujaddidî dans le monde turc (XVI^{e}-XVIII^{e} siècle). Lecture de trois textes naqshbandî kâsânî", in R. Chih – C. Mayeur-Jaouen (eds), *Le soufisme à l'époque ottoman, XVI^{e}-XVIII^{e} siècle* (Cairo 2010), 235–248.

41 Kafadar, "Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth Century Istanbul and First-person Narratives in Ottoman Literature", *Studia Islamica* 69 (1989), 121–150; Sariyannis, "The Ḳāḍızādeli Movement", 279. The full text of the diary was transliterated recently in two unpublished MA theses, both submitted to Marmara University: A. Can, "Seyyîd Hasan, *Sohbetnâme*, I. cilt (1071–1072/1660–1661) (inceleme – metin)", 2015; A. Akkılık, "Seyyid Hasan'ın günlüğü, II. cilt (H. 1073–1075/M. 1662–1664)", 2019. A detailed study is still pending and would reveal a lot more about the social basis of the mid-seventeenth century Ḫalvetīs.

sheikhs, whose social basis was distinctly mercantile and artisanal.[42] The Bayrāmī-Melāmī is one of the few brotherhoods for which we have specific information about its sheikhs and prominent members regarding their craft and occupation, and these were more often than not artisanal.[43] Melāmīs had been criticising Sufis living on alms for decades, and they were promoting the idea that one should earn one's own livelihood.[44] For instance, this is how Sarı Abdullah (d. 1660) explains the need for choosing *melāmet* or reproach (by the common folk), i.e. in this context (as put by Betul Yavuz) "working manually to make a living in the marketplace rather than relying on the comforts of a convent":

> In choosing *melāmet*, [the first Bayrāmīs'] intent was not to commit illicit acts. It was rather that they were inclined to occupy themselves with buying and selling, earning and making a living without a Sufi scarf and cloak.[45]

The same applies for the Mevlevīs (also associated with janissaries like the Ḫalvetīs,[46] but closely allied to the Bayrāmīs as well[47]); a short catechism authored by the famous İsmāʿīl ʿAnḳaravī (d. 1631) asserts that

42 Ocak, *Zındıklar ve mülhidler*, 256–258; Sariyannis, "The Ḳāḍızādeli Movement", 279–280. On the role of seventeenth-century Bayrāmīs in defending Ibn Arabi against the Ḳāḍızādeli attacks see A. E. Özkul – S. Ilić, "Ibn Arabi, Malami-Bayrāmī Dervish Order and the 17th Century Ottoman Balkans", *Journal of History Culture and Art Research* 6/6 (2017), 328–335.

43 So Abdurrahman Askeri, the biographer of Pir Ali Aksarayi (d. 1539), a shop-owner; Aḥmed Edirnevi, Pir Ali's possible successor, a shoemaker; their adherents were specifically *ehl-i dükkân ve ehl-i hiref*; Gazanfer Dede (d. 1566/7) was a tanner; Hasan Kabaduz of Bursa (d. 1601/2) a tailor; Idris-i Muḫtefî (d. 1615) was a famously rich merchant and his closest disciples came from the guilds of craftsmen; Hacı Bayram Kabayî (d. 1626) a seller of cloths (Yavuz, "The Making of a Sufi Order", 90, 91n242, 97, 122, 131, 134–135 and 137–138, 153).

44 D. Terzioğlu, "Sunna-Minded Sufi Preachers in Service of the Ottoman State: The *Naṣīḥatnāme* of Hasan Addressed to Murad IV", *Archivum Ottomanicum* 27 (2010), 241–312 at 280–281; Erken, "A Historical Analysis", 55–56.

45 Yavuz, "From the *Hamzaviyye* to the *Melāmiyye*", 132–133. The accusation against Sufis of living on alms was a commonplace in various Ottoman moralist and political treatises.

46 Already in 1598 the janissary scribe adheres to the brotherhood and founds a tekke, in whose inauguration pashas and the janissary agha were present: Selânikî Mustafâ Efendi, *Târih-i Selânikî*, M. İpşirli (ed.) (Ankara 1999), 730.

47 Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives*, 100. Let us note here that Mevlevī texts were central for the Naḳşibendīs as well.

> the masters have not allowed the devotees or traders the right to divorce their wives for reasons of commerce or of their craft. They have ordained to the initiated to work according to their capacities, so that the divine work and concrete existence coexist. They have considered being idle a dishonest thing, and so have ordained that every initiated earns his livelihood from his work.[48]

Indeed, the usual connection of Mevlevīs to the higher echelons of society seems to correspond to a later stage of their history, well into the eighteenth century. The historian Silaḥdār Mehmet Ağa mentions the chief astrologer Derviş Aḥmed Efendi's adhesion to the brotherhood in 1686 as a remarkable gossip.[49]

However, we must be very cautious in making these generalisations and in insisting in a one-two-one correspondence of Sufi brotherhoods with social groups. For one thing, Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī accuses the Ḥamzevīs (Bayrāmī-Melāmī) for dominating the royal court in the end of the seventeenth century.[50] Indeed, Idrīs-i Muḫtefī's (d. 1615) successor, Sarı Abdullah (d. 1665), was a courtier of kingly descent from the Maghrib and was raised by his uncle, the Grand Vizier Halil Pasha; his courtly and ulema connections must have played a pivotal role in the order's new visibility and status.[51] The Ḥamzevī sheikhs of the late seventeenth century were often high-ranked ulemas and it appears that they did indeed infiltrate the higher echelons of power by the early eighteenth century.[52] Thus, it seems indeed that the Bayrāmī-Melāmī order had acquired a higher social status by the mid-seventeenth century, leaving the lower *esnaf* to the various branches of the Ḫalvetī and Mevlevī brotherhoods. Another cautionary remark here should be that the Melāmī in general were what Victoria Rowe Holbrook described as a "supra-order", in the sense that "they are said to begin where sufi orders leave off": a Melāmī could also belong to another brotherhood and declare allegiance to a Melāmī sheikh.[53] After all, the conflict between Melāmīs

48 A. F. Ambrosio, "Ecrire et décrire la confrérie Mevlevīyye entre le XVI[e] et le XVII[e] siècle", in Chih – Mayeur-Jaouen (eds), *Le soufisme à l'époque ottoman*, 275–290 at 289.

49 Silahdar Fındıklılı Meḥmed Ağa, *Silâhdâr Tarihi*, A. Refik ed., 2 vols (İstanbul 1928), 2:244.

50 Terzioglu, "Sufi and Dissident", 338–339.

51 Yavuz, "The Making of a Sufi Order", 139–145; Erken, "A Historical Analysis", 20–22.

52 Yavuz, "The Making of a Sufi Order", 156–157; Eadem, "From the *Hamzaviyye* to the *Melāmiyye*", 124; Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives*, 44n89.

53 Holbrook, "Ibn 'Arabi and Ottoman Dervish Traditions".

and Ḫalvetīs should not be taken at face value, since it was often personified in individual controversies (as in the cases of the Ḫalvetī figures of Sivāsī or Niyāzī-i Mısrī, for example). The example of the famous Melāmī sheikh Oğlan Şeyh İbrahim Efendi (d. 1655) is telling: he had only positive things to say of the Ḫalvetīs, and many Ḫalvetī sheikhs (including Sivasī) had only nice words to say of him.[54]

In the light of these observations, one might suggest, in simplified terms, a pattern as follows: on the one hand, there are different Ḫalvetī (and Ḫalvetī-affiliated branches) or Bayrāmī fraternities (not to forget the Mevlevīs) in contestation over the esoteric content of the world, where sainthood and various occult methods of manipulation (from *cifr* and letter magic to geomancy) are commonly accepted as facts. On the other hand, the Ḳāḍızādeli masses and perhaps more generally the Naḳşibendī order were promoting a less esoteric, more pietistic vision of the world, where what counted was piety and religious fervor, rather than direct mediation of the supernatural forces. Among these two roughly defined sides, the former seems to have relied on large segments of the lower artisanal classes, in general within the guild system, whereas the latter expressed an upcoming class of merchants with a more "bourgeois" spirit. A parallel to the Protestant-Calvinist tendency for non-esoteric interpretation of the world would not be out of place here.

II. Ishrāqī/Illuminationist beliefs and revealed knowledge

While the urban masses rallied around either Ḳāḍızādeli preachers or Ḫalvetī sheikhs, scholarly circles seem to have eagerly endorsed al-Suhrawardī's Illuminationism. Refined by Shams al-Din al-Shahrazūrī (d. after 1288), Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardī (d. 1191)'s natural philosophy gave a primordial importance to light, varying intensities of which produce the array of phenomena from immaterial entities down to material bodies; in the same vein, it is light and its perception by varying degrees of human vision that produce knowledge of the world, through (in al-Shahrazūrī's formulation) the "world of images" (ʿālam-i *miṯāl*), a sphere of existence similar to Plato's archetypes, whence mystic visions

54 Yavuz, "Orality in the *Tekke*", 61; B. Kemikli (ed.), *Oğlanlar* Şeyhi *İbrahim: Müfîd ü muhtasar* (Istanbul 2003), 142–144. Cf. similar writings by another prominent Bayrāmī figure, Sarı Abdullah (d. 1660): Yavuz, "From the *Hamzaviyye* to the *Melāmiyye*", 128, 133.

and miracles originate.[55] Furthermore, Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) philosophy created a genealogy of revelatory knowledge of hermetic nature, attributing all esoteric (and, in some degree, exoteric) knowledge to the ancient sages (including the Greek philosophers[56] and Hermes[57]) and being skeptical toward the exploration of the world through reason.[58]

Ishrāqī thought entered the Ottoman realm relatively early, for instance in the works of Mollā Luṭfī (d. 1495).[59] It was perceived as a tradition of wisdom (*ḥikma*) beginning with Hermes, Pythagoras and Plato (rather than al-Suhrawardī), a concept initiated by al-Shahrazūrī, in quite a few authors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, such as Musannifak (d. 1470) and others.[60] By the seventeenth century, it had become the favourite philosophical tradition of the Ottoman ulema, such as Mehmet Emin Şirvanī (d. 1626; an Iranian scholar who fled his native town to become a major figure in the Ottoman religious-educational establishment) and, perhaps even more so, of the new stratum of intellectuals that grew outside the *medrese* tradition, like Kâtib Çelebi or Müneccimbaşı Ahmed Dede (d. 1702).[61] Even popular literature was early to

55 L. W. C. van Lit, *The World of Image in Islamic Philosophy: Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī, Shahrazūrī, and Beyond* (Edinburgh 2017).

56 Notably Plato, considered the dean of ancient Illuminationists, whereas Aristotle was the dean of ancient Peripatetics/philosophers. This distinction begins perhaps with al-Jurjanī (d. 1413); see M. Arıcı, "Is it Possible to Speak of an Illuminationist Circle in the Ottoman Scholarly World? An Analysis of the Ottoman Scholarly Conception of Illuminationism", *Nazariyat* 4/3 (2018), 1–48 at 14.

57 On Islamic Hermes and Hermeticism see the now classic study by K. van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes: from Pagan Sage to Prophet of Science* (Oxford 2009).

58 I am trying to analyse this aspect in a paper titled "Sources and Traditions of Knowledge: Revelation, Hermeticism, Reasoning in an Ottoman Context", to be published in the proceedings of the Halcyon Days XI International Symposium "Enchantments and disenchantments: early modern Ottoman visions of the world" (Rethymno, 14–17 January 2022).

59 Arıcı, "Is it Possible to Speak of an Illuminationist Circle", 29–30; M. Kurz, *Ways to Heaven, Gates to Hell: Fażlīzāde ʿAlī's Struggle with the Diversity of Ottoman Islam* (Berlin 2011), 237–243.

60 Arıcı, "Is it Possible to Speak of an Illuminationist Circle", 25.

61 G. Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph bei der Arbeit. Entstehung und Gedankenwelt von Katib Celebis Gihannüma* (Berlin 2003), 44–46; Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 203–209; Arıcı, "Is it Possible to Speak of an Illuminationist Circle", 19–20; İ. Kömbe, "Müneccimbaşı Ahmed Dede'nin ahlâk düşüncesi: Meşşâî felsefe ile Tasavvufî düşünceyi İşrâkî hikmette sentezleme", *Nazariyat* 7 (2021), 149–174.

incorporate Illuminationist philosophy: one of the first instances can be found in a peculiar text known as *Ḫıżırnāme* and composed in 1476 by Şeyh Mehmed Çelebi (d. 1493/4), which describes the travels of a dervish through the terrestrial and celestial worlds.[62] From among the Sufi world, it seems Mevlevī sheikhs were principal actors in spreading Illuminationism, if we judge from İsmāʿīl ʿAnḳaravī (d. 1631), author of the first Turkish commentary of al-Suhrawardī's magnum opus, who considered Mevlana's *Mesnevī* a representation of primordial wisdom or *ḥikma*.[63] On the other hand, Ḫalvetīs and their parent branches were rather skeptical. For instance, İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī, the early-eighteenth century Celvetī sheikh, opposes the Illuminationist to the Sufi path and dismisses the Illuminationists' claim to *ḥikma*: because they value abstract thought (*fikr-i mücerred*) over God's remembrance (*ẕikr*), "the line of annulment has been drawn over the pages of their unveilings".[64]

Illuminationist philosophy, with its tendency to attribute knowledge (and, in fact, its own genealogy) to ancient wisdom, must have played a crucial role in the spread of Hermetic beliefs in the Ottoman world; by this, I mean not the *corpus Hermeticum* itself, but the idea of Hermes as a keeper and transmitter of ancient knowledge.[65] In this context, it should come as no surprise that an emphasis on the precept that knowledge, particularly esoteric knowledge, should be kept for the few elect, is evident in authors associated with *Ishrāqī* thought. A story about how Aristotle decided to make wisdom so difficult to grasp that only those fit will comprehend it, in order not to disclose its secrets, runs all the way from Taşköprüzāde Ahmed Efendi's (d. 1561) encyclopaedia[66] to Nevʿī's (d. 1599) vernacular counterpart, *Netā'icü'l-fünūn* ("The Yield of the Disciplines"):

62 Sibel Kocaer highlights some of the structural elements of this work that imply a knowledge of al-Suhrawardī's philosophy in her thesis: "The journey of an Ottoman warrior dervish: The *Hızırname* (Book of Khidr), sources and reception", unpublished PhD thesis, SOAS, University of London 2015, 161–167. Other examples of Illuminationist influence are the references to the realm of images or *ʿālem-i miṯāl* (ibid., 271).

63 Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 203–204; Gürbüzel, "Bilingual Heaven", 231–232; Arıcı, "Is it Possible to Speak of an Illuminationist Circle", 38–40.

64 Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 212.

65 Cf. van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, 223–229.

66 Tashkupri-zadah, *Miftâh as-Sa'âdah wa misbâh as-siyâdah fî mawdu'ât al-ulûm, by Ahmad b. Mustafa (Tashkupri-zadah)*, ed. Kamil Bakry and Abdalwahhab Abu'l-Nur (Cairo 1968), v. 1, 314–316.

> Before [Aristotle] the art of philosophy had not been written down; there existed [only] some scattered treatises in the form of hints, allusions, signs, and riddles because the forefathers did not impart philosophical knowledge and other hidden sciences… to anyone who was not a philosopher. Knowledge was passed on by inheritance and not by study. When they put this matter to Plato, Plato asked… "Do you want to publicise secret matters of wisdom so that the uneducated (*cühelā*) get to know the secret knowledge of the wise?" Aristotle said: "I will do it in such a way that the unexplained meaning will not be obvious to the uninitiated (*nā-maḥrem*)".[67]

The same story can be found in Ömer Karakaşzāde (d. 1637), who adds extensive allusions both to Illuminationism and to Hermes and Idris, and in Kâtib Çelebi's entry on Aristotle from a biographical dictionary, *Süllemü'l-vuṣūl ilâ tabaḳātü'l-fuṣūl* ("A ladder to attain the degrees of sections [of knowledge]"), where he also notes that "Greek philosophers used to conceal philosophy from the commoners, and they taught it only to the sons of rulers and kings".[68] And regarding the execution of the chief astrologer Hüseyin Efendi in 1650, Kâtib Çelebi warns that

> it is inauspicious to bring to light and disclose this kind of divine secrets (*bu maḳūle esrār-ı ilāhiyyeyi keşf ü ifşāda yümn olmayup*); [he didn't know that] one must conceal with circumspection those things that one learns through deduction and inference from the rules of the craft (*fenn ḳavā'ïdinden*).[69]

Most of these authors belonged to the ulema apparatus. Kâtib Çelebi's case is more interesting: a student of Ḳāḍızāde Meḥmed who chose a more liberal attitude, actually promoting a tolerance for different lifestyles and a casuistic morality of sorts, he was the first of a series of scholars-cum-bureaucrats who acted outside the *medrese* system (another scholar in this line, Müneccimbaşı

67 Nev'i Efendi, *Texts on Popular Learning in Early Modern Ottoman Times*, v. 2, *"The Yield of the Disciplines and the Merits of the Texts". Nev'i Efendi's Encyclopaedia Netâyic el-Fünûn*, eds G. Procházka-Eisl and H. Çelik (Harvard 2015), 79=229–230.

68 Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 216–228; O. Ş. Gökyay, ed., *Kâtip Çelebi'den seçmeler* (Istanbul 1968), 198–200; H. Koç, "XVII. yüzyılın ortasında Osmanlı coğrafyası'ndan antik dönemlere bir bakış: Kâtip Çelebi'nin eserlerinden seçmeler", *Doğu Batı* 40 (2007), 257–282 at 264–265.

69 Z. Aycibin, "Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*. Tahlil ve metin", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Mimar Sinan University, 2007, 1072; copied also by Na'ima, *Târih-i Na'imâ (Ravzatü'l-Hüseyn fî hulâsati ahbâri'l-hâfikayn)*, ed. M. İpşirli (Ankara 2007), 3:1272.

Aḥmed Dede, was also influenced by Illuminationism). Furthermore, it may be argued that *Ishrāqī* authors, promoting the hermetic tradition of occult sciences, were competing over access to the supernatural against Sufis claiming their own, mystical union with Godly powers.[70]

As far as it concerns techniques to control the supernatural, these authors seem to have moved away from the spiritual vision of the world, served by dream interpretation or the science of letters, toward a more mechanical vision, where correspondences, homologies and hierarchies of the realms of nature connected the microcosm to the macrocosm.[71] In this, they were actually reverting to the medieval tradition of natural/astral magic, best exemplified by the famous tenth-century *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* or *Picatrix*, which had been shadowed by the lettrist talismanics of the thirteenth-century *Corpus Bunianum* and the ritual/demonic magic of Sufi environments.[72] As a side remark, it is important to note that scholars such as Kâtib Çelebi may have expressed their preference for a natural/astral magic style of occultism, but they never really cared to deal with them seriously, the way Pico della Mirandola, Ficino or even Newton did.[73] Half of Kâtib Çelebi's famous bibliographical encyclopaedia, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, is a list of lost sciences, whose topic is described but never really studied. And to my knowledge there is no detailed and systematic treatise of astral magic after Uzun Firdevsī's (d. after 1517) *Da'vetnāme*, composed in 1487 (which is already full of angelic/demonic elements, but no lettrism).[74] One of the swansongs of Ottoman lettrism may have been Taşköprüzāde's treatise on plague[75]—and even this consists mostly of talismanic magic squares copied from al-Būnī or al-Biṣṭāmī. While in his own encyclopaedia Taşköprüzāde describes a science

70 On the relationship of Illuminationism with occultism see Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 241–243.

71 Cf. Sariyannis, "Knowledge and Control of the Future", 74–75, 82–83; idem, *The Horizons, Limits, and Taxonomies of Ottoman Knowledge* (Berlin 2021), 35–36.

72 On the general history of Islamic magic see J.-C. Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam au Moyen* Âge (Paris 2017); S. Günther – D. Pielow (eds), *Die Geheimnisse der oberen und der unteren Welt. Magie im Islam zwischen Glaube und Wissenschaft* (Leiden 2018); L. Saif – F. Leoni – M. Melvin-Koushki – F. Yahya (eds), *Islamicate Occult Sciences in Theory and Practice* (Leiden 2021).

73 Cf. B. P. Copenhaver, *Magic in Western Culture: From Antiquity to the Enlightenment* (Cambridge 2015).

74 F. Büyükkarcı (ed.), *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and his Da'vet-nāme: Interpretation, Transcription, Index, Facsimile and Microfiche* (Harvard 1995).

75 Melvin-Koushki, "Taşköprīzāde on the (Occult) Science of Plague Prevention and Cure".

much nearer the natural magic of *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*, he uses it no more than Kâtib Çelebi.

It is important that we view this tendency for elitism, so to speak, within the wider context of an ongoing democratization of knowledge. The Ḳāḍızāde-li movement may be seen as a plea for egalitarianism, where every individual Muslim should reason and develop their principles of faith, without the mediation of theologians and officials. But Ḫalvetī and other Sufis, as well, seem to have promoted a similar vision in many ways. It has been noted that catechisms (ʿilm-i ḥāl) authored by prominent Ḫalvetī sheikhs such as Sivāsī or Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī stressed that a proper Muslim should have detailed knowledge of their faith and be able to reason thereof and verify it; the same claim was made by more "fundamentalist" authors, the difference of the Ḫalvetīs being their suggestion that the Sufi path was necessary to access this level.[76] Whereas this may sound as elitist as the Hermetic gnosiology of the Illuminationists, it may also be read as an entitlement of every Muslim to knowledge and reasoning. This vision of equality and individual responsibility has been the subject of a number of recent studies, and it seems to encompass a large segment of the "Sunna-minded" and Sufi audiences from the mid-seventeenth century onwards.[77]

It may also be argued that absolutism is strongly threaded into such an egalitarian vision, or perhaps rather a unifying tendency: equality under either a strong ruler or a strict set of confessional rules and principles, followed by all. On the other hand, the high bureaucrats and ulemas favourable to *Ishrāqī* elitism were more inclined to accept a pluralistic society. And indeed, such pleas for tolerance and pluralism were expressed by *Ishrāqī* authors, from Kâtib Çelebi to prominent Mevlevī sheikhs. Recently Aslıhan Gürbüzel suggested that a debate on whether Persian was spoken in Paradise alongside Arabic (and, more generally, whether Persian works and specifically Rūmī's *Meṣnevī* were entitled to be read as sacred texts) was closely connected to the Mevlevis' effort to defend

76 T. Krstić, "*You Must Know Your Faith in Detail*: Redefinition of the Role of Knowledge and Boundaries of Belief in Ottoman Catechisms (*ʿİlm-i ḥāls*)", in T. Krstić and D. Terzioğlu (eds), *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450–c. 1750* (Leiden 2020), 155–195 at 185–188. For the general context see also Kh. El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb*, (Cambridge 2015), 97–128.

77 Terzioğlu, "Sunna-Minded Sufi Preachers", 277–278; N. Shafir, "Moral Revolutions: The Politics of Piety in the Ottoman Empire Reimagined", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 61 (2019), 595–623.

themselves against Kadızadeli accusations. The Mevlevis promoted a pluralism expanded to the very core of the latter's arguments, namely tradition: tradition could then be a dynamic concept, that could be expanded to accommodate diverse texts and practices.[78] Significantly, in this struggle prominent Mevlevī authors connected the *Meṣnevī* to Illuminationist philosophical wisdom (*ḥikma*), which could also function as a receptacle for various "innovative" ideas.[79]

III. The waning of scholarly and the second life of vernacular occultism in the eighteenth century

The Sufi world of Ottoman urban societies underwent some major changes from the early eighteenth century on. The multiplication of Sufi orders and figures led to a waning of wide networks, as fraternities were now segmented along neighbourhoods, as well as often family-based.[80] In this respect, but also due to the developments described in previous sections as the aftermath of the Ḳāḍızādeli movement, it is not surprising that Sufi claims to sanctity seem to have become more pietistic than miraculous. We already saw that eighteenth-century Sufi sheikhs turned to a more personal interpretation of miracles, seen now as an epiphany of sorts ("unveiling", *kaşf*, or "inspiration", *ilhām*) in which mystical content was revealed to the subject, whereas successful divination, miraculous appearances after death or other interventions to the usual course of things are more and more rarely to be seen. Scholarly culture outside the *tekke*, moreover, turned toward a worldview that emphasised the role of the human actor upon history, as can be documented by the lively theological debates on free will and predestination.[81] In the context of our analysis here, it is of particular importance to note that the terminology and arguments behind this turn (namely, the concept of "particular will", which is under human con-

78 Gürbüzel, "Bilingual Heaven". On the role of diverse languages in Ottoman esotericism see also Sariyannis, "Languages of Ottoman Esotericism", *Aca'ib: Occasional papers on the Ottoman perceptions of the supernatural* 2 (2021), 39–76.

79 Gürbüzel, "Bilingual Heaven".

80 See the survey by J. J. Curry, "Sufi Spaces and Practices", in Sh. Hamadeh – Ç. Kafescioğlu (eds), *A Companion to Early Modern Istanbul* (Leiden 2021), 503–527 at 519–523.

81 E. L. Menchinger, "Free Will, Predestination, and the Fate of the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 77 (2016): 445–66; Idem, "Revisiting 'Turkish Fatalism'; Or, Why Ottoman Theology Matters", *Aca'ib: Occasional papers on the Ottoman perceptions of the supernatural* 2 (2021), 9–37. [https://doi.org/10.26225/rnyr-ar56]

trol and complements "universal will" in moving the universe) originated from Naḳşibendī circles, including ʿAbd al-Ġani al-Nābulusī (d. 1731), Muḥammad Saçaklızāde (d. 1732) and Isma'īl Gelenbevī (d. 1790, a noted scholar who introduced logarithms in Ottoman mathematics).[82] Indeed, reformed through the Mujaddidī current in a wave that had already swept the Islamic world starting from India, the Naḳşibendīs ended up in the late eighteenth century as allies of the Westernising flank of the Ottoman apparatus, aiming to modernise the military.[83] It seems that most of the doctors, scholars or officials associated with eighteenth-century experimentalism and naturalism were associated with the Mujaddidī Naḳşibendī order.[84] A highly compelling case of such a Sufi reformist is Ubeydullah Kuşmanī: supported by bureaucrats and young intellectuals, with possible Naḳşibendī affiliations, he attacked vehemently Janissary opponents of Selim III's New Order and praised European military technology in a 1806 treatise. In this effort he rejects fatalism and points out the necessity for the "pursuit of the necessary efforts" (*teşebbüs-i esbāb*), whereas he explains that infidels invent are so capable in inventing new weapons and tools because they "are all oriented toward this world (*sālik-i dünyā oldukları ecilden*), [so] they always think of increasing their knowledge"; infidel artisans keep an apprentice until he may prove that he can be a master by finding some new knowledge or technique, while Muslims tend to neglect worldly affairs as transitory.[85]

By the early eighteenth century we can already see authors associated with the ulema and the state apparatus in some form, dismissing miraculous deeds and occult sciences. Indeed, several scholars and bureaucrats seem sincerely involved with occult sciences well into the eighteenth century: in 1683 a high-ranking bureaucrat, Bosnavī Şaʿbanzāde Meḥmed Efendi (d. 1709) would have the pen boasting of its role in occult sciences, including astrology, geomancy, letter

82 Bruckmayr, "The Particular Will".

83 A. Yaycıoğlu, "Guarding Traditions and Laws—Disciplining Bodies and Souls: Tradition, Science, and Religion in the Age of Ottoman Reform", *Modern Asian Studies* 52 (2018), 1542–1603, esp. 1584–1591 for the Mujaddidī reform and its role in the Selimian New Order. Cf. also Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidīyya in the Ottoman Lands", 19–20; A. E. Topal, "Political Reforms as Religious Revival: Conceptual Foundations of *Tanzimat*", *Oriente Moderno* 101 (2021), 153–180.

84 Küçük, "The Compass and the Astrolabe", 269.

85 Dihkanizade Kuşmani, *Nizâm-ı Cedîde dâir bir risâle: Zebîre-i Kuşmânî fî ta'rîf-i nizâm-ı ilhâmî*, ed. Ö. İşbilir (Ankara 2006), 30; Sariyannis, *History of Ottoman Political Thought*, 416–420; Yaycıoğlu, "Guarding Traditions and Laws", 1591–1597.

magic and alchemy,[86] while the prolific professor and judge Veliyuddin Carullah Efendi (d. 1738) had collected a remarkable number of books on *cifr*, which he annotated with sincere interest.[87] However, a growing number of moralist authors had already begun to dismiss this branch of knowledge as vain and futile. Yusuf Nābī (d. 1712), the famous poet who originated from a Naḳşibendī family of Urfa, urges against astrology and geomancy, on the grounds that everything happens according to fate (*takdīr iledür cümle umūr*) and that most astrologers and geomancers are scoundrels, although he admits that geomancy may be a sound science (with no living practitioner): only God knows the hidden world, he concludes.[88] Even more adamant, his imitator Sünbülzāde Vehbī (d. 1809), who is extremely favourable toward both the Ḳāḍızādelis and the Naḳşibendīs,[89] likens astrologers with demons with their claim of communicating with the hidden world.[90] As for the other occult sciences, to which he expands considerably in relation to his predecessor, Vehbī is more than dismissive: geomancers are tricksters; the science of letters (*cifr*) belongs to those who can perform miracles; magic squares are not for everyone and the meaning of the major works on them (al-Būnī's *Shams al-maʿārif*) is hidden; incantations (*siḥr*, *ruḳyā*) are to be avoided; conjuring of djinn and demons (*narenciyāt*) runs the danger of associating with demons and the Satan, who are natural enemies of humanity; alchemy has no truth and is a ridiculous occupation; magic (*simyā*) is the work of tricksters; the art of finding treasures is harnessed by Northern Africans to accumulate wealth; paper divination or chartomancy only results in wasting one's money; talismans and prophylactics (*ṭılsımāt u himyā*) are useless, as only God and prudence can guard a man; finally, the art of concealment (ʿilm-i *iḫfā*) is also useless and without any truth.[91] The only occult sciences found sound by Vehbī are oniromancy (praising the medieval authority of Ibn

86 E. Tuşalp Atiyas, "Eloquence in Context: Şabanzade Meḥmed Efendi's (d.1708–1709) *Münazara-ı Ṭıg u Ḳalem* and 'The People of the Pen' in Late Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire", *Turcica,* 48 (2017), 113–155 at 124.

87 F. Usluer, "Cârullah Efendi'nin cifir ve tıp ilimlerine dair kitapları", in B. Açıl (ed.), *Osmanlı kitap kültürü: Cârullah Efendi kütüphanesi ve derkenar notları* (Ankara 2015), 297–312.

88 Nābī, *Hayriyye*, ed. İ. Pala (Istanbul 1989), 106 (v. 644–654).

89 Sünbülzāde Vehbī, *Lutfiyye-i Vehbī*, ed. G. Tanıdır Alıcı (Kahramanmaraş 2011), 78–81 and 84–85 (v. 211–213 and 234–235).

90 Sünbülzāde Vehbī, *Lutfiyye-i Vehbī*, ed. Tanıdır Alıcı, 58–63 (v. 110–128).

91 Sünbülzāde Vehbī, *Lutfiyye-i Vehbī*, ed. Tanıdır Alıcı, 62–77 (v. 129–196).

Shirin) and physiognomy.[92] Even in minor works of this period, such as a book of advice (*pendnāme*) by the poet Zarīfī (d. 1795), we find sections urging the reader to avoid alchemy, magic, the art of finding treasures and various forms of conjuration (*kimyā ve simyā ve define ve ḫuddām ve ḳırṭāsiye*), actually denying the common man's access to such knowledge, rather than the truth of these sciences itself.[93] Notably, both Nābī and Vehbī devote a large number of verses to alchemy, indicating that this science was quite expanded among the elite; Nābī stresses its difficulty and its futility,[94] while Vehbī ridicules it at length.[95]

An interesting example can be found in the work of the otherwise unknown Abdullah Ḥalīm Efendi, who wrote a peculiar political treatise in 1791 in support of Selim III's reforms. He most probably was affiliated to the Naḳşibendī order, as he mentions his sheikh who can be identified with the sheikh of the Naḳşibendī lodge in Fatih.[96] In the conclusion of his treatise, where a sheikh (the author's alter ego) rejects the arguments of a host of imaginary persons representing various groups of Ottoman society, Abdullah Ḥalīm dismisses all kinds of occult knowledge,[97] from astrology to divination and dream interpretation:

> Whoever says that "astrologers know the hidden (*gayb*)" is an infidel. They do not know the hidden, they gather information from experience (*tecrübe*). For instance, a sailor who says that a southeast wind will rise on seeing a cloud toward the *qibla* is not an infidel; neither what he says comes always true. Because experience is not a source of knowledge (*tecrübe, esbâb-ı 'ilmden değildir*); it is not a sign (of the future), it is an indication (of possible outcomes) (*tecrübe 'alâmet dahi olmaz, olsa*

92 Sünbülzāde Vehbī, *Lutfiyye-i Vehbī*, ed. Tanıdır Alıcı, 64–65 and 90–91 (v. 134–135 and 269–274).

93 Zarīfī, *Pendnâme-i Zarīfî*, ed. M. Arslan (Sivas 1994), 32–34 (v. 306–324).

94 Nābī, *Hayriyye*, ed. Pala, 205–217 (v. 1391–1483).

95 Sünbülzāde Vehbī, *Lutfiyye-i Vehbī*, ed. Tanıdır Alıcı, 66–73 (v. 149–176).

96 A. Şahin, "Abdullah Halim Efendi'nin *Seyfü'l-izzet ila hazreti sahibi'd-devlet* adlı kitabının çevirim yazısı ve değerlendirilmesi", unpublished MA thesis, Marmara University 2009, 17. However, the author includes the Naḳşibendīs in his accusations against modern-day dervishes, whose faults, he insists, do not stain the founders of the *tariqa*s (ibid., 219: he speaks of the Naḳşibendīs' hypocrisy). Cf. Sariyannis, *History of Ottoman Political Thought*, 366–368.

97 He also warns poets not to exaggerate the extraordinary element in narrating miracles of the saints, and rejects tomb veneration: Şahin, "Abdullah Halim Efendi'nin *Seyfü'l-izzet*", 187, 218.

emâre olur): the southwest wind is an indication of rain, but it often happens that upon the southwest wind we see windy weather instead of rain…

Whoever says "I conjured the jinn and they brought me information from the hidden [world]" is also an infidel… You say, "I saw him with my eyes". I do not believe your eyes or anything; I only believe to the word of sharia… There is no divine, nor geomancer, nor jinn… Suffice to mention the illustrious fetva from the fetvas of Abdurrahim Efendi (in office 1715–1716): Question – If Zeyd says "I will conjure a jinni in a mirror" (âyine *içinde cin da'vet idirin deyü*) and drives astray the Muslims with such tricks, what should become of him? Answer – He should be punished severely and stay in prison until his improvement is manifest. Whoever claims knowledge from the things hidden (*muğayyibâta 'ilm iddi'â iderse*) must be subject to renewal of faith and marriage…

Dreams can be true, but they depend on their understanding (*hattâ nazar-ı zabtdadır*). Even when one is awake and hears some words, one cannot always render it as it was heard; all the more so difficult it is to render rightly what one has heard in one's sleep.[98]

Astrology, the most "scientific" of occult sciences and the longest living one, was distrusted even by the Sultans Abdulhamid I (r. 1774–1789) and Selim III (r. 1789–1807), although they felt compelled to listen to their palace astrologers for the sake of tradition;[99] and by 1848 even a professional astrologer would express his doubts regarding his science, disappointed by its lack of success in his everyday life.[100]

At the same period, a very practical naturalism dominated the "science market" of Istanbul, creating vernacular forms of knowledge and combining practices of divination with aspects of European engineering and technology.[101]

98 Şahin, "Abdullah Halim Efendi'nin *Seyfü'l-izzet*", 188 (on astrology and causality), 226–227 (on divination), 227ff. (on dreams).

99 S. Aydüz, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde müneccimbaşılık müessesesi", *Belleten*, 70:257 (2006), 167–264 at 180.

100 G. Tunalı, "An Ottoman Astrologer at Work: Sadullah el-Ankaravî and the Everyday Practice of *İlm-i nücûm*", in F. Georgeon and F. Hitzel (eds), *Les Ottomans et le temps* (Leiden 2012), 39–59.

101 B. H. Küçük, "Science and Technology", in *A Companion to Early Modern Istanbul*, eds. Sh. Hamadeh and Ç. Kafesçioğlu (Leiden 2021), 607–633; Idem, "The Compass and the Astrolabe".

Among these practical artisans, many were Sufis, mostly Mevlevīs, who produced mechanical clocks and other time-keeping instruments.[102] Feza Günergun suggests that "they may have been captivated by the regular revolutions of the gears and correlated these with Sufi meditative rituals",[103] but one may argue that Mevlevīs were in general willing to be involved with all kinds of natural science, including alchemy and medicine: a typical case is Ömer Şifaī (d. 1742), the son of a Mevlevī sheikh who had studied occult sciences (ʿulūm-i ġarībe) under a Ḫalvetī sheikh in Egypt but ended up being a prominent iatrochemist in Bursa using extensively European alchemical and medical sources. Similar scholars of the same period also belonged to branches of the Ḫalvetī or, predominantly it seems, the Naḳşibendī-Mujaddidī order.[104] A sheikh of the same brotherhood, Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı (d. 1780), is famous for introducing Copernican astronomy in his compendium of human knowledge, the 1757 *Maʿrifetnāme*; he remarks that

> believing in and trusting the new astronomy is not one of the foundations of the religious matters nor one of the vehicles to increase one's firm belief (*yaḳīn*). Because no matter what is the shape and the form of the globe, no matter what is the arrangement of heaven and earth, no matter how the firmament revolves, it is impossible to deny that the universe was created and that no other than the Highest God, the creator of the most beautiful and perfect things, might have created it.[105]

In order to reassure those who think that this "philosophical opinion" contradicts religion (*bu reʾy-i felsefī şerʿ-i şerīfe muḫālif ẓann olunursa*), Erzurumī quotes al-Gazālī to the effect that differences between these opinions can be either only in name (i.e. same things can be named with different terms),[106] or things that do not pertain to religion, such as eclipses (in which case, arguing against

102 F. Günergun, "Timekeepers and Sufi Mystics: Technical Knowledge Bearers of the Ottoman Empire", *Technology and Culture* 62/2 (2021), 348–372.

103 Günergun, "Timekeepers and Sufi Mystics", 363.

104 F. Günergun, "Convergences in and around Bursa: Sufism, Alchemy, Iatrochemistry in Turkey, 1500–1750", in P. H. Smith (ed.), *Entangled Itineraries: Materials, Practices, and Knowledges across Eurasia* (Pittsburgh 2019), 227–257; Küçük, "The Compass and the Astrolabe", 269–275.

105 Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Māʿrifetnāme*, University of Michigan, Special Collections Research Center, Isl. Ms. 826, 199; ed. F. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme (Tam metin)* (Istanbul 2000), 270–271.

106 He also insists that numbers such as "five hundred years' distance" for the magnitude of

a proven scientific truth would be damaging faith), or things that pertain to the foundations of religion, such as whether the world was created or eternal (in which case, they have to be refuted).[107]

This, however, does not suggest that esotericism and more particularly occult practices of accessing the hidden world fell into disuse. Miracles such as the appearance of a dead sheikh in blood and flesh continued being recorded in Ḫalvetī or Celvetī (but provincial) milieus well into the nineteenth century.[108] The torch was handed over to the vernacular culture, which by the early eighteenth century was blooming: bottom-up literacy ("artisan literacy", according to Nelly Hanna, or "nouveau literacy", in Dana Sajdi's work),[109] closely connected to a simultaneous boom in new forms of sociability,[110] emerged

earth in some old books are simply symbolic: Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 171; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 233–234,.

107 Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 78–79; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 86–88.

108 Such the case of a Ḫalvetī sheikh executed in Crete in 1757, whose miracles were recorded by a Celvetī author who died in 1824/5: M. Tatcı – C. Kurnaz – Y. Aydemir, *Giritli Salacıoğlu Mustafa ve Mesnevileri* (Ankara 2001), 112–113; N. Clayer – A. Popović, "Les réseaux soufis dans la Crète ottomane", in A. Anastasopoulos (ed.), *The Eastern Mediterranean under Ottoman Rule: Crete, 1645–1840. Halcyon Days in Crete VI. A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 13–15 January 2006* (Rethymno 2008), 211–230 at 217; M. Sariyannis, «Ένας ετερόδοξος μουσουλμάνος στην Κρήτη του 18ου αιώνα» [A Heterodox Muslim in 18th Century Crete], in K. Lappas, A. Anastasopoulos, E. Kolovos (eds), Μνήμη Πηνελόπης Στάθη. Μελέτες ιστορίας και φιλολογίας [In memoriam Penelope Stathi. Studies on History and Literature] (Herakleio 2010), 371–385.

109 S. Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (London and New York 2000), 185–191; N. Hanna, "Literacy and the 'Great Divide' in the Islamic World, 1300–1800," *Journal of Global History* 2 (2007), 175–193; Eadem, "Literacy among Artisans and Tradesmen in Ottoman Cairo," in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Ch. Woodhead (London 2012), 319–331; D. Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus: Nouveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant* (Stanford 2013); Timothy J. Fitzgerald, "Reaching the Flocks: Literacy and the Mass Reception of Ottoman Law in the Sixteenth-Century Arab World," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 2,1 (2015), 5–20; cf. also Z. Altok, "The 18th-Century 'Istanbul Tale'", in *A Companion to Early Modern Istanbul*, eds. Hamadeh and Kafesçioğlu, 581–604.

110 On this development see Sh. Hamadeh, *The City's Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Seattle 2008); C. Kafadar, "How Dark is the History of the Night, How Black the Story of Coffee, How Bitter the Tale of Love: The Changing Measure of Leisure and Pleasure in Early-Modern Istanbul," in *Medieval and Early-Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean*, eds. A. Öztürkmen and E. Birge Vitz (Turnhout 2014), 243–269 and esp. at

throughout the second half of the seventeenth century and produced a large number of manuscripts, miscellanea, personal notes or recollections throughout the eighteenth century. Indeed, eighteenth and even nineteenth-century manuscripts of this sort are plenty of notes on divination. From the sample Jan Schmidt studied (coming only from Dutch libraries), most of the miscellanea containing notes on astrology, bibliomancy, geomancy, dream interpretation or talismans date from the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, reaching as far as the turn of the twentieth century.[111] Not surprisingly, it was the janissaries and the artisans associated with them who constituted the bulk of this new culture of readers and authors.[112] However, identifying them with the authors or readers of the occultist miscellanea mentioned above is neither as easy nor as safe as one might expect. Authors of notes and possessors of the manuscripts described by Schmidt may be identified as low-class ulema (*na'ib* in ca. 1690, an imam ca. 1790), Sufis of often uncertain affiliation (a Rifa'ī/Sa'dī sheikh in ca. 1800, a dervish from a *tekke* in Katerini, modern Greece, in ca. 1900) or low-rank officials and clerks (a clerk of the financial bureaucracy, ca. 1700; the secretary of the *ka'immakam*, ca. 1800; an official of the arsenal, ca. 1810).[113] Indeed, we know that an emphasis on orality seen in mid-seventeenth century Bayrāmī-Melāmī conceded space to "bookish knowledge" in the following decades; the reason may be the potential for participation in the bureaucratic elite (as postulated by Betul Yavuz), but also the general expan-

244–246; M. Sariyannis, "Sociability, Public Life, and Decorum," in *A Companion to Early Modern Istanbul*, eds. Hamadeh and Kafesçioğlu, 473–502.

111 J. Schmidt, "The Occult Sciences and their Importance in Ottoman Culture: Evidence from Turkish Manuscripts in Dutch Public Collections", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 23 (2003), 219–254.

112 See e.g. E. Sezer Aydınlı, "Unusual Readers in Early Modern Istanbul: Manuscript Notes of Janissaries and Other Riff-Raff on Popular Heroic Narratives," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 9 (2018), 109–131; T. Değirmenci, "Bir kitabı kaç kişi okur? Osmanlı'da okurlar ve okuma biçimleri üzerine bazı gözlemler," *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 13 (2011), 7–43, now also available in English as "A Book is Read by How Many People? Some Observations on Readers and Reading Modes in the Ottoman Empire," *Lingua Franca* 5 (2019), https://www.sharpweb.org/linguafranca/issue-5–2019–ottoman-print-culture/ (accessed December 2020). On these strata as main opponents of the Westernising project, supported by members of the administrative apparatus and a Sharia-minded, Naḳşibendī-dominated trend of thought, see Yaycıoğlu, "Guarding Traditions and Laws".

113 Schmidt, "The Occult Sciences and their Importance".

sion of literacy among the lower classes.[114] A recent study on manuscript collections of stories read in janissary milieus in the late eighteenth century unfortunately does not focus in this kind of notes, although "astrological symbols" are mentioned;[115] and we know of some eighteenth-century janissary copyists of religious and Sufi literature.[116] In sum, the material and studies at hand do not allow us to conclude about any special involvement of janissary-affiliated readers or authors in occultist literature.[117]

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Thus, debates on the source of knowledge predominated in Ottoman cultural life, and claims for the priority of one or another source played a crucial role as they could determine who had a legitimate access to things hidden.[118] These debates can be associated with greater currents of thought, closely connected to specific Sufi or at any rate religious affiliations: the Ḳāḍızādeli and Naḳşibendī emphasis on human agency and piety (and on the absence of revelation or miracle in present times), the Ḫalvetī (and others') claim for continuous contact with the supernatural, and the Illuminationist combination of revelatory and hermetic knowledge with rational science (not to mention some materialist tendencies, insufficiently studied so far, from the late seventeenth century on).[119]

114 Yavuz, "Orality in the *Tekke*", 72.

115 Sezer Aydınlı, "Unusual Readers", 123. In the author's main source, a manuscript of Firuzşâh's story, no such note is recorded: Eadem, *The Oral and the Written in Ottoman Literature: The Reader Notes on the Story of Firuzşah* (Istanbul 2015). Neither can we find any note on occultism of any sort recorded by Değirmenci, "Bir kitabı kaç kişi okur?".

116 M. Kökrek, "Müstensih Yeniçeriler," *Türk Dünyası Tarih-Kültür Dergisi* 349 (2016), 22–24.

117 Some exemplary analyses of such manuscripts (unfortunately concerning earlier periods) are those by A. T. Şen, "Manuscript On the Battlefields: Early Modern Ottoman Subjects in the European Theatre of War and Their Textual Relations to the Supernatural in Their Fight For Survival", *Aca'ib: Occasional papers on the Ottoman perceptions of the supernatural* 2 (2021), 77–106 (https://doi.org/10.26225/08gv-3v52) (on a sailor or seafarer's text, dated from the late sixteenth century); and "The Emotional Universe of Insecure Scholars in the Early Modern Ottoman Hierarchy of Learning", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 53 (2021), 315–321 (on a mid-sixteenth century judge; for his numerical divinatory methods see ibid., 321).

118 I am delving more into this topic in Sariyannis, "Sources and Traditions of Knowledge".

119 See M. Sariyannis, *Perceptions ottomanes du surnaturel. Aspects de l'histoire intellectuelle d'une culture islamique à l'époque moderne* (Paris 2019), 97–100.

The manner in which these debates intermingled with social groups and conflicts has yet to be determined; we hope that the path illuminated by this paper may lead to meaningful results. As noted above, the study of the social history of Sufi brotherhoods in the Ottoman Empire is still in its beginnings, so one must take the associations put forth in this paper as research hypotheses, rather than well-researched suggestions. One should especially note the absence of the popular Ḳādirī order in my argumentation, all the more since one of its branches, the Eşrefī, seems to be closely associated with Ottoman alchemist writing.[120] Hopefully, it will be included to a future re-assessment of the subject.

However, the Ḳāḍızādeli/Naḳşibendī reaction against the Sufi claims to a miraculous reality may be linked with some safety to the emergence of mercantile strata of a proto-capitalistic mentality, as their discourse was fit for the audience of these "newcomers" to the urban economy (as shown, for instance, in the vocabulary used in the 1691 attempt to abolish *narḫ* prices).[121] Small traders and artisans, working under the guild system, continued to favour Sufi brotherhoods such as the Ḫalvetīs and their branches, the Bayrāmī-Melāmīs or even, arguably, the Mevlevīs, who continued to offer mediation with supernatural forces, ways to secure the future through divination or talismanic magic, and state-like protection by the divinity. On the other hand, the hermetic stream of Illuminationism was wholeheartedly adopted by the bureaucratic elite, who felt threatened by the expansion of the political nation and the alliance of the janissaries with the guilds. Kâtib Çelebi's programmatic encyclopaedism was targeting at a potential audience of his peers, not the common folk; his attitude against the lower classes may be summarised as "let them be as they wish (so as not to rebel)", as opposed to the egalitarian tendencies of both the Ḳāḍızādeli and Sufi pietism. His plea for change and reform, theoretically founded on Ibn Khaldūn's sociology, looked up to a centralising vizier who would impose the necessary measures.[122]

120 T. Artun, "Hearts of Gold and Silver: The Production of Alchemical Knowledge in the Early Modern Ottoman World", unpublished PhD thesis, Princeton University 2013, esp. 162–184. A deep involvement with alchemy can also be seen in Ismāʿil Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī, the famous Celvetī sheikh: ibid., 61, 188; İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, eds Muslu – Namlı, 282–287, translated in M. Sariyannis, "Examples of Translated Materials for the Study of Ottoman Occultism II", *Aca'ib: Occasional papers on the Ottoman perceptions of the supernatural* 2 (2021), 177–188 at 182–184.

121 Sariyannis, "The Ḳāḍızādeli Movement", 289.

122 See Sariyannis, *History of Ottoman Political Thought*, 285–302.

Debates on knowledge and access to the supernatural seem to have lost their relevance in the eighteenth century, when other topics such as military reform won the day. From the scarce (or little studied) material we have in our hands, it seems that the "disenchantment" process that had begun with both the Ḳāḍızādeli reaction and Kâtib Çelebi's rationalization expanded to wider parts of society and led to growingly larger segments of the educated, not only elite members but also common folk, abandoning occultist approaches to knowledge in favour of the new natural sciences and technologies. The greater visibility of occult manuscripts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries should perhaps be attributed to the growth of low-class literacy, which made janissaries, small traders, low-rank local sheikhs or ulema leaving more traces of their esoteric musings. Still, it would be hasty to postulate that highly educated elites lost any interest in occultist approaches to reality. While these might have fallen out of fashion, they did not fall out of use. Ultimately, the "enlightened" attitude that prevailed did not prevent parts of them from seeking techniques and ways to communicate with the Hereafter, and by the 1850s, members of the new intellectual elites (like their Western European counterparts) were ready to adopt a new form of esotericism, secular and more "scientific" this time, namely spiritualism.[123]

123 Ö. Türesay, "Between Science and Religion: Spiritism in the Ottoman Empire (1850s–1910s)", *Studia Islamica* 113 (2018), 166–200.

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Magic at the Imperial Palace, 1876–8

Edhem Eldem (Istanbul)

Introduction

It will come as no surprise that magic and other forms of belief in the supernatural should have been present at the Ottoman palace and in the everyday life of its inhabitants. Given the extent to which such practices are still alive in everyday life throughout Turkey, from the mildest form of rituals and gestures meant to ward off the "evil eye" (*nazar*), to the widespread belief in the existence of *cin*s/jinns (Ottoman fairies or leprechauns?), or to the Islamically unorthodox propensity to visit and honour by gifts or ex-votos the shrines and tombs of individuals reputed for their saintly power, it seems logical to assume that things would not have been very different centuries ago. We also know how frequently individuals supposed to have mastered control over the occult have used their reputation to gain some form of political or social pre-eminence in Ottoman times, as with the seventeenth-century "magician" Karabaşzade Hüseyin Efendi, AKA "Cinci Hoca," who managed to keep Sultan İbrahim under his thumb and derive much power from this position. I do not think I need to remind the readers of this journal of the relevance of such beliefs to Ottoman culture, both high and low, given the number of sources one can find that relate to "magic, to the marvellous, and to the strange in Ottoman mentalities."

What seems to be missing most, however, is first-hand narratives and descrip-

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tions that may go beyond stating and describing in general terms the obvious 'enchantment' of Ottoman society,[1] and provide us with enough material to understand how such beliefs and practices actually unfolded in everyday life, be it in the higher spheres of power or among the middling or lower classes of the population. Obviously, the problem is less one of absence than of availability, considering that such information can be found scattered throughout a vast spectrum of sources, from state archives to private papers, and from manuscripts to the daily press. This is particularly true of one subgenre, or sub-phenomenon, in the domain, namely that of dreams and their interpretation. A standard feature of early-modern Ottoman life,[2] dreams remain a recurrent feature of the 'modern' era, as suggested by the surprisingly high number of documents one can find in the Ottoman state archives, simply by browsing the online catalogue. If dreams could find their way into the official documentation of the late Ottoman Empire, one can only imagine what is likely to emerge from the thousands of manuscript *mecmua*s (literally, collections, in fact near-diary note- and scrapbooks) kept in the libraries of Turkey.

Nonetheless, even if one were to collect these bits and pieces of information lying across the documentary wilderness, one would still have difficulty finding

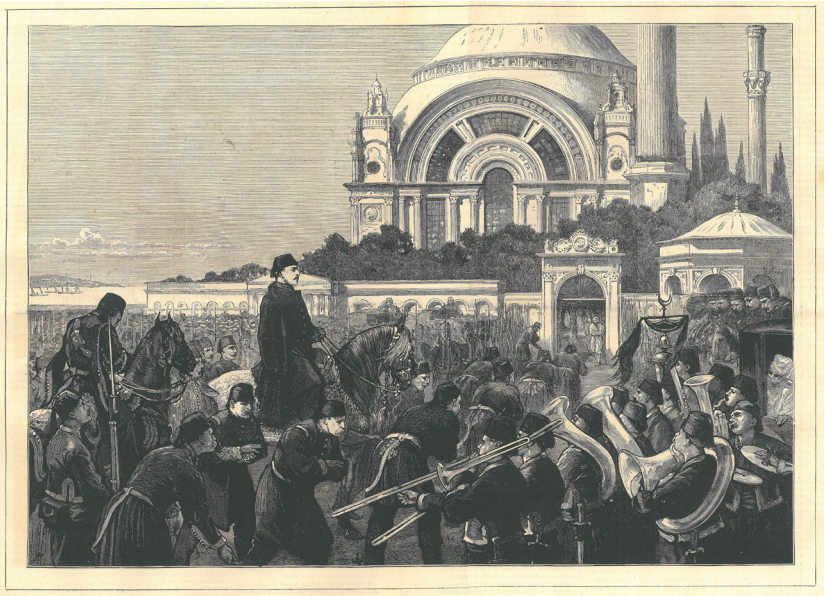
1 For the last decades of the Empire, on which I will be focusing, one can draw a tentative and disappointingly short list of works that provide their readers with a rich, but generic, kind of information on the topic: H. Carnoy and J. Nicolaides, *Traditions populaires de l'Asie mineure* (Paris 1889); Carnoy and Nicolaides, *Traditions populaires de Constantinople et de ses environs. Contributions au folklore des Turcs, Chrétiens, Arméniens, etc.* (Paris 1892); Carnoy and Nicolaides, *Folklore de Constantinople* (Paris 1894); L. J. M. Garnett, *The Women of Turkey and Their Folk-Lore* (London 1891); Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Âdet, Merasim ve Tabirleri. Âdât ve Merasim-i Kadime, Tabirât ve Muamelât-i Kavmiye-i Osmaniye* (Istanbul 1995), vol. II, 369–374; İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, s.v. "Büyü, Büyücüler" (Reşad Ekrem Koçu); M. H. Bayrı, İstanbul Folkloru (Istanbul 1947).

2 One needs only to browse through the pages of Evliya Çelebi's "book of travels" (*Seyahatname*) to find scores of references to the "extraordinary," especially dreams as part of his narrative plot, but also as a reflection of a real interest of his protagonists. See, for example, *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesman. Melek Ahmed Pasha (*1588–1662*), as Portrayed in Evliya Çelebi's Book of Travels (Seyahat-Name),* trans. and ed. R. Dankoff (Albany 1991). A few collections of "dream letters" kept by early modern Ottoman subjects have provided historians with excellent material allowing for a peek into their minds and beliefs: Asiye Hatun, Rüya Mektupları. ed. C. Kafadar (Istanbul 1994); *Kitābü'l-Menāmāt: Sultan III. Murad'ın Rüya Mektupları*, ed. Ö. Felek (Istanbul 2012); A. Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives in Ottoman Istanbul. A Seventeenth-Century Biographer's Perspective* (London-New York 2017).

texts that are continuous and consistent enough to provide a true, sustained, and personalised narrative rather than an assemblage of however many cases can be brought together through research and compilation. What has pushed me to engage in a domain that is not central to my concerns or competences is precisely the discovery and use I have made of one such source. I believe it offers a rare opportunity to present a well-rounded and multi-layered case study on magic at the Ottoman palace in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In fact, I should qualify this statement by noting that rather than a self-standing single narrative, what I have actually come across is a few references in a personal document, which have led me to a vast number of other sources, and which, once unravelled, have provided me with the building blocks of a consistent narrative. In that sense, I must insist on the fact that this is not the simple transfer of information from one rich source, but rather the result of an exciting historiographical adventure with multiple and unexpected twists and turns. Among these, I was particularly pleased to realise that the end result went against the grain of some of the dominant features that often accompany the documentation on magic and the supernatural, namely orientalism, sexism, and racism.

Sultan Murad and Cleanthi Scalieri

What sparked my discovery was my ongoing work on the memoirs and diaries of Prince Selahaddin Efendi (1861–1915), the son of Sultan Murad V (1840–1904), whose ephemeral reign in 1876 lasted only three months. [Ill. 1] Murad, known for his liberal and Western(ist) ideas and for his proximity to the Young Ottoman opposition of the late 1860s, particularly Namık Kemal (1840–88), had greatly invested in this image in preparation of his succession to Sultan Abdülaziz (1830–76, r. 1861–76). [Ill. 2] His turn on the throne came suddenly when a coup led by Midhat and Hüseyin Avni pashas toppled Abdülaziz on 30 May 1876. However, what should have been his chance to show his ability and willingness to engage in much-desired reforms soon turned into a nightmare. When, a few days after being deposed, Abdülaziz killed himself — or, according to some, was assassinated by the junta — the news of his uncle's tragic end came as a shock to Murad, who collapsed mentally and physically, in what was probably a manic-depressive episode facilitated by his chronic alcoholism. Efforts to treat him and to hide his condition failed; after three months of procrastination, on 31 August 1876, he was deposed on grounds of incurable insanity (*cünun-ı mutbik*), ceding the sultanate to the next in line, his brother



1. Sultan Murad V on horseback on his way to Dolmabahçe Mosque. *L'Univers illustré*, 10 June 1876. Author's collection.

2. Sultan Murad V, surrounded by the portraits of 'Young Turks': Ziya Bey, Mustafa Fazıl Pasha, Simon Deutsch, Namık Kemal, Agâh Efendi. *Le Monde illustré*, 10 June 1876. Author's collection.

3. Artist's rendition of the storming of Çırağan Palace by Ali Suavi on 20 May 1878. *Le Monde illustré*, 8 June 1878. Author's collection.

Abdülhamid II (1842–1918, r. 1876–1909). Thus ended the 'year of the three sultans' with an ambitious prince ascending the throne with a clear intent to set up a system that would ward off any of the menaces he had witnessed in the past months. This was the beginning of a reign, which, after shortly paying lip service to constitutionalism, reverted to a strongly personalised and oppressive autocracy that would last thirty years, until the Young Turk Revolution of 1908.

Unsurprisingly, the consequences of this turn of events were catastrophic for Murad V and, by extension, his entire family and household. They were assigned to a heavily guarded residence at Çırağan Palace; however, the relative leniency that was shown to the recluse completely dissipated after the attempt, on 20 May 1878, by the Islamist revolutionary Ali Suavi (1839–78) to storm the deposed sultan's residence with about 200 men, with the aim to reinstate him as sultan. The event ended in bloodshed, almost all the assailants being shot and bludgeoned to death by the police force; as a result, Murad and his household were transferred to the neighbouring Feriye Palace. [Ill. 3] The minimal contacts they had with the outer world were completely severed and they were forced to

live in a de facto prison. For the next 26 years, until Murad's death in 1904, the entire household lived in almost complete isolation, under the watchful eye of officials and eunuchs from Abdülhamid's own palace of Yıldız, atop the hill. One could estimate the number of inmates to about a hundred: Murad; his mother Şevkefza; his wives and concubines, his only son Selahaddin and his wives, concubines, and, later, children; his daughters; and a large number of slave women (*cariye*) accompanied by half a dozen eunuchs.

In this stifling context of internment and social death that Selahaddin Efendi produced a unique — by Ottoman standards — corpus of personal writings: a daily diary for about ten years, memoirs and recollections, essays on a variety of issues, scrapbooks of documents and mementos from his youth. My interest in the supernatural arose from the first volume of the series that I published, which focused on one particular notebook from the prince's memoirs and recollections, which he had meticulously filled with copies of the correspondence between his father and Cleanthi Scalieri (1833–92).[3] Scalieri, a Greek Ottoman stockbroker, had established a connection with Murad when the latter was still heir to the throne. At the time, Scalieri was grand master of the *Proodos* (*Η Πρόοδος*, Progress) masonic lodge in Istanbul, and was working towards opening his dominantly Greek lodge to a wider Ottoman entourage, especially by attracting Muslims. It seems he managed to attract the attention of the prince through his recently co-opted chamberlain, Ahmed Seyyid Bey. At any rate, Murad was initiated in October 1872, and promoted to the rank of master by December. There is no doubt that on his part this was a political investment, a way of adding yet another layer to his commitment to modernity and the West. [Ill. 4]

The correspondence between the two men, however, was from a much later date. Scalieri was deeply attached to Murad, and he probably had serious expectations from his accession, which soon dissipated as the sultan lost first his mental health, followed by his throne. This probably explains why Scalieri became one of the most ardent defenders of Murad's rights against what he felt was the usurpation of a conniving and evil brother. He engaged in several attempts to infiltrate the ex-sultan's prison and free him, all of which failed, forcing him to flee to Athens. There he launched a campaign aimed at rousing support from

3 E. Eldem, *V. Murad'ın Oğlu Selahaddin Efendi'nin Evrak ve Yazıları*, I, *V. Murad ile Cléanthi Scalieri* (Istanbul 2019).

4. Cleanthi Scalieri in Masonic garb. Photograph by Basile Kargopoulo. Ömer M. Koç collection, Istanbul.

several political actors of the time, from William Gladstone to Theodoros Deligiannis, backed by the publication of a long pamphlet to support his claims.[4]

It was during this period of self-exile that Scalieri managed to maintain clandestine correspondence with Murad. Selahaddin Efendi, acting as his father's secretary, dutifully copied these into one of his notebooks, from the end of 1883 to mid-1886. The fact that he recorded both incoming and outgoing letters enables us to reconstitute the entirety of the correspondence, allowing

4 C. Scalieri, *Appel à la justice internationale des grandes puissances par rapport au grand procès de Constantinople par suite de la mort du feu sultan Aziz adressé par Cléanthi Scalieri au nom du sultan Mourad accusé, de Midhat Pacha & des autres accusés* (Athens 1881). A second and a Greek edition would be published the following year.

for a fascinating insight into the minds and schemes of a deposed sultan and his Greek partisan, revealing a strange – but certainly not supernatural – episode of late-Ottoman political history.

Magnetism and magic

Unless we consider that Freemasonry flirted with some aspects of occultism, nothing in the correspondence alludes to any form of magic. While there is a great deal of nonsense in it – among Scalieri's plans was to kidnap Murad, take him to Athens, and allow him to lead the Greek army into Istanbul to reclaim his throne – the remainder was largely comprised of lamentations on Murad and his family's fate and ruminations on ways by which to attract the sympathies and support of Western powers. And yet, my collateral research in the Ottoman archives suddenly revealed morsels of information that pointed in the direction of the mobilisation of 'unorthodox' means to save Murad from the state of destitution he found himself in.

Indeed, one of the major issues at hand was the ex-sultan's health, or more specifically his mental health. As he had been deposed on grounds of insanity, his supporters' greatest hope was to see him regain his senses and thus be able to reclaim his lawful rights over the throne. If they were able to prove that his mental health had improved to the point of being able to handle his responsibilities as a monarch, this would invalidate the process by which he had been deposed, and his brother – who, they assumed, had promised to do so – would abdicate in his favour. There was a lot of wishful thinking involved, but it was the only bit of hope the family and his partisans could cling to, thus turning the issue of his health and recovery into a crucially important one.

Although it is clear that Murad did recover, at least partially, this was not yet the case in the first months, and possibly years, of his internment. The visits by foreign and local physicians had ceased after a last consultation three weeks after his deposition, which confirmed the incurability that had justified this measure. From that moment on, Abdülhamid's main concern had been to keep Murad secluded and to prevent any kind of contact that might bring into question that diagnosis. This explains that, as we will see, his entourage inside and supporters outside made desperate moves to reverse this situation. Two strategies were employed in conjunction. On the one hand, rumours were spread concerning his recovery, thus preparing the ground for whatever action might

be taken to reinstate him, or at least free him from confinement. On the other hand, efforts were made to secure him any form of treatment or cure, a clear indication that he was far from having recovered.

In the absence of any mention of these concerns in Selahaddin Efendi's memoirs — understandably, he was not eager to mention his father's illness in any other way than as a temporary and now bygone inconvenience — it is in the Ottoman archives that I came across the first concrete reference to a form of (para)medical intervention. This information appeared in Aziz Bey's interrogation minutes, after he was arrested for having set up a 'committee' (*komite*) — the buzz word for any revolutionary activity at the time — to free Murad and, by implication, to overthrow Abdülhamid II: [Ill. 5]

> When Sultan Murad was deposed this Kırlandi (Cleanthi)[5] went to Paris to find one of those magnetizers[6] or spiritual masters[7] and brought him to Istanbul. At that time, although Sultan Murad was [still] at Çırağan Palace, it was not easy to get in and out. At the end of the day, the said Kırlandi managed to get the magnetizer into the palace, and he stayed there for about ten days. Whatever he did was beneficial to Sultan Murad, and they say he got well. I also saw the magnetizer he had brought in Kırlandi's home. He was given two or three hundred liras, which with other gratifications came up to five-six hundred and then returned to Paris. After that Sultan Murad was fully conscious and started writing to Kırlandi, saying "work hard, I want my rights back," to which Kırlandi started answering "we are working hard, I am trying to muster strong forces.[8]

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5 Cleanthi Scalieri's name was always challenging to Ottoman penpushers. As surnames were generally not taken into account, he rarely appears as "İskalyeri". Most of the time, one is faced with phonetic deformations of Cleanthi, such as the one here.

6 *Manyetizmci*.

7 *Ruhani hoca*. *Hoca* can be used to describe a Muslim cleric, but also any master or teacher. In this case, the context suggests that he is using it in the sense ascribed to masters with (para)-religious knowledge and powers. *Ruhani* means spiritual; in all likelihood, as will be revealed later, he was translating "spiritualist/spiritist."

8 "*Sultan Murad'ın hal'i vukuunda ol vakit bu Kırlandi Paris'e giderek oradan Fransızlı manyetizmci yani ruhani hocalarından birini bulup Dersaadet'e getirdi. Ol vakit ise Sultan Murad yine Çırağan Sarayı'nda ise de bu kadar girilip çıkılması sıkı değildi. Hasılı merkum Kırlandi getirdiği manyetizmciyi bir takrip saraya soktu ve içeride ale't-tahmin bir hafta on gün kadar durdu. Hasılı yaptığı şey Sultan Murad'a tesir edip iyi olduğunu söylediler. Yine bu getirdiği merkum manyetizmciyi Kırlandi'nin hanesinde gördüm. İki yüz üç yüz lira ile hediye behiye olarak beş altı yüz lirayı bularak badehu yine merkum buradan yine Paris'e avdet eyledi.*

5. Aziz Bey, the alleged leader of the committee organised to free Murad V from his prison. BOA, Y EE 23/9, May 1878.

Should we believe this claim? There are no traces of this in Scalieri's own account of Murad's sufferings; then again, why would he wish to reveal a detail that contradicted his claims that Murad was not truly mentally ill, but had been misdiagnosed by most physicians, starting with his own doctor Capoleone? Moreover, would it make sense to speak of an 'intervention' of such dubious nature in a publication, the aim of which was to convince the Western public

Ondan sonra artık Sultan Murad kendisini bilerek gayret edin hakkımı isterim diye Kırlandi'ye yazmaya Kırlandi dahi gayret ediyoruz kuvve-i cesime tedarikine çalışıyorum diye cevap yazmaya başladı" (DOA, Y EE 23/5, Interrogation minutes of the Scalieri-Aziz Bey committee members, Aziz Bey's declaration, 16 Recep 1295/16 July 1878; İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, "V. Murad'ı Tekrar Padişah Yapmak İsteyen Scalieri-Aziz Bey Komitesi", *Belleten*, 8/30 (1944), 260–261.

opinion of the legitimacy the deposed sultan's rights over the throne? Quite the contrary, Scalieri's account included details of how Abdülhamid himself had resorted to a much darker kind of magic:

> While everyone, Muslims, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, were imploring God for their beloved sovereign's recovery, Abdülhamid Efendi, who in the nineteenth century believed in, and practiced, so-called black magic, tried to put it to use with the help of demons to accelerate his brother's death. Among other magical feats Abdülhamid resorted to, I will mention two, the first before, and the other after, his accession to the throne.
>
> By means of an arch-sorcerer (*sihir*[baz]*başı*)[9] living in a neighbourhood of Sulukule in Istanbul, the name of which I cannot presently recall,[10] but I remember very well that he was the son of a certain Kaşıkçı Ali Efendi, Abdülhamid, after having a miniature wax effigy made of his brother, Sultan Murad, stuck a multitude of pins into it, and then had it taken to the basement of this sorcerer, where every night the latter, sitting on the Koran, read [incantations] and conjured demons while at the same time beating the said wax body with a pomegranate tree stick.[11]
>
> As soon as he acceded to the throne, he summoned a great number of sorcerers from Arabia, whom he brought together with those of Constantinople, forming a regiment of about 180, whose monthly salaries reached one hundred Turkish liras per head. This regiment formed of Arabs and Turks, was divided in seven parts, placed in the same number of locations, namely one at Yıldız, one at Serence Bey Yokuşu, one at Valide Çeşme, one at Hayreddin İskelesi, one at Ortaköy, one at

9 *Sihirbaz* is a magician, or sorcerer and *başı* a generic suffix to indicate a head or chief. Scalieri's command of Turkish being limited, he seems to have been confused about the repetition of *baz* and *başı*, and mixed up *sihir* (magic, spell) with *şehir* (city) to come up with "schéhir-bache."

10 "Soulouklou" is evidently a misspelling for Sulukule, a neighbourhood by the city walls, near Edirnekapı. The reference to this neighbourhood is not surprising, considering that it was known for the presence — until today — of a strong Romani community, which was traditionally associated, among other stereotypes, with magic and fortune telling.

11 The pomegranate tree stick (*nar sopası*) seems to have been used to punish children. However, it also refers to an instrument used in various religious practices, from drawing yantras with a pomegranate stick (*anar ki kalam*) in Hinduism to Roman rituals where a curved stick (*inarculum*) would be placed upon the head of the person sacrificing an animal. According to the Egyptian Islamic scholar Al-Suyuti (1445–1505), djinns could be driven away by drawing an image of a demon and striking it with a pomegranate or quince tree stick. See V. François, "Objets du quotidien à Damas à l'époque ottoman", *Bulletin d'études orientales,* 61 (2012), 493.

Kabataş, and the other at Tophane; some were on the heights and others in the vicinity of Çırağan, so that these devil incarnates' breath (*nefes*)[12] might reach Sultan Murad's prison.

The reader will probably think that this is exaggerated or written out of resentment and enmity against Sultan Abdülhamid II's person. Far from it! I think of myself better than a slanderer; at any rate his engagement with magic is well known to all his courtiers and almost all of the Muslim people, and his stepmother Perestu Kadın is still alive to admit in all good conscience that she was despicably slandered by him to his uncle Abdülaziz and sent away from the palace because she was hostile to this profession and advised him not exercise it.[13]

There was still more to it. According to Scalieri, Abdülhamid was also endowed with the gift of divination, which he had allegedly demonstrated by predicting Abdülaziz's fall and Murad's short reign.[14]

Apparently, this was not the first time that poor Murad had been targeted using very similar methods. His uncle Abdülaziz had always been — probably with some reason — suspicious of his political ambitions and possible plans to have him overthrown. In rather typical fashion if we look at Ottoman history, many of the battles and rivalries between sultans and princes were waged through their households and, most particularly, their mothers.[15] History has

12 *Nefes* (breath) is the typical embodiment of the supernatural power of a magician or of a saintly person, who may use it to cure, but also to harm, others.

13 Scalieri, *Appel à la justice internationale*, 24–25. Scalieri had a poor command of French, as suggested by many errors and awkward expressions throughout the text. While I have corrected blatant errors in my translation, I have also maintained some of its overall awkwardness.

14 Ibid. 26.

15 The role ascribed to women in Ottoman politics and power struggles needs to be carefully contextualised and not taken at face value, given the underlying misogyny that characterises both contemporary witnesses and later historians, up to the present. A typical example is that of the 'sultanate of women' (*kadınlar saltanatı*), as the prominent presence and influence of queen mothers in the seventeenth century was much later dubbed by historians such as Ahmed Refik [Altınay], who saw in this phenomenon one of the major causes of decline and decadence. Apart from the fact that this vision generally chooses to qualify as female forms of power that rest on male networks and interests, it is also compounded with the negative connotations associated with the 'womanly' character of their behaviour and of the means they used to attain their goals. This gendered vision will have them use their beauty and charms, engage in intrigues and tricks, and, of course, practice all sorts of magic and throw spells. The problem, however, is that, as is often the case, such stereotypes often

it that Abdülaziz's mother, Pertevniyal Valide Sultan (1812–83), was extremely protective of her 'lion' (*arslanım*), as she was known to call her son, and Selahaddin Efendi's writings abound with examples of her active efforts to curb Murad and his household's freedom and prerogatives. If we are to believe the recollections of one of his concubines, the day Abdülaziz was deposed and his harem ousted from the palace, the incoming inmates of Murad's harem had discovered proof of such malicious action in one of the cupboards of Pertevniyal's room:

> The spell consisted of an effigy of approximately two spans, coarsely made of yellow beeswax. The name Murad had been written with red paint on its chest, back, head, kneecaps, and arms, and many needles had been stuck on it from the top down to the sole of its feet.[16]

As suggested by other examples, dolls may have been a common and popular way of putting a spell on a person, attesting to the use of what is lumped under the generic term of 'voodoo.'[17]

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take the form of a self-fulfilling prophecy, if only because such groups whose power and freedom are seriously curtailed by the dominant one, will end up reproducing these clichés for lack of any alternative.

16 Z. Şakir, *Çırağan Sarayında 28 Sene: Beşinci Murad'ın Hayatı* (Istanbul 1943), 88. The word used is *heykel* (statue), rather than the more common *kukla* (doll). The book consists of the recollections of one of Murad's concubines, Filizten Kalfa, which the author Ziya Şakir Soku (1883–1959) obtained from interviews he conducted with her. Although Soku is often frowned upon as the prolific author of popular history books about the Hamidian period, his work is generally well documented. This publication is as close as one could come to a very basic form of oral history, which the absence of any scholarly work in the early decades of the Republic makes all the more precious.

17 Around 1810, an "Arab"—the term is ambiguous given its use both to denote an ethnic or cultural Arab and a black person—was caught slashing a child-sized doll representing Sultan Mahmud II with a razor, allegedly under instructions from the Wahhabi rebels in the Hejaz. See *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. "Büyücü Arab Vak'ası" (Reşad Ekrem Koçu). Three examples of such practices cannot tell us how widespread they truly were, nor if they may have been connected to African forms of magic. Such an investigation would by far exceed the scope of this study; suffice it to say that the practice of magic by black slave women is a recurrent theme in the literature. See Garnett, *The Women of Turkey*, Vol. 2, 415–417; Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Âdet, Merasim ve Tabirleri*, 2: 370–373; R. Davey, *The Sultan and His Subjects* (London 1907), 123–124; L. Hanoum, *Le Harem Impérial et les Sultanes au XIXe Siècle* (Paris 1925), 79–82; G. Young, *Constantinople* (London 1926), 261; Y. H. Er-

The spiritualist connection

While Scalieri was accusing Abdülhamid of practicing black magic to destroy Murad and Aziz Bey was suggesting that Scalieri had resorted to magnetism to save him, there was scant evidence available to corroborate one or the other of these claims. The closest one could come to an overlap with Aziz Bey's story was the account by Filizten of a visit by a physician sent by the British embassy to check on the ex-sultan. According to her, this doctor had come from abroad and was named Doni; she herself had helped him enter the secluded palace through the sewers, once he had said the password agreed upon, "Edward." He allegedly stayed for a whole week with Murad, examined him thoroughly and concluded that he was in excellent health.[18] One could endlessly speculate about the name and identity of this physician: assuming that he was British, Donney, Downey, Dunny? The password was also meaningful, if one considers that Edward (1841–1910) was then Prince of Wales and, since 1874, grand master of the United Grand Lodge of England. Doctor Doni's visit may well have been the result of masonic solidarity between two princes.

My first revelation came when I discovered in the Ottoman archives a letter sent by Scalieri to Sultan Abdülhamid in 1888. The letter was surprising enough, as it revealed Scalieri's desire to mend his relations with the sultan by accepting the pardon he had apparently been granted. Yet, from the perspective of this study, it was the second paragraph of the letter that was particularly striking:

> As a fervent adherent of the philosophy of spiritism, I could never sully my conscience by an odious and dishonest act, lie, or fail to keep my word. On the eve of departing this vain and false life, all my efforts aim only at bettering myself as much as I morally and intellectually can in this world, in view of ensuring my life after death, which is the only true and real one and in which I have unwavering faith.[19]

This was evidently a piece of information that could be connected to Aziz Bey's claim that Scalieri had arranged for the dispatching of a "magnetiser" to cure Sultan Murad, if only because magnetism was a generic term used to describe

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dem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise,* 1800–1909 (Basingstoke and London 1996), 174–176.

18 Şakir, *Çırağan Sarayında 28 Sene*, 146–151.

19 DOA, Y PRK EŞA 7/82, Cleanthi Scalieri's letter to Abdülhamid via Feridun Bey, Ottoman minister in Athens, 23 June/5 July 1888.

pseudo-medical interventions on the body and soul of a patient, which typically encompassed many similar belief systems including spiritualism and its French offshoot, spiritism. Magnetism, or animal magnetism as it was sometimes called, had been developed in the eighteenth century by the German physician Franz Anton Mesmer (1735–1815) as a form of alternative medicine, which claimed to cure patients by putting them in a trance induced by allegedly magnetic currents. By the mid-nineteenth century, even though there were still some magnetisers exercising this art, this fad had lost much of its popularity. It was gradually replaced by spiritualism, partly inspired by Mesmer's hypnotic techniques and Emanuel Swedenborg's (1688–1772) claims to establish contact with spirits. In Scalieri's case, the reference was explicitly to spiritism, a branch of spiritualism created in the 1850s by Hippolyte-Léon-Denizard Rivail (1804–69), better known under the pen name of Allan Kardec.

According to this current, which Kardec developed into a systematic doctrine by 1857, there existed immortal souls apart from the mortal body. These souls could be ranked from good to bad according to their degree of maturity. Contact with these souls could be established by individuals vested with this special skill, known as mediums. As such contacts could enable humanity to advance mentally and morally, spiritism would constitute a link between religion and science. Kardec had come up with the idea of turning his claims into a formal movement after the unexpected success of his first book, *Le Livre des esprits* (The Book of Spirits), published in 1857.[20] The doctrine spread rapidly through a specialised journal, *La Revue spirite*,[21] the following year, and in 1861 *Le Livre des médiums* (The Book of Mediums).[22] Thanks to its combination of religion and science, the new current attracted much attention from the wider public, spearheaded by some prestigious names, such as Napoleon III (1808–73),

20 A. Kardec, *Le Livre des esprits, contenant les principes de la doctrine spirite sur la nature des esprits, leur manifestation et leurs rapports avec les hommes; les lois morales, la vie présente, la vie future et l'avenir de l'humanité, écrit sous la dictée et publié par l'ordre d'esprits supérieurs* (Paris 1857).

21 *Revue spirite. Journal d'études psychologiques*. The journal was published from 1858 to 1914, 1914 to 1940, 1947 to 1976, 1989 to 2000, 2001 to 2019 and from 2020 to the present, with slightly differing titles https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Revue_spirite.

22 A. Kardec, *Le Livre des médiums, ou Guide des médiums et des évocateurs, l'enseignement spécial des esprits de la théorie sur tous les genres de manifestations, les moyens de communiquer avec le monde invisible, le développement de la médiumnité, les difficultés et les écueils que l'on peut rencontrer dans la pratique du spiritisme, pour faire suite au Livre des esprits* (Paris 1861).

Victor Hugo (1802–85), Camille Flammarion (1842–1925), or Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930). Despite some slowing down after the 1920s, the fact that Spiritism still has six million members and twenty million sympathisers in Brazil certainly says something about its universal appeal.[23]

It is in August 1888 that we find further confirmation of Scalieri's commitment to the doctrine in the *Revue spirite*, where his name appears among the "names of influential spiritists who have stated their faith," as residing in Athens.[24] Interestingly, Murad is also mentioned for the first time in an earlier issue of the same year, as a "spiritist figure," in a long list of monarchs, heads of state, and other prominent figures such as Victoria, Ludwig of Bavaria and presidents Lincoln and Thiers.[25] Even more surprisingly, the same issue seems to hold the key to the mysterious visit to the illustrious patient. At the end of a section devoted to the visit of Cuban delegates to Kardec's grave at the Père-Lachaise cemetery in Paris, one reads:

> Another correspondent from the Orient, an intimate friend of *Sultan Murad*, who was cured of his obsession by the medium Duneau we had sent him, asked us at the same time to bring some flowers to Allan Kardec's tomb as a memento of this convinced and enlightened spiritist sultan.[26]

It takes little imagination to guess that Murad's "intimate friend" was no other than Scalieri. More importantly, however, the medium's name sounds strangely familiar. Could Doni in Filizten's recollections have been a deformation of Duneau? If so, would it not make sense to conflate the two stories of the British doctor and of the French magnetiser to imagine that in reality Murad was visited by a spiritist medium named Duneau, who was dispatched from France thanks to Scalieri's mediation?

All this information allows us to decipher a cryptic mention that appeared in the *Revue spirite*'s January 1878 issue, as part of a retrospective assessment of the previous year:

23 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritism.

24 "Noms de spirites influents qui ont affirmé leur croyance", *Revue spirite. Journal d'études psychologiques et du spiritualisme expérimental*, 31/16 (15 August 1888), 496–497.

25 "Personnalités spirites", *Revue spirite*, 31/13 (1 July 1888), 390.

26 "Délégués cubains au Père-Lachaise", *Revue spirite*, 31/13 (1 July 1888), 398.

> Healing mediums multiply everywhere, which is of great benefit to our cause; [...] in Paris, there are some who do not wish to be mentioned, and one of them was recently called to Constantinople, where he cured of a terrible obsession a great, very great, figure, who had been condemned by the most renowned doctors of Europe.[27]

An incredible story

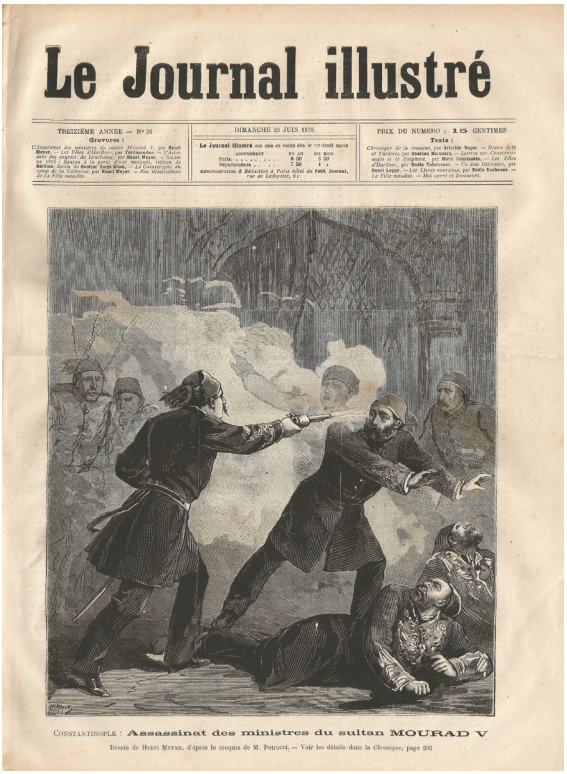
Apparently, the secret had been well kept for ten years; it would take another six years for the details to surface, again in the same journal, at the end of 1894. Interestingly, the matter was presented almost like an afterthought, provoked by the death, on 19 October 1894, of Marie Leüe, "universally honoured" in Constantinople, thanks to whom "some twenty-five years ago, the major pashas were engaged in spiritism." Her influence seemed to have reached to the highest levels: "Sultan *Murad* most particularly revered Mme. M. Leüe; he considered her a loyal counsellor, with a broad and fair mind."[28] This demise was what triggered a four-page digression on Duneau's visit to Murad.

Although this account was unsigned, a second version of it, published in the same journal in 1897, reveals that it was by Pierre-Gaëtan Leymarie (1827–1901), who had succeeded Kardec at the head of the movement after the latter's death in 1869. Leymarie recalled that Scalieri had visited him "three months after Murad's accession," so probably upon his deposition in September 1876. Visibly troubled and depressed, Scalieri had told him about the latest developments in Istanbul. Insisting that Murad had had nothing to do with the coup that had toppled Abdülaziz, he recounted how, during the ceremony of presentation of state officials, Murad had expressly requested his presence, called him to his side and hugged him, provoking the ire of the "powerful party of the old Turks." If we are to believe Scalieri, this unprecedented embrace was the Sultan's way of showing that he sided with his Greek subjects, "men of progress, who can revive literature, politics, arts, and science [...] as the antithesis of the old Turks and their stagnation."

That evening, the sultan had invited his most loyal supporters, of course including Scalieri, to discuss the future of the empire. At some point, he entered a form of trance and in an ominous voice, said: "At this very moment, they are assassinating such and such ministers in such and such way; horror, horror!" be-

27 "Coup d'œil rétrospectif pour l'année 1877", *Revue spirite*, 21/1 (January 1878), 5.

28 "Nécrologie", *Revue spirite*, 37/12 (December 1894), 729–730.


Le Journal illustré

TREIZIÈME ANNÉE — N° 26 — DIMANCHE 25 JUIN 1876 — PRIX DU NUMÉRO : 15 CENTIMES

Gravures :

Texte :

CONSTANTINOPLE : Assassinat des ministres du sultan MOURAD V

Dessin de Henri Meyer, d'après le croquis de M. Petrucci. — Voir les détails dans la Chronique, page 292

6. Artist's rendition of the attack by Çerkes Hasan against the Cabinet of ministers on 15 June 1876. *Journal illustré*, 25 June 1876. Author's collection.

fore breaking into tears. This was evidently a reference to the assault by Çerkes Hasan Bey on the Cabinet, which left several ministers dead, in retaliation for Abdülaziz's death. [Ill. 6] Terrified of being accused of crimes he had not condoned, Murad spent a troubled night, only to be informed the following day of his uncle's suicide. The news triggered a breakdown, leaving him prostrated and catatonic, branded as insane by his family and grandees alike, until he was deposed by his brother a few days later.

The chronology of events was wrong. The attack on the Cabinet had taken place *after* Abdülaziz's death, and it had taken a full three months for the government to opt for Murad's destitution. At any rate, Murad was interned in a palace with his household of 400 persons, isolated from the outer world, and in a state of "obsession" that left him with "clenched fists, crazed eyes, roaming the palace and forgetting the most basic principles of hygiene." His desperate mother managed to keep contact with Scalieri and asked him to go to Coursan, in southern France, where the "invisibles" had let her know that a gardener by

the name of Jeoffre possessed the capacities of a healing medium and would be able to cure Murad.[29]

Scalieri did find Jeoffre, but as the gardener-medium was too afraid of the risks involved, he had decided to reach out to Leymarie. It was Leymarie who introduced him to Duneau, "a powerful healer," who accepted the challenge and set out for Istanbul.

> A handsome and tall young man of athletic stature, Duneau looked at the Sultan, magnetized or hypnotized him, and Murad, who was also of herculean size, feeling his beneficial influence, obeyed him. Duneau decongested him, had him open his hands that had remained clenched for four months and a half and whose nails had penetrated the skin, and Murad, who had remained silent for so many days, said: "Thank you, you are doing me good."

Duneau's treatment continued with a bath, for which he had to threaten two servants with a whip so that they would accept to touch his sacred body. As Murad stood up, refusing to enter the bath, he had to use a powerful trick to have him lie in the tub. He then massaged, magnetised, decongested, and anointed him with precious oils, and Murad was revived. Duneau ordered a hearty meal and excellent wine, and Murad, regaining his appetite, engaged in a lively conversation. The following day, he had recovered so well that he played the piano and sang in presence of an amazed assembly of harem women, whom, against all rules, he ordered to dance unveiled in presence of the foreigner. Intrigued by the sounds of rejoicing, the guards finally became aware of Duneau's presence and asked that he be surrendered. They refused and the women guarded him day and night to keep him in the palace.

The time he spent there was put to excellent use: Duneau initiated Murad to the art of fencing. Within twenty days, he had fully recovered, and the news had spread to the city, where his supporters openly rejoiced. Duneau had to escape the palace and hide for a month; when he came back, he could proudly observe that Murad was again capable of ruling. His mission accomplished, Duneau returned to Paris, only to die of a sudden illness; Scalieri had had to flee Istanbul and lead a life of exile in Athens; as to Murad, despite his full recovery,

29 "M. Jeoffre, à Coursan (Aude), médium guérisseur", *Revue spirite*, 31/16 (15 August 1888), 496.

he ended up buried alive in his palatial prison: "For him, the hour of power has not yet struck on the dial of time."[30]

Three years later, a slightly different version of the same story was published in the journal, this time under Leymarie's name. The differences were minimal, mostly stylistic. The reason for the repetition was the publication by Paul de Régla — Paul-André Desjardin's pen name —of a book on the "secrets of Yıldız," a long pamphlet against Abdülhamid and in defence of Murad.[31] Leymarie was disappointed to see that the author had not used this story, which he had personally told him, and felt the need to tell it again. For the rest, there were a few additions, such as a mention of how Duneau had escalated the walls of the palace, established "fluidic contact" with his patient, magnetised each of his meals, taught him boxing on top of fencing, and details concerning Murad's expression of gratitude: "You do me good, and I love you; thanks to you and I can finally express myself. You come from the beautiful land of France, the great country of thinkers." He had also corrected some inconsistencies in the chronology of events and slightly changed Murad's 'premonition' upon his accession.[32]

Doubts and hard evidence

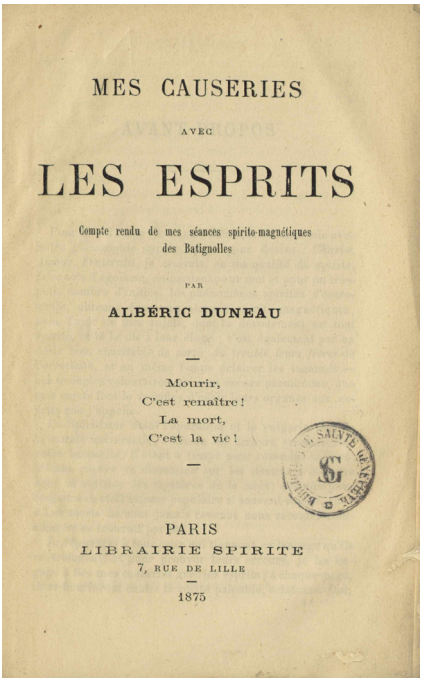
There is no need to discuss the veracity of all the claims made in this account. Evidently, Scalieri had been engaging in a great deal of self-promotion, probably exaggerating his degree of intimacy and friendship with the sultan. He clearly also sought to present Murad as a person with great spiritist potential, including a capacity to sense events taking place at a distance and the gift of premonition. As to the description of the medium's "fluidic" energy and healing powers, it would be futile to enter a discussion on this very particular and esoteric topic.

Nevertheless, I believe that following the saying that there is no smoke without fire, at least some of this information is likely to be trustworthy and possibly

30 *Revue spirite*, 37/12 (December 1894), 730–733.

31 P. de Régla, *Les Secrets d'Yildiz* (Paris 1897).

32 P.G. Leymarie, "Les secrets d'Yildiz", *Revue spirite. Journal d'études psychologiques*, 40/1 (1 January 1897), 34–38. The newer version of Murad's premonition was as follows: "Those despicable men! Yesterday, they assassinated my beloved uncle Abdülaziz. Now, they are stabbing the new ministers. Tomorrow they will say: 'Murad, assassin of his uncle, has gotten rid of those who were in the way!' They are going to incriminate me, and I am innocent of all the blood that has been shed" (ibid., 36).


MES CAUSERIES

AVEC

LES ESPRITS

Compte rendu de mes séances spirito-magnétiques des Batignolles

PAR

ALBÉRIC DUNEAU

—

Mourir,
C'est renaître !
La mort,
C'est la vie !

—

PARIS
LIBRAIRIE SPIRITE
7, RUE DE LILLE
—
1875

7. Cover page of Albéric Duneau's *Causeries avec les esprits*, 1875. Sainte-Geneviève Library, Paris.

of some use. It seems highly unlikely that the basic plot behind the story was a pure fabrication. Despite obvious disparities, the convergence of three completely independent testimonies — Aziz Bey's, Filizten's, and Leymarie's — make it practically impossible to deny the fact that Murad was indeed visited and probably treated by a person sent from abroad. The parallelism between the reference to a magnetiser and the story of a spiritist intervention would tend to discredit the concubine's version of a British physician, which we can attribute to a common confusion between French and English, or simply to the secrecy that surrounded the arrangement.[33] Moreover, we know that Duneau — Albéric Duneau — was indeed a medium, who authored in 1875 a book on his "conversations with spirits," an account of his spiritist sessions in the Parisian neighbourhood of les Batignolles.[34] [Ill. 7] In the face of all this evidence,

33 The mention of the password "Edward" — how and why would one invent that? — is a detail that weakens this dismissal.

34 A. Duneau, *Mes causeries avec les esprits. Compte rendu de mes séances spirito-magnétiques des Batignolles* (Paris 1875). My attempts to find a trace of Duneau's passage in the Ottoman Archives have rather predictably failed.

we have no reason to doubt that Scalieri did indeed embark upon a mission to France in order to secure the help of his spiritist 'brethren' in saving Murad from the state of destitution in which he had found himself.

This is also true of some of the details in Leymarie's account, which deserve some attention. Particularly striking is the way in which, in the second version, Murad is said to have spoken about his uncle's assassination, a statement which runs counter to the claim by most of his champions that Abdülaziz had committed suicide and echoes the accusations which Abdülhamid would revive in the Yıldız trial of 1881 to eliminate Midhat Pasha and the other authors of the 1876 coup. Considering that Leymarie's account was based on Scalieri's claims, one could assume that the latter had no reason to present such a version of the facts unless there was some truth to it, not necessarily in the sense of the event itself, but at least of Murad's perception of it. On a different matter, if we accept that Duneau did visit, examine, and treat the deposed sultan in Istanbul, we may obviously question the alleged efficacy of his healing, but still take into consideration the details concerning the initial state of his health. Clenched fists, a vacant gaze, a lack of hygiene, aimless wandering, constitute details, which, combined with other sources of information such as medical reports, may turn out to be useful if one were to engage in a thorough reconsideration and possible reconstitution of Murad's psychotic episode.[35]

The question remains of understanding how exactly Scalieri, and if we are to believe the *Revue spirite*, Murad, came into contact with the world of spiritism. In Scalieri's case, it may seem strange that no mention of his affiliation should appear before 1888, especially if one considers that his visit to Leymarie in 1876 seems to have been of a 'fraternal' nature. This is all the more surprising if one considers that ever since 1861, the movement's journal had been publishing information about the spreading of the doctrine in the Ottoman capital.[36] Two names came up very frequently: B. Repos, a lawyer, who seems to have been

35 Murad was examined by numerous physicians, most notably the famed Viennese alienist Maximilian Leidesdorf (1818–89) who was invited to Istanbul and spent two weeks at Dolmabahçe Palace before submitting a report to the government. Nevertheless, no real attempt has been made to revisit this famous medical case, other than listing the few reports that were issued and published until and immediately after the sultan's deposition.

36 In 1869, it noted that "almost the entirety of the followers was composed of French, Italians, and Greeks" (*Revue spirite*, 12/2 (1 February 1869), 39).

very active from 1858 to 1870;[37] and the Leüe couple — Marie, née Lyonnard, and Wilhelm — who had allegedly been very close to Murad.[38] The fact that Scalieri was never mentioned until 1888 makes one wonder if this was not an attempt to integrate him ex post facto, perhaps upon his own request, for the purpose of consistency regarding Murad's treatment by Duneau.

And yet, I have found the most unexpected evidence of Scalieri's early involvement with spiritism in the most unexpected of places. A file in the Ottoman archives — originally an envelope — contains the photographs of ten members of the "Aziz Bey committee," who had attempted to rescue Murad from his prison.[39] One of these photographs was identified on the back as Scalieri's (*Kırlanti'nin resmi*); however, there was something very peculiar about it. It was of rather mediocre quality, showing Scalieri wearing a coat, sitting at a pedestal table on which his left arm rested. What was strange was that the right side of the image was filled with a second, much blurrier figure, a bearded man wrapped in a white cloth, who seemed to be looking down towards the unsuspecting Scalieri. The quality of the image makes it impossible to distinguish the

37 The first mention of B. Repos dates from July 1861, when a letter he addressed to Allan Kardec on 28 May was published in the *Revue spirite*. In it, Repos spoke of the gradual progress of the doctrine in Constantinople, and of successful experiments conducted by the members of the small community (*Revue spirite*, 4/7 (1 July 1861), 206–8). It is through his widow's obituary in 1896 that we learn that Repos had led the first spiritist group of Constantinople, between 1858 and 1870, which suggests that he may have died at the latter date. An "old friend of Allan Kardec", Repos was an "inspired poet and a drawing medium" (*Revue spirite*, 39/6 (1 June 1896), 381).

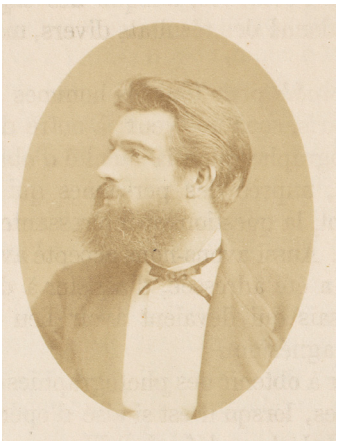
38 Wilhelm Leüe was a tailor of civilian outfits and military uniforms, whose shop was located at number 410 of Pera's main street (Grand-rue de Péra), just across from the church of Santa Maria Draperis (*L'Indicateur ottoman. Annuaire-almanach du commerce, de l'industrie, de l'administration et de la magistrature* (Constantinople: Cervati Frères et D. Fatzea, 1881), p. 208). We have already seen that upon her death in 1894 —or rather the "disengagement of her spirit from matter," as the journal had it— the *Revue spirite* mentioned the close relationship between this woman and Sultan Murad, and then moved on to recount the story of the sultan's healing session with Duneau. In 1898, her husband Wilhelm's death in Athens became the occasion to remind once again the readers of the couple's "very intimate" friendship with Murad, and that, "consequently, their business was twice destroyed by fire" ("Nécrologie", *Revue spirite*, 41/7 (1 July 1898), 445–446).

39 BOA, Y EE 23/9. The envelope bears the mention of "the photographs of Murad Efendi's partisans" (*Murad Efendi tarafdarı bulunanların resimleri*). The use of "Efendi" (prince) as Murad's title is a typical example of the Hamidian efforts to downgrade the former sultan to the status of a prince.

8. (a) Spiritist portrait of Cleanthi Scalieri. Photograph by Édouard Buguet, ca 1875. BOA, Y EE, 23/9. (b) Buguet's name and address on the back of Cleanthi Scalieri's portrait, ca 1875. BOA, Y EE, 23/9. The inscription in Turkish reads "Kırlanti'nin resmi."

features of the evanescent man, or even to guess whether he is bareheaded or perhaps wearing a fez. [Ill. 8 a-b]

Of course, the blurred image of a man wrapped in a white sheet immediately evokes a rather coarse rendition of an ectoplasmic creature, unexpected as this may seem in a file probably kept by Abdülhamid's police or henchmen. Was there any possibility that this image may have something to do with spiritism? The name and address of the photographer on the back confirmed my wildest speculations: E. Buguet, 5, B^{d} Montmartre, Paris. Indeed, Jean Buguet (1840–1901), who worked under the name of Édouard Buguet, was a photographer whose specialty was exactly that: *photographie spirite*, or "spiritist photography." [Ill. 9] Buguet's sales pitch was the claim that he could conjure the spirits of his sitters' loved ones and capture their image on the same glass negative. Buguet had established contact with spiritist circles, most notably with Kardec's widow



9. Portrait of Édouard [Jean] Buguet, spiritist photographer. *Revue spirite*, 17/5 (May 1874), p. 147.

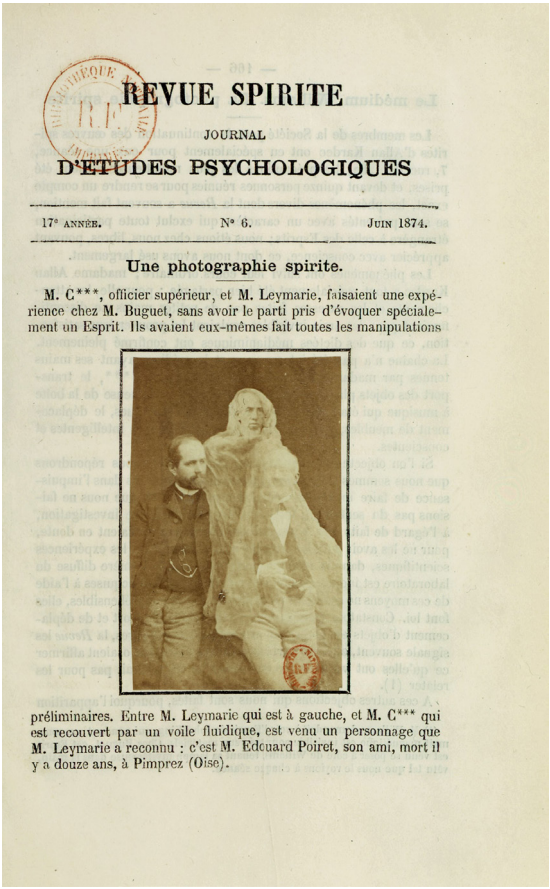
and his successor, Leymarie.[40] The latter had even placed on the cover of the *Revue spirite* a photograph taken by Buguet of himself with his long-deceased friend Édouard Poiret.[41] [Ill. 10] Yet what brought even greater celebrity to Buguet and makes it relatively easy to trace his career is that he was tried for fraud in June 1875 and sentenced to one year in prison and a fine of 500 francs.

The proceedings of the trial and its repercussions in the press had revealed the details of Buguet's technique.[42] Whenever he received a client, he would ask

40 A precursor of Buguet in the 1860s was the American photographer William H. Mumler (1832–84). In 1874 and 1875, the *Revue spirite* published a series of articles on "spiritist photography," many of which amounted to a publicity for Buguet: "La photographie spirite à Paris", *Revue spirite*, 17/1 (January 1874), 6–9; "La photographie spirite," 17/2 (February 1874), 50–52; 17/4 (April 1874), 123–124; Une photographie spirite," 17/6 (June 1874), 165–172; 17/7 (July 1874), 212 bis; 17/8 (August 1874), 260 bis; 17/9 (September 1874), 276 bis; 17/10 (October 1874), 308 bis; "Discussion au sujet de la photographie spirite", 17/9 (September 1874), 269–272; "Comment on devient médium photographe. Quelques preuves d'identité", 17/10 (October 1874), 309–311; "Expériences de photographies spirites, par un chimiste", 17/11 (November 1874), 340–342; "Une visite chez M. Buguet, photographe spirite", 17/12 (December 1874), 372–374; "Désir matériel; vision réalisée par un fait", 378 bis–ter; "Une photographie spirite", 18/2 (February 1875), 52 bis–ter; 132 bis-132 ter; "Photographie spirite," 18/10 (October 1875) 325–330; On Buguet and spirit(ist) photography, see J. W. Monroe, *Laboratories of Faith. Mesmerism, Spiritism and Occultism in Modern France* (Ithaca and London 2008), 162–185; S. Natale, *Supernatural Entertainments. Victorian Spiritualism and the Rise of Modern Media Culture* (Pennsylvania 2016), 138–144.

41 "Une photographie spirite", *Revue spirite*, 17/6 (1874), 165.

42 For the trial minutes, see P.G. Leymarie (ed.), *Procès des spirites* (Paris 1875); "Le procès des spirites", *Revue des grands procès contemporains*, 5 (1887), 71–143.



REVUE SPIRITE

JOURNAL

D'ÉTUDES PSYCHOLOGIQUES

17e ANNÉE. — Nº 6. — JUIN 1874.

Une photographie spirite.

M. C***, officier supérieur, et M. Leymarie, faisaient une expérience chez M. Buguet, sans avoir le parti pris d'évoquer spécialement un Esprit. Ils avaient eux-mêmes fait toutes les manipulations préliminaires. Entre M. Leymarie qui est à gauche, et M. C*** qui est recouvert par un voile fluidique, est venu un personnage que M. Leymarie a reconnu : c'est M. Edouard Poiret, son ami, mort il y a douze ans, à Pimprez (Oise).

10. Portrait of Pierre-Gaëtan Leymarie and his deceased friend Édouard Poiret. Photograph by Édouard Buguet, 1874. *Revue spirite*, 17/6 (June 1874), p. 165.

whose spirit he wished to see, and then retire for a few minutes in a backroom where he kept an archive of hundreds of headshots pasted on cardboard, from which he picked a convenient one, which he attached to the top of a wooden dummy wrapped in tulle. He would then take a shot of the 'spirit' and bring the glass negative back into the studio and take the client's image on the same plate.[43]

43 For examples of accounts drawn from the trial minutes or articles in the press, see C. Dupuis, "Les mystères de la science", *Le Chercheur. Journal mensuel illustré des inventions nouvelles*, 3/7 (1888), 49–50; A. Praviel, "Le photographe des fantômes", *Lectures pour tous*, (February 1929), 69–78; (March 1929), 65–74; (April 1929), 38–48; A. Praviel, "L'affaire Buguet: le photographe spirite des fantômes", *Revue belge* (1 January 1931), 20–145. For more recent sources, see F. Gettings, *Ghosts in Photographs. The Extraordinary Story of Spirit Photography* (New York 1978); R. H. Krauss, *Beyond Light and Shadow* (Munich 1995); M.

The available evidence suggested that Scalieri felt attracted enough by the process to engage Buguet's services. The date is unclear, but we can be sure that it was not during his visit to Leymarie in late 1876, considering that Buguet had by then been convicted and forced to put an end to his trade. Given that his studio on boulevard Montmartre appears in Parisian commercial directories for the first time in 1874 and for the last, in 1876, it seems reasonable to assume that Buguet's activity at that address — and consequently, Scalieri's visit — must have taken place from mid-1873 to mid-1875, the latter being the date of his trial.[44] As to the alleged identity of the spectral apparition on the photograph, one can only try to guess: his father, an influent relative or mentor, or perhaps the person who initiated him to Freemasonry...

The bigger picture

Did this photographic encounter in Paris mark the beginning of Scalieri's engagement with spiritualism? It is difficult to say, but at least it proves that by 1876, when Leymarie claimed to have met him, he had at least been exposed and was sympathetic to some of the teachings of the doctrine. On the other hand, what seems much more doubtful is Murad's involvement in spiritism. This is not to deny that such an interest could have developed in the prince's mind, especially considering his penchant for things Western and modern. After all, if Scalieri managed to pull him into Freemasonry, one should not exclude the possibility that spiritism may have had a similar appeal on him, given that it was widely acknowledged as a scientific venture and promoted as such by some of the greatest minds of the time in the Western world. Moreover, as I have previously shown, the *Revue spirite* was proud to advertise Murad's affiliation on several occasions apart from Duneau's healing session, most notably through his alleged friendship with the spiritist couple of Marie and Wilhelm Leüe.

It is widely understood that there existed a spiritist network in Istanbul, and likely in other cities of the Ottoman Empire and the *Revue spirite* was there to publicise this information, as part of the movement's claim to universal appeal. Several colleagues have previously written on the topic. Thierry Zarcone, focus-

Sweet, "They Saw Dead People", *The Independent on Sunday* (23 December 2001), 19–21. A virtual museum on the topic is also available at https://www.photographymuseum.com/believe1.html.

44 *Annuaire-almanach du commerce et de l'industrie, de la magistrature et de l'administration* (Paris 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877).

ing mostly on forms of esotericism in Islam, mentioned the presence in Izmir/Smyrna in the early 1860s of a follower of magnetism, an Armenian by the name of Calouste Constant.[45] However, the articles he referred to, while providing extremely interesting details concerning local healing practices, did not reveal any Western-inspired movement, except for Constant's self-proclaimed allegiance to magnetism.[46] The most comprehensive and thorough treatment of the question can be found in Alexandre Toumarkine's *habilitation* monograph, which covers the question of spiritism in the Ottoman and Empire and Turkey, from the 1850s to the end of the twentieth century.[47] Most recently, Özgür Türesay has published an excellent article that covers about half a century of spiritist activity in the Ottoman Empire, from the 1860s to the early 1910s, with particular emphasis on the role played by Ottoman Muslims — Turks, as it were — towards the end of this period.[48]

There is little I can add to Toumarkine's and Türesay's findings. Nevertheless, some meaningful information can be gathered that complement these observations, especially with respect to the 1870s and 1880s, much less covered by these authors, and which also correspond to the period during which Scalieri seems to have been particularly active. For example, an item in the *Revue spirite* of February 1875 mentions, based on a letter received from Madame Leüe, that a certain Şevket Pasha, governor of a province, had received from Buguet – the spiritist photographer – a photograph of his deceased father, which many in his entourage had immediately recognised, and that one Mehmed Pasha had also gone through a similar experience. "The doctrine advances with giant steps," added Leüe, "and many families engage in spiritism secretly, for they fear being

45 T. Zarcone, "Occultism in an Islamic Context. The Case of Modern Turkey from the Nineteenth Century to the Present Time", in H. Bogdan and G. Djurdjevic (eds.), *Occultism in a Global Perspective* (London and New York 2014), 158–159.

46 "Les extatiques d'Amassia", *Le Magnétiseur*, 4/9 (15 December 1862), 130–133; "Le magnétisme en Turquie. L'okoudmak, l'agothèle", *Le Magnétiseur*, 4/11 (15 February 1863), 162–171.

47 A. Toumarkine, "Le spiritisme, un ésotérisme sécularisé dans l'Empire ottoman et en Turquie: des hommes, des esprits et des livres entre Orient et Occident", monographie présentée en vue de l'habilitation à diriger des recherches (Paris: Écoles des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2016). Toumarkine is the only researcher to have come across the information about Scalieri and Murad in the *Revue spirite* (Toumarkine, "Le spiritisme", 32, 41–44).

48 Ö. Türesay, "Between Science and Religion: Spiritism in the Ottoman Empire (1850s-1910s)", *Studia Islamica*, 113 (2018), 166–200.

ridiculed by materialists."[49] That spiritism was a matter of interest in Istanbul at the time, at least among the foreign and Westernised communities of the city, can be ascertained from frequent references in the most influent French-language newspaper in the capital, the *Stamboul*. Public sessions were held in theatres by visiting 'specialists,' such as a Professor Wells, who gave an "informative and entertaining" show of "mnemotechnics, electrobiology, optical illusions, phrenology, physiognomy and clairvoyance, spiritism, etc." in Kadıköy,[50] suggesting that the 'doctrine' was not taken very seriously, but rather considered as a performance of magic, not to say a circus act. Interestingly, most of the items that appeared in the newspaper took the form of indictments against spiritism and its performers, considered to be charlatans. In November 1875, the daily published in extenso a report by the Society of Physics of Saint Petersburg University, which came to the damning conclusion that "spiritist phenomena derive from unconscious movements or conscious deceptions, and [that] the spiritist doctrine was a superstition."[51] A year later, an even longer piece, spread over two issues, provided a scathing assessment of spiritism, revealing the 'techniques' employed by a number of conmen who had recently been exposed in Europe.[52] In 1881, an article by one Maurice Français, 'borrowed' from the French *Voltaire*, displayed a rather sarcastic attitude towards Kardec and Leymarie.[53]

The 1880s were marked by a particularly striking frequency of performances in the domain, clearly dominated by a sceptical tone, due to the predominance of representatives of the anti-spirit(ual)ist movement, particularly of the illusionist vein.[54] The first of these was Marius Cazeneuve (1839–1913),

49 *Revue spirite*, 18/2 (1 February 1875), 52 ter. The only governor by the name of Şevket Pasha at around this time is the governor of İşkodra/Shkodër, who died in this post in November 1873. Other than that, one could perhaps think of Ahmed Şevket Bey (1827–78), who was mayor (*şehremini*) of Istanbul in March-May 1874. As to pashas by the name of Mehmed, they are too numerous to allow for any form of verification. At any rate, it is clear that Madame Leüe's claims need to be taken with a grain of salt, given her enthusiasm for the movement.

50 *Stamboul* (8 October 1875), 2; (9 October 1875), 4.

51 "Causerie scientifique: le spiritisme", *Stamboul* (5 November 1875), 2–3.

52 Ibid. (26 September 1876), 2–3; (18 October 1876), 2–3.

53 M. Français, "Un voyage au pays des esprits", *Stamboul* (17 August 1881), 2–3. Although the *Stamboul* made no mention of it, Maurice Français was the editor of the *Voltaire*, and this article had been published in his newspaper ten days earlier, on 8 August.

54 There were several anti-spiritualist currents at the time. One was Christian, mostly Catholic, anti-spiritualism, which understandably tried to expose the blasphemous nature of the

AKA *commandeur* Cazeneuve, who, while known primarily as an illusionist/magician (*prestidigitateur*), also contributed to the anti-spiritist cause.[55] Cazeneuve came to Istanbul in August 1881, where he performed at the Théâtre des Petits-Champs, in Pera, apparently with great success.[56] Three years later, the *Stamboul* announced the arrival of the famous "chained mediums, Thorn and Darvin."[57] [Ill. 11] They eventually arrived in late March of the following year from Vienna, with a slightly different setup: Darvin was not there; in-

doctrine. Another important current was grounded in science, which it sought to use to debunk shams and tricksters. The showiest of all was that of individuals who were convinced that spiritualists were scammers but intended to prove it by reproducing the same tricks by using their skills as magicians or illusionists, thus revealing the fraud. Of course, the major advantage of this form of anti-spiritualism was that it could be turned into a spectacle, often in combination with more conventional forms of magic. Interestingly, this phenomenon was in many ways linked to the development of cinema, especially with the work of some 'magicians,' such as Georges Méliès. On the topic, see E. W. Dyson, "'Gentleman Mountebanks' and Spiritualists: Legal, Stage and Media Contest Between Magicians and Spirit Mediums in the United States and England", in S. Willburn and T. Kontou (eds), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism and the Occult* (Farnham and Burlington 2012), 231–266; S. Natale, "Spiritualism Exposed: Scepticism, Credulity and Spectatorship in End-of-the-Century America", *European Journal of American Culture*, 29/2 (2010), 131–144; F. Tabet and P. Taillefert, "Influence de l'occulte sur les formes magiques: l'anti-spiritisme spectaculaire, des *Spectres* d'Henri Robin au *Spiritisme abracadabrant* de Georges Méliès", 1895. *Mille huit-cent quatre-vingt-quinze. Revue de l'association française sur l'histoire du cinéma*, 76 (2015), 94–117.

55 Cazeneuve's international fame was such that he performed before the major sovereigns of Europe, including Abdülaziz in 1866. His career took an extraordinary turn when he landed in Madagascar in 1886, with the mission of using his skills to impress Queen Ranavalona III and turn her away from the British in favour of France. Cazeneuve's own account of this 'diplomatic' victory provides us with his definition of the 'anti-spiritist' nature of some of his 'experiments': "I label these experiments *anti-spiritist* because those who perform them, or at least perform things that come close to them, claim that they can only be done in the dark and with the complicity of spirits. However, as I do not believe that spirits, if they exist, would abandon ethereal spheres just to amuse gawking crowds, I insist on proving that one can realise these experiments and others of the same kind in plain day, without resorting to other means than those provided by science and study". See M. Cazeneuve, *À la cour de Madagascar. Magie et diplomatie* (Paris 1896), 131.

56 *Stamboul* (6 August 1881), 2; (8 August 1881), 1; (9 August 1881), 2; (18 August 1881), 2.

57 Ernest Thorn (1853–1923), born Abraham Moses Thorn in Jarosław, was a famous magician, who started his career in the 1870s together with his brother, Heinrich/Henry Thorn (1857–1943), AKA as Darvin. Under the name of Thorn and Darvin, they toured Europe and the world in the 1880s, under the trademarks of the 'Royal Illusionists,' or the 'Exposers

11. "Thorn and Darvin's Startling Phenomena," 1880s. Colour lithograph poster, 108.8 x 77.6 cm. https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2021/the-ricky-jay-collection/thorn-ernest-chevalier-moses-abraham-thorn-and

stead, Thorn was accompanied by a certain Homes and one Miss Fey.[58] They performed in a series of "anti-spiritist sessions" (*séances d'anti-spiritisme*)[59] with such success that on 24 April, they were asked to perform at the palace, in presence of Abdülhamid, the imperial princes, and the sultan's immediate entourage. Apparently, the sovereign asked for the 'turning table' trick to be repeated three times.[60] The team's performances went on throughout the summer, in Bursa, Prinkipo/Büyükada, Samatya, and Büyükdere,[61] and Thorn even got married to Julie Zucker (ca 1869–1919) at the synagogue of Yüksek Kaldırım, in Galata.[62] Meanwhile, Cazeneuve had returned to the Ottoman capital with a program consisting of a series of attractions, each of which had been created for sovereigns and princes of Europe and the Middle East.[63] On 20 July, he performed at the palace, catching in his mouth previously marked bullets that were fired at him, to the delight of Sultan Abdülhamid, who bestowed upon him the third class insignia of the Mecidiye order.[64] Such was his success that he was summoned again to Yıldız three days later, for a performance that lasted four hours,[65] and a third time on 4 August, in a session to which the Grand Vizier and all the ministers had been invited and were asked to participate in a series

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of Spiritualism'. See "Ernest Thorn": https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernest_Thorn; "Magician's Blood": https://ourgame.mlblogs.com/magicians-blood-81af2e4f0ec2.

58 Miss Fey was probably Anna Eva Fay Pingree (1851–1927), born Ann Eliza Heathman in Ohio, a famous medium and stage mentalist ("Anna Eva Fay": https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_Eva_Fay), who started as a spiritualist but shifted to anti-spiritualism and mind reading when her tricks were exposed in 1876 by Washington Irving Bishop. She eventually confessed to Harry Houdini all the deceptions she had used throughout her career. As to Homes, who is not to be confused with the famous Daniel Dunglas Home (1833–86), one of the most celebrated mediums of the Victorian age, I have not been able to find any satisfactory information as to his identity and career. For a broadside advertising a performance by Thorn, Darvin, Homes, and Fey at the Hotel de Saxe, in Dresden, on Sunday, 30 November [1884], see https://www.lotsearch.net/auction-catalogues/the-christian-fechner-collection-of-american-english-magic-part-i-123174?perPage=20&page=14&orderBy=lot-title&order=DESC.

59 *Stamboul* (27 March 1885), 1; (30 March 1885), 2; (31 March 1885), 1; (1 April 1885), 1; (2 April 1885), 1; (7 April 1885), 2; (8 April 1885), 1.

60 "Séance d'anti-spiritisme au palais", *Stamboul* (25 April 1885), 1.

61 *Stamboul* (25 May 1885), 2; (29 May 1885), 1; (5 June 1885), 3; (6 June 1885), 3; (1 July 1885), 2.

62 *Stamboul,* 19 September 1885), 2.

63 *Stamboul,* (10 July 1885), 1; (11 July 1885), 2; (17 July 1885), 1; (21 July 1885), 2.

64 *Stamboul,* (21 July 1885), 1.

65 *Stamboul* (25 July 1885), 2.

of 'miraculous' tricks, from mind reading to disappearing objects, with musical interludes by the imperial band and a young and gifted Armenian pianist by the name of Satenik Golmanoff.[66] In late September, the two stars of magic were brought together in a performance at the Greek school of Hasköy.[67]

The success of these performers in discrediting and demystifying spiritism seems to have borne its fruits if one considers how the American mentalist Washington Irving Bishop (1885–89) was received in Constantinople the following year. Bishop had started his career as Anna Eva Fay's — Miss Fey above — manager and revealed her tricks in 1876. He had then shifted to mind reading, which he explained not by spiritualism, but by his extraordinary muscular sensitivity, which allowed him to sense and read thoughts through the unconscious bodily cues of individuals he was in contact with.[68] The *Stamboul*'s reporting on Bishop's performances was very different from its items on Thorn and Cazeneuve; far from showing any sympathy or admiration, the newspaper adopted a very doubtful attitude from the very start. The main reason was that contrary to his predecessors who amazed and amused the audience with their tricks, which they recognised as such, Bishop had a claim to authenticity as a 'physiologist' that went against the grain of the newspaper's predominantly sceptical stance. This negative attitude was further accentuated by the fact that the daily's director, the Irish Baron Henry Laffan Hanly, had attended the first performance and challenged the impartiality of one of the witnesses to the experiment, a man whose visiting card bore the strange mention of "Van der Merwe, Lat. 26° S. Long. 16° 10′ W., Africa."[69] Five days after the event, the *Stamboul* published a long letter by one G. Chassagnon, a "professor of abstract sciences" residing in Pera. This 'expert' gave a damning assessment of Bishop's performance, comparing him to Cazeneuve, Thorn, and Homes, who on top of the merit of openly claiming their skills as illusionists, were much better than him at performing their tricks.[70] A few days later, the daily was happy to announce that Thorn was

66 *Stamboul* (5 August 1885), 1.

67 *Stamboul* (28 September 1885), 2.

68 S. During, *Modern Enchantments. The Cultural Power of Secular Magic* (Cambridge, MA and London 2002), 161–167.

69 *Stamboul* (19 March 1886), 1; (20 March 1886), 1–2; (22 March 1886), 1; (24 March 1886), 2. The coordinates indicated correspond to a point in the South Atlantic, halfway between São Paulo and Namibia!

70 "Lecture de pensées", *Stamboul* (23 March 1886), 2. Three days later, the newspaper published a shorter letter by Chassagnon to Bishop, whereby he threatened to pursue him

about to return and to suggest that Bishop might want to avoid the embarrassment of a confrontation by leaving the city as soon as possible.[71]

One could expand upon these morsels of information to encompass the entirety of Abdülhamid's reign, after which spiritism seems to have benefited from the liberalisation of the system following the 1908 Young Turk Revolution and the consequent boom in publications, a phenomenon thoroughly studied by both Toumarkine and Türesay in their works. Nevertheless, rather than resume a somewhat tedious enumeration of performances and press items, I think it might be more useful to take a step back and try to draw some general conclusions from the available information and to focus ultimately on the least visible aspect of the question, the participation of Muslims in spiritist activities.

Following Bishop's alleged flop, Pera was witness to several more performances, all of which involved illusion and magic, and were generally labelled as 'anti-spiritist' One D. Saint-Germain in 1888,[72] a 'local' illusionist by the name of Melides, evidently Greek, dubbed the "Magician of Orient,"[73] the 'celebrity' Santi Soraci,[74] a returning Cazeneuve,[75] a certain Delaunay Petrowski and a 'Mademoiselle' Benita,[76] the 'Great' Baron Poletti,[77] the hypnotist Pickman,[78] Spiridion Karidis, of 'great fame in Europe'...[79] The references were clearly less

"from city to city, like his shadow, to publicly expose all his tricks" (*Stamboul* (26 March 1886), 2).

71 *Stamboul* (2 April 1886), 2.

72 *Stamboul* (31 July 1888), 2.

73 *Stamboul* (24 December 1890), 2.

74 *Stamboul* (6 April 1892), 3; (11 April 1892), 3; (13 April 1892), 3.

75 *Stamboul* (1 December 1892), 1; (7 January 1893), 2; (28 January 1893), 2; (1 March 1893), 1. This was probably the occasion for Abdülhamid to show once more is appreciation by bestowing upon "Mösyö Kaznöv" and "Madmazel Rendösolanc" (Reine (?) de Solange) the medal for arts and sciences (*sanayi madalyası*) (BOA, İ TAL 10/70, decree dated 14 Cemaziyülevvel 1310/22 Teşrinisani 1308 (4 December 1892)). Indeed, we learn from a much later item in the press that Cazeneuve was accompanied by his 'niece,' Mademoiselle de Solange (*Stamboul* (22 April 1902), 3).

76 *Stamboul* (8 June 1893), 2.

77 *Stamboul* (29 September 1893), 1.

78 *Stamboul* (2 May 1894), 1–2. Jean-Lambert Pickman (1857–1925) was a Belgian illusionist, who started his career under the stage name of Alberti, and, after 1893, reverted to his surname and acquired great fame as a mentalist and hypnotist. Pickman came back a few years later (see below, p. 102 and fn 87).

79 *Stamboul* (20 July 1900), 3; (24 July 1900), 3.

numerous, and seemed to disappear altogether by the turn of the century. A few items on spiritism, generally borrowed from the French press, maintained the sceptical, even sarcastic, tone observed in the preceding decade. The long description by 'Passe-Partout,' a regular but anonymous contributor of the *Stamboul*, of a séance held in Pera ended with the revelation that the whole event had been a hoax concocted by people who wanted to play an April's fool trick on one of their friends.[80] By and large, contrary to some claims in the *Revue spirite*, one gets the impression that the spiritist scene in Istanbul — or rather in its Europeanised district of Pera — was mostly limited to popular performances of illusionism and mentalism, a clear sign of a predominantly sceptical attitude. This was apparently also the case with Abdülhamid, who seems to have particularly enjoyed the tricks performed by some of the celebrities of the world of illusionism.

The dearth of documentation in the Ottoman archives makes it difficult to guess what the official stance might have been in this respect, or even if there ever was any real concern regarding this issue. In June-July 1876, the Council of Education granted a certain Angelos Nicolaidis, residing in Galata, the permission to publish the Greek translation of a book in French called 'Spiritism' (*İspiritizm*), apparently translated as "*O Pnevmatismos*" (*Ο Πνευματισμὸς*).[81] While this information, corroborated by Türesay's finding that Nicolaidis had indeed translated three of Kardec's books into Greek,[82] suggests that the publisher saw some potential for spiritism among the Ottoman Greek public — and perhaps readers in Greece — it would certainly be pure speculation to link the fact that this permit was issued during the first month of Murad V's reign to the influence of, say, Scalieri or other spiritists in Istanbul. We also owe to Türesay the information concerning at least three publications in Turkish more or less directly related to spiritism during the Hamidian period: Besim Ömer's *Hypnotism*, Camille Flammarion's *Uranie*, and Alexandre Dumas fils's *Césarine*.[83]

80 *Stamboul* (1 April 1897), 3.

81 BOA, MF MKT 37/137 and 39/23, Publication permits dated 23 Cemaziyülevvel 1293/3 June 1292 (15 June 1876) and 12 Cemaziyülahir 1293/23 June 1292 (4 July 1876).

82 Türesay, "Between Science and Religion" 177.

83 B. Ömer, *İpnotizm yahut Tenvim ve Tenevvüm* (1307/1891), Flammarion, *Ürani yahut Heyet Perisi* (1308/1892) and Dumas, *Sezarin yahut İspiritizma ile Atisi Keşfedilen bir Kadının Sergüzeşti* (1309/1893) (Türesay, "Between Science and Religion", 177–178).

While these are certainly indicative of the popularity of some aspects of the supernatural and paranormal in Hamidian Istanbul, their relevance should not be overrated either. After all, two of these titles belonged to popular fiction, and hypnosis, especially explained by a physician, does not need to be taken as an endorsement of spiritism. More importantly, these 'positive' reactions need to be taken into consideration against 'negative' ones, such as the predominance of anti-spiritism and illusionism as explained earlier, as well as a number of official unsympathetic measures and reports. Thus, in 1884, the proliferation of 'magicians' (*sihirbaz*) exploiting the ignorance of simple folk (*iğfal ve ihraz-ı sade-dilan*) was at one point seen as important enough to warrant a consultation with the Council of State.[84] In 1891, when the Ministry of the Interior informed the Grand Vizierate that one Dr Jelavejinsky (?) had applied to obtain the permission to organise a hypnotism performance at the Concordia theatre and to teach this science in a private home, it also noted that it thought such activities were not appropriate.[85] An undated and anonymous report on "public amusements of hypnotism" (*tenvim lu'biyat-ı aleniyesi*), perhaps penned for the occasion, gave an extremely negative assessment of the practice, allegedly drawing on the opinion of specialists such as the French neurologist Charcot, and with a particular stress on the fact that the hypnotised subject could be forced to obey all commands and to commit such deeds as "theft, evil, slaughter, and all sorts of crimes."[86] This could also be linked to the fact that in 1902, the police chief of Beyoğlu/Pera informed the palace that Pickman had been forbidden from performing his 'magnetism show' at the Petits-Champs theatre,[87] although this information needs to be taken with a grain of salt, since the *Stam-*

84 BOA, ŞD 2478/10 and 2480/29, Exchange between the Grand Vizierate and the Council of State, 7 Cemaziyülevvel 1301/22 February 1299 (5 March 1884) and 12 Recep 1301/12 Mayıs 1300 (24 May 1884). The Council of State's view was that Article 233 of the Penal Code regarding embezzlement was sufficient to deal with the issue at hand.

85 BOA, DH MKT 1804/10, Ministry of the Interior to Grand Vizierate, 18 Cemaziyülahir 1308/17 Kânunusani 1306 (29 January 1891).

86 BOA, Y PRK M 3/32, "Public amusements of hypnotism," n.d. Without suggesting that he may have been the author, or the inspiration, for this report, it is interesting to note that one of the *Stamboul*'s collaborators, L. Prétextat, wrote against the practice of public performances of hypnotism, which he found to be degrading to the subjects picked by the performer (*Stamboul*, 24 July 1900, 3; 22 April 1902, 3).

87 BOA, Y PRK ZB 32/40, Beyoğlu *mutasarrıf* Hamdi Pasha to Yıldız, 5 April 1318 (17 April 1902).

boul announced, and commented on, the Belgian hypnotist's shows at around the exact same time.[88] Two years later, the Press Bureau – AKA as the censorship office – informed the Ministry of the Interior that the Izmir Greek daily *Amalthea* had published on 28 June 1904 an article on hypnotism (*inpotizmi*!) and that the governor of Aydın needed to be informed of the prohibition to publish anything in the press relating to hypnotism and magnetism;[89] a few days later, the ministry wrote accordingly to the governor, requesting that "the necessary measures be taken."[90] Is it a coincidence that there seems to be a serious drop in the number of items published in the *Stamboul* relating to these practices in the following years, apparently until 1909? It would require a more thorough study of the press to be able to substantiate this impression any further.

The only additional issue that might be worth addressing, however imperfectly, is that of the participation of Muslims in the spiritist milieu of the Ottoman capital. Madame Leüe's claims concerning the interest shown by two unidentifiable pashas can hardly be taken to run counter to the observation, in 1869, that "almost the entirety of the followers was composed of French, Italians, and Greeks." As noted earlier, I do not think either that the publication of a book on hypnotism by a medical doctor and of two translations of French novels involving spiritist themes can be taken as a clear indicator of outstanding spiritist interest and activity among Muslim Ottomans. As to the reports and communications sent to the *Revue spirite* and said to emanate from Muslim spiritists, the impartiality of the journal being rather questionable, they need to be handled with great caution. In 1901, a "letter from a Muslim spiritist group," dated 28 September 1901, stated that they had discovered spiritism only ten months earlier, by accident, and had found themselves in a "moral crisis," to which they found an answer in Kardec's works. They insisted that they were devout Muslims, strongly committed to their faith, but found no contradiction in spiritism. They were curious, however, to know whether Muslim spirits had ever been contacted during séances and suggested that a particular effort

88 *Stamboul*, 12 April 1902, 3; 18 April 1902, 3; 19 April 1902, 3; 22 April 1902, 3. A possible explanation can be found in the information, provided on 18 April, that the performance announced for that day (Friday) had been postponed to Monday (21 April).

89 BOA, DH MKT 873/25, Press Bureau to the Ministry of the Interior, 7 Cemaziyülevvel 1322/8 July 1320 (20 July 1904).

90 BOA, DH MKT 873/25, Ministry of the Interior to the governor of Aydın, 12 Cemaziyülevvel 1322/13 July 1320 (25 July 1904).

be made to call upon "the pure and sublime spirit of the greatest Arab philosopher of the Middle Ages," Ibn Arabi (1165–1240). Reacting immediately to this suggestion, the journal issued a call to all its followers to inform them of any contact they may have had with the great thinker.[91] Sure enough, in March of the following year, a spiritist group in Badajoz, Spain, was lucky enough to contact Ibn Arabi, who gave them "proof of identity," which they were asked to transmit to their brethren of Istanbul.[92]

Perhaps the most interesting episode of spiritism reported from Istanbul is the séance held on 11 Receb 1319 (24 October 1901) by the same group who had sent a letter to the journal in late September. This time, the tone was much more optimistic: "Spiritism is spreading with such great success in our country that part of the enlightened and well-educated spirits is busy with the study and criticism of the spiritist doctrine." They had established contact with "the spirits of great Muslim philosophers, who had made the glory of Islam," but also with Voltaire, Kardec, Schopenhauer, Socrates, and Plato. Their enthusiasm knew only one obstacle, that of reincarnation, of which they had received no confirmation in their "spiritist interviews," and which they had chosen not to believe in for the time. The minutes of the séance were presented in the form of a dialogue between their medium — an 18–year-old auditor at the Council of State — and an unidentified spirit. Questions were asked about the cosmos and whether there were fixed stars — there were none — about the outcome of the Boer War — the British would have to evacuate Egypt in about ten years — and about the nature, gender, and religion of the creatures on the other side — they were not human, had no gender, had a religion, but no prophets as they did not need any. The spirit contacted was unable to see "our Great Prophet," but when asked whether they saw "our sultan's ethereal body," they said that they did perfectly. When asked whether he resembled the "Pure Spirits"? the answer was surprising: "He is much more elevated than the Pure Spirits." The following questions and answers were even more intriguing:

— When shall he die?
— His ethereal body wishes that he come promptly.
— Why?
—Because he is Sublime, Great, and Pure.

91 "Lettre d'un groupe spirite musulman", *Revue spirite*, 44/12 (1 December 1901), 747–749.
92 "Une communication du groupe de Badajoz", *Revue spirite*, 49/11 (1 November 1905), 689–692.

Apparently, such praise of the sultan came as an embarrassment to the journal's administrators, who, rather than censor the document, found the solution in inserting an editorial comment at the end of the report:

We regret that our friends should have chosen, among the spiritist communications they received, a purely somnambulist one. Indeed, the dialogue very clearly shows that only the medium's spirit intervened in the answers, and one could even conclude that he was under a strong influence of autosuggestion when he describes as a sublime spirit the author of atrocities committed in Armenia, which have taken the lives of 300,000 innocent human creatures, under the circumstances which all of Europe has discovered with horror.[93]

Back to 'good old' magic

During this broad "*tour d'horizon*," we have moved from Scalieri's accusations of black magic against Sultan Abdülhamid to the discovery of his own resorting to spiritist healing in the hope of finding a cure to Sultan Murad's illness, and from there to an investigation of the spiritist scene in Istanbul during these events and, more broadly, during the Hamidian period. It is only natural that we should now return one final time to traditional magic in the same context. However, this time, contrary to Scalieri's unsubstantiated claims about voodoo and black magic used against Murad by his 'evil' brother, I will refer to a solidly documented episode of an attempt at using magical intervention in the hope of securing the ailing ex-sultan's recovery.

The source for this information is a file in the Ottoman archives containing documents attesting to the contacts and correspondence between Murad's mother, Şevkefza, and Hafız Mehmed Emin Efendi, the steward of the corporation of porters (*hamallar kethüdası*), regarding measures to be taken to ensure Murad's recovery.[94] The 'treatment' involved 'blessings' (*okutma*) by the sheikhs,

93 "Le spiritisme à Constantinople", *Revue spirite*, 45/10 (1 October 1902), 637–640.

94 BOA, Y EE 22/82. The file consists of nine letters addressed by Şevkefza to Hafız Mehmed Emin Efendi, three of them dated from December 1876 to August 1877, and the remaining six bearing no date, and of two declarations by the said Mehmed Emin concerning his involvement in the matter, one of which is dated 25 Rebiyülahir 1296 (18 April 1879). The letters were published in İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, "Beşinci Sultan Murad'ın Tedâvîsine ve Ölümüne Ait Rapor ve Mektuplar," *Belleten*, 10/38 (1946), 335–343. It is not clear whether Mehmed Emin was himself engaging in magic, or if he was just a messenger between the palace and Melami dervishes by the names of Hasan Baba, İbrahim Çavuş, and Salih Efendi. Based on

fumigating Murad's underwear, and the preparation of amulets (*nüsha*, vulg. *muska*), all of which seem to be rather common practices often described in the ethnographic sources concerning magic in late Ottoman times.[95] Rather than list these, I will limit myself to quoting from some of the letters, which, apart from giving a general sense of the context, present the advantage of providing us with surprisingly detailed and accurate descriptions of Murad's ailment.

The dated letters provide us with rare insight into Murad's evolving condition and the efforts made by his mother. By mid-December 1876, she was still assuring her correspondent of the importance she attached to her son's recovery, with little indication of any progress.[96] About a month later, she was happy to report that he had sent back greetings to the sheikh but had not much more to say.[97] Four days later, however, she was evidently demoralised, confessing that despair had incited her to seek help from so many people, and to no avail; from then on, she would trust no one else than him.[98] By mid-March 1877, nine months into the ex-sultan's mental collapse, she had begun to nourish hopes of seeing Murad step out of the state of prostration that had overcome him, and described what seems to have been a 'cathartic' moment of his recovery:

> My dear Hafız Efendi
> I have received your glad tidings with great pleasure. May God grant us our wish without delay. Amen. How wonderous of God, his recovery is increasing day by day. You know well our situation. You said that if he cried, that would be a good sign. For the past week, he has been thinking to himself and crying about his circumstances. Had you seen him, it would have broken your heart. Tears were falling from his eyes like chickpeas. At the same time, he prays and implores the Lord Creator of all things. May God accept his prayers and forgive his faults. It kills me to see him this way, but after he has cried, he is relieved, his understanding and comprehension increase, he reads and even studies books. He also writes properly,

Mehmed Efendi's two declarations, evidently prepared for Abdülhamid's benefit, Uzunçarşılı assumes that he was a spy, a sort of double agent, pretending to help Murad but in fact reporting back to Abdülhamid. A more likely interpretation, corroborated by the date of his declaration (1879) is that he was forced to confess his deeds, in the hope that they would constitute incriminating evidence against Murad and, especially, his mother.

95 See n. 1 above.

96 BOA, Y EE 22/82, Şevkefza to Hafız Mehmed Emin, 2 Kânunusani 1292/14 December 1876.

97 BOA, Y EE 22/82, Şevkefza to Hafız Mehmed Emin, 11 Muharrem 1294/26 January 1877.

98 BOA, Y EE 22/82, Şevkefza to Hafız Mehmed Emin, 15 Muharrem 1294/30 January 1877.

thank God, so his health improves every hour and every day, but he still is very sorry about his state. Whenever his mind clears, he asks in tears "What have I done to anyone to be kept in this way?" and feels great sadness.[99]

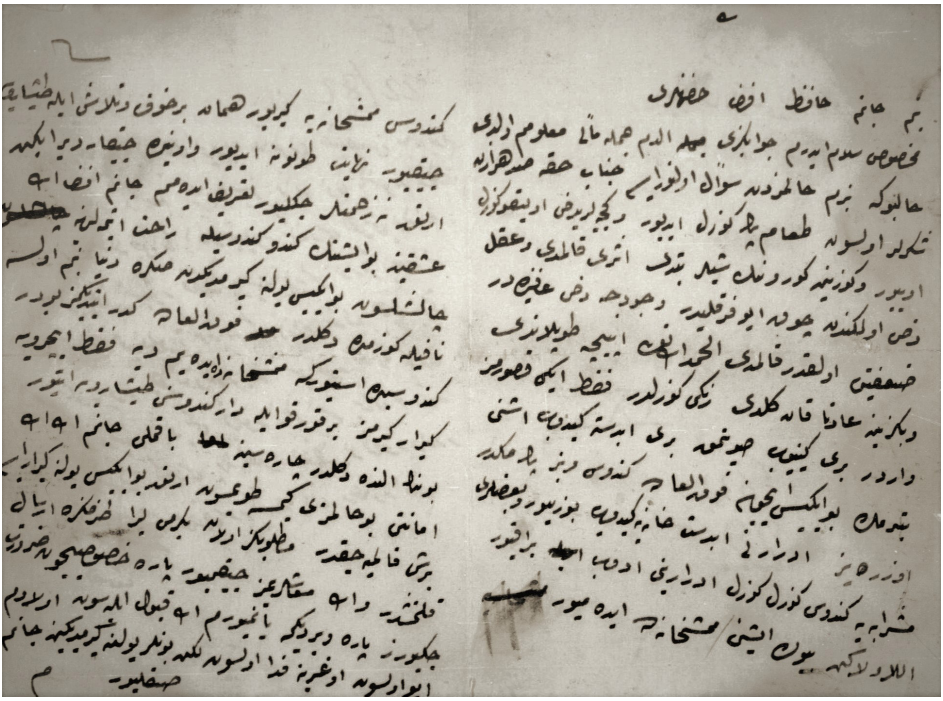
By mid-August, Şevkefza had even better news: "I can announce you that, praise be to God, my noble son is on the path of recovering his health."[100] Was this the result of an objective observation, or just wishful thinking? We will have to leave that question open and focus on the concrete evidence that this quest for magical intervention revealed about Murad's condition. The four letters already mentioned had little to offer besides the 'cathartic' experience of March, which seemed to indicate that Murad had somewhat loosened up enough to express his regrets and frustrations. While the remaining letters reveal much more details, the fact that they are all undated makes it difficult to integrate them in a reasonable timeline that might extend from the end of 1876 to mid- or late 1877.

Nevertheless, thanks to Şevkefza's very explicit description of the situation, we are allowed a fascinating peak into some of the symptoms of Murad's illness. One of these documents is particularly enlightening: [Ill. 12]

My very dear Lord Hafız Efendi
My most sincere greetings. I have received your answer and fully understood its meaning. If, on the other hand, you ask about us, Hundreds of thousands of thanks to the Lord, he eats very well and at night he sleeps well, and the visions he had are

99 "*Canım Hafız Efendi,*
Tebşirlerini aldım fevkalade memnun oldum. Cenab-ı Allah sayinizi zayi etmesin. An karibü'z-zaman maksudumuza nail buyursun. Amin. Maşallah kendisinin günden güne kesb-i afiyeti mütezayid olmaktadır. Malumunuzdur halimizi pek rana biliyorsunuz. Ağlar ise müjde demişsiniz. Bir haftadır kendi kendisine düşünüp haline ağlıyor. Görmüş olsanız yürekler dayanmaz. Gözünden leblebi gibi yaşlar iniyor. Ve onunla beraber Vacibü'l-vücud hazretlerine tazarru ve niyaz etmektedir. Hemen Allah kabulüyle kusurunu af buyursun amin. Ben onu öyle gördükçe helak oluyorum fakat ağladıktan sonra açılıyor, fehmi idraki ziyade oluyor, okuyor ve kitap da mütalaa ediyor. Ve yazı dahi güzel yazıyor elhamdülillah, yani her gün ve her saat iyilik artmaktadır lakin haline pek müteessiftir. Anladıkça ben kime ne yaptım ki ben böyle muhasara etmişler diye ağlayıp meyus oluyor. Ve cümle yazılan haberlerinden fevkalade memnun oldum. Baba hazretlerinin mübarek ellerinden öperim. Tebşirlerden teşekkür edip sevindim. Baki halimiz budur. Efendim Allah yüz aklığı versin cümlemize" (BOA, Y EE 22/82, from Şevkefza to Hafız Mehmed Emin, 25 Safer 1294/11 March 1877).

100 BOA, Y EE 22/82, Şevkefza to Hafız Mehmed Emin, 5 Şaban 1294/15 August 1877.



12. Letter from Şevkefza Kadınefendi to Hacı Mehmed Emin Efendi, n.d. BOA, Y EE 22/82.

over, no trace remains of them, and his mind is better than before and quite different, and his body is better, too, most of the weakness is now gone, praised be the Lord Almighty, he has recovered well and blood has returned to his complexion, his colour is fine. But we still have two difficulties, one is to get dressed and undressed, and the other is to go the toilet and do his thing. Both him and us are very sad about this. He does go to the toilet to urinate, and he sometimes urinates properly by himself into a pot and leaves it there. But he can never do his bigger business in the loo. He enters the toilet by himself, and then comes out in fear and in a flurry. Eventually he goes in his underwear, and I cannot tell you the difficulties we have to take it off him. My dear Master, for the love of God, if something could be done to help him in this respect; as long as these two matters are not solved, I will not care for anything in the world. This is what causes us extraordinary grief. He, too, wants to go to the loo, but as soon as he gets in, he can barely throw himself out in fear. He cannot help it someone has to find a way. Oh my God, let no one hear about this, if these matters can be solved, there will be no concern left. The twenty liras you have asked for have been sent to you. I swear, our salaries are not being paid, we are in much trouble regarding money. I have no objection to paying, may God accept it.

> As long as my child is well, I will sacrifice anything, but I am frustrated that these matters have not been solved.[101]

Hallucinations, a general weakness, a refusal, or incapacity to dress and undress, a loss of personal hygiene, and an irrational fear of the toilet and a consequent incapacity to defecate on his own… A post scriptum to this letter noted that 'the visions have ended, he sees nothing and does not mumble to himself, he speaks rather normally. If we do not count these two problems [dressing/undressing and toilet hygiene], there is nothing [wrong].'[102] These bits and pieces of information give us a sense of the gravity of the ex-sultan's condition, not to mention the unashamed milking of his mother's credulity by unscrupulous individuals. Yet, Şevkefza was still hopeful, as she observed — or convinced herself of — her son's improving health.

101 "*Benim canım Hafız Efendi hazretleri,*
Mahsus selam ederim. Cevabınızı aldım cümle meali malumum oldu. Halbuki bizin halimizden sual olunursa Cenab-ı Hakk'a sad hezaran şükürler olsun, taam pek güzel ediyor ve geceleri dahi uyku güzel uyuyor ve gözüne görünen şeyler bitti, eseri kalmadı ve aklı dahi evvelkinden çok iyi, farklıdır ve vücutça dahi afiyettedir, zafiyeti o kadar kalmadı, elhamdülillahu teala iyice toplandı ve benzine adeta kan geldi, rengi güzeldir. Fakat iki kusurumuz vardır, biri giyinip soyunmak, biri abdeste gidip işini bitirmek. Bu ikisi için fevkalade kendisi ve biz pek mükedder üzereyiz. İdrarını abdesthaneye gidip bozuyor ve bazıları maşrapaya kendisi güzel güzel idrarını edip bırakıyor. İlla ve lakin büyük işini memişhanede edemiyor. Kendisi memişhaneye giriyor, hemen bir havf ve telaş ile dışarıya çıkıyor. Nihayet donuna ediyor ve onu da çıkartır iken artık ne zahmetler çekiliyor tarif edemem. Canım Efendim Allah aşkına bu işinde kendi kendisiyle rahat etmelerine çalışılsın bu ikisi yoluna girmedikten sonra dünya benim olsa nafile gözümde değildir. Fevkalade keder ettiğimiz budur. Kendisi de istiyor memişhanede edeyim diye fakat içeriye girer girmez bir korku ile dar kendisini dışarıya atıyor. Bunun elinde değildir çaresine bakmalı Allah Allah, aman bu halimizi kimse duymasın, artık bu ikisi yoluna girer ise bir şey kalmayacaktır. Matlubunuz olan yirmi lira tarafınıza irsal kılınmıştır. Vallahi maaşlarımız çıkmıyor, para hususu için zaruret çekiyoruz. Para verdiğime yanmıyorum, Allah kabul eylesin. Evladım iyi olsun uğruna feda olsun, lakin bunlar yoluna girmediğine canım sıkılıyor" (BOA, Y EE 22/82, Şevkefza to Hafız Mehmed Emin, n.d.).

102 "*Hamdolsun gözüne görünen bitti, hiçbir şey görmüyor ve hem kendi kendine söylenmiyor, adeta güzel konuşuyor. Bu iki kusur olmaz ise bir şey yoktur. Görseniz kendisi pek ala fakat bu kusur vardır*" (BOA, Y EE 22/82, Şevkefza to Hafız Mehmed Emin, n.d).

Concluding remarks

Our objective in the preceding section was not to revisit the entire episode of Murad's mental breakdown, but simply to point to the fact that magic, as understood and commissioned by his mother, can be used as a very concrete evidence concerning the ex-sultan's health, which is simply not available in other sources, including official medical reports. Interestingly, the 'other' magic we saw at work, that of spiritism as practiced by Duneau, fulfils a somewhat similar role by revealing some of the symptoms observed by the healer, albeit with much less detail, due to the very indirect and consequently imprecise way in which this information was conveyed from the actual event down to its account by Leymarie some twenty years later. That magic, in both its versions, traditional and modern, should become a source of medical information is an ironic twist that deserves some attention.

Of course, what I believe to be one of the most interesting aspects of the case under study is precisely the rare and unexpected convergence of these two types of magic, whichever way we might want to define them: Eastern and Western, Oriental and Western, traditional and modern... Of course, the implicit opposition embedded in each of these pairs of terms is particularly striking; as a result, one is tempted to consider this binary aspect as being one of the most important revelations of this study.

While there is no denying that this is indeed a fascinating discovery, I believe it may also be useful to be able to set aside or transcend this dichotomy, which inevitably tends to play into some of the dominant tropes of Orientalism. True, despite all its esoterism, spiritism always came with a scientific claim that was further enhanced by the prestige of some of its intellectual sponsors, such as Victor Hugo or Camille Flammarion.[103] It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find any similar or even faintly comparable claim regarding 'good old' magic, be it in its Oriental or Western form, since its references were always lodged in religion and all its mystical derivatives. That being said, the fact that its followers had scientific claims does not make spiritism more scientific than traditional forms of magic. In fact, there is no *essential* difference between Duneau's alleged "fluidic contacts" and the "breath" (*nefes*, *üfürük*) of the der-

103 This is particularly true of spiritism as opposed to spiritualism, the former having a scientific claim, while the latter consists of dualist metaphysical belief (Türesay, "Between Science and Religion", 168).

vishes who were claiming to use their healing powers to cure Murad. Scalieri may have been a convinced spiritist, but the confession of another of his accomplices, Aziz Bey's son Kadri Bey, reveals that Scalieri and his father went to the grave of one Elekli/Elekçi Baba/Dede, where he "turned a sieve" (*elek çevirmek*) to figure out if they would succeed in their undertaking.[104]

At the very beginning of this essay, I had expressed my hope that one of the advantages to be derived from this study might the possibility of going against the grain with respect to some of the clichés that tend to stick to the question of magical practices in an Ottoman context. Orientalist tropes are probably the most blatant among these, and I believe that the way the major actors surrounding Murad navigated through spiritism and magic in their efforts to cure him of his alleged madness come to show that the borders between East and West were blurred, to say the least. A Greek Freemason, an Ottoman Muslim political activist, members of the Parisian spiritist community, an ageing queen mother, a French medium and healer, a group of Muslim clerics, were all participating in practices, which, behind a veil of cultural and ideological differences, converged towards a very similar perception of occult powers and influences. Another stigma that usually clings to such phenomena, namely that of the dominant presence and agency of women, both as users and providers of these services and practices, is also seriously challenged by the predominantly male participation and agency observed throughout this particular case. Finally, the racially or ethnically tainted stereotype of black or Romani practitioners of these 'dark' or occult arts does not hold water in the face of the preponderantly white and affluent profile of most of the people involved in the unfolding of this story.

Of course, it would be misleading, not to say naïve, to claim that the case under study is representative of all such practices in late Ottoman times. Nev-

104 "*Gündüzden pederim ile Kırlandi Silivrikapı'da Elekli Baba'nın türbesine işleri olacak mı diye oraya giderek elek cevirmişler, olacağı haberini alıp gelmişler*" (BOA, Y EE 23/5, Interrogation minutes of the Scalieri-Aziz Bey committee members, Kadri Bey's declaration, 10 Recep 1295/10 July 1878). Elekli or Elekçi Dede's grave is located near the land walls of Constantinople, close to Silivrikapı. According to one tradition, he was a standard bearer of Mehmed II during the conquest of Constantinople; more likely, he seems to have been a madman (*meczup*) who lived there in the seventeenth century and was venerated as a saintly character See İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, s.v. "Elekci Dede" (Reşad Ekrem Koçu). According to another tradition, Elekçi Dede was Sultan Mehmed II's standard bearer during the conquest of Constantinople (https://kulturvadisi.com/lokasyon/elekci-baba-turbesi).

ertheless, it is my hope that the detailed and multi-layered nature of this particular episode will have provided us with an element that is generally lacking from our knowledge on the matter: an intimate and detailed insight into the dynamics of magical practices that may constitute a useful complement, if not an alternative, to the general and often generic information derived from ethnographic and literary sources.

C. Research reports

The Melting Occult Pot in Ottoman Bosnia: Between Theory and Practice

Amila Buturović (Toronto)

The occult in the Balkans is a gift that keeps on giving: from historiographic, ethnographic, and sociological research to literary, cinematic, and artistic imagination, many authors have attempted to register and represent the region's diverse magic beliefs and practices that include werewolves, vampires, ghosts, apparitions, fairies, and other good and evil entities.[1] Neither confined to a single epoch nor a single class or religion, these beliefs and practices have existed in varied social and cultural milieux, intersecting nearly all realms of life and reflecting deep-seated anxieties about the unknown. While existential angst regarding the ultimate unknown — death — drives most of them, the unknown is also associated with religious, ethnic, gender, and ecological concerns. In a

1 See, e.g., E. Durham, "Of Magic, Witches and Vampires in the Balkans", *Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 23 (1923), 189–192; R. Levy-Zumwalt, "'Let It Go to the Garlic!': Evil Eye and the Fertility of Women among the Sephardim", *Western Folklore* 55:4 (1996), 261–280; B. McClelland, *Slayers and Their Vampires: A Cultural History of Killing the Dead* (Ann Arbor 2006); É. Pócs, "Stoikheion, Stuha, Zduhač: Guardian Spirits, Weather Magicians, and Talisman Magic in the Balkans", *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 15:3 (2021), 386–410; E. Kostova, *The Historian* (New York 2009).

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region that has historically been subjected to various imperial conquests and wars, frequent internal strife, and recurrent demographic and environmental shifts, the occult has been embraced by the Balkan population to better inhabit their world replete with uncertainties, navigate through social anxieties, and provide prophylactic and curative assistance and mediation there where reason is alleged to fail.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (henceforth Bosnia) is no exception. On the contrary, the convergence of various forms of the occult, both those that developed locally as well as those introduced trans-locally, speaks to a rich and enduring tradition of occult practices that may have been pushed to the social margins with the advent of modernity but have nevertheless survived, to this day. In this paper, we focus on the practices associated with the Ottoman period in Bosnia, when the already rich local register of the occult gained new elements, expanding it both cross-confessionally and cross-regionally. In other words, with the islamisation of Bosnia and the introduction of the Ottoman systems of knowledge within which esoteric sciences played a vital role, the occult became a new bridge among religious communities as well as a trajectory for the participation of Bosnia in the transfer and exchange of knowledge across and beyond the borders of the Ottoman Empire.

At the outset, there is a disconnect between the inherited occult practices encountered in everyday life and the highly sophisticated esoteric treatises deposited in literary archives. The former is conventionally labelled popular culture and ascribed to anthropological and ethnographic inquiry and oral histories.[2] The latter belongs to the enduring Middle Eastern, Islamic, and Ottoman studies since it requires literary proficiency in all Ottoman languages – Arabic, Turkish, and Persian, and Hebrew as well as occasional Latin and mediaeval Bosnian. For the most part, the epistemological trajectories of investigating and understanding these practices and theories have not intersected. In Religious Studies, a similar polarity exists.[3] Continued bifurcation of knowledge between philosophical discussion on esoteric modes of knowledge and the application of the occult in everyday life, while understandable from the perspective of disciplinary conventions and research pragmatism, have eclipsed essential connections between theory and practice, that is, between the ideas and technologies

2 P. Moro, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion* (New York 2009); S. Greenwood, *The Anthropology of Magic* (New York 2009).

3 R. T. McCutcheon, *Fabricating Religion: Fanfare for the Common* (Berlin & Boston 2018).

of the occult.[4] That said, establishing such connections is daunting. It requires innovative research methods to bring forth a new and refreshing analysis of the occult through its historical dynamic and counting on the evidence that connects material and written culture. This will be significant for the current project since both types of primary sources are available. They represent a unique opportunity to understand the links between written and material culture and offer new interpretative possibilities across the disciplinary divide.

In this process, similar challenges of classification emerge. The aforementioned standard delineations between theory and practice, written and material culture, as well as distinctions related to religious origins, eclipse any significant overlaps. In Ottoman Bosnia, when it comes to esoteric knowledge and practices, all religious traditions (Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism, and Judaism) rely heavily on holy scriptures and sacred scripts for the "technology of magic",[5] specifically through the use of talismans and amulets. These are inscribed, text reliant, and are often able to generate intertextual connections between the sacred scripture and the local systems of meaning. Their value, as both material objects and written registers, thus necessitates suspending the assumption of sharp demarcations between text and object in either theory or method. Second, much of the material evidence of the occult in Ottoman Bosnia — talismans, amulets, ritual objects, and related artifacts — may originate in different confessional communities of Bosnia but represent some of the most enduring examples of integrated esoteric practices in the region. In other words, while their origin may be unambiguously Christian, Islamic or Jewish, their circulation and use, as many sources indicate, are just as likely to be ambiguous, transferable, and combined.

In the premodern belief system, God's boundless powers could never be humanly owned. Still, they could be partially bounded and directed to the desired end above and beyond mainstream practices and rituals. Bosnians of all walks of life took advantage of the religiously plural environment whose sages and reli-

4 E. Savage-Smith (ed.), *Magic and Divination in Early Islam* (Farnham 2004); C. Burnett, *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds* (Aldershot 1996); E. Bever, *The Realities of Witchcraft and Popular Magic in Early Modern Europe* (New York 2008); D. Pingree, "The Diffusion of Arabic Magical Texts", in *La diffusione delle scienze islamische nel Medio Evo europeo* (Rome 1987), 57–102.

5 M. W. Dols, "The Theory of Magic in Healing", in Savage-Smith (ed.), *Magic and Divination*, 87–102.

gious authorities harnessed natural and divine powers to help their supplicants in wellness, health, and protection. The inherited healing traditions, coupled with the knowledge from Ottoman and European medical lineage, provided Bosnians with diverse resources and locations from which to draw support and help. Medical manuals were readily available. At the same time, the formation of these very intimate links with objects like talismans and amulets is also an affirmation of spiritual trust and a significant manifestation of cross-influence in a religiously plural society like Ottoman Bosnia, where religious authority was institutionally regulated but where many realms of culture, including the esoteric tradition, found a way of enhancing its content and influence due to a willingness to cross the official boundaries. The powers inhered in occult objects were primarily knowledge-specific and only secondarily identity-specific. In many ways, these objects acted as a form of premodern interreligious dialogue, grounded in the recognition that the symbols and supplications different from one's own could equally efficaciously bridge the communication with the unknown.

Thus, one anonymous Ottoman miscellany dated to 993/1585 that records everyday life in the Balkans, including Bosnia, speaks clearly about such prophylactic double-dipping: a Muslim man who died on his return from the Hajj pilgrimage was found to be wearing two amulets around his neck — one Muslim and the other Christian — to aid him in health and other challenges of life. His mother confirmed that this was her choice since the village priest was well known to cure childhood illnesses, while the Muslim cleric covered other issues.[6] This syncretic practice of mixing and matching, even switching religious symbols and cultural relics, has been repeatedly recorded in Bosnian history. Third, since the objects of magic intended to address, as one Franciscan monk observed in the mid-19th century, "all aspects of life which Bosnians could possibly find themselves in," their utility was flexible and widespread. As a result, the author continues, "[Orthodox] Christians collect amulets from their own priests, Catholic friars, and Muslim imams (*od svojih popova, kaludjera i turskih hodža*)", while his own Catholic flock "rushes to get an amulet even for minor headache".[7] The monk's antipathy was notably directed less towards the cross-confessional impulse but rather towards the amulet itself. Before him, his fellow friars at the Fojnica monastery in central Bosnia also recorded repeated

6 Manuscript #4811/II of the Oriental Institute, Sarajevo, folio 18/18a.

7 I. F. Jukić, *Putopisi i istorijsko-etnografski radovi* (Sarajevo 1953), 346.

requests for charms by Muslim patients.[8] These practices cross the religious divide and blur social status, gender, age, profession, and other forms of collective identification. As a result, magic objects are often customised in content and form to accommodate such varied settings, circumstances, and needs. Consequently, it becomes difficult to classify them by type or provenance. Finally, the fact that many inscribed talismans are eventually buried, submerged in water, orally consumed, shredded, suffumigated, or burned points to their expansive ritual utility through a close connection with the four elements (air, earth, water, and fire), alchemy, and astral correspondences, all of which activate magic efficacy but affect their constancy as either text or object.

Returning to the distinction between theoretical and practical magic, a bifurcation already presented by al-Qurtubi (d.964) in his foundational occult work *Ghayat al-Hakim*,[9] the grimoires which proliferated in both Islamicate and premodern European societies offer an exciting bridge between theory and practice. Ottoman Bosnian libraries also reflect this proliferation — practically any library that includes Ottoman sources contains miscellany es of this hybrid genre — allowing us to form critical insights into the usage of such manuals for protective, curative, and other purposes. Creating magic effects by imbuing everyday objects with special powers, as laid out in these manuals, furnishes them with new religious function and metaphysical meaning and allows us to trace better ritual transformations of texts and objects through interpretative practices of both the makers and consumers of magic. Finally, given at once the all-encompassing approach of such manuals yet their application to specific areas of everyday life, these manuals are helpful registers for social historians to assess social, health, and wellness standards and understand how desires, anxieties, ambitions, illness, and other challenges of life were managed through a ritual activation of magic.

The Ottoman grimoires in Bosnia surveyed in this study are deposited in three main libraries in Sarajevo: Gazi Husrev Bey's Library, The Bosniak Institute, and the Historical Institute. Tragically, during their 1992–1995 siege of Sarajevo, the Serbian forces deliberately destroyed the Oriental Institute, which contained a valuable collection of rare manuscripts on astral and esoteric sciences, creating a significant fracture in cultural heritage and leaving us in the dark

8 V. Bazala, "Svećenici kao liječnici", *Liječnički Vijesnik* (1938): 534–565.

9 D. Porecca – D. Attrell (trans. & ed.), *Picatrix: A Medieval Treatise on Astral Magic* (University Park 2019).

regarding the true extent of the occult manuscript culture. As regards the extant sources, several fundamental characteristics emerge: first, the manuscripts are multilingual. Written in the Arabic, Ottoman Turkish and, to a lesser extent, Persian languages, they speak to the commonalities and differences in occult semantics across the linguistic cultures represented in the libraries. Furthermore, Slavic languages are not represented, although some Aljamiado interventions of the Bosnian language in Arabic script can be found on the margins of the grimoires, primarily when the issue of medicinal substitution is necessitated for the botanical ingredients that are not locally available. Many manuals are polyglot, using two or more languages at once. Many are composite texts (including *mecmua* miscellanies) containing multiple authorship, fragments from well-known grimoires, and scribal additions and glossaries. Third, the treatises demonstrate relatively uniform but also uneven representations of the spiritual and natural forces at play in the occult. Various spiritual entities, commonly classified as *ruhaniyat*, of the lower and higher realms, do not have fixed names or places in the cosmological order. A significant analytical challenge in the case of Ottoman Bosnia and the Balkans is how best to develop a typology of such entities, especially since many have changed names or roles in their encounter with the local supernatural forces and beings. Thus, the terms *dîv, câdû/cā̲zû, melek, cinn, perî, khudam*, and alike appear at times in synch and at other times at odds with each other. And fourth, these manuals effectively represent a bridge between theory and practice. Functionally organised, they put to use what is laid out as theoretical frameworks of astral and occult sciences by well-known authors represented in the libraries, such as, in Arabic, the works of al-Qasrani (d. 200/815), Abu Ma'shar (d.272/885), al-Qayrawani (d.432/1040), al-Farisi (d.677/1278); Ibn 'Arabi (d.1240); in Ottoman Turkish by authors like Ibrahim Cevri (d.1065/1654), Mehmed Qasımpaşalı (d.1102/1691), Mehmed Çelebi (d.1040/1630); in Persian by Fakhr al-Din Razi (d.606/1209) and al-Buhari (d.695/1296); the translated texts of al-Buni (d.622/1225), and many others. The highly sophisticated cosmology of such works indicates a widespread interest in hidden sciences (*al-'ulum al-sirriya*) and the intellectual underpinning of the practice of astrology and different forms of divination and prognostication, like hydromancy, lettrism, geomancy, alchemy, dream interpretation, magic squares (*vefk*), and others, which the manuals put to the test.

As a case study of such theories in action, I will focus briefly on one manual found at the library of the Bosniak Institute in Sarajevo, provisionally entitled

"A Miscellany in Occult Sciences" and catalogued as Ms. 876.[10] Nearly 300 folios in length, the *mecmua* includes alchemist, pharmaceutical, numerological, talismanic, astrological, and lettrist instructions and recipes intended to be used for a broad spectrum of medical, religious, psychological, relational/social, marital, economic, erotic, and other experiences and challenges in life. The book was brought in from a private collection of an imam serving the community in a northeastern Bosnian town. Bound with thick leather, the book is bilingual, in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish, which are switched back and forth without compositional or formal predictability.

The condition of the book betrays its frequent usage. Some previously torn folios are fortified with glue and paper cuttings. Many pages have fallen out, then stitched back in and renumbered, in some cases over the original numbers and in others next to them, and contain numerous *hâshiyas*, supplementary and explanatory notes on the margins. The opening page, for example, does not include the usual introductory supplications but starts tightly at the top of the page with "the first spell" (*azâ'im evvel*). Spells are sequenced and commonly introduced with *bunun dermânı budur ki*, a formulaic expression that suggests that the original text is likely relatively old. However, the last pages are missing, so we have neither a date nor the scribe's name. Based on some linguistic pointers, such as orthography and terms of animals, the manuscript seems rather old, its origins are unclear but this copy was made by a Bosnian scribe. Being a miscellany, the text does not follow a narrative or thematic sequence. However, themes are often clustered together, offering magic formulae, advice, and recipes in different versions of the same subject. Despite the seeming disorder of the content, every entry is detailed and thorough. Magic formulae, diagrams, and magic squares accompany the majority of entries, interchangeably referred to as *wafq/vefk*, *sûrat; shakl/şekil; hurûf; ta'wîdh; heykel;* and *nuskha/nüsha*.

The spectrum of magic mediations and influences in the *mecmua* is vast. It includes physical deformities, ailments, illnesses, afflictions (both of humans and domestic animals), mental issues, psychological disorders, sexual performance, erotic desires, social angsts surrounding work and neighborly relations, and others. Veterinary problems are also dealt with in detail, with much attention given to the health of beehives and farm animals. Agricultural produce, from

10 I thank the staff of the Bosniak Institute for access to the material and Mr. N. Filipović for assistance.

vegetable gardens and fruit trees to crops and farmland, is protected against various infestations, poor management, and weather risks. The spells are used for curative, restorative, palliative, and dietary care. Many are also preventative and apotropaic, projecting anxieties about the weather, wealth, travel, trade and commerce, livestock, and evil forces of the visible and invisible worlds. It is important to emphasise that the causes behind various afflictions and anxieties are commonly perceived as having physiological and/or occult geneses, as advanced by premodern Islamic and European understanding of health and healing. The close connection between health, religion, and magic reveals that ill fortune and illness are often ascribed to supernatural and superhuman forces thanks to a close relationship between the inner and outer worlds with a person's psychological and physical well-being.[11] Moreover, most scholars argue that occult practices found in the Islamic lands, expressed in different forms of divination and astrology, have endured despite the discomfort and occasional rejection by jurists and theologians because there had hardly ever been any serious doubt about the existence of magic powers.[12] However, it is their manipulation that emerged as an issue of contention, both among the jurists and the general population. Magic and divination, in that sense, are not to be regarded as antonyms of mainstream medicine. It is their misuse, malicious or irresponsible use, that is scorned. And, as the many manuals and treatises on the subject indicate, the need to educate potential practitioners is key to their better social standing and reputation.[13] The *mecmua* in question reflects this observation well: all recipes and formulae are explained in detail, so little is left to chance, both in terms of applicability and rationale. Only a serious and thoughtful practitioner could

11 L. Saif, "Between Medicine and Magic: Spiritual Aetiology and Therapeutics in Medieval Islam", in S. Bhayro – C. Rider (eds), *Demons and Illness from Antiquity to the Early Modern Period* (Leiden 2017); T. Fahd, *La divination arabe* (Brill 1996); Idem, "Sciences naturelles et magie dans *Gayat al-hakim* du Pseudo-Mayriti ", in G. Sanchez (ed.), *Ciencias de la naturaleza en al-Andalus: Textos y estudios* (Granada 1990), 11–21; E. Francis, "Islamic Symbols and Sufi Rituals for Protection and Healing: Religion and Magic in the Writings of Ahmad ibn Ali al-Buni (d. 622/1225)", unpublished PhD dissertation, UCLA, 2005; Idem, "Magic and Divination in the Medieval Islamic Middle East", *History Compass* 9:8 (2011), 622–633.

12 D. M. Varisco, "The Magical Significance of the Lunar Stations in the 13th Century Yemeni *Kitab al-tabsira fi 'ilm al-nujum* of al-Malik al-Ashraf", *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 13 (1995), 19–40.

13 Dols, "The Theory of Magic in Healing".

be careful and thorough in explaining the ingredients, prayers, procedures, and effects with so much attention.

Like the wide range of afflictions, the ingredients and materials used to activate magic are impressively inclusive. Stones, both semi-precious and precious, minerals, gems, plants and herbs, trees and their bark, animals and animal parts are all used for ritual treatments. Their specifics are not random since each material and substance has a hidden meaning whose function is activated through magic combination and exposition. As Porter, Saif and Savage-Smith explain in relation to *Ghayat al-hakim*,

> the magic is based on the knowledge of correspondences – that is, the rules of sympathy or antipathy among animals, plants, minerals, even colors and scripts, on the one hand, and celestial/spiritual entities on the other. The magic of this text can be considered astral, natural, and spiritual. The operator in this case needs to have a vast knowledge of planets, signs, and lunar mansions in addition to information on all kinds of animals, plants, and minerals that correspond to the powers of the celestial bodies.[14]

Thus, the *mecmua* explicitly lists different effects and therefore formulates substitutable spells based on the colour of animals (e.g., black or white sheep; white, black or piebald chicken; brown or black ox), their external characteristics (long tail, large ears, etc.), and their age. Although the animals or their parts may be used for one purpose, the details reveal different combinations and applications, most of which include sacrificing the animal, using its blood to write a talisman, and distributing the meat to the community. In fact, the key to a successful outcome seems to be found in the arrangement of specific Qur'anic passages, religious invocations, and magic formulae in conjunction with cultivating good neighborly relations. The divine word is transferred and is not just used to enhance the talisman; instead, it animates its magic property and leads to success or, if incorrectly deployed, to failure, in specific and general social terms. Every entry thus has its corresponding incantation, to be recited and/or written, then ritually placed in order to complete the magic procedure.

14 V. Porter, L. Saif, E. Savage-Smith, "Medieval Islamic Amulets, Talismans, and Magic", in F. B. Flood – G. Necipoglu (eds), *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture* (New York 2017), 521–557 at 523.

The procedures are all elucidated in detail, and the instructions tend to be spelled out step by step, advising no deviations. After all, God is the mover of all correspondences, so the chain of action between Him and the talisman user must not be jeopardised at any stage. As mentioned earlier, extending the act of healing toward the community is not unusual: "twelve pieces of bread must be distributed as a charity (*sadaqa*), then a ram is sacrificed, and its meat distributed after its flesh is punctured with a needle." Or, "sacrifice a young goat, distribute its meat after puncturing its skin with a needle and, combining the blood with saffron, write the sura Yasin three times on the Byzantine paper (*rûmî kâğıt*), recite the sura, then soak the paper in the water and give to the patient to drink for three days." Or, "let the patient eat the meat of the white chicken while writing a Quranic verse on its skin, then dab the chicken skin on the patient, then feed the livestock." (folios 5–17, recto verso) Although the effects of such action may be only symbolic, the interdependence of inner and outer well-being is translated into the interdependence of the individual and the community. Healing is dramatised, to borrow Catherine Bell's terms, as "cultural performance,"[15] becoming both a strategy of asserting the healer's authority over those who are otherwise sideliners and a way of normalizing the occult as a more visible and tangible aspect of everyday life.

The talismans on which the divine and magic words are written are disposed of in various ways. They are to be buried in the ground, in the ruins of a building, an old church, the crossroads, a mosque, an abandoned mill by running water, or an old well. Sometimes, they ought to face the qibla. They are also to be burned over a candle fire or in a hearth. Some are to be sunk into the water and left there for as long as the water is given to the patient to drink. Sometimes they are folded and hung around the neck or put away on a shelf or under a pillow. Once this is performed, the spell is complete, and God will enable the healing (*Allah şifâ bula*).

A frequent differentiation between male and female versions of magic operations is notable in the entries. Gendered magic formulae are arranged with different ingredients, textual and material, based on whether the consumer is male or female. While modern medicine only relatively recently began to consider gender in developing, classifying, and dispensing medication, the premodern practice seems more ready to emphasise that the efficacy of a magic

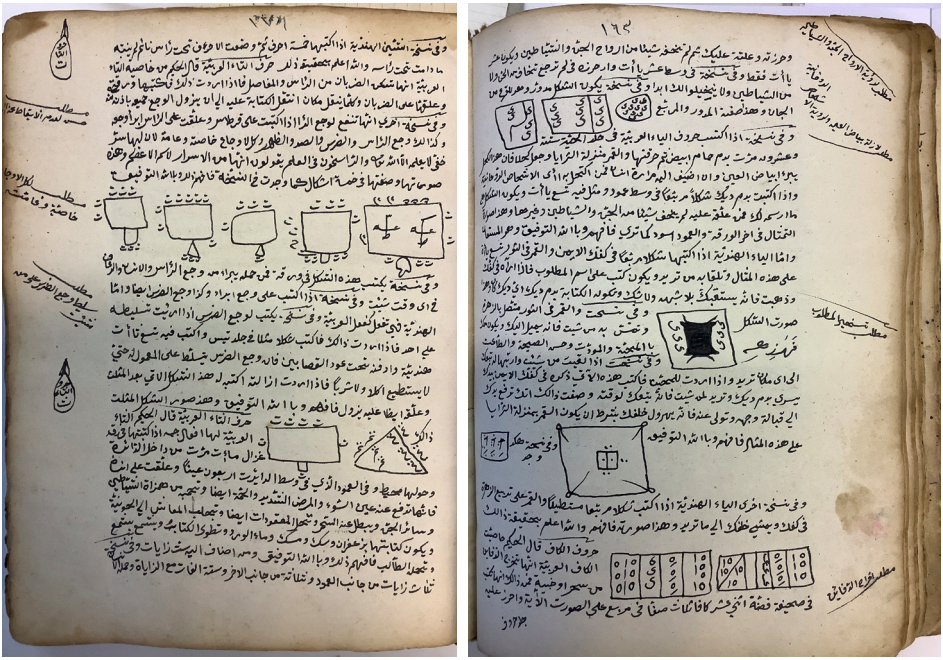
15 C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford & New York 2009), 37–8.

concoction or talisman depends on its gendered application. Moreover, just as the experience or affliction is processed differently between genders, so is the treatment. Headaches, stomach aches, and mental disorders seem conducive to such differentiations. Of course, these distinctions are most evident with regard to marital, sexual, and erotic challenges, desires, and relations. Here, from broken hearts to love connections, same-sex desires, obsessive emotional or sexual behavior, failed or undesired relationships, infertility, inability to carry a male fetus, infidelity (talismans to be worn on genitals, male and female, to ascertain monogamy), great care is paid to assisting all who need help, but always with the emphasis on gender specifications.

Last but not least, an aspect of the mecmua that deserves consideration is the taxonomy of black magic, where talismans and prayers against evil acts and witches/vampires (*sihir ve câzular mekri bâtil olmak için*) feature as the primary subject matter. The section is geared towards individuals either under the spell of black magic or anxious about falling prey to it. On several pages (folios 130–137, recto verso), the author details the locations where *sihir* could be cast. They include wild animals, listed by type (bear, lion, wolf, rabbit, weasel, marten, etc.) and anatomical parts (skin, brain, flesh, bones, tail, fur); plants and trees, also listed by name, part, and use; birds, listed by name and part; humankind, listed by gender, age, anatomical detail, ethnicity and religion (fair, dark, blond Turks; Anatolians; Byzantines; Jews; and others from the 'seventy-two nations,' aka, the proverbial 72 peoples of the world found in Biblical narratives, Prophetic sayings, and other near-eastern traditions). Wherever placed, however, *sihir* can be defeated with the power of divine words. The supplication prayers are long and specific, charged to defeat evil in every way and under every condition. The prayers' shortened versions are also offered in connection with auspicious letters used to compose the talismans, and they all join forces in repelling and repealing evil. After each detailed entry, the author concludes with, "with this, I annul the *sihir* that is here, and that was to be here" (*olmuşdur veya olacakdır bâtil eyledim*). Interestingly, the jinn do not feature prominently in this section; instead, the jinn are involved in obstructing health and interpersonal affairs and are mentioned in relation to illnesses, anxieties, and social concerns, none of which is explicitly classified as the work of vampires or black magic.

In addition to all of the above, the *mecmua* contains lengthy sections on astral correspondences, astrology, interpretation of dreams, geomancy, auspicious days, hidden powers of the Divine Names, alchemical substances, and many

other fascinating topics in esoteric worldviews and ritual praxis. Suffice it to say, its scope and detail offer a broad, cross-cultural window into the past about everyday anxieties, challenges and aspirations to take at least partial control over the conditions that surround us. The power of the occult ritual, its enactment, and its promise to advantageously manipulate the invisible or immaterial agencies, despite its ambiguous social status, is neither delusional nor sinful. Instead, it is the product of cumulative knowledge about the workings of the universe in its physical and metaphysical dimensions. This knowledge and these ritual endeavours were not oppositional or antagonistic but complementary. The manuals like the one presented here are, therefore, two-faced. They mediate between practical, hands-on efforts to improve lives, here and now, and the insatiable intellectual curiosity of the sages from from various places and times to connect the invisible dots that constitute this vast universe.



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Halcyon Days XI international symposium "Enchantments and disenchantments: early modern Ottoman visions of the world" (Rethymno, January 14–17, 2022): a report

The Halcyon Days in Crete XI Symposium "Enchantments and disenchantments: early modern Ottoman visions of the world", the second of a series[1] organised in the context of the research project "GHOST: Geographies and Histories of the Ottoman Supernatural Tradition: Exploring Magic, the Marvelous, and the Strange in Ottoman Mentalities" (funded by the European Research Council, CoGr2017 no. 771766), was to take place in Rethymno, Crete, on January 2021. However, the pandemic forced us to postpone it for one year, eventually taking place (on Zoom, unfortunately) on January 14–17, 2022.

The rationale behind the selection of the symposium topic was published in the previous issue of the present journal as its editorial.[2] In short, the symposium aspired to provide insights into the varying and shifting Ottoman images

1 For our first symposium see M. Sariyannis, "International workshop "Nature and the supernatural in Ottoman culture" (Istanbul, December 14–15, 2019): a report". *Aca'ib: Occasional papers on the Ottoman perceptions of the supernatural* 1 (2020), 105–116.

2 M. Sariyannis, "Enchantments and Disenchantments in Ottoman World Visions: Preliminary Remarks", *Aca'ib: Occasional papers on the Ottoman perceptions of the supernatural* 2 (2021), 5–8.

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of nature and the supernatural, searching for the sociocultural configurations of parallel paths that modified world visions of Ottoman individuals and communities. By studying the emergence and development of different regimes of truth from the early fourteenth to the late eighteenth centuries, it sought to investigate whether, and how, Ottoman perceptions of nature and science transformed toward a more "enchanted" or a more "disenchanted" world in the early modern period. Twenty-three scholars from across the world, representing Ottomanists, Arabists, and Neohellenists, explored topics related to this problématique, from miracle-working to medicine and from engineering to philosophy.

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The first day of the symposium was commenced by **Zeynep Aydoğan (Rethymno)** with her paper on "Antinomian dervishes and anti-*kerāmet* polemics before the 'Age of confessionalisation'". Focusing on the social reactions in the face of the miraculous deeds of certain Muslim holy men in the early hagiographies, Aydoğan discussed how the question of sainthood and the resulting polemics can be reflective of the competition and tensions between different religious segments of the society before the establishment of the subsequent *tariqa*s. In his paper, "La vie du Prophète et l'ordre des choses : les *Siyer-i Nebi* de Veysī (m. 1037/1628) et Nābī (m. 1124/1712)", **Renaud Soler (Paris)** analysed a couple of Ottoman *Siyer-i nebi* (*sīra* in Arabic), one from the early seventeenth and another from the early eighteenth centuries. Showing how poetic conventions, or what we would call today anachronisms, served to make present the prophetic past and to give it a meaning beyond holy history, Soler argued that the literary writing of the life of the Prophet could serve both as a vehicle for a cosmology, as well as to pave the way for its secularisation. The paper by **Nikolas Pissis (Berlin)** was entitled "Paisios Ligaridis on magic and divination". Paisios (Pantaleon) Ligaridis (1610–1678), a Jesuit from Chios, agent of the Propaganda Fide in the Christian East, Orthodox metropolitan of Gaza, counselor of Tsar Aleksei in Moscow, has been described by historians as an "intellectual adventurer" or "resourceful villain". Pissis focused on his voluminous Book of Prophecies, composed in 1655, analysing the author's reflections on the issue of public/permitted and secret/forbidden knowledge and the justification he provides for his exegetical efforts in revealing divine secrets or delving into pa-

gan divination practices. **Marinos Sariyannis (Rethymno)** spoke on "Sources and traditions of knowledge: revelation, hermeticism, reasoning in an Ottoman context". He delved into the different Ottoman approaches to the possible sources of knowledge, from divine revelation and inspiration to the power of individual reason and experience. The crucial question, he argued, is whether anybody is capable to reach truth and permitted access to knowledge: in this vein, he suggested, the role of Ottoman Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) thought and its connection to Hermeticism is crucial. Finally, **Güneş Işıksel's (Istanbul)** paper on "Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi's art of describing: narrative of wonders and details of precision" presented a report by Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi, ambassador to Louis XV's France in 1720 about the "wondrous arts and crafts" displayed in his presence. Particularly Mehmed Çelebi's descriptions of the opera and of the *Canal royal en Languedoc* highlight the new meanings of terms like "wonder" or "strange" and the technical precision he uses in describing human-made "marvels".

The second day began with **Aslı Niyazioğlu's (Oxford)** paper with the title "An enchanted Kostantiniyye? Talismanic antiquities of Ottoman *acaib*s (15th-17th centuries)". Niyazioğlu discussed Istanbul as a locus of ancient monuments, viewed as talismanic constructions of a marvelous past. She showed that the Ottomans' engagement with these antiquities implied a complex relationship with the past and the present of the city, as monuments like the obelisks were taken to contain prognostications through the occult science of *cifr*. Next, **Harun B. Küçük (Philadelphia)** presented his paper on "Weberian categories and models of Ottoman modernity". Küçük highlighted the importance of Max Weber's work and of his concepts of rationalism and bureaucratic domination for the debates concerning disenchantment (itself a Weberian term); moreover, he discussed a number of other approaches and models, with varying emphasis on science, secularism and religion. In a similar vein, **Baki Tezcan (Davis)** presented his paper on "Birgivi vs. Ghazali: disenchanting an enchanted scholar". Using in his turn Weber's concepts, he sought to situate the work of Birgivi Mehmed (d. 1573) in a larger context that includes works by al-Ghazali. Tezcan proposed to treat the early modern transformation of Ottoman Sunni Islam as a disenchantment and define it as the gradual disassociation of moral and ontological questions from one's faith in and submission to God, which were in the process of being articulated in increasingly more rationalist and technical and less emotive terms, and thus

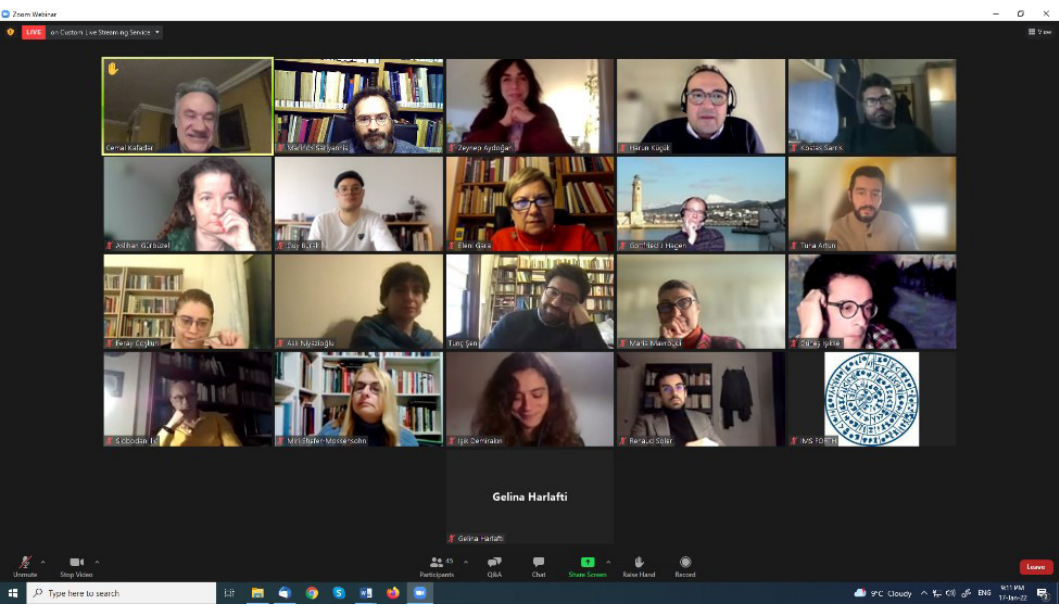
could no longer accommodate the enchanted world of medieval Sufis. **Kostas Sarris (Thessaloniki)** discussed the "Dialectics of enchantment and disenchantment in the intellectual world of Meletios of Athens". Michail Mitros/Meletios Metropolitan of Athens (1661–1714), author of geographical, historical and astronomical works, also wrote two medical treatises that lie in the grey area between natural and preternatural knowledge, drawing from the Paracelsian tradition and European "books of secrets". Sarris reflected on the cognitive presuppositions and delineated the modes through which the enchanted alternates with the disenchanted nature and occultism converses with science in Meletios' intellectual world. **Slobodan Ilić's (Nicosia)** paper had the title "Underground life of a Sufi saint: The hidden Idris (İdrîs-i Muhtefî, d. 1615) and the secret history of the Melâmî-Hamzevî order in the 17th Century". Ilić focused on the efforts of the Melâmî branch of the Bayrâmî dervish order to be reconciled with the state authorities and the orthodox ulema and try to regain its prestige, seriously imperiled by a chain of trials and eventual persecutions of its heterodox protagonists during the previous century. Using the corpus of the available Melâmî hagiographic works and some previously unused manuscript sources, he proposed a novel and dissenting history of Melâmism, challenging the generally accepted spiritual lineage of the order. The next paper, by **Tuna Artun (New Jersey)**, was titled "Warfare, re-enchanted? An occult history of the Ottoman military". Artun opened with the hypothesis that premodern battlefields were as much sites of the unseen as they were of the readily perceptible, as commanders and soldiers harnessed amulets, talismans, and various divinatory practices in order to foresee developments, take decisions and protect their lives. He then suggested a conceptual framework for studying Ottoman warfare as a social and cultural practice in relationship with disenchantment/re-enchantment processes, and offered a periodisation of certain practices and the involvement of specialists like alchemists and lettrists within the Ottoman war machine. Finally, **Gottfried Hagen (Michigan)**, "Miracles in the age of disenchantment", sought to explore how societies got from an enchanted world, where acts of power that disrupt or transcend the boundaries of normalcy or regularity of the human experience were ubiquitous, to a disenchanted one, where miracles are either discounted or relegated to a symbolic or spiritual plane outside of physical reality. Drawing on a broad range of 'early modern' Ottoman hagiography, Hagen argued that disenchantment manifests itself not in a critique of the concept of miracle per se, but, driven by shifts

from immanentist to transcendentalist religiosity (in Alan Strathern's terms), in the narrative framing, scale, and social function.

On the third day, **Maria Mavroudi (Berkeley)** and **Cornell H. Fleischer (Chicago)** presented a joint paper on "Ottoman and Byzantine classifications of knowledge in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries". They focused on the classifications of knowledge conveyed in the earliest surviving Ottoman version of the Life of Alexander and the position of the "science of letters" among them, arguing that Ottoman classifications of knowledge around this period closely parallel their Byzantine equivalents. Furthermore, addressing Byzantine and Ottoman discussions of miracles that took place in the fifteenth century, Mavroudi and Fleischer suggested that Byzantine texts and interpretative approaches to ancient Greek thought informed both Ottoman and European thought into the early seventeenth century. **Guy Burak**'s **(New York)** paper, with the title "'Sound transmission and sincere unveiling': 'Abd al-Rahman al-Bistami's epistemology and Islamic universalism", analysed 'Abd al-Rahman al-Bistami (d. 1455)'s works focusing on his methods and epistemological premises concerning the acquisition and transmission of knowledge. Both *naql* (transmission) and *kashf* (unveiling) are highly charged epistemological concepts in the Islamic tradition, the former is rooted in the transmitted sciences and the latter in *tasawwuf* and related sciences. Bistami does not devote much attention to the method of transmission of revelation, but, as illustrated by Burak, seems to imply the existence of one. **Aslıhan Gürbüzel (Montreal)** presented a paper entitled "Starting with enchantment: understanding charismatic authority". She focused on the Peripatetic (*meşşaî*) vs. Illuminationist (*işrâkî*) distinction of two types of wisdom or philosophy (*hikma*), as presented in Ottoman Illuminationist writings such as those by Karakaşzade Ömer Efendi or İsma'il Ankaravî. Gürbüzel traced the influences of Illuminationism in major intellectual currents and debates of the seventeenth century and highlighted the repercussions these debates had in early modern Ottoman efforts to regulate spiritual authority by defining rationality and claim various exclusive ways to access knowledge. **Cemal Kafadar (Cambridge MA)** ended the third day with a paper on "The enchanted çelebis of the seventeenth century and their disenchantments". Kafadar focused on the traditions and arguments regarding Khidr/Hızır, a key figure in Islamic lore who seems to have played a special role in the "long seventeenth century", the age of çelebis as he named it, i.e. of a social type that felt enchanted by a new cosmopolitan body of knowledge, re-

gardless ethnoreligious origin. He shed light on the complexities of the debates around Khidr's life and characteristics, part of the Kadızadeli debates discussed by Kâtib Çelebi and others, and suggested that the age of çelebis gave rise to a different kind of enchantment and wonder, more mundane than otherworldly.

The fourth and final day opened with **A. Tunç Şen (New York)**, with the title "Mystics vs. *munajjim*s: competing experts of esoteric knowledge in the early modern Ottoman world". Şen first examined the concepts related to knowledge and expertise as a window into looking at competing claims of authority and prestige, and then moved to the specific example of astrologers/*munajjim*s. He delved on anti-astrology polemics, studying whether these attacked the fundamental cosmological premises of astrology or its practitioners; Şen concluded with an analysis of how did the munajjims themselves define their own craft and expertise vis-à-vis those externalist views. **Feray Coşkun (Istanbul)** talked about "Wondrous and strange in Ottoman geographical texts". She explored the scope of wondrous and strange phenomena (*'ajā'ib wa gharā'ib*) in Ottoman geographical texts and their functions of invoking astonishment, fear and admiration and expanding people's perspectives on diversity of existence in heavenly and terrestrial realms or far and close geographies. Coşkun analysed how the sources play with religious symbolism and creative imagination, and how they instrumentalise *'ajā'ib wa gharā'ib* to convey theological or moralistic messages for the Ottoman audience. In a more cosmological level, **Side Emre (College Station)** presented a paper on "A diagram of the cosmos: mystical cosmologies and diagramming in the early modern Ottoman Empire". Emre surveyed a series of diagrams drawn by Sufi authors and representing the components of various mystical understandings of the cosmos in their interrelation through complex visual arrangements. After presenting some impressive 3D video renditions of such diagrams, Emre focused on such a diagram by Muhyi, centering in the five "presences" or "worlds" of Akbarian philosophy, highlighting the innovative points in which he departs from the traditional commentaries on Ibn Arabi. **Nir Shafir (San Diego)** contributed with a paper on "The Disenchanted Door: al-Jazari's mechanical contraptions and their Ottoman reception". Starting from the diffusion of fake or recreated images showcasing Islamic science, Shafir pondered on the role of illustrations in Islamic scientific manuscripts. As a case study, he analysed the Ottoman reception of al-Jazari's (d. 1206) work on mechanics and automata, highlighting the role of the work in the context of the twelfth-fourteenth century artisanal work, as well as the "disenchanting"



functions of the Ottoman translation. In her paper, **Miri Shefer-Mossensohn** (**Tel Aviv**) showed how "17th century Ottomans think about European medicine and rethink their world". Focusing on Tobias HaCohen (d. 1729), a doctor of Jewish-Polish descent who studied in Padua and eventually became physician to five successive Ottoman sultans, Shefer-Mossensohn analysed his social profile and emphasised his awareness of the innovative dimension of European medicine. HaCohen adopted new knowledge without rejecting the old, while believing in the human ability to reach all the secrets of the human body and, arguably, of the universe. The final paper of the symposium, "On the same page: convergence and divergence of natural and supernatural in the early 19th-century Ottoman Empire", was presented by **N. Işık Demirakın** (**Rethymno**). Concentrating on the earlier part of the 19th century, when reform efforts gained momentum and natural sciences became a part of the newly established schools' curricula in the Ottoman Empire, she analysed how the relationship with "supernatural" and "natural" was reshaped in line with the state policies based on the first official newspaper of the Ottoman Empire, *Takvim-i Vekayi*. Demirakın perused the news articles printed under the headings "*garaib*" and "*fünun*," and contended that despite offering different perspectives for making sense of and explaining the world, they were very much in unison in terms of their function: legitimising Mahmud II's rule.

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In lieu of a general assessment of the proceedings, we are happy to present here a transcript of the general discussion that ended the last day of the symposium:[3]

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Marinos Sariyannis: This is the end, we are missing Baki [Tezcan], who had some unpredicted administrative circumstances and Side [Emre], who also had to go. Cornell [Fleischer], I don't know if he's coming to join us later. Anyway, it's a pity we cannot discuss our papers and our views over a glass or two, as it has been usually in the long Halcyon Days tradition, but as I promised yesterday, I will try to live up to this tradition in private, so here's to you dear friends, I'll drink my beer and encourage you all to do so. And now I give the floor to Eleni Gara who kindly accepted to chair our concluding discussion.

Eleni Gara (Chair): Thank you very much Marinos, thank you all, it's a great pleasure and honor to have been here with you all this time, and to hear your work. I learned a lot and actually it has been four very stimulating evenings with thought-provoking papers and rich discussions. We have been introduced to different facets of the broad theme of enchantment and disenchantment in the Ottoman world, and to the work of intellectuals, mostly but not only of Turkish-speaking Muslims, and a lot of them Sufis, we have heard about miracles and wonders, reason, revelation, mystical and temporal knowledge, the nature of knowledge, and the modes of its classification, how to know God and to understand the world, etc. What I see, and it's not really a conclusion, but what I have taken out of these four evenings is that it's not really productive to understand the issue of enchantment/disenchantment in terms of irrationality and rationality, in terms of this dichotomy, but perhaps rather to associate it with different regimes of knowledge. If we agree that enchantment was the default position in the urban world throughout its history, to the extent that it was shamelessly manipulated for imperial propaganda as we just heard, what about the emergence and the inclusion of disenchantment? I feel that we have not really talked about this, and I'll take advantage of my chairing this last discussion session to bring up the issue. I will introduce it with the story that, in my mind, gives food for thought. In June 1797, the ambassador Seyyid Ali Efendi arrives

3 The discussion was transcribed by Sofia Kane, MA student and member of the GHOST team.

in Lyon on his way to Paris. His official program included a visit to the library where a demonstration of electricity took place. His report makes a brief note of the matter without any comment. "Besides books, there was also a demonstration of some sort of electric instruments relating to thunder and lightning." His Greek dragoman. however, Panagiotakis Kodrikas, notes the following in his diary: "Experiments in physics and electricity, which Efendi saw for the first time, he anathematized and compelled me to say that they deceived themselves, because the sound of thunder and the flash of lightning results from the wings of Archangel Gabriel, as God said in the Quran." I would like to open the discussion by asking you, who work with all these things, what do you make of this? The floor is yours.

Marinos Sariyannis: All right, I will summarise my two cents on the topic of enchantment and disenchantment again, and it will be, I think, what one might make of the example you so nicely brought up. As it was highlighted in so many of the excellent papers presented, there are plenty of definitions and theorisation about enchantment or disenchantment and they all have something to contribute to the discussion. In my view, one of the most fruitful is the distinction between transcendence and immanence brought up by Gottfried [Hagen]. So, is the supernatural, i.e. is God present in every action and phenomenon, from human actions to the thunder, as in Eleni's example, or does He inhabit a distant sphere above us all, leaving us the maximum possible freedom to decide and act? In this vein, I would propose that we should see enchantment and disenchantment as a process rather than a phenomenon: a process from transcendence to immanence and vice versa, all the way until the possibility of materialism and atheism appears. A process that can be repeated, inversed, but also coexist with its opposite, as different groups or individuals come to terms with the world and surrounding intellectual climate.

So this brings me to the second point that I think is relevant to the example, which is that it seems to me the major methodological problem (also highlighted by several papers) is that we really know only texts. Eleni's example was not exactly text, it's a behavior, which is different, and it's quite rarer. Texts, which copy other texts, all of which make claims that complement others and less often criticise them... but we don't know how these texts were read, with what degree of deepness or fidelity or skepticism. How much were people really thinking independently? The examples of the ambassador (who actually should

have known better, if he was educated, an *efendi* or a çelebi), or of Katip Çelebi's illuminationism (brought up in several moments of our symposium) are telling. French historians of the occult sciences have talked of *la croyance clignotante,* a blinking, a winking, a flashing belief, a partial belief, so to speak, where practices may sometimes be considered a game, a pastime, or a hobby of sorts. It's about occult practices and science, but it can also be applied to other aspects. What I would suggest is that we should perhaps investigate heresy, rather than orthodoxy; look for the singular cases, for the exceptions, for instance the materialist thinkers for whom we know next to nothing for the moment. If this proves impossible, we could explore and turn again to French historiography. What Lucien Febvre called *l'outillage mental,* the mental equipment or toolbox that frames conceptions of time, nature, causality, and allows for trespassing the borders of established thought.

Another last point (I know, Eleni, that I'm not really answering what I make of the Pasha's example, but perhaps I will help to highlight it): You know I always insist, and have been taught, that the intellectual historian should ultimately put questions in terms of social history. Identifying intellectual trends and traditions is one thing; we also need to move beyond, to understand how they function in society: which social groups favored which trends and why, in what cultural context they did so, what is the role of vernacular culture and what is the role of social status. Now, of course, an even cursory review of our sources, will show that they rarely mention the name of the author. In some cases, in the case of occult sources for instance, it's even rarer to find any kind of information on who the author is, or the author is not even named. So one path I would propose is to give emphasis to the Sufi affiliations of our sources. Because, firstly, identifying the Sufi attachments of an author from even an anonymous treatise is much easier than their social background. When they do not list Sufi fraternities, showing a more or less clear preference for one among them, they almost always will take sides on debates heavily colored by intra-Sufi conflict. Secondly, Ottoman society was deeply integrated through Sufi culture, which means that these affiliations also play the role of social statement, and, although we know very well the differentiation within the fraternity or brotherhood was extremely important, we perhaps can identify some major fraternities and brotherhoods with specific, albeit fluid, social groups.

I know I hijacked Eleni's question in the last intervention...

Eleni Gara (Chair): The idea was to introduce the discussion.

Marinos Sariyannis: Yes, exactly, I would say again my first point, that the disenchantment or re-enchantment is a process, so it's not a general, unilinear process for all. Kodrikas's ambassador obviously lived or thought he lived or wanted to show that he lived—

Eleni Gara (Chair): The interesting thing in this incident is that in the *Sefaretname* he says that he attended an experiment on electricity, that's all: nothing. He or, anyway, whoever wrote the *Sefaretname,* anyway, there is a point there, that there was an experiment—

Marinos Sariyannis: There is an example that shows exactly that—

Eleni Gara (Chair): Okay.

Marinos Sariyannis: We have the texts, and texts show us that at least in the late 18th century, there had been an impact of the Scientific Revolution, a kind of disenchantment, a kind of enlightenment perhaps. The example of the ambassador shows that there is also history behind and beyond texts, like the Pasha mentioned by Lady Montague who may have had dissident thoughts, or promoted this inverse kind of hermeticism: we can practice something that is not permitted to everybody, because we are the select, so it also works inversely.

Gottfried Hagen: I want to throw in one other pair of terms that might not solve anything, but that might enrich the debate in some form, I hope. One is Thomas Bauer's "culture of ambiguity," which I thought, back when it came out ten years ago, was a very thought-provoking approach, and to some degree what Bauer is describing is a process of a decreasing tolerance for ambiguity, and so it's very tempting to correlate this in one way or another to the problem of disenchantment. The disappointment with Bauer's book is that he describes this complex, colorful medieval world full of ambiguities, and then he jumps to contrast it with modernity, and I always felt that we as the Ottomanists are sort of caught in the middle, where that path, some way, goes through, and Bauer never even attempts to explain to us how we get from A to B, other than the

various forms of blanket blame on colonialism. But the notion as such I think is worth exploring.

And the other thing that I wanted to pose here is something, which I hope at some point I'll have the leisure in my life to think through a little bit more; it is to what degree Ottoman culture is a culture of performance, in the sense that being Ottoman, and participating in Ottoman culture, is always in one way or another a performative act of stepping into a particular frame, and acting according to a certain set of rules, and being able to step out of it again. So this is a very rough idea, but again, it might account for some of the simultaneity, then the inherent contradictions that we seem to be dealing with. This is, as I said, a very raw and rough and premature idea, but I thought this might be sort of a forum where it might help some.

Eleni Gara (Chair): It certainly resonates well with a theme that has come up in various papers about this state of diglossia or, if I may put it in this in this way, a public and a private persona, that behave in different ways, as you said.

Harun Küçük: One thing that I wonder about, and this is a very general question, is the limits of intellectual history. We talk about texts, and we access a reality through texts, but I think one question is, well, is that what reality is? In my view, what is most commonly shared, or what people most commonly have, is not access to texts, it's access to personal experience. In that sense, are we not using the text to access this experience, rather than the other way around? Is there not a world beyond text, and is there not a history beyond intellectual history, when we are talking about even intellectual objects? That's one thing I wonder about. Since I've got the floor, I want to say something: Gottfried Hagen, when he talks about Katip Çelebi, it's so hard to just—he said, well, it's your problem, Katip Çelebi is pretty [unintelligible] the way I see it, and he's absolutely right. And in a way, Katip Çelebi also is an indication of what's possible in the Ottoman setting.

I have my own views about Thomas Bauer because I personally think that we don't really have a good language to talk about people really not caring about some things, and we may see that as a kind of tolerance, or love of tolerance, or ambiguity, whereas... I don't know. I think about a lot of things in my scholarship, and in life, as somebody who has seen both Donald Trump and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and I think about that, what does that mean about

people, maybe I have been imagining people wrong all my life. This is maybe the case, that people maybe don't care all that much about all the things that I care about, or all the things that we in this room may care about, and we don't really have a good way to talk about that. That's my view on Thomas Bauer's "culture of ambiguity." Maybe it's not a culture of ambiguity, it's just an absence of an entire register of culture, full stop. That's my random musings based on what Gottfried said.

Cemal Kafadar: I have my own problems with the "culture of ambiguity," but it's a long story, and I won't go there, it's not directly related to what we've been speaking about in the last few days, though obviously there is a good reason that Gottfried brought it up, and we could discuss it. But about intellectual history and the rest of the world, let me just tell you an anecdote which I've already told in an interview that was published and some of you may have read it. Anyway, I was giving an interview on some TV channel at some point a few years ago, and a carpenter I admire very much, a true master of carpentry, my model of a good craftsman, was evidently watching it. A few days later, I met him, I had no idea. He said, "Oh, I saw you on TV speaking to this journalist." I said, "Wow, that's nice, what did you make of what I said, what do you think?" and he said, "You know, I watch many shows like this, I never really listen to what people say, I look at the bookshelves behind them. That's why I watch professors speak. I want to figure out the kind of wood they used, or other material, see if the shelf is bent, figure out if the dimensions are optimal, etc." Just the way I'm looking at Marinos and Eleni right now with bookshelves behind them, and I might be focused merely on that aspect of my encounter with the screen. He was engaged not with my discourse, but with something that's immediately relevant to him, and that too is extremely meaningful, probably much more meaningful than whatever I had been saying. And to me, that's like a lesson about the larger reception and relevance of the many books I read and love to read in manuscript libraries, which I still think are extremely resonant and relevant and meaningful, but the way they touch people's lives, the way they figure in people's lives, is something different. People have very different associations with those books, as we all know, and it is not only on the level of what we consider ideas worthy of intellectual history. Or one reads for those as well but has other priorities. My carpenter friend, I imagine, cares about the program enough to look at it for his own reasons, and I'm sure he listens to some of it. I've never considered

myself an intellectual historian, I read intellectual history avidly and love it, but the world beyond is always of much greater interest to me, though I cannot do one without the other, of course, and hence find myself regularly reading the work of intellectual historians with great admiration while trying to be aware of the limits of this kind of exercise.

As for enchantment and disenchantment, I think these two are very meaningful categories, but there are a couple of aspects we did not discuss, and as this project moves on, it may be worth bringing them up. One of them has to do with considering what lies beyond enchantment and disenchantment, or in the space between them? Do these binaries truly encompass the whole spectrum of positions one wants to be able to understand? Can one be indifferent? What's the position of indifference between enchantment and disenchantment? I don't think this is a huge problem, but speaking only of enchantment and disenchantment, one may be missing that there is a huge world of, "Oh, whatever. I'm neither enchanted nor disenchanted." That means this is—

Eleni Gara (Chair): If I could introduce a word, agnosticism, sort of; is that what you describe, an agnostic stance on the supernatural?

Cemal Kafadar: To some degree, but I am thinking mostly of something like the space between *haram* and *farz*, between what you must do and what you must avoid. It is the larger part of life and comprises all sorts of deeds and thoughts, which can even be reprehensible or commendable, but the largest area is the part in the middle, which is just neutral, indifferent, *mübāh*, like me gently scratching my nose, etc. So that's one conceptual aspect about binaries like enchantment and disenchantment, that one may wish to work on a bit in the future of the project. And the other—I think it came through indirectly at certain points —is the relationship between enchantment and the supernatural. It wasn't tackled directly in this conference, and, as I tried to argue, one can be just as enchanted in the natural as in the supernatural, and I don't think any of you would disagree with this. But we did not consider the diverse kinds of enchantment that take place with the supernatural, or the natural, or with preternatural, or other kinds of categories, and that's another element that calls for some conceptualisation and elaboration. Thank you. I look at bookshelves behind you, and both of you have sturdy shelves, good carpentry.

Guy Burak: I also don't really see—and that goes back to a comment that Maria [Mavroudi] made in the first day—I cannot see how we avoid the mega-narrative that we are post the enlightenment, and the post-enlightenment narrative. And I actually think that even the best attempts to translate it to the fifteenth century inevitably carries this and the flavor of this narrative. I actually don't think that this is very fruitful. I'm all for grand narratives, but I'm not sure that the enchantment and disenchantment helps us get away or come up with a better explanation of the wide range of epistemologies that we are seeing. For many of the people we study, these are not even major questions. Even if they are, they are questions that can be explained after the first second, they can be explained in different ways. I think that when we set out with this question in mind, we will be looking for snippets and moments that help us reinforce the narrative that we have been debunking and debating for, more or less, 80 years now, or maybe even 200. So maybe this is not the right framing.

Maria Mavroudi: I would like to emphasise that this is a comment by an outsider to the Ottoman field who is very grateful for the opportunity to observe it! Every time I discuss with Ottomanists, I am impressed by how central the question of modernity is. Of course, this has to do with the perception of the Ottoman Empire as a failed empire, which failed because it didn't catch up with modernity on time. Of course I come from a field that also studies a historical period and geography perceived as essentially anti-modern. So the problem of modernity is a problem for me as well. But, given that Byzantium is pre-modern, the problem of modernity is not as centrally located for Byzantinists. And it seems to me, if I may be permitted as an outsider, that the centrality of this question in the Ottoman field sometimes side-tracks the discussions. I hope this does not sound like harsh criticism, it is only the thought of an outsider, but I think I heard a number of times today, as a passing observation in a number of papers, "Let's leave modernity aside for a little bit and let's approach things in a different way." So it seems to me that there is a broader desideratum to dislodge modernity from its central position. Maybe we are witnessing the birth pains of a shift in the field—perhaps because our times are post-modern? To me, such a shift is desirable, because it will change the discussion, and this will be productive.

Aslı Niyazioğlu: I will follow up on Guy's remark. As early modern Ottomanists interested in the study of the occult knowledge, where are we now and where do we want to go? Guy mentioned the wide range of epistemologies that his material presents. Do we try to understand this knowledge thoroughly? I think we have not even begun yet. When we look at the material and problems our GHOST project brings out, we realise how little we know our source material. I personally would like to see much more attention to our sources. Rather than trying to come up with big theories, at this point, we do need to carry out the meticulous groundwork. I would like to see much more admission of what we do not understand about our material and more exploration of the ways in which they surprise us. We need to explore our texts more closely.

Eleni Gara (Chair): Thank you, Aslı. Of course you're right, this is a great project, and looking at it from the outside—because although I'm an Ottomanist this is a field that I am totally outside—I think this is wonderful, what you're doing: new material, and in the papers, things that I had no idea existed. So it was a great opportunity to see this panorama, and I'm sure that by the end of the project, a lot more things will come up. So what you say is that we are at the beginning, and you probably know best, a for lot of these texts, you are just trying to figure out how to read them, and how to understand them, and what to make of them. So of course this is important to point out.

Harun Küçük: I take Maria Mavroudi's comments very seriously. This is a question that I myself have questions about: what are we doing with modernity, why should we care about modernity, but I'm also curious about why, for example, I am more easily able to associate with someone like Katip Çelebi than I am with someone like Abdurrahman al-Bistami. What is the affinity there? Let's not call it modernity, but let's talk about—and this might not be just Katip Çelebi, it might not be a period-specific thing. I also associate more easily with Aristotle than I do with some other thinkers, but that's that kind of affinity, and I think modernity is also a question of people like us: how are they like us, and how are they not like us. I'm wondering what an alternative method of dealing with this affinity might be.

Guy Burak: As someone who actually finds much closer affinity to Abdurrahman al-Bistami than to Katip Çelebi, I actually think that these are people—I

was working on the alphabets, and his work on the alphabet, and when you start reading the work you suddenly realise that what he's saying is something that every graphic designer that understands semiotics of typology would say. It's really about what kind of genealogies we want to reconstruct. I think that many of these people have many things to tell us, and I'm not just saying that. I came to the study of these talismans sort of accidentally and in the midst of the pandemic, a period that I think we all agree was a year of talismanic thinking in many ways, and I actually find that many of the things that these people are trying to do are extremely meaningful and resonate with questions beyond the first layer of the discourse. They are reading texts that we may value more, but as for the kind of questions that they are trying to solve, and the kind of logic that they are trying to find, I don't find al-Bistami that distant.

Maria Mavroudi: I think that, in the larger scheme of things, what allows us to discuss enchantment, disenchantment, etc. in the terms that we did is the fact that postmodernism has deconstructed some of these earlier categories. I think the problem for the Ottoman field, as well as for my field, is that we are not really entirely buying into the model of postmodernism, because we cannot: if we do, we are done in. On the one hand, we are benefiting from the post-modern freedom to discuss things like faith and reason, rationality, etc. in new ways. On the other hand, we are still using instruments that were developed under the influence of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century intellectual universe (e.g. paleography, codicology, numismatics, in their form as modern scholarly disciplines). I was struck—and I want to insist that this was part of our punchline in our paper with Cornell—by how much enchanted thinking there is in Vico's work. In many ways one can construe Vico as an Italian provincial who hasn't caught up with what's happening in Central Europe, and who didn't have a very large reception during his lifetime, but then was discovered by postmodernism and became a key figure. We read him and are at ease with the fact that he talks about many things similar to the *aca'ib* discussed at our conference. There may be something in postmodernism that we (Byzantinists and Ottomanists) can capitalise on and apply in fruitful ways, at the same time knowing that we cannot completely buy into the post-modern model.

Güneş Işıksel: As party boomer, as always, I have some other remarks from my own experience, in 2004 or '05 it was, I have just seen a very strange parallel

between the 1650s in France and in the Ottoman cases. So in France, it was the Jansenists and Jesuits in a fierce fight on the nature of miracles. And from there it was obvious, of course, what it meant to me on the Ottoman case. Then I read Lucien Goldmann's *The Hidden God.* At the time, I was much more astonished at reading Pascal, etc., then I started to read more on the French theological-political controversies. Okay, what should I do for the Ottoman case, thence? I just wanted to read some—we have talked about a lot of *Ishrakî* texts. Hopefully, I had at hand all these editions of Henri Corbin and many other excellent translations as well all the apparatus necessary. Then I said, "Well, I have to enter on these." All right, it was not my minor, but I was at the time much more keen on philosophy, so I tried to read all the texts that I could find, at least in the absence of Ottoman critical editions, trying to read especially the seventeenth century Iranian ones, on which especially Henry Corbin had written a lot as well. But to sum up, reading these texts is extremely difficult. All the Arabists or specialists of Islamic philosophy on the one hand; no need to say—it's the same case for the Byzantines: all the major critical editions are done, all the necessary dictionaries and lexicons are quite ready. So while approaching the texts, what I feel while listening at all the papers—there were very meticulous presentations, such as Guy's or Tunç's excellent ones, but on the other hand, mine for instance, it was rather shaky. I was trying to understand the changes in the Ottoman syntax at the turn of the eighteenth century, but even for this, we have only a little here. You have to assess the changes in syntax, you have to study the terminology in the very basic texts—I'm not only talking about the *Sefaretname*—for all the texts of Ottoman philosophy, theosophy, I think we have to first make the initial editions, and then start to discuss the hermeneutical cycles, etc. Okay, that's my point: we are perhaps discussing a bit of many things as if we had achieved a lot of things. That's just what I would like to remind us, sorry.

Eleni Gara (Chair): No, okay, I think you're very harsh with yourself and the others. I don't know if we can really wait for the corpus to be prepared and edited before going on. This was in the nineteenth century or in the early twentieth century, and they were—I don't see it happening anytime soon, so it's great that you're doing it the way that you are.

Aslı Niyazioğlu: Why not be harsh? Of course, we have to communicate with

our colleagues in other fields, like those who work on European cases, but at what cost? I agree with Güneş. I do think that we have to complete initial steps first, such as working on critical editions and defining our terminology more clearly. This work is not "fashionable" anymore. But without it, I do not think we can really move forward.

Maria Mavroudi: About critical editions (again, talking as an outsider): in the Ottoman field, relatively few critical editions of texts are available. Scholars frequently have to resort to manuscripts. This is both a curse and a blessing. Part of the curse, until recently, was the difficulty of accessing manuscripts. This is beginning to change because digital reproductions of manuscripts freely available online are increasing in number. Comparatively speaking, the study and digital accessibility of Latin and Greek manuscripts is more advanced, simply because the study of the Graeco-Roman world is an older discipline. In the course of these longer developments, things are already beginning to change in fundamental ways. Before the free digital access to manuscripts, the modern critical edition as conceived in the nineteenth century imposed a tyranny of the printed text. The modern critical edition necessarily represents the text in a fixed way. With free digital access to manuscripts, as well as the possibilities offered by digital humanities, we are in many ways returning to the manuscript age, because multiple ways of representing the text are now possible electronically. In Byzantine studies, scholars increasingly try to approach manuscripts not just as carriers of text, but as representations of concrete moments in intellectual history. They pay attention to how and why a manuscript was created and how it was received. Efforts in the same direction (e.g. attention to notes that inform us on readership) have been made since the nineteenth century, but now they increase. This means that the need for critical editions is less acute. We can more readily approach the texts as they are, as they are found in the manuscripts. To my mind, a greater challenge is to understand what the texts say in their own terms. I have a great affinity for the difficulty of understanding philosophy written in Arabic. I felt for Side Emre earlier, when she said, "It literally took me a year to understand the diagram." I've had similar experiences. The editions and the dictionaries are not going to solve this problem. This problem is going to persist, because diagrams and other ways of expressing philosophical ideas are part of an intellectual universe that is effectively foreign to us, and that we need to resurrect and understand in its own terms.

Harun Küçük: Maria Mavroudi already made the point very clearly, the alienness of the intellectual culture. And Güneş is talking about how we don't have sufficient physical and intellectual access to this material to really be talking about them all that freely. I agree. One thing that I do wonder, and this maybe has a place in our thinking, it's not the case that they were much more accessible to people who lived in the past, either. That is, some of these were secret texts, some of them were advanced texts, and there are also many texts that you're simply not supposed to venture into without a teacher. So that's one other thing that I'm wondering about. We don't have this access, but nor did most people back then. What do we make of those people who didn't, or maybe they misunderstood it, just like it happens today?

Eleni Gara (Chair): Does this mean—sorry to intervene—but now you raise a very important point. Does this mean that perhaps by focusing on these texts, we are getting a very skewed impression of the social importance, or of the general importance, perhaps not the right word, but for the social meaning of these texts, of this kind of thought that these texts represent.

Tuna Artun: I had a very minor point, just to agree with Harun, and to bring up one of my favorite texts from the mid-seventeenth century. It's anonymous, but it's a commentary on the Ali Çelebi corpus and there there's an extensive quote from al-Jildaki, who's a 14th-century Mamluk alchemist. In the quote he says, well, I read this and the source that he's quoting, but these are great men with great minds and they've been blessed by God with an understanding which is beyond us, and I don't get it. This is basically what he says. This is not long after the composition of the Ali Çelebi corpus.

Eleni Gara (Chair): About my question, so how should we then understand, from a social history perspective, not for an intellectual history?

Güneş Işıksel: To add something else, we have also another difficulty about the exposed denominations of everything. So let's think about *Mesha'i*'s. I have this difficulty: how to attribute this qualification to someone in the seventeenth or sixteenth century. I think Slobodan Ilić has showed it very well in his communication. All these qualificative aspects are still, for each and every individual in that intellectual universe, so shaky, albeit I had done that as well because of its

usefulness, and qualified someone as, I don't know, not exactly a Halveti, but an *Işhrakî*-type Halveti. For these denominations, the main problem is that, most probably, as an outsider or quasi-outsider, I may say that these are based on some consensus which is very rarely put into criticism and question, which I think hinder a larger context of interpretation, criticism, etc. For many major intellectual figures elsewhere in the period, we have very good bibliographies. In order to constitute, for instance, the *champ intellectuel*, as Pierre Bourdieu had suggested, we don't have actually sufficient elements. So jumping up from there to seek —I don't know— if there was enchantment, or not, seems to me, at this stage, a bit shaky to say the least.

Renaud Soler: I would like to emphasise two very practical points. The first is the matter of languages. The Ottoman culture is not only an Ottoman Turkish-speaking culture. The intellectuals, poets, ulama where writing in Arabic and Turkish and Persian. So my question to my colleagues would be: to which point our understanding of this culture is biased by our linguistic limitations? So just one example: we've talked about the *Mizanu'l-hakk* by Katip Çelebi, and the chapter about the parents of the Prophet, and in fact in this chapter he is answering to Kemalpaşazade, who wrote an epistle in Arabic about the resurrection of the parents of the Prophet. So when we take the Turkish part of the problem, we may reach different conclusions than a researcher who would read only the Arabic epistle of Kemalpaşazade, at the first point.

And the second is, I think in intellectual history we mainly deal with individual thinkers. We took al-Bistami, or Katip Çelebi, or whatsoever. But I think the Islamic culture, especially after 12th or the 13th century, is a culture of quotation. So the individuality of authors is very well bound with their abilities with combining quotations from different thinkers, and in scientific culture, or in poetry. So I think we have to think about and understand this logic of quotation. I think a key for understanding intellectual debates or aesthetic changes has to do with the logic of quotation. That's important, because as Güneş said, we are in dire need of editions and new texts and new sources. But we shouldn't edit or think about editing these sources in the same way as we did in the nineteenth century and until today. We have to edit texts with this understanding of the logic of quotation, and it's very clear in Arabic editions. You read a text from the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and the author makes a quotation of a classic, but he makes it this quotation through one or two intermediaries. And

when you read the edited book, you have a reference to Bukhari or Tirmizi, without the path of the quotation. The path is the most important in order to understand the intellectual and social history of knowledge. So those were the two points. Thank you.

Tunç Şen: I'm not sure if anyone really needs to hear what I'm going to say, because Harun and Tuna already referred to that. Sometimes I feel that we attribute more authority and intellectual strength and, you know, power to the agents that we study in the past. Let's talk about Ibn Arabi, for instance, and all the readers and all the authors who refer to Ibn Arabi at some point in their texts. I sometimes think that Ibn Arabi is like the Foucault of medieval and early modern times. They refer to him without necessarily engaging with what he wrote, or what he said. There are ways that past agents, actors, authors, and readers did, and we can explore those moments, or those misreadings, or lack of readings, or lack of real engagements, and I think there could be a history of this to be written at some point. Just my two cents on this.

Eleni Gara (Chair): Perhaps even finding out the manipulation of quotations. I would expect that there is a lot of manipulation of quotations and authorships going around.

Slobodan Ilić: With what Aslı said, actually that we first need to translate, we first need to understand, actually. We are digging channels with the spoon. We are using the wrong tools for our task. Our problem is not to understand. Of course, to understand means to translate this into words and thoughts we are used to. Somebody mentioned—I think Renaud mentioned—Ibn Arabi. People generally say that Ibn Arabi developed his own language. It is wrong. Ibn Arabi speaks Arabic language, and we think that we know Arabic language, starting from, what is *wajada* in Arabic? It means 'to find,' not 'to exist,' something exists only if it is found. Or *'ayn*?—*'ayn* means 'eye', *'ayn* means spring or source of water, so this is the origin of something. Have you ever thought, it the modern English language, why there is one sole word, 'intelligence,' used both for espionage and for reasoning? Because when we are listening, we are doing the same thing as Secret Service, we are discerning important from unimportant. But if we are trying to understand hermetical texts, and somebody mentioned that those texts are not written for reading, not written for the general

public, the guy wrote this for himself, trying to think more clearly if he puts this on paper. And if you want to understand this, you should first exclude rules of reasoning we are using to read Aristotle or whatever. We should try to catch the feeling of the guy who wrote the text. So probably we should not think of how to translate, everybody translated Ibn Arabi in completely different language. Even William Chittick himself, probably the biggest Ibn Arabi scholar in the world, used different terms for the same of Ibn Arabi's words. In every book, he changed this. In the end, he was not satisfied with what he found, there are some things we cannot translate. Science scholarship is to translate everything in a words of reason, but we are dealing with things that have not too much to do with reason. So trying to translate this is actually an abyss we've reached. Sorry for your time.

Eleni Gara (Chair): To say it in a different way, translating is interpreting. If I understand correctly, you advocate for a kind of empathy in order to be able to understand.

Slobodan Ilić: After all translations and commentaries of Ibn Arabi, I still better understand the original Arabic text. This is the problem in all esoteric texts we are dealing with.

Marinos Sariyannis: Dimitris [Giagtzoglou] posted the message in the chat earlier, just about this. Al-Bistami's Ottoman translator, Şerif Mehmed Efendi, makes more or less the same point about the complexities he encountered, trying to understand what al-Bistami was trying to argue about. What I wanted to say when I raised my hand, I wanted to comment on Tunç's very insightful point, the similarity with Foucault. I think it was Colin Imber who had made this point, that everybody in American academia feels compelled to quote Foucault, because the people who will evaluate him or her will have written theories on Foucault, and so on and so forth. Yes, everybody talks about Foucault, and a few of us really have—I mean, I have not read Foucault, and I'm not really into Foucault. But again, the fact that everybody talks about Foucault means something. It means something both about our history of ideas, or intellectual history if you prefer, about which authors have this kind of influence or this kind of prestige rather, that have to be constantly quoted, and on the other hand, one may like Foucault or not, or like his writings more or less, but that

he's constantly quoted means also something about what he wrote, that matters such as the ones Foucault talked about are relevant in our era. So yes, I talked in the beginning about the need to show some skepticism against texts, but on the other hand, it is the great texts that build—not our world really, but our mental world, so to speak. The thing is to remember that we are just a small and very self-centered elite in that matter.

Harun Küçük: To build on both what Güneş was saying and what Marinos is saying, there is of course the question of, well, some people actually do care, right? There are people like that. On the example of Foucault, when they treat Foucault, they treat him differently than the people who just do an obligatory kind of footnote or whatever, and it just seems to me like we should have a way of talking about, well you know, öz *hakiki*, genuine Foucaultians, and pretend Foucaultians, right. This is part of the problem I'm having, one thing that we talk about is epistemology, and we talked about it a lot, which is fine. We see an epistemology there, but then there are actual people in the past who wrote about epistemology, and that's not the people we're talking about. So how do we distinguish those two types of people? Who may have a tacit epistemology, or maybe some very vague and very superficial gesture towards what kind of thing knowledge is, versus somebody like devotes an entire lifetime to understanding the problem of knowledge. It seems to me that there are different sorts of people. I don't know how we deal with those separate registers. It goes with language, too. Some people are kind of like, "Man, you know what? The poem that you just recited, it sounds so beautiful, I don't understand a word of it, but it sounds like fine poetry," whereas there are other people who are in the business of mastering language. My confusion is about how to deal with these matters.

Tuna Artun: I don't really have a strong opinion on Foucault, but I love this Foucaultian theme, and I'd like to just consider the flip side of this. If you absolutely hate Foucault, how likely would you be to talk about your hatred during a departmental meeting, or publish about it? I'm just wondering, there must have been people who absolutely hated Ibn Arabi, but never really raised the point maybe, until much later in the sixteenth century when the cultural norms began to shift.

Marinos Sariyannis: May I in this matter note—Baki Tezcan is not here, but he has written about Mehmed Kadızade's autobiography. Kadızade had been reading Ibn Arabi, and I think he initially liked him, but then he just turned the other way around. He was really outspoken against him, perhaps. But of course on the other hand, this is the early seventeenth century, it's somehow different there.

Eleni Gara (Chair): This is a great discussion and well I asked Marinos earlier how long it should go, and he said, "Whatever. Let's go and discuss as long as we want," so feel free to continue with sharing your thoughts, or posing questions, or ...

Kostas Sarris: I think that it was a great discussion, and thank you very much for all this exotic (for me) things. This is a question: how can we talk about the Ottoman intellectual world together with the Greek Orthodox, the Slav Orthodox—

Eleni Gara (Chair): The Jewish—

Kostas Sarris: What Renaud said: the question about the Arab-speaking Ottomans, the Jews, and I'm wondering, how could the Armenians be inscribed —we don't know about the Armenians. We had a workshop some years ago in Berlin with Tijana Krstić about the OTTOCONFESSION project, and all this discussion, and we were looking for some connections between the confessional developments in the Greek Orthodox world, and the Muslim Ottoman world. We were waiting for Krstić to tell us something about it, and finally she told us, "Oh my God, I was waiting for someone from among you to tell me something about the connection of the Greeks with the group of Ottomans." I think that this is an open question. For example, I think that Cornell did it yesterday, when he asked me about the lettrism and whether Meletios uses, or has some citation to the science of letters. I was thinking about it, and Meletios doesn't have anything about it. The question is that we have the example, and it's Panagiotis Nicoussios, he uses lettrism for several things. But after Nicoussios, we don't have this kind of knowledge in the Greek Orthodox intellectual world—

Eleni Gara (Chair): Or we don't know about it.

Kostas Sarris: Or we don't know. We don't have specific articles or archives or manuscripts. We don't have any reference, at least, any record about it. And this is quite interesting, how some parts of common supernatural knowledge or—for example, Maria told about the interconnection in the late Byzantine, early Ottoman period of this knowledge. I feel, at least with my colleagues in Berlin and later, that after the mid-seventeenth century, we can't find many common places, apart from some parts Harun has spoken about, in some archives, with Alexandros Mavrokordatos etc. But after that, it's quite strange.

Eleni Gara (Chair): If I may say something, and then I'll give the floor to Marinos. I think that we have not been looking closely enough, because actually, given the interconnections and that there are a lot more people (intellectuals, primarily among the Phanariot circle, but also in other environments) who study, who are getting educated in Ottoman Turkish and languages, who engage, have friendships, and have correspondence with Muslim intellectuals—Esad Efendi is a known case from the work of Penelope Stathi. So there must be something, maybe it's there, and we have not found it yet.

Marinos Sariyannis: I would very much like it to be so, that's what my initial idea was. But then again, Nicoussios really is not into the science of letters, he's into Kabbalah. We have in the GHOST project a doctoral student, he was also a student of Tunç's in Leiden, Marcos Litinas, he's writing his thesis on the Phanariot occult. The impression we have until now is that contrary to what I would expect, perhaps to what all of us would expect, there are these few Phanariot scholars who have written about occult sciences, but there seems to be nothing Ottoman or "oriental" about it. There is, you know, Aristotelian occultism, or Pico della Mirandola's Renaissance occultism, they are not looking—they may read Ottoman, and I am less confident about this than I had been some years ago, but it's like they don't want to. On the contrary, if I may judge from the very few known texts of vernacular occultism in Greek, there we do have this influence, and I like very much this text, the Vernardakis Codex, which is a late nineteenth-century copy of a grimoire of mainly demonic magic, where there is a very strong influence of Islamic magic. There are the *vefk*, the magic squares, the names of God, and all referred to with the Turkish or Islamic

names: *vefk*, *esma* and so on. And then these coexist with patterns and elements from the Western magic, like the *sator arepo* square and so on. I didn't expect this, but it seems that the scholarly Greek culture was very reluctant in this aspect, except for perhaps this small group of Esad Efendi, and Notaras, and his pals. I don't know, it's still to be explored, but the impression I get is very different from the one I expected.

Eleni Gara (Chair): Maybe they didn't write about it. Which is another thing, what to commit in writing and—

Marinos Sariyannis: There are works about esotericism, but this is Renaissance esotericism, Italian Renaissance.

Maria Mavroudi: I'm wondering whether what Marinos brings up, that there is less expressed communication with the Islamic occultism on the part of the Phanariots, is the result of a very old concept, all the way back to antiquity. The concept is that following a particular religion obliges one to accept its attendant cosmology. The phenomena and techniques that we are talking about (I'll call them Neoplatonic) are based on a cosmology. It is difficult to readily use the "Neoplatonic" tools because it is not as easy to borrow somebody else's cosmology. This occurred to me as Marinos was talking, because I also, like Eleni, have the expectation that there is more than meets the eye. I do not know if Markos Litinas is already pursuing this, but I think that many answers will come from simply following who owns what manuscript, and not who is writing what. In other words, we need to pay attention to what they were reading. We must try to reconstitute the libraries of the Phanariots in languages other than Greek. I cannot, right now, say what I think the Phanariots were reading in these languages, but I have really wondered about it, and maybe that's a line of inquiry that can be pursued.

Tuna Artun: Thank you. Just to say a little more on Kostas's point, sometimes these links are extremely difficult to establish, even if you, like Professor Mavroudi was just saying, you sense that there's something deeper. I was working on an earlier period, late fifteenth century, on the immediate precursor to the Safed circle of Jewish occultists who arrived from Spain in the Ottoman Empire, and they lived in the very same places, like Edirne, Thessaloniki, Nicopolis, that

some of my Muslim (Rumi and otherwise) occultists were residing in precisely in the same period, so looking at people like Rabbi Yosef Karo etc. Clearly they're dealing with similar kinds of material, they're engaged in remarkably similar practices. Whether or not they were talking to one another is something we can't really find from the sources. Now in the Greek tradition, there's something probably different. There's less seeing eye to eye in terms of the intellectual tradition, and that's kind of beyond my realm of expertise.

Marinos Sariyannis: Obviously we could talk about these things forever and ever. I just want to draw attention to a comment in the chat by Harun about his student. After a seminar on Neoplatonism he was thinking all the way that all the fuss was about somebody named Neil Plato, Neo Plato, or whatever.

These are things that might also be intriguing in our study of texts, audiences, and the people behind them. Obviously, we could go on and on forever. I do hope we will have an opportunity very soon to repeat, and all the more to repeat face to face in a real conference. This is something we greatly missed these days. On the other hand, many colleagues had the opportunity to converse with us, and I think this is a win-win situation for both sides, panelists and attendees. I really implore you to send your texts for the proceedings. If not until the summer, at least until the end of the year. I mean this will make a really great volume, and we could proceed really quick. I'm so much looking forward to having this volume proceeding, even though—

Eleni Gara (Chair): If I may add that this will be an important volume for us that do not work on intellectual history, so please do it. Send it.

Marinos Sariyannis: For many of us it's a cultural history, why not. I prefer cultural history as well. I'm immensely happy we have had this, it was so fascinating, I hope and I think that it was the same for all of us, and I just have to wish many happy returns. So thank you all—and Happy New Year, with health and joy and creativeness as well.

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D. Sources

Examples of translated materials for the study of Ottoman occultism III

Descriptions of various occult sciences in Ahmed Taşköprüzade's (d. 1561) encyclopaedia, *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda* ("Key to felicity"), completed in 1557:

[fourth tree, related to essences (*al-aʿyān*) – branch of "natural science" (*ʿilm al-ṭabīʿī*)]

The science of dream interpretation (*ʿilm taʿbīr al-ruʾyā*):

> It is a science by which the relation (*munāsaba*) between the imaginations of the soul (*al-takhayyulāt al-nafsāniyya*) and the affairs of the unknown (*al-umūr al-ghaybiyya*) is recognised, in order to be moved (*yantaqal*, "to be transported") from the first to the second (!), in order to obtain information from it [i.e. from knowledge of the unseen], regarding the conditions of the soul in the material world.
>
> Know that the dream is an act of the rational faculty of the soul (*fiʿl li-l-nafs al-nāṭiqa*). If there were no truth to it, there wouldn't be any point in bringing about these faculties in the human being. But God, the Wise, the High, is free from anything that is in vain.

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> Dreams are of two kinds: The first kind, which is the prevalent one, are confused dreams (*aḍghāth aḥlam*) and sayings of the soul (*aḥādīth al-nafs*) from lowly thoughts (*min al-khawāṭir al-radiyya*), because the soul—in this state—is like water that is surging with waves, not admitting of any form [i.e. not allowing for the imprint of any clear image]. The second kind, which is the less common one, are true dreams. And those are of two kinds: (1) a kind which does not require interpretation; (2) a kind which does require interpretation. And therefore an interpreter is needed to be skillful [in understanding] the difference between confused dreams and [real] dreams, and other things, in order to distinguish between spiritual and material expressions (*al-kalimāt al-rūḥāniyya wa-l-jismāniyya*), and to differentiate between the different classes of men—because there are men whose dreams are not true, and there are men whose dreams are true; then there are those who confirm this for them. And there are those who explain that they encountered things while asleep that were great to be imagined. And there are those among them who do not describe anything like it. Therefore, the Greeks said: the interpreter must apply himself to express the dreams of philosophers (*al-ḥukamāʾ*, lit. wise men) and kings, to the exclusion of [those of] low people (*dūn al-ṭaghām*). That is because their dreams are part of prophecy. As the Prophet said: The true dream (*al-ruʾyā al-ṣādiqa*) is part of the forty-six parts of prophecy.

The science of the principles of the stars (*ʿilm aḥkām al-nujūm*, lit. knowledge of the precepts of the stars):

> It is a science by which the shapes of the celestial spheres are deduced from their situations, that is the locations of the celestial spheres and the stars, by opposition (*muqābala*), conjunction (*muqārana*), trigon (*talthlīth*), hexagon (*tasdīs*) and quadrature (*tarbīʿ*), and according to the events that come to pass in the world of generation and corruption—such as weather conditions, minerals, plants, animals ...
>
> Know that many scholars consider the science of astronomy absolutely forbidden. And some of them consider forbidden the belief that the stars have an impact in themselves. It has been transmitted on the authority of al-Shāfiʿī, may God have mercy upon him, that he said: If the astronomer believes that there is no *muʾaththir* (i.e. no thing that effects) except God, but that God makes things run according to His custom, in that this or that comes about, and the *muʾaththir* is God, then there is, in my opinion, no harm in this. And as for blame, it must be brought upon those who believe in the power of stars to affect [the course of events].

The science of magic (*ʿilm al-siḥr*):

Know that magic is that of which the cause is hidden to the majority of minds and which is difficult to discover. The truth of it is everything, all the sayings and deeds, which enchant the minds and which guide the souls towards them, by wonder (*taʿajjub*) and appreciation and attentiveness. It is a science which explores the knowledge of the celestial states and the conditions of the stars and their connection with earthly matters (*irtibāṭihā maʿa al-umūr al-arḍiyya*) and in particular the three kingdoms of nature, so that from this mixture strange deeds appear and wondrous secrets, the reasons and causes of which are hidden.

And the benefit of magic lies in learning to guard oneself against it, because engaging in it is forbidden in the Law. Oh God, in order to defend against a magician who alleges to be a prophet. As for the science of it (i.e. as for the knowledge of magic), most declared it to be permissible. Some of them [even] declared it to be a collective duty (*farḍ kifāya*), because of the possibility that a magician might appear who claims to be a prophet, to show extraordinary things (*khawāriq*) by magic. So it is necessary for there to be someone who can defend the community against him.

And there are different "ways" in it [different kinds of magic]:

1. The Indian way: the purification of the soul —see the book *Mirʾāt al-maʿānī fī idrāk al-ʿālam al-insānī* ("The Mirror of Meanings concerning the Grasping of the Human World"). – 2. The way of the Nabateans: using spells (*ʿamal al-ʿaẓāʾim*, doing incantations, lit. "firm resolutions") at appropriate times. See the book *Siḥr al-nabaṭ* ("The Magic of the Nabateans") by Ibn Waḥshiyya. – 3. The way of the Greeks: Making the celestial spheres and the stars subservient spiritually (*taskhīr rūḥānī al-aflāk wa-l-kawākib*). See the *Kitāb al-wuqūfāt li-l-kawākib* ("The Book of the Investigations into the Stars"); *Kitāb Ṭīmāūs li-Asṭūṭālīs* (the *Timaeus* of Aristotle [*sic*!]); his letters to Alexander; the *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* of al-Majrīṭī. – 4. The way of the Hebrews and the Copts and the Arabs: To invoke names, the meaning of which are unknown, as if they were oaths (*aqsām*) and spells (*ʿazāʾim*), as if they (the Hebrews, Copts and Arabs) were determined to make powerful angels subservient to the *jinn* by way of these spells. Works written on this type of magic include: the *Kitāb al-jamhara* by al-Khwārizmī, *al-Īḍāḥ* by al-Andalusī, *Kitāb al-ʿAmā* ("The book of blindness") by Khalaf b. Yūsuf al-Dasmāsānī, *Kitāb al-basātīn li-istikhdām al-uns li-arwāḥ al-jinn wa-l-shayāṭīn* ("The book of the Gardens to

make human beings subservient to the spirits of the *jinn* and the *shayṭāns*"), *Bughyat al-nāshid* ("The object of desire of the one who seeks"), *Maṭlab al-qāṣid* ("The [object of the] search of the one who pursues [something]").

The science of talismans (*ʿilm al-ṭilasmāt*):

The meaning of the word *ṭilasm* is: a knot that cannot be untied (*ʿaqd lā yunḥall*). It is said that the name is inverted (i.e. the word needs to be read backwards), i.e. *musalliṭ*, because it is of the essential substance(s) of subjugation and ruling over (*min jawāhir al-qahr wa-l-tasalluṭ*) [i.e. the essence of a talisman is that it has the power to subjugate and rule over that against which it is used or for the purpose of which it is used]. It is a science that seeks to explore the quality (*kayfiyya*, lit. "the how-ness") of the mixture of the heavenly, active faculties (*al-qiwā al-samāwiyya al-faʿāliyya*) with the earthly, passive faculties (*bi-l-qiwā al-arḍiyya al-munfaʿila*), at appropriate times, in terms of the desired acts and effects, together with appropriate, invigorating incense (*bakhūrāt*), which draws towards the spirituality of that talisman (*jāliba li-rūḥāniyyat dhālika al-ṭilasm*), so that from these matters strange acts might come about in the world of generation and corruption. And the science of talismans is easier to handle than the science of magic, because its principles and causes are known.

The science of *sīmiyā'*:

This is a name applied to types of magic that are not real (*yuṭlaq ʿalā ghayr al-ḥaqīqī min al-siḥr*), as is well-known. The main substance of it is occurrences of fantastic images (*mithālāt khayāliyya*) in the atmosphere (*fi-l-jaw*), which do not have an existence in sense-perception (*fi-l-ḥiss*). And it is applied to the bringing into existence (*ījād*) of these images in their forms (*ṣuwar*, "images", "shapes") in sense-perception; and they are [or become] forms in the substance [or element] of air (*fī jawhar al-hawā'*). Because of this, their passing is quick, according to the speed of the transformation (*taghayyur*) of the substance of air... It is quick to receive and quick to pass, because of its humidity.

As for the quality (*kayfiyya*, the "how-ness") of the occurrences of these forms (*ṣuwar*) and their causes (*ʿilaluhā*), it is a hidden matter—only the "people of *sīmiyā'*" examine these things.

Our aim here is not to uncover the confusion from these images (*amthāl*) and to summarize the situation, so that the magician (*al-sāḥir*) might pursue some-

thing—from special properties (*khawāṣṣ*) or oils (*adhān*) or special liquiscents (*māʾiʿāt khāṣṣa*) or special words (*kalimāt khāṣṣa*), which bring about special visions (*mukhayyalāt*) and a perception of the senses, by eating and drinking [some substances prepared in a special way] or something along these lines. And there is no truth to it ... The benefit of this science and its aim are both very obvious. The word *sīmiyāʾ* is Arabicised Hebrew (*ʿibrānī muʿarrab*); its origin is *sīm yah*, which means "the name of God".

The science of *kīmiyāʾ* ("alchemy"):

It is a science the aim of which is to strip from mineral gems (*al-jawāhir al-maʿdaniyya*) their special properties (*khawāṣṣ*) and to put them to use for special purposes, which they didn't have. The word alchemy (*al-kīmiyāʾ*) is Arabicized Hebrew (*ʿibrānī muʿarrab*); its origin is *kīm yah*, which means "a sign from God" (*āyatun min Allāh*). People disagree greatly with regard to it. Many hold the opinion that it is impossible, except that they do not provide evidence for the fact that it is impossible... As for those who say that it is possible: among them is Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. He argued for the possibility of it in his two books, *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* and *al-Mulakhkhaṣ*. The upshot of his argument is that the nonprecious metals (*filizzāt*) are all combined in the specificity (*mushtaraka fi-l-nawʿiyya*, lit. "sharing in the characteristics relative to the type") and their external character traits (*al-akhlāq al-ẓāhira*) are only earthly matters (*umūr arḍiyya*), the transformation of which is permissible. Because trying to change [things] in nature (*al-istiḥāla fī al-ṭabīʿa*) is not forbidden. And from among those who claim that it is impossible are Ibn Taymiyya and al-Jawharī and Ibn al-Ṣāʾigh, except that they did not provide any convincing argument that would bolster their opinion that it is impossible, let alone [anything that would provide] certainty. And in this vein, Yaʿqūb al-Kindī wrote a treatise on the impossibility of it. But if only he had actually provided an argument that would support this supposition!

Know that this science was a miracle (*muʿjiza*) of Moses, which he taught to Qārūn, and what happened happened. Then it [i.e. the science of alchemy] appeared among the giants (*jabābira*) of the people of *Hūd* and they practiced it. They built a city of gold and silver, the like of which had never been created in the lands. And among those who became famous for attaining it [i.e. the science of alchemy] was Muʾayyid [al-Ṭughrāʾī], of whom it was said: He attained the elixir (*al-iksīr*), which is the medicine the philosophers (*al-ḥukamāʾ*) prepare; they cast it onto the body, when it is affected by dissolution [when it is in a passive state of melting away]; and it transforms it, like poison transforms the body when it is poured over it (or: when

it comes into contact with it). But it does so to make it better, not worse (lit. "for renovation, to the exclusion of corruption"). They call the material of this medicine "the philosopher's stone" (*al-ḥajar al-mukarram*); often they also say: "the stone of Moses", because it was Moses who taught it to Qārūn. The condition (*ḥāl*) of this medicine differs according to the strength of the preparation or its weakness, to the extent that al-Ṭughrāʾī cast a *mithqāl* of the elixir onto sixty-thousand other minerals, and it turned to gold ...

If you know this, then know that the origin (*aṣl*) of this art is that the non-precious metals, which are the essences (*al-jawāhir*), are not burnt by fire, but melt instead—and, once fire leaves them, they return to their initial state. They are these seven objects (? *munṭariqāt*): gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, lead and zinc. They are the same in their essences (*fī dhawātihā*). The difference between them is not in their quiddities (*mā-hiyyāt*), but in their accidents (*aʿrāḍ*, "contingent, non-essential characteristics") ... The fabrication (*ṣanʿa*, lit. "work", "manufacture", "art") [of gold and silver] does not stand in the place of the act of nature (*fiʿl al-ṭabī a*), despite the fact that in nature there are also many conditions, so that the chance of them coming about is rare. It is because of this that gold and silver are [in fact] rare among the minerals ... That is to say, mercury, which is the origin of gold and silver, must be of utmost purity in the mineral, and its maturity completed; then pure sulphur is mixed with it, so that the atoms (*ajzāʾ*) of the two of them become according to the original proportion (*ʿalā al-nisba al-aṣliyya*). And the heat of the mineral must be in equilibrium, no accident of coldness or dryness should be exposed to them, nor any of the things that are salty (*mulūḥāt*, "saltinesses") and bitter (*marārāt*, "bitternesses") and sour (*ḥumūḍāt*, "acitidies", "sournesses"). Then, from that, over the course of [a long] time—with the permission of God, the Creator, the Wise, the Powerful and Knowing—pure gold will be produced. And, in the same way the other precious stones—God, the Ultimate Effective Cause, bless whatever He wishes!

[sub-branches of natural sciences; sub-branches of physiognomy]

The science of fortune-telling (*ʿilm al-ʿirāfa*):

It is the knowledge of inference (*istidlāl*) from some current occurrences to some future occurrences, by correlation (*munāsaba*) or by the hidden resemblance (*mushābaha*), or the connection, which exists between the two; either because of their nature as known [aspects] of *one* matter. Or because of the nature of that which is in the present an indication for that which is in the future (*mā fi-l-ḥāl ʿilla li-mā fi-l-mustaqbal*). On the condition that the connection between the two

of them is hidden; that it can only be seen by (very unique) individuals—either through experience, which they witnessed in the likes of them, or through a very gentle condition in their souls (*bi-ḥāla mūdiʿa fī anfusihim*), in their *fiṭra* (natural condition), inasmuch as a share of the unseen overpowers the one who looks at them, whom the Prophet called "speaker" (*muḥaddith*, "narrator"), and he is the one "afflicted" in supposition and physiognomy (*muṣīb fi-l-ẓann wa-l-firāsa*)—as we have explained in the [section on the] science of physiognomy.

[sub-branches of astrology]

Know that the decrees (*aḥkām*, "rules", "principles") of the stars are not the same as the science (*ʿilm*) of the stars, because the latter is known by arithmetic (*ḥisāb*), which is a branch of mathematics (*min furūʿ al-riyāḍī*); while the former is known by the evidence (*dalāla*, "sign", "indication") of nature (*ṭabīʿa*), according to the "traces" (*āthār*), i.e. it is a branch of the natural sciences (*furūʿ al-ṭabīʿī*).

The science of choices (*ʿilm al-ikhtiyārāt*):

It is a science which looks into the decrees (*aḥkām*) of every moment (*waqt*) and time (*zamān*)—of the good and the bad—of times one needs to be careful to start things, times at which it is recommendable to pursue things, and times at which the pursuit of things is "so-and-so" (*bayn wa bayn*). Every moment has a special relation to some good things, and some of them to bad things, depending on the occurrence (*kawn*) of the sun in the zodiac (*fi-l-burūj*), and the moon in its mansions (*fi-l-manāzil*), and the positions occurring (*al-awḍāʿ al-wāqiʿa*) between the two of them, in terms of opposition (*al-muqābala*), quadrature (*tarbīʿ*), hexagonal relation (*tasdīs*) and the like. It is even possible—because of the exactitude (*ḍabṭ*) of these conditions (*aḥwāl*)—to determine a [good] moment for every affair one intends: like travel and building [things] and cutting clothes and other matters. The benefit of this science is evident in a way that is not hidden from anyone.

The science of geomancy (*ʿilm al-raml*):

It is the inference [of evidence] (*istidlāl*) by way of the twelve shapes [of sand] (*bi-ashkālihi al-ithnā ʿashar*), according to the conditions of a given matter at the time of the question (*ʿalā aḥwāl al-masʾala ḥīna al-suʾāl*). Most of the matters are affairs of clear estimation, pursuant to insufficient experiences (*ʿalā tajārib ghayr kāfiyya*). That is because they say that there are twelve signs of the zodiac, and each one of them necessitates (*yaqtaḍī,* "makes necessary") a particular letter, and

a particular shape of the shapes mentioned. So the time of the question of what is desired necessitates [some particular] positions of the signs of the zodiac and the faculties of the particular shape from the sand. These shapes—because of their meanings (*madlūlāt*) from the signs of the zodiac—indicate special decrees (*aḥkām makhṣūṣa*), which correspond to the positions of the signs of the zodiac. But they are relative (*umūr taqrībiyya*), not certain (*lā yaqīniyya*) ... This science [i.e. geomancy] was Idrīs' miracle (*muʿjiza*). The external meaning of the *ḥadīth* is that it is possible to examine sand when it comes to some matters. But that is not the case. If the miracle had made it possible for humans, then there would not be a difference between the miracle and the art [of geomancy]. And then the prophet would not be different from anyone else. Yet, it is possible for a saint to bring about (*ẓuhūr*, to make appear) extra-ordinary things (*khawāriq li-l-ʿādāt*).

The science of omens (*ʿilm al-fāl*):

It is a science by which one learns of coming events, by way of a sudden occurrence of a matter, by speech, or by hearing of it from someone, or by opening a copy of the Qurʾān, or by words of someone who believes in it from the prophets or saints. The subject matter of this science is obvious from its definition. Its benefit and advantage are like those of geomancy. But the most correct [thing about it], which the Law bears witness to, is its permissibility; while experience [bears witness] to its truthfulness. Drawing omens (*al-tafāʾul)* is done with the holy Qurʾān. The practice of drawing omens this way has been passed down from the companions of the Prophet and from the pious forefathers, may God be pleased with them all. The practice of "opening" (*fatḥ*) an omen from a copy of the Qurʾān is very widespread among the people. But the best is the expression of meanings (*al-iʿtibār bi-l-maʿānī*) without words and letters. The Prophet used to draw omens; and good omens used to please him. But he would not draw bad omens (*lā yataṭayyir*, "he would not practice *ṭīra*"). When he emigrated to Medina and drew close to the town, he heard a man shout: "Oh Sālim!" So he said to his companions: "He greeted us" (lit. *sallamanā*, "he extended peace and blessing upon us", "he protected us from harm"). And when he entered Medina, he heard another man say, "Oh Ghānim!" So the Prophet said: "He granted us [booty]" (*ghanamanā*). Then, when he descended, he came with fresh dates and said: "the town is *ḥalāl* for us." There are many examples of this.

As for drawing bad omens (*al-taṭayyur*): The Prophet forbade it, saying: "No *ṭīra*, no *hāmma* and no *ṣifr*!"[1]

1 "Do not engage in *ṭīra*, observing owls (or prognosticating based on venomous reptiles)

The science of casting lots (*ʿilm al-qurʿa*):

It is a science by which one seeks to learn what will happen in the future, by way of dropping (*wuqūʿ*) shapes (*shakl min al-ashkāl*), with letters written on them (*allatī tuktab ʿalayhā ḥurūf*). In this way information about what one wants is sought. This is exactly like geomancy. You can have an appreciation of its conditions from it. It's just weaker than geomancy, in terms of the indications it can give—although geomancy is weak already, as we have mentioned.

The science of *ṭīra* and *zajr*

This is the opposite of *fāl*. While the aim of *fāl* is to find out whether or not one should go ahead with a matter, in the case of *zajr* it is the question of whether one should "flee" from a matter. It is the inauspicious feeling (*tashāʾum*) one gets from a thing that repels the eyes and ears—that from which the soul flees, that which is not natural (*mimmā laysa bi-ṭabīʿī*). As for the aversion of the eyes and ears from what is natural, like man's aversion from the screeching of iron and the sound of the donkey, it does not belong to this...

[sub-branches of magic (*fī furūʿ al-siḥr*)]

Know that, seeking to bring about events–when it is only by the influence of the soul (*al-taʾthīr al-nafsānī*, lit. by effects produced by the soul)—is [called] magic (*al-siḥr*). If it is [carried out] by way of seeking the help of (*istiʿāna*, "resorting to") the celestial spheres, it is "calling upon the stars" (*daʿwa al-kawākib*, "the invocation of the stars"); if it is by way of mixing heavenly and earthly powers, it is [the science of] talismans; if it is by way of seeking help from special natural properties (*istiʿāna bi-l-khawāṣṣ al-ṭabīʿiyya*), either by recitation—then it is the science of special properties (*ʿilm al-khawāṣṣ*); or by writing—then it is *nīranjāt*; or by actions other than the two [i.e. other than recitation or writing]—then these are spells (*al-ruqā*, "incantations," "charms", "magic"); if it is by way of seeking help from innocent spirits (*al-arwāḥ al-sādhija*, "plain spirits"), it is [called] incantation (*al-ʿazāʾim*); if it is by making appear these spirits in the forms (*qawālib*) of ghosts (*ashbāḥ*), it is [called] the science of summoning (*istiḥḍār*, "seeking to bring into the presence"); it is [also] called "the subjugation of the *jinn*" (*taskhīr al-jinn*). As for reports about events which have not come about, either in the

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or that which is "void" (*ṣifr*, lit. "empty", "zero")!" For *ṭīra* see *EI2*, "*Fa'l*" and "*Iyāfa*" (T. Fahd); for *hām* or *hāma/hāmma*, see *EI2*, "*Ṣadā*" (T. Fahd).

past, or the present, or the future, that is the science of divination (*ʿilm al-kihāna*, "sooth-saying").

Furthermore, human beings—just as they are able to make incorporeal things (*mujarradāt*) appear (*istiḥḍār*), they can also make that which is present disappear from sense perception (*taghyīb al-ḥāḍir ʿan al-ḥiss*). This is called the science of concealing (*ikhfāʾ*, lit. "hiding", "making disappear"). And likewise the act of making matters disappear that are present (*ikhfāʾ al-umūr al-ḥāḍira*), from [before the eyes of] those who are present (*ʿan al-ḥāḍirīn*); this is called tricks (*ḥiyal*). There are many examples of it. So let us list these sciences in this manner.

The science of divination (*al-kihāna*):

It is the coming together (*munāsaba*, lit. "convenience", "relation", "agreement") of human spirits with incorporeal spirits—from *jinn* and demons (*shayāṭīn*)—and seeking to learn from them (*istiʿlāmuhā minhā*) about the particular states (*al-aḥwāl al-juzʾiyya*, the states that are characterised by particularities) occurring in the world of generation and corruption. But they pertain especially to future affairs. There was a lot of that among the Arabs ...

Yet it is understood from what Imām Rāzī has said in his book *al-Sirr al-maktūm* ("The hidden secret") that divination is of two categories: One category stems from the particular characteristics of some souls. This cannot be acquired. Another category is attained by occupying oneself with incantations and the invocation of the stars. There are various ways of this mentioned in *al-Sirr al-maktūm*. But it is clear from this book that engaging in this is forbidden in our *sharīʿa*. One has to guard oneself against acquiring and attaining it. Know that the first category, which cannot be acquired (actively or on purpose), is part of the science of fortune-telling (*ʿilm al-ʿirāfa*, "divination"). We have warned you about it here, so don't be heedless!

The science of *nīranjāt*:

This is the Arabicised form of "*nīrang*", which means falsifying (*al-tamwīh*) and making belief (*al-takhyīl*). It is to produce (*iẓhār*) strange harmonies (*gharāʾib al-imtizājāt*) between active and passive faculties, composed, altogether, from the macrocosm and the microcosm (*al-qiwā al-fāʿila wa-l-munfaʿila wa bi-l-jumla muʾallifa bayna al-ʿālam al-akbar wa-l-aṣghar*), in order to produce desired effects of love and hate, of attraction and aversion. Examples for it can be found in special

writings (*kitābāt makhṣūṣa*), composed by spiritual forces (*rūḥāniyyāt*), unfolded (*mabthūtha*) in the world. Though the written signs [used in this science] have unknown significations (*kitābāt majhūla al-dalālāt*), it is as if they were the numbers and letters of primordial [forces?] (*li-l-awā'il*), and though it is unknown why the specific properties [of these signs] cause the effects they cause, the effects [themselves] are known (*khawāṣṣuhā majhūla al-limmiyya, ma'rūfa al-anniyya*).

Majrīṭī's *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* and Ibn Waḥshiyya's *Asrār al-shams wa-l-qamar* have been written about this [i.e. in this field].

The "science of secret properties" (*'ilm al-khawāṣṣ*) [meaning the properties of the names of God and of Qur'anic excerpts]:

It is a science which examines the special properties connected to the recitation (*qirā'a*) of the names of God, Almighty, or His book—from the psalms and the gospel and the Qur'ān. It follows (methodically, in terms of arrangement) (*yatarattab*) all of these names and the invocations (*da'wāt*) of special properties that relate to them (*munāsaba lahā*, "that are appropriate to them"). Know that the soul, because it busies itself with the names of God and the invocations that appear in His revealed books, turns to His Holiness and empties itself of all other matters that preoccupy it. So, by way of this turning towards [God] and emptying itself [of other preoccupations], it is inundated by effects (*āthār*, lit. "traces") and lights (*anwār*) which match its readiness, which is produced due to its occupation with these matters. [There is also] the resort to (*isti'āna*, "seeking the help of") the special properties of medicines, inasmuch as the observer thinks that this is because of an act of magic. As was related, that in a church in the lands of the Rūm, six stones of magnetite, equal in power, were put on its four walls, its roof and its ground; and an iron cross was put into the air, to the extent that the attraction of these six stones was equal, so that no one stone was stronger than the others in attraction. The cross persisted suspended in the air—always—without any tool that was holding it apparently. So a group of Christians was enthralled.

The science of *ruqā* ("spells", sg. *ruqya*):

It is a science that seeks the pursuit of (*mubāshara*, "the direct/physical cause", "direct contact", "applying oneself to") specified actions (*af'āl makhṣūṣa*), which are arranged (*tatarattab*, "put into a specific order") through a special attribute (*khāṣṣiyya*) by specific "traces" (*athār makhṣūṣa*), like knots of string (*'uqūd al-khayṭ*) and hair and the like. *Ruqya* is often used in the case of illnesses: like ailments of the eye,

or toothache, or other kinds of afflictions of the eye, and the like. In Persian, *ruqya* is "*afsūn*", i.e. "*āb sūn*" ("like water"), because they mostly recite it over water. And the one afflicted drinks it, or it is poured over him ... They claim that it was unveiled from the *jinn* or heard in a dream, while asleep. And that is what the word of God indicates: "[I seek refuge] from the evil of those who blow on knots (*al-naffāthāt fi-l-ʿuqad*)" (Q 113:4). But the Law permits *ruqya*, in as much as the Prophet said, when he saw a girl with yellowness in her face: "Have recourse to *ruqya*—she has been affected by the evil eye (*al-naẓra*)."

The science of incantations (*ʿazāʾim*):

It is a science through which the subjugation of spirits is known (*kayfiyya taskhīr al-arwāḥ*, "the way spirits are made subservient") and how they are used for one's own purposes, like the subjugation of angels and *jinn*. To this belongs what the masters of [delusive] imaginations (*aṣḥāb al-awhām*) do, and strong souls (*al-nufūs al-qawiyya*), which have an effect upon a thing, when they become incorporeal (*tajarradat*, "strip themselves", "free themselves") and turn towards it. The closest witness to this, in the *sharīʿa*, is the [acceptance of the idea of the] affliction by the evil eye (*iṣābat bi-l-ʿayn*). For the Prophet confirmed it, saying: "It is true." ...

The science of summoning (*ʿilm al-istiḥḍār*):

It is the attempt to make descend the spirits, in the forms of men (*istinzāl al-arwāḥ fī qawālib al-ashbāʿ*). Know that the subjugation (*taskhīr*) of *jinn* or angels is something other than making them corporeal (*min ghayr tajassudihā*) and making them appear (*ḥudurihā*, "making them present") in front of you. It [i.e. the subjugation of them] is called "the science of spells" (*ʿilm al-ʿazāʾim*), provided that you attain your goals by way of these two things. As for the presence (*ḥuḍūr*) of *jinn* before you and their materialisation (*tajassuduhā*) in your sense perception, it is called the science of "summoning" (*istiḥḍār*). It is not dependent on whether you achieve your goals by way of it or not. As for the summoning (*istiḥḍār*) of angels, if it is a heavenly one, his "materialisation" (*tajassuduhu*, "his assumption of corporeal form") can only be achieved by prophets. If it is an earthly angel, it depends.

The science of invoking stars (*ʿilm daʿwa al-kawākib*):

Know that you have just learnt that summoning *jinn* and some angels is possible. Likewise, it is possible to subjugate the spirituality (*rūḥāniyya*) of the stars, especially the one of the "seven moving ones" [i.e. the seven planets]. One can achieve

by way of it important goals ... And this is called "calling upon the stars." It is the magic of the Sabeans, to whom God had sent Abraham, in order to invalidate their position and refute them.

As was related: a king occupied himself with calling upon (*daʿwa*, "invoking") Saturn. An enemy—a great king—appeared, but he was not able to fight him. His manservant was at a loss at this, while the king occupied himself with calling upon Saturn, rather than preparing for war. While he was sitting with his close associates and boon companions, something came down from the sky. The people at the gathering were scared and scattered, but the king remained fixed in his place. When it descended and fell down on the ground, in front of the king, he called his companions and they saw a vessel of copper, triangular in shape. In it was the head of the king, who had fought him, cut off. They rejoiced at this, and the army fled. So the king was victorious through the spiritual power (*rūḥāniyya*) of Saturn. And he said: "You deemed me foolish to busy myself by calling upon [Saturn]. But this is the immediate benefit of doing so". So all of them believed firmly in invocation. And they desisted from contesting the king in engaging in it. As for the nature of the vessel, being of copper and of a triangular shape, it is due to the necessity of the nature of Saturn from that mineral and that shape. And God knows best regarding the truth.

The science of "spectacled scripts" (*ʿilm al-falaqṭīrāt*, Gk. χαρακτῆρες):[2]

These are long lines (*khuṭūṭ ṭawīla*), which are joined by letters and shapes, i.e. rings (*ḥalaq*) and circles (*dawāʾir*). They claim that they have effects by sympathetic quality (*lahā taʾthīrāt bi-l-khāṣṣiyya*).[3] Some of them are read (*maqrūʾ*). We have seen many of them on diverse papers, but we have not seen a single work written about them. Nor have we considered the way in which they are made. We have not tested if they have an effect or not. They remain obscure to us.

The "science of making disappear" (*ʿilm al-ikhfāʾ*):

It is a science by which one knows how a person can make himself disappear from those present, in as much as he (still) sees them, but they do not see him. There are invocations and spells that belong to this science (*lahā daʿwāt wa-ʿazāʾim*), but

2 See M. Ullmann, *Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften* (Leiden 1972), 362, as well as M. Günther and D. Pielow (eds.) *Die Geheimnisse der unteren und oberen Welt* (Leiden 2019), index: "Brillenbuchstaben".

3 For *khāṣṣiyya* as "sympathic quality" see Ullmann, *Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, 395.

most of it is conjecture [i.e. not certain]. For this is not possible, except by saints (*wilāya*), by way of tearing the custom of nature (*bi-ṭarīq kharq al-ʿāda*), not by applying oneself directly to the occasions along which that custom [of nature] is organised (*lā bi-mubāsharat asbāb yatarattab ʿalayhā dhālika al-ʿāda*). We hear about this often. But we have not seen it happen, nor have we seen anyone do it. However, instances of extraordinary feats or occurrences (*khawāriq al-ʿādāt*) cannot be denied. Especially on the part of the saints of this *umma*. May God sanctify their secrets!

[Sixth tree, religious sciences – branch of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*) – sub-branches of Qur'anic exegesis]

The science of the numbers of harmonious agreement (magic squares) (*ʿilm aʿdād al-wafq*):

Harmonious agreement (*al-wafq*): quadratic tables (*jadāwil murabbaʿa*) with quadratic squares (*buyūt*), into which numbers are placed, or letters instead of the numbers—provided that the sides (*aḍlāʿ*) of these tables and their diagonals (*aqṭār*) are equal in number, and [provided] that there is no recurring number in these squares [i.e. each number should feature only once in the table]. There are many beneficial properties (*khawāṣṣ fāʾiḍa*) of this equilibrium of numbers, coming from the spiritual quality (*rūḥaniyya*) of these numbers or letters. And from them derive wondrous effects and strange effluences, provided that the appropriate moments and noble hours are chosen ... This science is from among the branches of the science of numbers (*ʿilm al-ʿadad*), in terms of arithmetic (*ḥisāb al-aʿdād*), and from among the branches of the science of special properties (*ʿilm al-khawāṣṣ*), in terms of its effects and benefits ... In fact, this science is a sea, with no shore. It ends in the science of unveiling (*mukāshafa*), in whose seas the minds of the scholars and wise men have drowned.

The science of the properties of letters (*ʿilm khawāṣṣ al-ḥurūf*):

Know that the letters mentioned in the openings/beginnings of the chapters of the Qurʾān, indeed the letters generally (*muṭlaqan*), have great secret properties (*khawāṣṣ jalīla*) and abundant advantages, which are known by the experts in this science. The Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī has set forth this science in the books he composed about it.

The science of spiritual properties (*ʿilm al-khawāṣṣ al-rūḥāniyya*):

> Of the agreements of numbers and letters (*al-awfāq al-ʿadadiyya wa-l-ḥarfiyya*) and the fractions of numbers and letters (*al-taksīrāt al-ʿadadiyya wa-l-ḥarfiyya*). It is a science that seeks to examine the quality (*kayfiyya*) of the mixture of the numbers and letters, according to a proportional and even (harmonious) relationship (*ʿalā al-tanāsub wa-l-taʿādul*); in so far as active spirits (*arwāḥ mutaṣarrifa*), connected to this equilibrium (*taʿdīl*), influence the opposites (*qawābil*), according to what is desired and aimed at, from the arrangement (*tartīb*) of numbers and letters, and their qualities (*kayfiyyātihā*). Its object [i.e. the subject of this science] are the numbers and letters; its aim is to reach the religious or worldly or other-worldly objectives; its goal, aim and benefit are obvious. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Maghribī wrote something beneficial in this area; and, likewise, the Shaykh Aḥmad al-Būnī; and others. This science can be considered a branch of arithmetic (*ʿilm al-ḥisāb*), in view of the arrangement of numbers (*tartīb al-aʿdād*), and a branch of geometry (*ʿilm al-handasa*), from the point of view of the harmonious arrangement (*taʿdīl*) of these numbers or letters in tables of "agreement" (*fi-l-jadāwil al-wafqiyya*). But because of the fact that it can also be considered from among the [science of the] special properties of letters, considering that the agreement can be made in terms of letters, too, we have mentioned it [here] as part of the science of letters, which are from the special/secret properties of the Qurʾān.

The science of manipulating the letters and names [of God] (*ʿilm al-taṣarruf bi-l-ḥurūf wa-l-asmāʾ*)[4]:

> This is a noble science, which is reached by diligent perseverance, according to specific conditions and a special exercise (*riyāḍa khāṣṣa*) applied to the special (secret) properties that pertain to these letters and names. Its subject matter and aim are obvious to the one who knows. It is said: This science covers 148 sciences. The books of the above-mentioned Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and [those] of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Būnī are well-known in this science.

The science of the letters of light and darkness (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf al-nūraniyya wa-l-ẓulmāniyya*):

> Know that they [i.e. certain scholars] have categorised some letters as "letters of light" and some as "letters of darkness" and they have judged it so, because neither

4 For *taṣarruf*, see p. 172, fn. 10, below.

in the *Fātiḥa*, nor at the beginnings of the [other] chapters [of the Qurʾān which contain the "mysterious letters"] are there any "letters of darkness". The detailed explanation of this science [can be found] in the books of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Būnī. There are some who declare it invalid. The benefit of this science is: doing good deeds with "light" letters and evil deeds with "dark" letters ...

The science of manipulating the greatest name (*ʿilm al-taṣrīf bi-l-ism al-aʿẓam*)[5]:

This is from among the sciences which have rarely been reached by any human being, save prophets or perfect saints, from among the masters of unveiling and witnessing. Therefore, they have not written any work about it, in which that name is specified. Because revealing it to a single person is not allowed—absolutely not. Because the corruption of the world lies in revealing it and in "lifting" (i.e. doing away with) the order of humanity (*irtifāʿ niẓām banī ādam*). Indeed, Shaykh Yāfiʿ and others collected traditions that had appeared regarding it; but not in so far as certainty could be seen from the horizon ...

The science of "breaking" and "unfolding" (*ʿilm al-kasr wa-l-basṭ*)[6]:

It is a science by which the disconnected (i.e. mysterious) letters [of the Qurʾān] are laid down; [this is done] in that the letters of one of the names of God are cut up, mixed together with the letters of the thing you desire, and laid out on a line; the letters are then manipulated in certain ways known to the experts, so that the order of the letters on the first line is changed in the second line. Then [this is done] again and again, until the "essence" (*ʿayn*) of the first line is organised and—at that point—one obtains the names of angels and prayers, with which to busy oneself until one obtains what one wishes.

The science of knowledge of *zāyirja* (*ʿilm ma ʿrifat al-zāyirja*):[7]

It is a part of [the science of] "breaking" and "unfolding" (*huwa qism al-kasr wa-l-basṭ*), with special methods and particular conditions, so that/until letters appear (*ḥattā takhruj hurūf*), [and] [so that] words appear from them, which indicate the how-ness of what you desire in the future—i.e. either what you *want* to happen or

5 *Taṣrīf*, like *taṣarruf*, has the meaning of "disposing of", i.e. the practitioner's way of acting: his handling of the process of lettrist operation. See below, p. 172, fn. 10.

6 For the related term *taksīr*, see p. 170, fn. 8, below.

7 Cf. Anne Regourd, "Zāʾirdja", *EI*[2].

what you *don't* want to happen; so that the name of the person who will carry out your wish appears, as well as the name of the person who is preventing it from happening. I have seen some methods, in which the words of the desired thing appear as verses of poetry, strung together in Arabic, in one single meter, and with one and the same rhyme. And this science is strange (*ʿajīb*); [it is] put in tables. I have rarely met anyone who knows it. I have rarely seen anyone who practices it and is not stingy with it. And God is the one whose help is and should be sought in ever matter.

The science of divination and "bringing together" (*ʿilm al-jafr wa-l-jāmiʿa*) [Tr. *cifr*]:

It is an expression that refers to the comprehensive knowledge of the tablet of predestination (*ʿibāra ʿan al-ʿilm al-ijmālī bi-lawḥ al-qaḍāʾ wa-l-qadar*), which contains everything that was and everything that will be—comprehensively (*kulliyyan*) and in all particulars (*juzʿiyyan*). *Jafr* is the expression used for the tablet of the divine decree (*qaḍāʾ*), which is the universal intellect (*ʿaql al-kull*); and *al-jāmiʿa* [refers to] the tablet of fate (*qadar*), which is the universal soul (*nafs al-kull*).

One group has claimed that the Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, may God be pleased with him, laid down (*waḍaʿa*) the twenty-eight letters, by way of the "great extension" (*ʿalā ṭarīq al-basṭ al-aʿẓam*, "according to the great spreading" or "unfolding") in a leather-volume of *jafr* (*fī jild al-jafr*, "in a hide of *jafr*"), to extract from them, by specific ways and particular conditions, specific words; and to extract from these word that which is on the tablet of predestination.

This science is from the legacy of the house of the prophet, and those who trace their descent to them (those who possess it as an inheritance); the perfect *shaykh*s learnt it from them; and they would hide it from others, completely. It is said: Nobody studies this book really, except the Mahdī, who is expected to appear at the end of time. This can be found in the books of the ancient prophets, as transmitted on the authority of Jesus, may the blessings of God be upon him: "We are a band of prophets and have come to you with the revelation. As for the interpretation, the Paraclete (*al-fārqlīṭ*), who will come to you after me, will bring it." ...

Ṭāshkubrī-zādah, *Miftāḥ al-saʿādah wa-miṣbāḥ al-siyādah fi mawḍūʿāt al-ʿulūm*, ed. Kāmil Bakrī and ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Abū al-Nūr (Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-ḥadīthah, 1968), 1:335–336 (*taʿbīr al-ruʾyā*), 338–345 (*aḥkām al-nujūm, al-siḥr, al-ṭilasmāt, sīmiyāʾ*), 357 (*ʿilm al-ʿirāfa*), 359–368 (on astrology, *al-ikhtiyārāt, al-*

raml, al-fāl, al-qurʿa, ṭīra and *zajr,* branches of magic, *al-kihāna, nīranjāt, al-khawāṣṣ, ruqā, ʿazāʾim, al-istiḥḍār, daʿwa al-kawākib, al-ikhfāʾ*), 395–396 (*wafq*), 2: 591–594 (*khawāṣṣ al-ḥurūf, al-khawāṣṣ al-rūḥāniyya, al-taṣarruf bi-l-ḥurūf wa-l-asmāʾ, al-ḥurūf al-nūraniyya wa-l-ẓulmāniyya, al-taṣrīf bi-l-ism al-aʿẓm, al-kasr wa-l-basṭ, al-zāyirja, al-jafr wa-l-jāmiʿa*); cf. Taşköprülüzâde Ahmed Efendi, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm (İlimler ansiklopedisi)*, tr. Mümin Çevik (Istanbul 2011), 1:305–313, 323, 326–337, 359–360, 2:1030–1032.

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Additions or emendations to Taşköprüzade's entries by Kâtib Çelebi (d. 1657) in *Kashf al-ẓunūn* ("The unveiling of doubts" or "The survey of suppositions").

On *cifr* (Tr.; Ar. *jafr*):

> Ibn Ṭalḥa said: "*al-jafr* and *al-jāmiʿa* are two great books (*kitābān jalīlān*). One of them was mentioned by Imām ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, may God be pleased with him, when he was giving a sermon in Kufa, from the *minbar*. The other was kept a secret by the Messenger of God, may God's peace and blessing be upon him. He commanded him [ʿAlī] to write it down (*tadwīn*). So ʿAlī wrote it in letters different from the book of Adam (*sifr* Ādam), in *jafr*, i.e. on parchment that had been tanned from the skin of a camel. It became well-known among the people by [that name], because whatever had come to pass to the first and last ones was to be found in it."
>
> People differ regarding the question of how it was written down and "transposed" (*fī waḍʿihi wa-taksīrihi*).[8] There are some who transposed it in the "small fashion" (*bi-l-taksīr al-ṣaghīr*); namely, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, who put the following in the hidden part of "the great opening" (*waḍaʿahu fī khāfiyat al-bāb al-kabīr*): a – b – t – th

8 In Grammar, *taksīr* usually refers to the so-called "irregular" or "broken" plural (*jamʿ al-taksīr*); in mathematics, it means "fraction"; it may also refer to the area of a circle. In the context of the occult sciences, however, it seems to denote a particular kind of procedure: Toufic Fahd refers to it as "transposition" in his article on "Ḥurūf" (*EI²*) and glosses it as "a procedure which performs a basic function in all forms of *jafr*." Noah Gardiner translates *taksīr* as "decomposition," in his study of Ibn Khaldūn's critique of lettrism. See Gardiner, *Ibn Khaldūn versus the occultists at Barqūq's court* (Berlin 2020), 36–37, fn. 74, referencing Kraus, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān, Contribution à l'histoire des idées scientifiques dans l'islam, Volume II: Jābir et la science grecque* (Cairo 1945), 253, fn. 2 and 300, fn. 7. The general sense of the term is that of "fracturing" or "fragmentation".

– etc. In the "lesser opening" (*al-bāb al-ṣaghīr*) [he put] the *abjad* until *qarshat*.[9] Some scholars have called the "great opening" (*al-bāb al-kabīr*) "the great divination" (*al-jafr al-kab*īr) and the lesser one "the lesser divination" (*al-jafr al-ṣaghīr*). A thousand sources (*maṣdar*) emerge from the greater one; and from the lesser one seven hundred.

There are others who write it by the "middle transposition" (*bi-l-taksīr al-mutawassiṭ*). This is the most appropriate and best [way of writing *jafr*]. The secret orbit of the moon and the sun circle on the axis of [this way of writing] (*ʿalayhi madār al-khāfiya al-qamariyya wa-l-shamsiyya*). This is the way the lettrist magic squares have been written down.

There are others who write it according to the "great transposition" (*bi-l-taksīr al-kabīr*). This is the way from which all the words (or languages; *lughāt*) and names (or nouns; *asmāʾ*) emerge.

There are others who write it according to the order of the letters (*al-tarkīb al-ḥarfī*). This is the way of Plato (*madhhab aflāṭūn*).

There are others who write it according to a numerical arrangement (*al-tarkīb al-ʿadadī*). This is the way of the rest of the people of India.

On the science of letters and words (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf wa-l-asmāʾ*)

It examines the secret properties of letters (*khawāṣṣ al-ḥurūf*), individually and when composed together [into words]. Its object are the letters of the alphabet. Its material [are] the agreements (*awfāq*, "conjunctions", "tables", magic squares) and arrangements (*tarākīb*, "structures"); its form (*ṣūra*) their division, like "what" and "how"; the composition of oaths and spells (*al-aqsām wa-l-ʿazāʾim*), and what is produced by them. The practitioner (of the science of letters) is called *mutaṣarrif* ("the one who acts [in a particular way]", "the one who disposes of", "the one who maneuvers [a process or a thing]"), its goal is called *taṣarruf* ("way of action", "manipulating [something in a particular way]"), with regard to obtaining [by way of it it] what one seeks, by "letting fall" and "removing" (*īqāʿan wa-intizāʿan*). The rank (*martaba*) at which it [i.e. the science of lettrism] is situated is after the spiritual matters (*rūḥāniyyāt*), the [science of the] celestial spheres (*falak*) and astrology ...

9 A way of ordering the letters of the Arabic alphabet, different from the first.

Ibn Khaldūn said in the *Muqaddima*: The science of the secrets of the letters, which is called *al-sīmiyā'* in this age: the name of this science was transferred, in usage, from [initially designating the science of] talismans to a technical term used by the practitioners [of the science of letters], from among the Sufis. A general term thus came to be used for a specific sub-branch [of the occult sciences]. This science came about after the first period of Islam (*baʿda al-ṣadr al-awwal*), when the *ghulāt* ("extremists", "exaggerators") appeared among the Muslims, with their inclination towards the lifting of the veil of sense-perception, bringing about extraordinary phenomena and [extraordinary] ways of manipulating the world of the elements (*taṣarrufāt fī ʿālam al-ʿanāṣir*). They claim that the *loci*, where the perfection of the divine names manifests itself, are the spirits of the celestial spheres and the stars, and that the natural characteristics of the letters and their secrets pervade the divine names (*sāriya al-asmā'*, "are effectively in force in the names"). They pervade all beings (*al-akwān*, "the existent things", "the cosmos"). It [i.e. the science of letters] is [therefore] one of the branches of the sciences of *sīmiyā'*—a science whose object cannot be grasped, and the number of questions it raises is infinite.

The writings of al-Būnī, Ibn ʿArabī and others in this field are numerous. In their opinion, the upshot and fruit of this science is the effective force of the divine souls (*taṣarruf al-nufūs al-rabbāniyya*) in the natural world (*fī ʿālam al-ṭabīʿa*) by the beautiful names of God (*bi-l-asmā' al-ḥusnā*) and the divine expressions (*al-kalimāt al-ilāhiyya*), which grow from the letters, which are surrounded by the secrets pervading all the things in existence. Then they differ regarding the secret of the effective force (*sirr al-taṣarruf*), which [is] in the letters *b-m h-w*.[10]

There are those who ascribe it [i.e. the secret of the effective force] to the mixture (*li-l-mizāj*, also "temperament") which is in it, and divide the letters into four categories, following the division of the natural characteristics (of the humours), like

10 Noah Gardiner translates *ṭasarruf* as "occult efficacy," see *Ibn Khaldūn*, 33; Franz Rosenthal translates it as "activity" and "activeness," see Ibn Khaldûn, *The Muqaddimah: And Introduction to History*, trans. F. Rosenthal (Princeton 1958), vol. 3., 172: "the divine souls are active in the world of nature" for *taṣarruf al-nufūs fī ʿālam al-ṭabīʿa*, and "as to the secret of the (magic) activity lying in the letters" for *sir al-taṣarruf*. The term *taṣarruf* seems to indicate, potentially, *both* the effective force of the secret and the practitioner's handling or manipulation of processes of lettrist operation, i.e. the practitioner's way of acting, on the one hand (cf. Gardiner's "occult operations" on 29), and the effect brought about by the secret's "way of acting" in the world, on the other. Ultimately, the two are connected. Indeed, the fact that the term *taṣarruf* is used for both seems indicative of that intrinsic connection.

the elements. They are classified, according to a rule that pertains to that particular craft (*qanūn ṣināʿī*), which they call "transposition" (*al-taksīr*).

Then there are others who maintain that this secret is due to the numerical proportion (*jaʿala hādhā al-sirr li-l-nisba al-ʿadadiyya*), i.e. that the letters of the alphabet indicate the numbers they are known for, conventionally and naturally, and that words have "correspondences" (*wa-li-l-asmāʾ awfāq*)[11], like the numbers. Each category of letters distinguishes itself by a category of "correspondences" (*awfāq*), with which it agrees (in a proportional relationship), in terms of the number or the shape of the letters. The effect (*taṣarruf*) of the secret of the letters is mixed up with the secret of the numbers, on account of the proportional relationship (*tanāsub*), which exists between the two of them.

As for the secret of this proportional relationship, which exists between the letters and the mixtures of the natural temperaments, or between the letters and the numbers, it is difficult to understand (*ʿasr ʿalā al-fahm*), since it does not belong to the realm of the sciences and analogies, but rather, its support rests, for them, on "taste" and unveiling.

al-Būnī said: Certainly, do not think that the secret of the letters is from among the things which can be reached by intellectual analogy. Rather, it is by way of witnessing (*mushāhada*) and divine gift (*tawfīq ilāhī*). As for the effect (*al-taṣarruf*) of these letters and words in the natural world (*fī ʿālam al-ṭabīʿa*), and the influence (*taʾthīr*) they exert upon existing things (*al-akwān*), it cannot be denied, because it is established [as true], on the authority of many from among them, by [the principle] of "uninterrupted transmission" (*tawātur*). It may be (wrongly) supposed that what those [who practice the science of letters] do and what the "masters of talismans" (*aṣḥāb al-ṭilasimāt*) do is the same. But that is not the case. Then he [al-Būnī] explained the difference between the two—extensively. We have mentioned a part of the detailed explanation [of this] in our book entitled *Rūḥ al-ḥurūf* ("The spirit of the letters").[12]

On the "science of making disappear" (*ʿilm al-ikhfāʾ*):

I say: It being a science, in terms of it being a branch of magic, not in terms of [it being] a grace from God, there is no reason for thinking that it is most likely

11 Cf. "harmonious agreements" in magic squares (*awfāq*). See above, p. 166.

12 For a translation and extensive analysis of the entire chapter on lettrism by Ibn Khaldun, see Gardiner, *Ibn Khaldūn*, 27–57.

impossible. For, by way of magic, it is possible! There is no doubt in it. Indeed, by way of invocation and [the use of] spells it is also possible, as the people who practice it maintain. And not seeing something does not mean that it does not occur.

On the science of properties (*ʿilm al-khawāṣṣ*):

I say: The secret properties of things are fixed and their occasions (*asbāb*, lit. "causes") are hidden, because we know [for instance] that magnetite attracts iron, but we do not know how and why. Likewise with all the secret properties, except that the causes (*ʿilal*, "occasions") of some of them can be grasped by the intellect, while the meaning of the causes of others cannot. Furthermore, these secret properties are divided into many parts: there are, for instance, the secret properties of the "names" mentioned [above], which are included in the category of the rules of the science of the letters; likewise, the secret properties of the letters, from which the names are composed, and the secret properties of the supplications used in spells, and the secret properties of the Qurʾān.

On *zāʾirja*:

It belongs to the laws of the art [of the occult sciences] (*al-qawānīn al-ṣināʿiyya*), [used] for the purpose of extracting the unknown things, which are related to the world of the known (*al-ghuyūb al-mansūba ilā al-ʿālam al-maʿrūf*). [It is a science associated with] Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad al-Sabtī, who was one of its most excellent practitioners of it in the Maghrib. He lived at the end of the sixth century in Marrakesh, during the reign of Yaʿqūb b. Manṣūr, of the Almohad kings. [These laws have] many secret properties, which they [the practitioners of this science] give evidence of, in making use of the unknown through them, by the knowledge of them, and their form, which they work with: a great circle, on the inside of which are concentric circles for the celestial spheres, the elements, the material entities (of this world), the spiritual entities and other categories of beings and sciences. Each circle of these is divided by its celestial sphere into the signs of the zodiac, the elements, etc. The lines of each lead to the center; they are called "strings" (*awtār*), and on each string are letters, laid down in sequence. Some of them are by drawings of a "bridle" (*zimām*), which are from among the most difficult of numbers, according to the chancery officials and mathematicians of the Maghrib. Others are by trivial drawings in the *ghubār* script. On the inside of the *zāʾirja* [the table used in this divinatory technique], between the circles, are the names of the sciences and the positions of [the various, different] beings (*mawāḍiʿ al-akwān*, "the

ranks of existences"); and at the backs (*ẓuhūr*, "rear parts") of the circles is a chart (*jadwal*, "table"), with intersecting (?) squares (*buyūt al-mutaqāṭiʿa*) increasing in length and width, comprising 55 squares in width and 131 in length. The sides of the chart are "populated" (*maʿmūra*) by squares [too], some filled with numbers, others with letters, others are empty. The proportion (*nisba*) of these numbers in their positions is not known, nor the division, which is assigned to the squares. On the two sides of the *zā'irja* are verses, written in *ṭawīl* (meter), and with the rhyming letter *lām*, in the accusative. These [verses] comprise that which is sought from the *zā'irja*, what is sought to be brought forth. However, they [these verses] are in the form of nonsense (*laghw*, "gibberish"), characterised by a lack of clarity. ...

The answers to the questions asked can be extracted by it, according to the rules [of this art]. This is because there is a correlation (*muṭābaqa*) between the answer and the question, because the unknown can in no way be grasped by a matter of the art (*bi-amr ṣināʿī*), of course! The correlation between the question and the answer is only in terms of understanding (*ifhām*, "making understood") and this comes about, in this art, by the "transposition" (*taksīr*) of the letters of which the question is composed... Some of the sharp-witted ones have examined the proportional relation (*tanāsub*), reaching an understanding of the unknown (*al-majhūl*) by way of the proportional relation between things. This is the secret of arriving at the unknown from the known (*al-ḥuḍūr ʿalā al-majhūl min al-maʿlūm*), which happens to the soul by way of coming about (*al-ḥāṣil li-l-nafs bi-ṭarīq ḥuṣūlihi*), like in mathematics. It benefits the mind a lot. Therefore, [the science of] *zā'irja* has mostly been attributed to mathematicians. *Zā'irja* is also traced back to Sahl b. ʿAbd Allāh. It is [considered] one of the "strange crafts" (*al-aʿmāl al-gharība*), in the history of Ibn Khaldūn. He said: It is a strange business, the practice of which is wonderous. Many [persons?] of secret properties engage in it, in order to benefit from that which is hidden. Unravelling it is difficult for the one who is ignorant of it.

On magic (*ʿilm al-siḥr*):

The magician (*al-sāḥir*) gathers together and arranges, at appropriate moments of [given] celestial conditions and planetary situations, the three realms of nature with each other, and then makes appear wondrous conditions and strange deeds, the effect of which is great, and the cause of which remains hidden, so that the minds are perplexed and the thoughts of [even] brilliant people are unable to solve the secrets [of these phenomena] ...

On conjuration of *jinn* (*ʿazāʾim*):

The *muḥaqqiqūn* differ regarding the way it is possible to communicate with the *jinn*. Some say: it is done in a way that is not possible for anyone, to the exclusion of God. Others say: By way of a spell, like a prayer, which is answered by God. Others say: By way of [spells] and pleasing behaviors. Others say: By obedient spies, who forbid what is wrong, and stand ready to fight! (*bi-l-jawāsīs al-ṭāʾiʿīn al-munhiyīn al-mutahayyiʾīn*). Others say: By self-reckoning and with the help of the stars (*wa-l-sayyāra*). Others say: By righteousness ...

Fakhr al-Aʾimma [al-Rāzī] said: In my opinion, when the [necessary] conditions are met and the spells proceed correctly, God makes spells against the *jinn* in a great burning fire for them, constricting the regions of the world against them, so that no place remains for them to seek refuge in, and only "presence" and obedience to what he commands them to do is sufficient. Higher than that, if one is skillful and acting pleasing [to God], and if his behavior is praiseworthy and satisfying, then God sends very strong and harsh angels against the *jinn*, in order for them to restrain them and lead them to be obedient to him and serve him [i.e. the person who practices the spells].

The theologians and other *muḥaqqiqūn* confirmed these principles, saying: "It is not forbidden that a human memorises and says words from the names of God and other than these, in books and spells and talismans, so that God subdues a *jinnī* and forces him to obey the person [who had memorised these words] and he chooses him for that which he seeks [to obtain or do] of the affairs that are" ... They say: the obedience of these [*jinn*] to humans is not impossible rationally, nor in terms of revelation, completely.

On alchemy (kimiyāʾ)

Those who deny [the validity of alchemy] say that: if gold produced artificially were equal to (*mathal*, "likeness", "like") natural gold, then that which is [made] by art would be equal to (or: like) that which is [made] by nature. And if that were conceivable, then it would also be conceivable that what is [made] by nature is like that which is artificial, and we would find swords and beds and seal-rings in nature, which is absurd ... Then, by the estimation that that which does not exist artificially, does not exist in nature (*bi-taqdīr anna lā yūjad bi-l-ṭabīʿa mā lā yūjad bi-l-ṣināʿa*), apodictic judgement (*al-jazm*) does not impose on us to deny this, nor does the possibility that the natural thing might have come about artificially

impose on us [the necessity to admit] the possibility of the opposite. Rather, the matter depends on the proof (*al-amr mawqūf ʿalā al-dalīl*) ...

Then, [also] know that a group of philosophers, like the wise Hermes, Ostanes and Pythagoras, when they wanted to bring forth (*istikhrāj*) this divine art, they put themselves in the place of nature, and they knew, by way of the logical faculty and the experiential sciences, what happened to each of these bodies, in terms of heat and cold, humidity and dryness, and also what parts of other bodies they were mixed (up) with. They did the trick (*al-ḥīla*) of decreasing that which was in excess, and adding [to] what was lacking (*tanqīṣ al-zāʾid wa-tazyīd al-nāqiṣ*), in terms of active and passive[13] qualities, because of the deficiency (*ʿilla*) of these bodies, according to what they needed, in terms of different elixirs of the earth, of animals and of plants, depending on time and place.

Kâtib Çelebi, *Keşf-el-zunun*, eds Şerefettin Yaltkaya – Kilisli Rifat Bilge (Ankara 2014 [1941]), 1:591–592 (*cifr*), 650–651 (*al-ḥurūf wa-l-asmāʾ*), 716 (*al-ikhfāʾ*), 726 (*al-khawāṣṣ*), 2:1137–1138 (*ʿazāʾim*), 948–949 (*zāʾirja*), 980 (*siḥr*), 1528–1531 (*kimiyāʾ*); cf. Kâtip Çelebi, *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Rüştü Balcı (Istanbul 2007), 2:498, 543–544, 594, 602, 764–765, 788, 3:909, 1218–1220.

Translations by Katharina A. Iványi.

13 There are three adjectives here: *fāʿil, mafʿūl* and *munfaʿil*, but the latter two both have the sense of "passive."

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