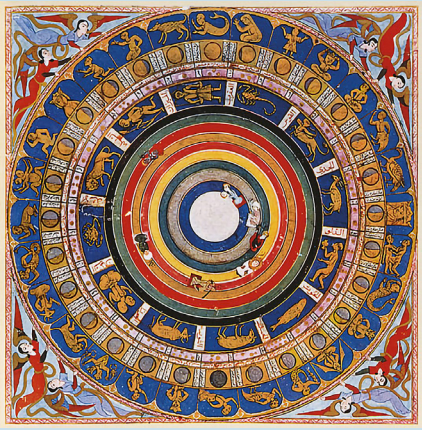
Aca'ib

Occasional Papers on the Ottoman Perceptions of the Supernatural



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GHOST: Geographies and Histories of the Ottoman Supernatural Tradition: Exploring Magic, the Marvelous, and the Strange in Ottoman Mentalities

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2

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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–)

Table of Contents

A. Editorial

Enchantments and disenchantments in Ottoman world visions: preliminary remarks

Marinos Sariyannis (Rethymno)

We are extremely happy to present the second issue of "*Aca'ib*: Occasional Papers on the Ottoman Perceptions of the Supernatural", part of a five-year 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. In the year that passed since our first issue, the research team, which consists of Marinos Sariyannis (Institute for Mediterranean Studies/FORTH, Rethymno, Greece), as Principal Investigator, Zeynep Aydoğan (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 two Ph.D. candidates (Dimitris Giagtzoglou, Markos Litinas), some MA students and our technical staff, was enriched by another member, N. Işık Demirakın, post-doctoral fellow at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies/

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FORTH. This year has not been easy, as international circumstances continued to set a heavy shadow over scientific activities, including meetings and research trips; however, we tried to do our share of presentations and conference participations, which the reader may follow through the "News" section of our site (https://ghost.ims.forth.gr/news/).

In this vein, we are happy to announce that our project will organize the eleventh international symposium of the highly prestigious series of "Halcyon Days in Crete", organized since 1991 by the Department of Ottoman History of the Institute for Mediterranean Studies/Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas (for a list of previous Symposia and the consequent publications, the reader may visit our webpage at the following link: https://ims.forth.gr/en/department/view?id=1). The symposium will finally take place online (Zoom link to be announced) on 14–16 January 2022 (it was to happen on January 2021 but had to be postponed due to the pandemic) with the topic 'Enchantments and disenchantments: early modern Ottoman visions of the world'. Some thoughts on this topic, which is directly related to the subject of the "GHOST" project, follow.[1]

As historiographical debates on a "global Enlightenment" intensified during the last decades, usually focusing on aspects of the intellectual history of the non-European world in the age of modernity, a discussion on the development of Islamic culture in the Ottoman world also arose. The concept of an "Islamic Enlightenment" was proposed, discussed and largely abandoned, although literature on Ottoman science continues to emphasize the developments demonstrating a transition from an "occultist" to a "scientific" mentality from the late seventeenth or the early eighteenth century onwards. Rather than insisting on the notion of cultural transfer, such studies sought to illuminate the intrinsic, "bottom-up" ways in which a new vision of the world gradually permeated at least some segments of Ottoman society.

Perhaps even more than scientific developments, one can speak of changes at the street level, changes that had to do with the presence of the supernatural in quotidian life, the degree one had control over one's life or destiny, the availability and accessibility of truth and so forth. There are signs showing an "occultisation" of knowledge in a wide array of fields during the fourteenth, the fifteenth

1 I tried to explore some aspects of the topic in 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

and at least part of the sixteenth centuries; and it has been remarked that for certain Sufi fraternities, the world had become more and more an enchanted place by the early seventeenth century. On the other hand, the appearance of new legitimate sources of knowledge by the middle of the same century and an apparent emphasis on individual reasoning, as well as the rejection of alleged Sufi miracles by the Kadızadeli movement in favour of a strict, scriptural understanding of religion, were arguably steps toward what Max Weber would call a gradual (and partial) disenchantment of the Ottoman world.

The Symposium will seek to explore these aspects of Ottoman intellectual, cultural and social history, using a variety of approaches, sources and methods. Thus, it aspires to provide insights into the varying and shifting Ottoman images of nature and the supernatural, searching not for a unilineal progress toward "secularism" or "rationalism", but rather for the sociocultural configurations of parallel paths that modified the *Weltanschauung* 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 seeks 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.

Furthermore, another issue that we cannot address here in full concerns Ottoman views on the sources of knowledge. In short, we have understood knowledge as being produced by revelation, prophetic or saintly (or visionary), ancient wisdom, often with hermetic overtones, and reasoning. Of course, these sources do not exclude each other, as, for instance, reason can be quite legitimately used to elaborate revelation (for example in theology); nor does even such a rationalist author as Kâtib Çelebi reject visionary illumination. However, claims as to the preeminence of such sources played a crucial role in Ottoman intellectual history, as they could determine who had legitimate access to things hidden. Moreover, they were closely related to major trends of thought: the Kadızadeli and Nakşbendi emphasis on human agency and piety (and on the absence of revelation in present times), the Halveti (and others') claim for continuous contact with the supernatural, and the *işraki* or Illuminationist combination of revelatory and hermetic knowledge with rational science, not to mention some materialist tendencies noted but insufficiently studied so far.

A similar but not identical issue concerns the various traditions of knowledge coexisting in the Ottoman context. Whereas the question of sources re-

fers to gnosiology, tradition is perhaps more relevant for intellectual history. By tradition, I refer here to an "origin myth", a symbolic narrative attributing at least certain branches of knowledge to a series of thinkers and/or visionaries who offer their prestige both to a science and its practitioners. Thus, there is undoubtedly an "Islamic" tradition which comprises not only knowledge on matters theological, but also cosmology and even ancient history. There is also an "ancient" tradition, often informed by hermetic beliefs, that claims access to a corpus of knowledge discovered by or revealed to the wise philosophers of (mostly Greek, but also, in the case of magic, Indian or Chinese) antiquity. Finally, one may speak of a European tradition inasmuch as scholars such as Kâtip Çelebi did not endorse, or rather did not apply fully, the methodology used by their European colleagues, but nonetheless used their works and conclusions as yet another authoritative source of knowledge.

The papers presented at the symposium will be published in a peer-reviewed volume, expected to appear in 2024. A short report on the symposium will appear in the next issue of *Aca'ib*. We plan to organize yet another conference in the context of the GHOST project in 2023. For the time being, we humbly offer the current issue and hope to present even richer material for our third issue, scheduled for the Fall of 2022.

B. Papers

Revisiting "Turkish Fatalism"; Or, Why Ottoman Theology Matters

Ethan L. Menchinger (Manchester)[1]

There are certain dirty words in Ottoman history, words that make a specialist raise an eyebrow or purse the lips. Fatalism is one such word. For most of us, the term evokes outdated tropes of a piece with Ottoman "decline," "despotism," or "sensuality." Few would use the word at all, save in discussing Orientalism or early modern travel literature, and even then we might add appropriate scare quotes to disavow it.[2] While this impulse is an understandable reaction against invidious stereotypes, as is otherwise avoiding the idea or implications of "Turkish fatalism," I feel it is misguided. Both to provoke and make a point about

1 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 E.g., E. Said, *Orientalism* (London 1995), 102, 345. Nükhet Varlık italicizes the phrase "Turkish fatalism" in her excellent study of plague so as to isolate it as an Orientalist trope: N. Varlık, *Plague and Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean World: The Ottoman Experience, 1347–1600* (Cambridge 2015), esp. 72–88.

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Menchinger, Ethan L. 2021. "Revisiting "Turkish Fatalism"; Or, Why Ottoman Theology Matters". *Aca'ib: Occasional papers on the Ottoman perceptions of the supernatural* 2.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.26225/rnyr-ar56

our field, namely its neglect of all things theological, I use the word in what follows—and I use it often.[3]

This article revisits fatalism in the early modern Ottoman Empire. It takes fatalism seriously as a theological issue and for what it can reveal about our subjects: Muslim inhabitants of the empire, and how they saw their place as worldly creatures, spiritual beings, and moral agents in a larger divine order. After outlining the issue, a dilemma over God's foreknowledge and will and human action, I explore how fatalism shaped views of disease and warfare, respectively, in the 16th to 18th centuries. How far was fatalism an Orientalist trope? Were early modern Ottoman Muslims fatalists in any meaningful sense? The answer to these questions will depend on how we define our terms, but they lead to some perhaps uncomfortable conclusions. Fatalism was by no means purely a trope, I argue. And in a basic theological sense, yes, Ottoman Muslims were fatalist—though the full reality proved quite complex. Last, I will close with reflections on why such insights matter, and what scholars miss by ignoring them.

The Ottoman Empire and Theological Fatalism

We should first establish what we mean by fatalism. If we take the term in a strict sense, as a belief as a point of faith in fate or predestination, then we stand on firm footing in applying it to our subjects. Let us call this "theological fatalism." Ottoman Muslims, of course, did not believe in "fate" as an abstract causal force, like the pre-Islamic Arab notion of *dahr*, but in a specific doctrine upholding God's divine decree and preordination of all things subsumed in the phrase *al-qaḍā wa'l-qadar* (Trk. *kaza vü kader*).[4] Nor was this doctrine novel. The ideas one finds in the early modern empire were the fruit of centuries of earlier debate over God's will, knowledge, and creative power, and how these could be balanced with our own actions and moral responsibility as created beings.

3 Some years ago I treated freewill and predestination in early modern Ottoman politics, showing how the theology was mobilized both to support and oppose reform. I recall that, while preparing the article, a colleague pointedly advised me to avoid the word fatalism: E. L. Menchinger, "Free Will, Predestination, and the Fate of the Ottoman Empire", *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 77 (2016), 445–66.

4 See *EI²*, s.v. "Dahr" (W. M. Watt); ibid., s.v. "al-Ḳaḍā' Wa'l-Ḳadar" (L. Gardet). See also *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, ed. John Esposito (Oxford 2003), s.v. "Fatalism".

We can neatly outline the debate here. Scholars in Sunni Islam took an early interest in the issue of predestination because it touched directly on two of God's attributes—power and justice. If God is almighty, an entity who wills and creates all things, do we have any control over our own deeds? If God is omniscient, moreover, knowing everything that will ever occur in creation, does it not follow that He has decreed all aspects of our lives from preeternity? Scripture itself is equivocal. While affirming that God has inscribed each person's fate in the so-called "Preserved Tablet" (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*) in heaven—"the archetype of all things, past, present, and future"—the Quran and hadith at times assert absolute predestination but at others insist humans can direct our behavior to good or ill.[5] This dilemma is not easily resolved. While Islamic scholars agreed that God is an all-powerful creator, they also accepted that He will judge humans, rewarding good and punishing evil. Yet reward and punishment are arbitrary, even unjust, if we lack the power to choose. The debate thus fixes upon a point of tension between preserving divine power, on the one hand, and ensuring that God remains all-just on the other.

The first centuries of Islam set the contours of debate. Choosing to err on the side of divine power, some thinkers held humans to be entirely constrained (*jabr*; Trk. *cebr*) in their acts and subject to God's will and decree. Opponents called this group *jabriyya* or *mujbira*—fatalist or predestinarian. At the other extreme, and often associated with Muʿtazilī theological circles, were those who placed justice at the fore and argued that humans must have freewill to choose good and evil, and even to "create" their own acts. These were called *qadariyya*. Neither view proved durable in the long run and, by the 10th century AD, Sunni theologians began to forge a middle way. If complete *jabr* made humans little better than marionettes, moved by the strings of God's decree, their freewill to choose and "create" actions also went too far—for creative power is limited to God alone.[6]

5 Quote from *EI²*, s.v. "Lawḥ" (A. J. Wensinck and C. E. Bosworth). The tablet is also considered to be the uncreated "original" of the Quran, sent down in revelation: e.g., "Nay, but it is a glorious Koran, in a guarded tablet (85: 22)" and "Behold, we sent it [the Quran] down on the Night of Power (97: 1)" [(trans. A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (London 1955)]. For scripture's equivocal statements on fate, see M. Watt, *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam* (London 1948), 12–31.

6 See M. De Cillis, *Free Will and Predestination in Islamic Thought: Theoretical Compromises in the Works of Avicenna, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn ʿArabī* (London 2014), 10-16; D. Gimaret,

A synthesis formed in time from the work of Ashʿarī and Māturīdī thinkers. This emerging orthodoxy, first, upheld God's omnipotence and uniqueness as a creator by adopting an occasionalist, atomistic worldview. It maintained that God acts continually to create and recreate the universe, joining, separating, destroying, and recreating every atom at every instant in time. God is thus the only true cause in the world, pervading all things. Second, while humans are subject to divine will and have no real causal power, theologians conceded that they still take moral responsibility for their actions by "acquiring" (*kasb*; Trk. *kesb*) them from God.[7] The famed al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) put the final touches on these ideas by aligning them superficially with Aristotelian causality. Al-Ghazālī sought to explain why, if God is the only true cause who wills and creates all things, the world as we observe it seems to work through independent cause and effect. His solution was to argue that this is "God's custom" (*ʿādat Allah*; Trk. *adetüllah*). That is, God chooses to create through the semblance of visible or secondary causes. God is the prime mover, "the One who makes causes function as causes" (*musabbib al-asbāb*) in most worldly affairs, the connections between which are only apparent rather than necessary, yet He can just as equally intervene directly to disrupt the regular course of events. God decrees, wills, and creates all things according to His preeternal knowledge, then, and what small agency remains to humans is non-creative and subject to the divine.[8]

Early modern Ottomans inherited this framework with minor modifications. Most notably, they cast human will in new terms. By the 16th century AD, intellectuals in the empire had coined a novel concept—"particular will" (*irade-i cüziyye / ihtiyar-ı cüzi*)—to elaborate how our volition relates to God's will. The idea was that people have volition in limited areas of life ("particular events" or *umur-ı cüziyye*) by which they can choose to act or not, and thereby

Théories de l'acte humaine en théologie Musulmane (Paris 1980); and Watt, *Free Will and Predestination*. See also Menchinger, "Free Will", 446–47.

7 On Islamic occasionalism, see D. Perler and U. Rudolph, *Occasionalismus: Theorien der Kausalität im arabisch-islamischen und im europäischen Denken* (Göttingen 2000), 23–124; and S. Pines, *Studies in Islamic Atomism*, trans. M. Schwarz (Jerusalem 1997). See also Watt, *Free Will and Predestination,* 147–52; and F. Griffel, *Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford 2009), 123–33.

8 See Griffel, *Al-Ghazali's,* 216–22, 276–78; and Menchinger, "Free Will", 447–48. On miracles as the "breaking of [God's] custom," see J. Brown, "Faithful Dissenters: Sunni Skepticism about the Miracles of Saints", *Journal of Sufi Studies,* 1 (2012), 123–68.

exert influence on the world. While this concept grew during a harmonization of Ashʿarī and Māturīdī thought in Ottoman lands, much was left to debate, like what exactly the will is and how it operates.[9] Yet the innovation did not change the basics: human will and deeds remained subject to divine preordination. Strictly speaking, "particular will" is not freewill. God knows and wills from time immemorial what each person will do in every situation, thinkers held. We merely direct our particular will toward this end and—since we have no creative power of our own—God creates the result.[10]

We can note other ideas of fate that seem to have held popular currency in the empire, many of which also feature in European sources in relation to plague and war. Apart from *al-qaḍā wa'l-qadar*, God's inescapable decree and preordination of all things, and the related verbal noun *taqdīr* (Trk. *takdir*), we find references to individual fate. Terms like *naṣīb* (*nasib*), *rizq* (*rızk*), and

9 On the "particular will" and its scholarly milieu, see P. Bruckmayr, "The Particular Will (*al-irādat al-juzi'yya*): Excavations Regarding a Latecomer in *Kalām* Terminology on Human Agency and its Position in Naqshbandi Discourse", *European Journal of Turkish Studies* [online], 13 (2011); Idem, "The Spread and Persistence of Māturīdī Kalām and Underlying Dynamics", *Iran and the Caucasus,* 13 (2009), 59–92; and P. Doroll, "Māturīdī Theology in the Ottoman Empire: Debating Human Choice and Divine Power", in O. Demir et al (eds), *Osmanlı'da İlm-i Kelâm: Âlimler, Eserler, Meseleler* (Istanbul 2016), 219-38. Questions persisted over the nature of will (*irāde*), intention (*qaṣd*), and resolution (*ʿazm*), for instance. Are these "things" with external existence, and so must be created? İspirli Kadızade (d. ca. 1717) called the will "a conceptual matter (*amr iʿtibārī*)" in the sense that is not. ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1731) also weighed if the will is an accident (*ʿaraḍ*), a state (*ḥāl*), or merely arises from a state. What also is a state—does it have external existence or is it a "quality" given to something that exists, without itself having existence or non-existence? See their respective treatises: İspirli Kadızade, *Risāla mumayyiza madhhab al-Māturīdiyya ʿan al-madhāhib al-ghayriyya* and ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, *Taḥqīq al-intiṣār fī ittifāq al-Ashʿarī wa'l-Māturīdī ʿalā khalq al-ikhtiyār*, ed. E. Badeen, in *Sunnitische Theologie in osmanischer Zeit* (Würzburg 2008), at 67 ff., and 82 ff.

10 While not a strict rendering of *irade-i cüziyye*, "freewill" is more idiomatic and an established translation. See Franciscus Meninski, *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium Turcicae-Arabicae-Persicae* (Vienna 1680), 1: 95, for *ihtiyâr-ı cüzi'*: "Liberum arbitrium. Ein freier Will. Il libero arbitrio. Le franc arbitre. Wolność woley." Frank Griffel (private communication, May 2018) suggests that "particular" is a misleading translation and we should read *cüzi'* as "individual": "*Irada juz'iyya* is hence the individual (act of) volition' of a human to perform one single act." İspirli (*Risāla mumayyiza*, 70) wrote that our actions are attributable to us in a limited and locative sense and to God in an "operative sense (*min ḥaythu huwa ḥaraka*)."

qisma (*kısmet*) do not all derive from scripture and theological discourse but stem from roots meaning one's being allotted or apportioned something—in our case, they came to mean a fortune or destiny allotted by God.[11] The term *ajal* (*ecel*) referred more narrowly to the appointed term of a person's life and the hour of his or her death, a time nothing could change: "No one has his life prolonged or no one has his life cut short except (as it is written) in a book (of God's decrees) (35:12)."[12] The belief that our fates are "written" appears to have been widespread, as we shall see. Not only did God record all that was, is, and ever shall be in the "Preserved Tablet," but it was said that He also inscribed each individual's personal fate (or at least *ajal*) in invisible writing on their forehead. Fate in this guise was inevitable, irrevocable, and literally inscrutable.[13] Last, in considering people's responses to dangers like plague, we should address the role of trust in God (*tawakkul*, Trk. *tevekkül*). Scripture instructs believers to trust entirely in God and submit to providence with acceptance and pious resignation. Some earlier thinkers held trust in God to be a pillar of faith,

11 *EI*², s.v. "Taḳdīr" (A. Levin); ibid., s.v. "Rizḳ" (C. E. Bosworth and J. D. McAuliffe); ibid., s.v. "Ḳisma" (C. E. Bosworth). Also Meninski, who represents 17th-century Ottoman usage: (s.v. Takdir) "Destinatio, praedestinatio, Divinae potentiae decretum, & inevitable fatum ...*taktīrī rebbānīde mukadder imiš*. Praedestinatum à Deo erat, sic erat in fatis ...*taktīrātī ilāhīje*. Praeordinationes divinae"; (s.v. Kaza) "*Kazā wu kader*. Praeordinatio Divina, fatum ...*kazāī mūbrem* ...*görünmez kazā*. An. inevitable fatum ...*Kazā geldükte dīdeī dāniš kör olur* ...*kazāī wetr*. Inevitabile fatum aut infortunium ...Ćiün tīrī kazā kemānī kaderden atylür siperī hazer ile def' olunmaz ...*Kazā üllah üzerine gelsün* ...*Kazā wājib olur kefāret wājib olmaz* ...*Kazāje ryzā göstermek, wirmek*. Se submittere voluntati Dei ...*kazāje ryzāden ghajrī ne ćiāre*"; (s.v. Kismet) "Fati partitio, fatum, fortuna, decretum Dei ...*görelüm allah ne kysmet wirür.*" See also Mustafa b. Şemseddin Ahteri, *Ahteri-i Kebir* (1876), s.v. "Kaza" and "Kader"; and Vankulu Mehmed, *Lugat-ı Vankulu* (Istanbul 1802/3), s.v. "Kaza" and "Kader".

12 *EI*², s.v. "Adjal" (I. Goldziher and W. M. Watt); and Meninski, s.v. "Egel": "Fatalis meta, vel hora mortis, mors, fatum, vitae extremum, & mora concessa, seu certi temporis terminus."

13 Meninski: (s.v. Fatum) *"Taktīrī rebbānīde mukadder imiš ...nasybī ejle imiš ...bašine jazylmyš idy ...egel bulmak"*; (s.v. Praedestinatus) *"Mukadder ...sernüvišt ...munkadir ...mevud ...bašina jazylmyš ...nasyjelerinde mestur."* See also Jakab Harsányi Nagy, representing 17th-century Ottoman dialogue in *Colloquia familiaria Turcico Latina, seu status Turcicus loquens* (Berlin 1672), 4 f.: *"Her sej Allah elinden gielür, andan oturi kabul itmek gierek.* Omnia ex manu Dei veniunt, ideò boni consulenda ...*Emma, kim Tanrgie karsi kor? (gielür)*. At, Quis ausit Deo reluctari? ...*Mukader olan zuhure gielür*. Stat Fatum ratum inevitabile. Quod præstatutum est, fiec. Aliter sic: *jazilan gielür basina*. Quod capici unius cujusque inscriptum est (quod Decretum est) illud futurũ est."

even to the extent of abandoning one's own volition, while others debated the practical limits of *tawakkul*.[14]

According to most Ottoman thought, then, our deeds inhabit a middle ground (*amr bayn al-amrayn*) between compulsion and freewill. One theologian likened the situation to a rider on a horse, with God as the horse and the human the rider. Particular will is like the reins in the rider's hands, he wrote, whereas God's will is the underlying horsepower. If the horse so willed, it could carry the rider wherever it pleased but instead it chooses to follow the rider's direction and propel him on his way, for good or ill.[15] In a similar manner, belief in *al-qaḍā wa'l-qadar* remained an article of faith for Ottoman Muslims, treated in detail in catechisms. The much-read gloss of Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī (d. 1390) on Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī's creed (d. 1142) devotes a section to the topic.[16] Birgivi Mehmed Efendi (d. 1573), whose writings on faith circulated widely in Turkish and Arabic, also enjoined readers to attest that God is all-willing. God decrees, wills, and creates all things, he said, both good and evil, from the believer's piety to the infidel's unbelief and sinner's misdeeds. Everything occurs by God's preordination, so that "from all eternity has He decreed both what is and what is to come and writ it on the Preserved Tablet, and nothing shall defy it."[17]

Fatalism as a theological doctrine was uncontroversial for Ottoman believers, the general tenets of which they were called to embrace. Yet one might object at this point: is it not better call these beliefs predestination rather than fatalism? Apart from the latter's pejorative connotations, for example, contemporary European sources often prefer to call Ottoman subjects "predestinar-

14 *EI*², s.v. "Tawakkul" (L. Lewisohn). Al-Ghazālī said that in the perfect degree, one trusts in God "like a corpse in the hands of the corpse-washer."

15 Anonymous, *Risāla fī al-ikhtiyār al-juzi'*, Princeton Garrett nr. 788Y, fol. 5b. İspirli said (in Badeen, *Sunnitische Theologie*, 68) that "the true position is between compulsion and freewill (*fa'l-ḥaqq huwa al-tawassuṭ bayn al-jabr wa'l-qadr*) and that the act is neither forced nor delegated, but an intermediate thing (also Nābulusī in ibid., 99).

16 Taftazānī, *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam*, trans. Earl Edgar Elder (New York 1950), 80 ff. On catechisms in general in Ottoman lands, see T. Kristć, "*You Must Know Your Faith in Detail*: Redefinition of the Role of Knowledge and Boundaries of Belief in Ottoman Catechisms (*'İlm-i ḥāls*)", in T. Krstić and D. Terzioğlu (eds), *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450-c. 1750* (Leiden 2020), 155–95.

17 Birgivî, *Risale-yi Birgivî* [*Vasiyetname*] (s.n., 1876), 18–19. The topic is also treated in his Arabic *al-Ṭarīqat al-Muḥammadiyya* (Istanbul 1844).

ians" in drawing parallels with broadly similar Christian doctrines.[18] There is good reason for us to distinguish, however. For one, predestination in Christian sects like Calvinism typically deals with soteriology, or doctrines of salvation and who will ultimately be saved or damned—a point some early modern travelers noted.[19] As we have seen, Sunni theology to the contrary joined a belief in *al-qaḍā wa'l-qadar* with an occasionalist worldview in which God not only decreed final states but was, quite literally, responsible for all events in time down the motion of the smallest atom. Modern philosophers also apply the term "theological fatalism" to a specific dilemma: namely, that infallible foreknowledge makes human acts unfree. If God knows the whole future infallibly, as in our case, then it seems to follow that those acts must necessarily take place whether we will it or not.[20]

Yet while theological fatalism was present in the empire, it only takes us so far. Creeds and doctrine tell us what religious scholars felt people should believe, but they do not tell us much about how those people really thought or acted. Theology can be recondite and give rise to misunderstandings; believers will also act and think contrary to teaching. And if we take fatalism in a sense beyond doctrine—as one of mentality, signaling resignation or indifference in

18 E.g., Jean du Mont, *A New Voyage to the Levant, Containing an Account of the Most Remarkable Curiosities in Germany, France, Italy, Malta, and Turkey* (London 1696), 251; John Covel, *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant, Hakluyt Society no. lxxxvi* (London 1892), 246; Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire: containing the Maxims of the Turkish Politie, the Most Material Points of the Mahometan Religion, their Sects and Heresies, their Convents and Religious Votaries, their Military Discipline* (London 1668), 115 ff.; Cornelis de Bruyn, *Reizen van Cornelis de Bruyn door de vermaardste Deelen van Klein Asia* (Delft 1697), 69; and Edward Browne, *The Travels and Adventures of Edward Browne, formerly a Merchant of London* (London 1739), 361.

19 See, for instance, *Encyclopedia of Theology: the Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner (New York 1975), s.v. "Predestination" (H. Rondet and K. Rahner); and *The New Catholic Encyclopaedia* (Washington D.C. 2003), s.v. "Fate and Fatalism". I note some examples below.

20 E.g., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Stanford, CA, 1997—), s.v. "Foreknowledge and Free Will" (L. Zagzebski): "Fatalism is the thesis that human acts occur by necessity and hence are unfree. Theological fatalism is the thesis that infallible foreknowledge of a human act makes the act necessary and hence unfree. If there is a being who knows the entire future infallibly, then no human act is free." See also *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, ed. Robert Kane (Oxford 2005), s.v. "Fatalism" (M. Bernstein) and its subsection on "Theological Fatalism."

the face of events or danger—the picture becomes still more complex. Were Ottoman Muslims fatalists in this broader sense, one scholars often dismiss as an Orientalist trope? As we turn our focus to popular views of plague and warfare, both contested "particular events," we find conflicting evidence but, yes, at least some attitudes we can fairly describe as fatalist.

Plague and Providence

Fatalism has long been treated alongside plague and features in recent revisionist work on Ottoman experiences of the disease. The debate centers on claims that Muslims in the empire did not take precautions against infection, and eschewed flight, due to their belief in God's inalterable decrees. Much-quoted traditions of the Prophet taught that God sends down plague as a form of martyrdom or punishment, so that it is not contagious and believers ought not flee an outbreak.[21] Some Ottoman sources in this sense even call the disease "blessed" (*taun-ı mübarek*).[22] Early modern European travelers often recorded such behavior or related sentiments, too, noting that many people showed little fear over contact with the dead and dying or claimed that each person's fate was "written on his forehead," not to be changed. Scholars like Nükhet Varlık, Yaron Ayalon, and Sam White tend to discount these fatalistic accounts. Such sources deal in stereotypes, they say. They convey Orientalist tropes, describe behavior better explained by psychology, or indeed, if read carefully, overturn the idea that Ottomans acted largely out of "religious scruples."[23] While they

21 E.g., from *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, nr. 5728: "The Prophet said: if you hear of an outbreak of the plague in a land, do not enter it; but if the plague breaks out in a place while you are in it, do not leave that place." Also nr. 2830 and 5732, calling death from the plague a form of martyrdom; and nr. 5734, saying God uses plague both as a punishment and as a blessing for the pious. See also A. Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: an Environmental History* (Cambridge 2011), 214 n. 43.

22 E.g. Selanikî Mustafa, *Tarih-i Selânikî*, ed. M. İpşirli (Istanbul 1989), 1: 283.

23 Varlık tends to present fatalism as a trope, e.g. Varlık, *Plague and Empire,* 72–88. Ayalon argues that "psychological" factors were more important than "religious" ones, though I am not sure how the two can be neatly separated: Y. Ayalon, "Plague, Psychology, and Religious Boundaries in Ottoman Anatolia", *THR,* 9 (2018), 1–17. Sam White acknowledges fatalism as a contested "scruple" yet does not go deeper into the theology, arguing that Ottoman Muslims were largely similar to Byzantine or Western Christians: S. White, "Rethinking Disease in Ottoman History", *IJMES,* 42 (2010), 553 ff. While Alan Mikhail calls plague "a necessary and vital part of Egyptian culture" that was feared but did not cause

grant that some Ottomans do appear to have met the plague stoically, these specialists seek above all to show that Ottoman Muslims took active precautions. While this is welcome, as is their critical handling of sources, one senses an aversion on their part to dig deeper, either to minimize fatalism as a triviality of "religion" or because it is potentially embarrassing, making our subjects seem like Orientalist caricatures—passive, illogical, unthinking. We in this way miss out on rich complexities.[24]

How might early modern Ottomans have engaged with such ideas when it came to plague? Let us consider what some European sources say. According to the English traveler Sir Henry Blount (d. 1682), an often-sympathetic observer, Muslims in the empire saw predestination not only as a "matter of Salvation, but of fortune, and success in this life, [and] they peremptory permit to Destiny fixt, and not avoydable by any act of ours."[25] Blount noted seeing this attitude twice. Once, when one of his ship's crew died of plague at Rhodes, Blount expressed shock at how others failed to keep away and even used the dead man's effects. Instead, "they pointed upon their foreheads, telling me it was written there at their birth when they should dye."[26] A second episode occurred on Blount's way to Edirne, during a plague outbreak. "Wee passed by a man of good qualitie," he wrote, "and a Souldier, who lying along, and his Horse by, could hardly speake so much, as to entreat us to take him into the Coach."

> [Our] Ianizary made our companion ride his Horse, taking the man in: whose brest being open, and full of plague tokens, I would not have had him received; but he in like manner pointing to his owne forehead, and mine, told me wee could not be hurt, unlesse it were written there, and that then we could not avoyd it.[27]

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flight, citing also scriptural injunctions, he does not explore fatalism further: Mikhail, *Nature and Empire*, 201 ff. Miri Shefer-Mossensohn is the most sensitive to theological concerns in *Ottoman Medicine: Healing and Institutions, 1500–1700* (Albany 2010), 173 ff. Unfortunately, while preparing this article I could not access B. Bulmuş, *Plague, Quarantines, and Geopolitics in the Ottoman Empire* (Edinburgh 2012).

24 Cf. Daniel Pipes' blunt article, "Are Muslims Fatalists?", *Middle East Quarterly* (2015), 1–18. This topic is likely one of few in which Pipes and I share much common ground—and I perhaps go further than him here in finding analytical value in fatalism as a term.

25 Henry Blount, *A Voyage into the Levant: a Briefe Relation of a Iourney...* (London 1636), 85.

26 Ibid., 85–86.

27 Ibid., 86.

The man died the next day, said Blount. He also admitted that this attitude had some redeeming merits. "I thought this opinion of fate, had usually taken men off from all industrious care of their owne safety; but in dangers at Sea, and other cases where diligence may evidently import, I have still found the contrary," he wrote. "And in such occurrence as these, where industry is not of manifest avayle; this assurance does not so much hurt in leaving vayne care, as good in strengthening the spirits whose decay yeelds a man up to all bad impressions."[28]

Thomas Smith (d. 1710), a fellow Englishman who served as embassy chaplain in Istanbul, agreed that this "absurd principle of fate" allowed Ottomans to boldly meet dangers like plague. Yet Smith was hostile where Blount showed grudging admiration. Most in the empire take no care in tending the ill or dead, he wrote,

> Their confidence being grounded upon this foolish belief, that every man's destiny is written in his forehead, and not to be prevented or kept off by care or Medicine, that the term of life is fatal and peremptory, and that it is in vain to go about to extend it beyond the set Period.[29]

Smith said this view was especially rife among the uneducated. Such folk "think it a kind of Sin as well as weakness to relinquish their houses, and retire to more wholsom air," he wrote, and liken the disease to an arrow none can escape.[30] Smith added that this argument served on the whole as a source of comfort in distress, or in the face of death: "that it is the decree and pleasure of *God,* which they are to submit to, and that all humane counsels and remedies are ineffectual against his will (which is a great truth in itself, but very much misapplied by them)." Such people claim they are allotted so long to live and no more, saying, "*Egel ghelmedi* ...the hour of his death has not yet come."[31]

The French traveler and later Baron of Carlscroon, Jean du Mont (d. 1727), relayed similar views. Like Blount, Du Mont pointed out that predestination for Ottoman Muslims did not just affect salvation: "they extend it even to the

28 Ibid., 86–87.

29 Thomas Smith, *Remarks upon the Manners, Religion and Government of the Turks together with a Survey of the Seven Churches of Asia, as they now lye in their Ruines, and a Brief Description of Constantinople* (London 1678), 108–09.

30 Ibid., 109.

31 Ibid., 112–13.

most Indifferent Actions, yet with some Limitations and Circumstances which 'twou'd be very difficult to explain, and which they themselves do not well understand."[32] Du Mont claimed that the empire's inhabitants took no precautions against plague, or even took offense at those who did. He recounted how a man he knew was accosted on the street while trying to avoid two "Turks" who were carrying away the body of a plague victim. "One of the Company ran after him, and clasp'd him in his Arms, rubbing his Body upon him several times; after which opening his Vest, and showing him a large Plague-Sore under his right Pap, *Learn,* said he, *not to forsake dead and dying Men*."[33] Du Mont wrote that Ottomans denied plague arises from airborne contagion or human physiology. Instead, they believed it proceeded from a divine cause, as a punishment for sin. Du Mont explained, accordingly, that when God means to punish immorality, he sends an army of "black angels."

> Every Angel receives of Bow and two sorts of Arrows, to inflict either *Death* or *Sickness*, with orders to shoot their mortal Arrows at those whom they find under the Power of *Sin*, and to direct the others at such who are only tainted with some *Pollution*. 'Tis then that Men stand most in need of the Protection of their *White Angels,* who intercede for 'em, and do what they can toward the Blows that are aim'd against 'em, sometimes covering a Man entirely, when they perceive a great number of Enemies ready to attack him. Yet notwithstanding all their Care, their Assistance proves oftentimes ineffectual; and therefore 'tis the Interest of every Man that regards his own Safety, to secure himself against the Vengeance of those destroying Spirits, by leading a sinless Life.[34]

Blount, Smith, and Du Mont overgeneralize, to be sure, and at times are dismissive—traits they share with many European writers regarding the Ottoman realm. Nor were they very familiar with local customs and tongues. But if we delve deeper, we can extract some useful insights. All grant that fatalism went beyond Christianity's soteriological concerns and was a contested issue, for one. We can also allow that, if some Ottomans argued for natural theories of contagion and took precautions—and they notably did[35]—others considered God either to be plague's direct or ultimate cause, acting to His preordained ends.

32 Du Mont, *A New Voyage to the Levant,* 251.
33 Ibid., 258–59.
34 Ibid., 259–60.
35 See, for instance, Shefer-Mossensohn, *Ottoman Medicine,* 173 ff.

How one reacted could thus be morally charged. Du Mont's friend evidently angered his assailants through his lack of charity for the dying and, perhaps as they saw it, proper acceptance of God's agency. His response also contrasts with the risky, if kind, gesture of Blount's Janissary guard, who seems to have taken pity on the plague victim and trusted the outcome to God. While Ayalon disregards Du Mont's angels as "fantastic,"[36] moreover, the fact that Evliya Çelebi (d. 1684?) tells a nearly identical story about an "army of the plague (*taun askeri*)" suggests a popular circulation for such explanations. Like Du Mont, Evliya linked plague outbreaks to such invisible forces. Their ranks feature good spirits clad in white and wicked ones in black, he said, though in his telling they are jinn rather than angels and do not battle each other. Instead, whoever the white spirits strike is spared the plague, and whoever the black spirits strike will die.[37] Strikingly similar stories of spirit armies circulated in relation to warfare, as well, as we will see.

We can find keener observations from people who lived in the empire for years, spoke its languages, and, in some cases, were born there. Alexander Russell (d. 1768), a naturalist and doctor for the Levant Company who lived in Aleppo for more than a decade and learned Arabic, acknowledged fatalism's complexity. The empire's Muslims resign themselves to calamities and political reverses, he said, "but it is not to be imputed to natural insensibility, nor is it always, though it may be sometimes, merely affected."[38] Russell admitted that belief in fate can be useful and fortifying. While the notion is "universally received" in the abstract, however, he maintained that it had little real influence

36 Ayalon, "Plague, Psychology, and Religious Boundaries", 5–6.

37 Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, eds. R. Dankoff et al (Istanbul. 2017), 1: 184, 4: 333, on a dervish's interaction with these spirits near Istanbul, who provided him a register with names of all who would die in a coming plague. The dervish gave it to the sultan, who refused to believe its contents. Plague then raged for forty days, proving the register true. See also M. Sariyannis, "The Dead, the Spirits, and the Living: on Ottoman Ghost Stories", *JTS,* 44 (2015), 380–81; and Idem, "Of Ottoman Ghosts, Vampires, and Sorcerers: an Old Discussion Disinterred", *ArchOtt,* 30 (2013), 189. Varlık relates this story in full (*Plague and Empire,* 237–38) but ties it to shifting mentalities about who might predict or heal plague, rather than to the more obvious way it reflects beliefs about predestination. She also tells (ibid., 224) of one Abdal Musa, who had "the soldiers of plague [*ta'un askeri*] under his control," but refers to the phrase as only a "metaphor."

38 Alexander Russell, *The Natural History of Aleppo: Containing a Description of the City, and the Principal Natural Productions of its Neighbourhood*, revised with notes by P. Russell (London 1794 [2nd ed.]), 1: 233.

on people's decision-making. God's preordination was "an article of faith seldom contested," but it is "practically called in as an auxiliary," after the fact, as well as a topic hotly contested by religious scholars.[39] Russell granted that heedlessness against plague was a reality, yet suggested this behavior was due less to "orthodox opinion" than doubts about the disease's contagiousness. Many in any case took preventative measures, arguing that, since God wills and creates all things, He has created both diseases and the remedies thereof.[40]

Edward Lane (d. 1876), an Orientalist who also spent years in the empire's Arab lands and wrote the monumental *Arabic-English Lexicon*, agreed that, in Egypt, belief in fatalism was by no means absolute. All Muslims must believe in God's preordination of all things, he said. Yet this doctrine was a point of controversy and, in any case, "conditional."[41] Lane noted a belief that, in mid-Shaban, God fixes each person's fate for the next year and shakes the Lote Tree of Paradise to determine who shall die. Maybe counter-intuitively, some on this night prayed to God to cancel out any ill fate decreed for them on the Preserved Tablet. Others held that the chance to alter one's fate fell on the "Night of Power (or Decree)" (*laylat al-qadr*) at the end of Ramadan, when the gates of heaven opened and prayers were sure to succeed.[42] Yet while Lane claimed that fatalism on the whole gave an Egyptian patience, fortitude, and serenity in the face of affliction, it did not preclude action. "His belief in predestination does not ...prevent him from taking any step to attain an object he may have in view; not being perfectly absolute, or unconditional," he wrote. Lane added that Muslims followed the Quranic injunction, "Throw yourselves not into perdition," and avoided danger when possible except in certain cases—one of which was plague. Owing to sayings of the Prophet, "the lawfulness of quarantine is contested; but the generality of them condemn it."[43]

We might regard a final source for examination, Mouradgea D'Ohsson (d. 1807), as much Ottoman as European. Born Muradcan Tosunyan in Istanbul,

39 Ibid., 1: 233–34.

40 Ibid., 1: 234–35, 422–424; 2: 122. Note 50 (p. 235) adds that locals had a proverbial saying: "The physic from the doctor, the cure from God!" (*al-dawa' min al-hakim al-shifa' min Allah*).

41 Edward Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of Modern Egyptians* (London 1860), 1: 68.

42 Ibid., 1: 471–72. Cf. Smith, *Remarks upon the Manners, Religion and Government,* 79.

43 Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs,* 283–84.

D'Ohsson was an Ottoman Armenian subject who knew Arabic and Turkish, worked as an interpreter for the Swedish embassy, and gallicized his name. His vast *Tableau général de l'Empire othoman* treats fatalism in fair detail. The belief in God's preordination is one of five articles of the faith, D'Ohsson wrote. Drawing on legal works and creeds, however, he limited this belief to soteriology and whether a person would be damned or saved. The doctrine of fate only affects our spiritual state, he wrote, and even then not that of all people. The "free-will (*ikhtiyar-djuz'y*)" thus acts without hindrance in civil, moral, and political actions, to deny which is a sin, and it is only after prayer, deliberation, and action that one can ascribe an event to God's will.[44] D'Ohsson evidently erred in this opinion. As we have seen, the doctrine of *al-qaḍā wa'l-qadar* generally embraced all things and events—spiritual and temporal—in a person's life. D'Ohsson also hinted at sharp disagreement over its limits. He decried what he called a "prevailing prejudice" that, despite fine points of doctrine, extended fate to all civil and moral actions. "Nearly everyone cleaves to the principle of an immutable destiny fixed by the decrees of heaven," he said, written on our forehead from birth, while the least complaint against "Takdir" or "Kissmeth" was regarded by high and low as a gross impiety.[45]

Such was also the case in disasters like plague. D'Ohsson blamed outbreaks of pestilence as well as Istanbul's frequent fires on fatalism. Despite the example of early caliphs and Sultan Bayezid II, who avoided plague and even retired to the countryside, he said, and despite the "spirit of the faith" and legal and theological literature, many Ottomans refused to take precautions. D'Ohsson claimed that, while some tried to protect themselves or flee, "they are outdone by the prejudices of the masses."[46] The latter held reasonable precautions to be not only a sin but an insult against them and God, he said. Yet D'Ohsson pointed to contradictions. The same man who took no action in the face of plague or fire, considering them God's decree, would still use all the means at his disposal

44 Mouradgea D'Ohsson, *Tableau général de l'Empire othoman* (Paris 1788–1824), 1: 167–68. D'Ohsson drew on al-Nasafī's creed, the legal work of Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī (d. 1549), and the *fetva*s of Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi (d. 1743) for his discussions of faith and law, respectively. On D'Ohsson and his work, see C. V. Findley, *Enlightening Europe on Islam and the Ottomans: Mouradgea D'Ohsson and his Masterpiece* (Leiden 2019).

45 D'Ohsson, *Tableau général,* 1: 168–70. I have used the translation in Menchinger, "Free Will", 451.

46 D'Ohsson, *Tableau général,* 1: 170–73; and 4a: 391–93, 395.

to repel the effects of the disaster, just as someone with a serious illness consults a doctor.[47]

What are we to make of these accounts? If we take the sources seriously, I think, we can first admit that *al-qaḍā wa'l-qadar* had wide purchase in the abstract. Yet we can also see that the doctrine fed all manner of debate. As Lane and others indicated, for instance, Ottoman religious scholars addressed the general problem of human will as well as the specific issue of flight from plague in treatises and legal opinions (*fetva*). Flight was indeed a fraught topic, running against clear scriptural injunctions. Yet scholars tried to offer nuance. Taşköprüzade (d. 1561), known for his learning in the sciences and author of a treatise on predestination, argued that believers did no wrong to leave a pest-ridden city, provided they were only seeking purer air and not fleeing the disease itself (and hence God's will). The prolific şeyhülislam and historian Kemal Paşazade (d. 1534) along with the scribe İdris Bidlisi (d. 1520) had likewise urged readers to flee from pestilential sites in works on the topic.[48] The empire's most famous jurisconsult, meanwhile, Ebüssuud Efendi (d. 1574), conceded in a series of rulings that both flight and staying put could be justified. While he lamented the panicked flight of officials, ordering the dismissal of those who abandoned their charges at a time of need, he also granted room for agency. In one ruling, he allowed believers to exit "a plague-stricken city in search of a safer place and ...precautions against the plague."[49]

The survival of legal opinions on flight indicates that it was a real point of debate, one jurists had to adjudicate and clarify. Ebüssuud also issued a ruling on the more general problem: if God decrees and preordains everything, can we blame our actions or inaction on divine will? Or are we morally responsible? As the *fetva* poses the question (which may reflect an actual legal dispute), can a man carouse and indulge in sin but claim that his behavior is fated—that God compels him to act so?[50] Ebüssuud followed the consensus theology to reject

47 Ibid., 4a: 396–97.

48 Shefer-Mossensohn, *Ottoman Medicine,* 174; and Varlık, *Plague and Empire,* 243–44.

49 Shefer-Mohsensson, *Ottoman Medicine,* 173–74; and Varlık, *Plague and Empire,* 244. See also E. Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebusuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16. Asır Türk Hayatı* (Istanbul 1983), nrs. 395, 754, 888, 912, and 913.

50 Ebüssuud Mehmed, *Fetva-yı Kaza vü Kader*, in Princeton Firestone Library, Islamic MSS Garrett nr. 225Y, fol. 5b: "[Zeyd] diyse kim meyhaneye gideceğüm ve anda fısk ideceğüm ilm-i Allah'da mukadder ve levh-i mahfuz'da mesturdur lacerem benden bu fıskın sudurı bir emr-i zaruridir..."

this argument. If we accept that our deeds are wholly compelled, he argued, humans cannot be morally responsible. We cannot be held to account for good and evil, for God is just and does not place unbearable obligations (*teklif-i mala yutak*) on us. Rather, while God knows from all eternity how each person will act in life, we still choose to "acquire" our actions or not. The fact that God knows what we will choose in all things, and then wills and creates our acts, does not mean that God compels us. Ebüssuud likened the situation to a sculptor: "A sculptor makes a statue of a horse in a particular way because that is what a horse is like in its essence," he wrote. "How should it be that the horse is by essence that way because the sculptor made such a representation?"[51]

Ebüssuud's *fetva* suggests that at least some Ottomans used fatalism opportunistically, finding in it excuses for inaction or the shirking of responsibility. These arguments, while self-interested, had power. They drew on the theology in a way that was hard to refute, or easy to turn into an attack on a naysayer's piety. For who can doubt God's might and the wisdom of what He wills? European sources at times noted such a tendency. The French diplomat and merchant Laurent d'Arvieux (d. 1702) observed that, in Arab lands, people offered fatalistic expressions to condole others on the loss of loved ones: "Providence wou'd have it thus; Such was the Destiny which the Almighty had writ upon his Head, and his Hour was Come."[52] John Antes (d. 1811), an American missionary who spent more than ten years in Egypt, complained that similar phrases could justify indolence or still more serious matters—in his case, a beating that left him badly injured.[53] D'Ohsson agreed that rulers especially invoked fate ex post facto to excuse bad policy or behavior.[54] Early modern Ottomans voiced irritation at such devices, too. The anonymous author of *Kitab-ı Müstetab*, for instance, a 17th century reform tract, criticized the fatalism of some of his peers as cynical, indeed blasphemous. "The person who says, 'It was fated for us. The

51 Ibid., fols. 6b–7a.

52 Laurent D'Arvieux, *The chevalier D'Arvieux's travels in Arabia the desart; written by himself, and Publish'd by Mr. De la Roque: Giving a very accurate and entertaining Account of the Religion, Rights, Customs, Diversions, &c.* (London 1718), 270.

53 John Antes, *Observations on the Manners and Customs of Egyptians* (London 1800), 63, where his guides invoked fate when proceeding more slowly than he wished ("*Min Allah! Mukadder!*"), and 124–125, when he was bastinadoed and told by interlocutors that his treatment had been "*Min Allah, Maktub, Mukadder!* that is, it is from God: it is so written in the book of fate, which cannot be altered."

54 D'Ohsson, *Tableau général,* 1: 174–75.

Lord God ordained it thus for us—what can we do?' is no Muslim."[55] Canikli Ali Paşa (d. 1785), an officer who wrote a popular reform treatise in the late 18th century, had a similar view. Those who invoked fate were excuse-makers, he said: "People blame fate whenever there is a flaw in human strategy."[56] Clearly, for some Ottomans fatalism could be a rhetorical tool.

Many sources also note a distinction between the behavior of the more and less educated, or between socio-economic groups. D'Ohsson complained that in his day a "prejudice" led many across the empire to apply fatalism indiscriminately in their everyday lives. Earlier writers like Thomas Smith, Paul Rycaut (d. 1700), and John Covel (d. 1722) alleged that the "prejudice" was rooted especially among commoners—the wealthy or educated, including judges, jurists, and rulers, fled the plague either because they could or because they grasped the doctrine's subtler points, they said. We read that it was in fact the lower classes who most resisted precautions and, indeed, put public pressure on others to conform, with the threat of being labeled impious or an infidel.[57]

Some Ottomans likely stayed put for economic reasons, lacking the means to flee. Could others have simply misinterpreted what they had heard? Did unlettered believers fail to grasp what authorities told them, in other words, distorting it into more extreme forms? We should consider this possibility, too. The formal theological debate over *al-qaḍā wa'l-qadar* mainly took place in Arabic among scholars; the literature was erudite and made fine distinctions. Even those who had prior knowledge could find it befuddling. The Moldovian prince Dimitrie Cantemir (d. 1723), for instance, who spent his youth in Istanbul as a hostage and had a wide education, including in Arabic and Turkish, evidently asked scholarly acquaintances about human agency. Can a person ever speak or

55 Y. Yücel (ed.), *Osmanlı Devlet Düzenine Ait Metinler I.: Kitâb-ı Müstetâb* (Ankara 1974), 28: "bu bize mukadder imiş, Hakk Te'âlâ hazretleri bize böyle mukadder itmiş, bizim elimizde ne vardır dimeğe kişi İslamdan çıkar…"

56 Canikli Ali, *Tedbir-i Cedid-i Nadir*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, H.O. nr. 104b, 1b: "Tedbirde noksan oldı takdire bühtan ittiler …"

57 See, respectively, Smith, *Remarks upon the Manners, Religion and Government,* 109–10; Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire,* 116–17; and Covel, *Early Voyages and Travels,* 243–44. See also Antes, *Observations on the Manners and Customs*, 46–47. Antes acknowledges the same but blames it, condescendingly, on the lower classes "being more stupid and superstitious". Some scholars have pointed to a divergence along socio-economic lines, e.g. Ayalon, "Plague, Psychology, and Religious Boundaries", 7.

act contrary to the divine will, and are we saved or damned from all eternity? "I could never obtain a direct answer from them," he wrote.

> If again they are asked, how their Opinion of free-will is reconciled with this Reason, they beg the Question, by saying, that all may be saved who will, but no man is saved whom God has not destin'd to Salvation. They conclude with this Axoim, *Tacdir Tedbiri bozár*, i.e. *Divine Providence destroyes Human Appointments or Purposes*. From this Contrariety of Sentiments it is that free-will is highly valued by some, and as little esteem'd by others.[58]

To be sure, fatalism and its rhetoric could be used post factum to serve ulterior ends—consoling the bereaved, justifying politics, excusing inaction, or veiling poverty. In many cases, however, we may also be dealing with a different strain of piety. If scholars like Ebüssuud upheld a pragmatic, intellectual approach to the faith, there were others who preached simpler values like belief, trust in God, and humility. Such values were widely accessible. The texts that an average Ottoman Muslim might hear or read focused largely on proper piety and belief, not esoteric theological distinctions. Mehmed Birgivi warned readers of his popular *Ṭarīqat* against fatalistic inaction. "If God is the cause of all things," we are tempted to think, "then who can change that which is destined to happen?"

> What if your efforts are against that which God has predestined for you? Is it not a great sin? If He wills you to do good, it will happen regardless of your will. If anything you want to happen does not meet His will, it will not happen. There is no need to judge, for all good and bad is from Him...[59]

Birgivi regarded this thinking as a satanic temptation, to be rejected. Yet he also urged readers to believe in *al-qaḍā wa'l-qadar* as irrevocable, God's will, down to the minute operations of our bodies. "Can you change the way your heart and lungs are built? In the same way your life is also predestined, whether you

58 Dimitrie Cantemir, *History of the Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Empire*, trans. N. Tindal (London 1757), 122 n. 18.

59 Birgivî, in *The Path of Muhammad: a Book on Islamic Morals and Ethics*, trans. S. T. B. al-Jerrahi al-Halveti (Bloomington 2005), 142. Cf. the Arabic in *al-Ṭarīqat al-Muḥammadiyya*, 70–71. There is no such warning in his Turkish creed, *Risale-yi Birgivî* [*Vasiyetname*].

believe it or not," he wrote.[60] So too did Birgivi caution against ambition (*tul-ı emel*) and prideful faith in our own abilities. Ambition, he said, "rests on a false belief in our ability to deal with things unknown, and to tamper with destiny." Self-love, too, blinds us to the fact that we owe everything to God and that all of our actions "are [our] destiny decided by God." We must instead see what happens as God's will and that everything belongs to Him.[61] Birgivi's teachings warn against fatalistic behavior, to be sure, but they also stress our weakness before God and the need to submit in pious resignation to divine will. It is easy to see how some readers might imbibe more of the latter than the former.

The preacher Fazlızade Mehmed (fl. ca. 1740) serves as a good example of this kind of piety. We know little about Fazlızade, who appears to have been an isolated, embittered figure in his day. Still, while they may have been unusual, his views hint at the circulation of extreme strains of fatalistic thought, if not behavior. Fazlızade's views appear anti-rational, for one. He resented the intellectual bent of contemporaries, considering it arrogant pride in their own abilities. For him, being "reasonable" (*akıllu*) did not mean using unfettered human reason. It was rather an index of piety. Fazlızade held that a "reasonable" person would recall at all times his own frailty and so submit wholly to God's decrees, "following His orders without hesitation and being content with whatever fate He had assigned for His creature."[62] In the same way, those who used intellect for any reason other than to acknowledge God's omnipotence were vain and sinful; worse, those who tried to meddle in God's affairs verged on blasphemy.[63]

Fazlızade's brand of pious quietism also stressed creaturely weakness and absolute trust in God. He rejected all causal systems and efforts to find patterns in the world, taking the occasionalism of Ottoman theology to extremes, and even went so far as to deny the idea of ʿādat Allah, as he thought it limited God's omnipotence.[64] Fazlızade felt that people who presumed to act through causes blasphemed, by implying they could compel God: "It is blasphemy to think that the being or not being of a thing is both from God and another," he wrote.

60 Ibid., 346.

61 Ibid., 136, 165. Cf. *al-Ṭarīqat al-Muḥammadiyya*, 64, 80.

62 M. Kurz, *Ways to Heaven, Gates to Hell: Fazlızade ʿAli's Struggle with the Diversity of Ottoman Islam* (Berlin 2011), 183–84.

63 Ibid., 186–87.

64 Ibid., 193–94.

> For the only absolute creator and really independent agent is God. There is by no means participation by the servant in creation. There is no relation with that which is called "cause." That is: that which will be, comes about even without any cause; that which will not be, does not come about even if there is a cause. But if God wishes that there should be a cause, the thing comes about through a cause. That which He wants without a cause, comes about without a cause… In short, that something comes about or does not come about is only from God.[65]

For Fazlızade, a person who sought out causes not only tried to manipulate the Creator but also failed to place his trust where it belongs, in God, and thus negated *tawakkul*. The true believer knows his limits and acknowledges God's power, he held. He does not try to understand why things happen or not, but submits piously to God's decrees.[66]

Fate and War

As with plague, war held an unclear status as a "particular event" and provoked debate over fate. Warfare in the early modern empire was not only a human affair, decided by our judgment and decision-making. God directs and decrees all things, it was held, including battles. According to the Quran, God led early Muslims to victory at the 624 Battle of Badr, reinforcing them with "a thousand of the angels, rank on rank (8:9)." When the Prophet blinded the enemy with a handful of dust as he advanced, scripture gives God agency: "Ye (Muslims) slew them not, but God sleweth them. And thou (Muhammad) threwest not when thou didst throw; but God threw, that He might test the believers by a fair test (8:17)." Victory and defeat rely on God. As the Quran says, "Victory cometh only from God (3:126, 8:10)" and "Lo! We have given thee (O Muhammad) a signal victory (48:1)."[67] The extent to which humans might contribute to the outcome, however, remained a point of debate. Did material factors such as tactics and discipline matter? Or must one only be pure of heart and trust in God (*mutawakkilan ʿalā Allah*)?

Ottomans clearly felt that God could and did intervene in war. Gazi tradi-

65 Quoted in Ibid., 193.

66 Ibid., 192.

67 D. Thomas, "Miracles in Islam", in G. Twelftree (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Miracles* (Cambridge 2011). Quranic passages are from the Pickthall translation, lightly emended.

tion in the empire held that Muslim armies typically went to battle with unseen reinforcements, with stories of various invisible entities. Some sources cite the active presence of angels, spirits, or long-dead martyrs from the early days of Islam, with the Prophet himself at times in the vanguard. Other sources credit comfort and aid to so-called "men of God" (*ricalullah*) or "hidden ones" (*ricalü'l-gayb*), a company of human saints, hidden in the liminal space between this world and the next, whom God chooses to enact His will and who control the world.[68] Sinan Paşa (d. 1486), a prominent scholar and vizier of the 15th century, described such beings in these terms:

> They are the army of souls from the unseen world (*bâtından ervâh çerisi olur*), and one of them is highest. They wear their (special) costume of a peaked cap; they are clad at times in white, at times in black, and they ride horses at times bay and at times wild… They stand against the enemy, and those who have vision for the unseen may see them. It is the spirits who first beat the enemy; bodily battle begins afterwards. When you have beaten your enemy, know that in fact they beat him; and if you cannot see how they did this, it is because you lack the [proper] vision.[69]

Many early Ottoman chronicles reflect this worldview and tell of miraculous events in battle. God might break "divine custom," for example, by empowering a dervish-warrior to slay his foes with a wooden sword or allowing a slain solider to pursue his killer and retake his severed head.[70] But so too might He send "unseen aid" (*nusret-i gaybiyye*). Early modern Ottomans often imputed victories to God's invisible hand, at times to enhance the sacral aura of particular rulers. For instance, a courtier named Levhî (fl. 1526) claimed that "hidden ones" constantly attended Süleyman I and that the sultan had aid from the Prophet and all the saints in his 1526 victory at Mohaç. Süleyman's own chancellor Celalzade Mustafa equally argued that, at Mohaç, the Prophet aided

68 Paul Wittek, for instance, claims it was commonly held in gazi circles that the Prophet led Muslim warriors into battle: P. Wittek, "The Taking of Aydos Castle: a Ghazi Legend and its Transformation", in G. Makdisi (ed.), *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A.R. Gibb* (Leiden 1965), 669. See also *TDVİA*, s.v. "Ahyâr" (T. Yazıcı); s.v. "Ricâlullah" (S. Uludağ); s.v. "Ricâlü'l-gayb" (S. Uludağ).

69 Quoted in Sariyannis, "The Dead, the Spirits, and the Living", 379.

70 See, respectively, F. Giese (ed.), *Die altosmanischen anonymen Chroniken* (Breslau 1922), 1: 11; and Claire Norton on Deli Hasan's decapitation around the 1566 capture of Szigetvár, in "Sacred Sites, Severed Heads, and Prophetic Visions", *Anthropology of the Contemporary Middle East and Central Eurasia,* 2 (2014), 81–96.

the empire's forces with "secret soldiers and sacred souls" (*cunûd-ı gaybiyye ve ervâh-ı mukaddese)*.[71] Eyewitnesses and later authors also attributed Mehmed III's stunning 1596 victory at Haçova (Mezőkeresztes) to spirits, angels, "hidden ones," or a miracle induced by the sultan's veneration of the Prophet's relics.[72] These authors had political motives, undoubtedly. But we should not lose sight of the fact that their arguments and motives—associating rulers with God's blessings and entities acting as instruments of His will—drew power from ideas with wide currency.

Ideas of "unseen aid" and "hidden ones" also persisted through the early modern era, feeding a view that God actively aided the empire's arms. From the mid-16th century, many elites espoused a general conviction in the realm's uniqueness and divine blessing, the proof of which manifested itself in battle. As Lutfi Paşa (d. 1563), Grand Vizier to Süleyman, wrote, the Ottomans would prevail no matter how few men they took to the field. The prominent scribe and reformist Koçi Beg (fl. 1630s) insisted at a later date on the empire's recuperative ability and that even defeat posed no real long-term danger:

> If the armies of Islam, taking refuge in God, were defeated ten times in battle, by God's grace neither the Sublime State nor the faith would suffer any harm whatsoever.[73]

European observers also noted such attitudes. The Englishman Paul Rycaut wrote that Ottomans took victory as a sign of God's favor. Because God decrees all things good and ill, they held, "whatsoever prospers hath God for the Author." Rycaut added that they not only applied this logic to the outcome of civil strife, but "from the same rule they conclude much of Divine approbation

71 See C. Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: the Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleymân", in G. Veinstein (ed.), *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps* (Paris 1992), 168–170; on Celalzade, see Sariyannis, "The Dead, the Spirits, and the Living", 379.

72 There are many such accounts, e.g. in the work of Mustafa Ali (d. 1600), Hasan Beyzade (d. 1636), İbrahim Peçevi (d. 1649?), and others. I am now preparing an article on this battle and its miraculous interpretations.

73 See Lütfi Paşa, *Tevârîh-i Âl-i Osmân* (Istanbul 1922/23), 4–7; and Koçi Bey, *Koçi Bey Risalesi*, ed. A. K. Aksüt (Istanbul 1939), 66. On "Ottoman exceptionalism" in general, see E. Menchinger, "Dreams of Destiny and Omens of Greatness: Exceptionalism in Ottoman Political and Historical Thought", *Journal of Islamic Studies,* 31 (2020), 1–30.

and the truth of their Religion, from their Conquests and present Prosperity."[74] Mouradgea D'Ohsson said that such beliefs continued to animate Ottomans to the late 1700s, "the effect of a true piety, and the conviction they share with nearly all Muslims, that God alone, according to his eternal decrees, decides the fate of battles and destiny of nations." While common opinion credited victory to God and the support of unseen "legions" of angels or spirits, led by the Prophet himself, it framed defeat as an effect of God's wrath—punishment for "those iniquities committed against religion and the law."[75]

At the individual level, moreover, many in the rank-and-file seem to have expressed faith in divine providence, or in the rewards of martyrdom. Dimitrie Cantemir wrote that, in the early 18th century, Ottoman soldiers wore no armor "in the belief that, tho' a Man were made of Adamant, he could not evade nor escape the law of Fate." Each man's destiny was fixed, following common phrases such as:

> *Bashde yazilmysh olan Gelmek Vadzibdur, what is written on the forehead must necessarily come to pass. Acajak can damarda durmaz, the blood that is to flow out, remains not in the artery* (that is, what God has preordain'd must be done in its time), *Tacdir tedbiri bozar, Providence overrules all human purposes*.[76]

Many contemporary Europeans also felt that this faith bolstered Ottoman forces. Thomas Smith numbered fatalism as a cause for their tenacity, in addition to discipline, education, and, in some cases, sincere piety. "The doctrine of *Predestination* and Fate contributes not a little to their fury," he said,

> Upon confidence of which principle they expose themselves to certain dangers, believing themselves safe in the midst of them, if *God* has so decreed it; which they do

74 Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire,* 115–16.

75 D'Ohsson, *Tableau général,* 2: 263–64. According to Evliya Çelebi (d. 1684?) (in Sariyannis, "The Dead, the Spirits, and the Living", 379), the souls of martyrs killed at Nihawand (642) joined the 1586 Ottoman siege of Hamadan. Mustafa Naima in the early 1700s credited a number of victories to God's aid rather than material factors, including Haçova and Kanije: Naîmâ Mustafa Efendi, *Târih-i Na'îmâ*, ed. M. İpşirli (Ankara 2007), 1: 115–120, 172, 2: 399.

76 Cantemir, *History of the Growth and Decay,* 42 n. 23.

not know, whether he has or no, but by the event; and if so, all their wariness and endeavours to escape signifie nothing in the end.[77]

Others like Rycaut, D'Ohsson, and the soldier and scholar Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli (d. 1730) concurred. All argued that popular belief in fatalism gave Ottoman forces valor in the face of danger, or the ability to meet reverses with equanimity.[78]

If Ottomans held that God decreed the outcome of war, however, they debated how this decree unfolded and how far humans could shape the result. These debates rose in intensity through the 18th century as part of controversy over military and political reform, with arguments delimiting the scope of creaturely action. Again, while we can acknowledge that these debates served political ends, whether support for or opposition to reform, they drew force from the theology and stayed within its parameters. Older views clearly still resonated with some groups. Battle for them required absolute trust in God, who, if He willed, would grant believers aid. One late 18th-century author outlined this logic. Victory and defeat depend on God's will and not material factors, he wrote. While some Christians argue that war is a "particular event" in which God has no effect—Heaven forefend!—and so credit victory to whatever side musters the superior means (*esbab*) of warfare, they err, ignorant of what scripture says: "Not the least atom is hidden from Him" and "There is no aid but

77 Smith, *Remarks upon the Manners, Religion and Government,* 140.

78 Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire,* 116: "it causes the Souldiery brutishly to throw away their lives in the most desperate attempts, and to esteem no more of their bodies, then as dirt or rubbish to fill up the trenches of the Enemy: And to speak the truth, this received assertion hath turned the Turk as much to account, as any other of their best and subtlest Maxims." D'Ohsson, *Tableau général,* 2: 264–65: "We can perceive here both the advantages and inconveniences of this opinion in the conduct of public affairs, since it serves, on the one hand, to direct the people and the army according to circumstances, and, on the other, to cover with the veil of fatalism whatever is vicious and reprehensible in the projects of ministers as well as operations of generals." L. F. Marsigli, *Stato militare dell'imperio Ottomano, incremento e decremento del medesimo* (Amsterdam 1732), 41: "Their courage, each to his own, in bearing reverses of fortune has no parallel among any other nation. If one who yesterday was vizier finds himself stripped of his office and authority today—reduced, I say, to having but two or three servants—he regards his disgrace with an extraordinary indifference, and blames his woes only on God's will and his own ill-fate. And if he returns to his old post, which very often happens, he resumes his former pomp forthwith as if he had never suffered any disgrace."

from God the Almighty."[79] The same author offered an apt counter-example in the battle of Haçova, when trust in God overcame numbers and disorder and led to victory. With such cases, "how can anyone impute victory to refinement of the means of war (*tekmîl-i esbâb-ı ceng*) and defeat to inadequate arms?"[80] According to some Ottomans, God would unfailingly send aid—unseen armies of angels, spirits, or "men of God"—so long as the empire showed itself worthy. The lesson of Haçova, another source stated, was that one must not trust in numbers or things of this world but only, and utterly, in God.[81] Concern for worldly causes was unnecessary, at best a distraction and at worst an impiety.

We can see by the 17th century an alternative perspective that underlined battle as an event in which humans could exert "particular will," nonetheless. It is important to note that this viewpoint did not deny fate or the miraculous, and it still upheld fatalism in strict theological terms. God's preordination remained the ultimate cause of all things, battle and human deeds included. Figures like the polymath Katip Çelebi (d. 1657) now stressed the theology of human will more firmly, however. God gave us volition and enjoined us to act in this world through causes that we will and He creates, he argued. The failure to do so is a sin.[82] Would-be reformers adopted a similar tack in their calls to action. İbrahim Müteferrika (d. 1745), a printer and scholar of Christian background whose interests ranged widely, encapsulated such arguments in a 1731 treatise in which he argued that a well-organized, disciplined army will most often defeat a chaotic and untrained one. "It is secret wisdom that victory, success, and triumph over the enemy depend always and utterly on the Lord God's infinite aid to believers," he wrote.

79 Ahmed Vasıf, *Mehasinü'l-Asar ve Hakaiku'l-Ahbar*, ed. M. İlgürel (Istanbul 1978), 151. Vasıf paid lip service to this view but was in fact arguing in a roundabout way for military reform. On his ideas on warfare and reform, see E. L. Menchinger, *The First of the Modern Ottomans: the Intellectual History of Ahmed Vasif* (Cambridge 2017), esp. 96 ff.

80 Vasıf, *Mehasinü'l-Asar,* 151. Vasıf used the same battle to make a similar point in another tract: Y. Çelik, "Siyaset-Nasihat Literatürümüzde Nadir bir Tür: Mısır'ın İşgali üzerine III. Selim'e Sunulan Tesliyet-nâme", *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi,* 22 (2010), 121–22.

81 İbrahim Peçevi, *Tarih-i Peçevî* (Istanbul 1864), 2: 201–203.

82 See G. Hagen and E. Menchinger, "Ottoman Historical Thought", in P. Duara et al (eds), *A Companion to Global Historical Thought* (London 2014), 101–102; and Menchinger, "Free Will", 448–49. For the original text, see Kâtib Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibar fi Esfari'l-Bihar* (Istanbul 1911), 163–164.

> That rule rests upon His exalted will; and that victory and defeat lie within His pre-ordination. However, God has consigned the outward realization of every matter to initiative through causes ...Man must operate thus.[83]

The point, then, was not that humans control their fate, though many reformers obviously hoped to imply as much. We can and must still hope for God's aid. As the late 18th-century historian and reformer Ahmed Vasıf said, the empire was "succored by God until the end of time (*damen-i kıyamete dek müeyyed min-'indillah*). If we might at times suffer defeat, there is ample proof that we shall with God's help immediately recover."[84] For Vasıf and like-minds, rather, the point was that humans must not expect divine intervention passively or presumptuously. Believers should have faith as well as take action. The proper course, said Vasıf, was "to immediately put trust and forgiveness with God and, begging the Prophet's intercession, to purify our intent, strive with all effort, and spend might and main to perfect secondary causes (*esbab-ı zahire*) before any time is lost."[85]

The empire's unsuccessful wars of the late 1700s, especially against Russia, brought these arguments into stark conflict. Some in the Ottoman hierarchy continued to insist that they could rely on divine favor and aid in battle. Material factors, preparation, numbers—these did not matter, or at least they did not matter as much, for God always favors Muslim armies and will punish the wicked. According to one Müftizade Ahmed (d. 1791), a high-ranking religious scholar and şeyhülislam who favored an aggressive stance toward Russia, "the zephyr of victory shall blow to our armies and the dynasty's ill-wishers shall be confounded, following the verse, 'How many a small company has overcome a large company by God's will.'"[86] Yet this view now faced vocal criticism. One scribe in the service of the reformist Grand Vizier Halil Hamid Paşa (d. 1785) supplied a rebuttal. As he put it, times had changed. "While I have no doubt that God is almighty and powerful and will help the weak and oppressed," he argued, "it is undeniable that the divine custom is always to create everything through causes."

83 Quoted in Menchinger, "Free Will", 455.
84 Çelik, "Siyaset-Nasihat Literatürümüzde", 122.
85 Ibid., 123.
86 Vasıf, *Mehasinü'l-Asar,* 39–40. See also Menchinger, "Free Will", 463.

> God alone has knowledge of the outcome of future events; therefore, to open the gates of war with such potent enemies while secondary causes [*esbab-ı zahire*] are entirely lacking, relying on unseen aid [*nusret-i gaybiyye*], is like taking mortal poison and trusting overconfidently in the antidote's unknown efficacy ...[87]

In this view, the empire could no longer simply trust in God's intervention, in avenging angels, or in legions of unseen soldiers. They must work through visible, worldly means.

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Conclusions—and Why Ottoman Theology Matters

By revisiting "Turkish fatalism," I have tried to make a case in this article for serious study of theology in the early modern empire. What does that mean? Thinking theologically forces us to ask basic questions about reality and the human condition, for one, such as: How does the world work? How do we relate to that world and its Creator? What attitude ought we to take before the divine? What values should we properly cultivate in life? The answers that early modern Ottoman Muslims gave to these questions differed from our own, of course, at times markedly. We can also say that, as a set of beliefs or attitudes, fatalism supplied an interlinking, coherent framework for understanding the place of humans in the cosmos and our relationship to God.

Fatalism was not merely an Orientalist trope, then. Ottoman Muslims were indeed fatalists in a strict sense: by belief in God's preordination of all things in an occasionalistic universe. There are also grounds to think that at least some believers took these ideas further, despite vigorous debate, into more broadly fatalistic and quietist attitudes. Of course, I do not wish to overstate the case. There is a difference between worldview and actual practice, and our subjects often did flee pestilence, consult doctors, use talismans, or devise tactics for battle or proposals for reform. Yet we have also seen how the theology of fatalism shaped responses to plague and war in the 16th to 18th centuries, and how it could equally extend into political jockeying, gestures of consolation, and excuse-making. Nor does affirming such strains of thought make our subjects Orientalist caricatures, illogical or unthinking. Indeed, dismissing fatalism only

87 Vasıf, *Mehasinü'l-Asar,* 85. I have lightly emended the translation in Menchinger, "Free Will", 464.

leads us to a less crude form of Orientalism, by presuming that the only "proper" response to adversity is human initiative and the application of reason. It is a value judgment informed, ultimately, by secular traditions of Enlightenment thought, and diminishes the rich theological and pietistic impulses of a theocentric society. Historians overlook complexities, or even actively distort our subject matter, by ignoring these alternatives.

What, then, do we miss by ignoring Ottoman theology, and why does it matter? I would argue that Ottoman theology matters precisely for what it tells us about these alternative impulses—and a conceptualization of the cosmos that differs from our own. It can reveal to us a worldview pervaded by transcendent divine power, for instance, one in which God acted and intervened constantly and, as Almighty Creator, could break in at any moment. A theological concern might also bring to our attention people or groups for whom serving God, resignation to God's decrees, or maintaining a creaturely posture before the divine was potentially of higher value than action, or self-realization, or even self-preservation. Third, Ottoman theology might lay bare attitudes in our subjects that focused less on the worldly, material, and concrete, and were more attuned to the numinous. And last, it can limn for us a world that was thought to bear traces everywhere of its Creator, traces that showed that same Creator's power and generosity and demanded our awe in return.

Ottoman theology can tell us about such things, revealing an empire in which the divine could saturate all aspects of life. It reminds us that "religion" was not and is not an isolatable category we can wall off from other spheres. For our subjects, faith helped to answer basic questions of self, of reality, of polity and politics, and much else. We would do well as historians to pay them more mind.

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Languages of Ottoman Esotericism

Marinos Sariyannis (Rethymno)[1]

> The Hardic tongue of the Archipelago, though it has no more magic power in it than any other tongue of men, has its roots in the Old Speech, that language in which things are named with their true names: and the way to the understanding of this speech starts with the Runes that were written when the islands of the world first were raised up from the sea.
>
> (Ursula K. Le Guin, *A Wizard of Earthsea*)

From amongst the early modern Islamicate cultures, Ottoman esotericism is arguably the least studied. Commonly considered (at least by Arabists, as Ottomanists have moved away from this notion) a period of decline for Islamic cul-

1 Earlier drafts of this paper were read at Osmanistischer Studienkreis: "Sprache und Sprachen im osmanischen Raum" (Bonn, 14–15 February 2020) and at the 2nd European Network for the Study of Islam and Esotericism (ENSIE) Conference "Islamic Esotericism in Global Contexts" (Louvain, December 3–5, 2020). I wish to thank all participants in both venues for their suggestions, as well as Zeynep Aydoğan, Aslıhan Gürbüzel, Güneş Işıksel and Aslı Niyazioğlu who read thoroughly an earlier version and made insightful additions and remarks. 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).

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ture, when all science (including occult ones) barely went beyond mere copying and commenting on older authorities, the Ottoman period is in fact a highly compelling intersection of influences and intellectual movements, closely interwoven with social dynamics. This was a time when scholarly activity was equally if not more intensive outside the medrese system; when vernacular culture charted its own course, albeit with an unprecedented degree of literacy and breadth of authorship; when "fundamentalist" and various Sufi influences coexisted with "materialistic" trends and unintentionally contributed to a disenchanted view of the world, whereas at the same time a Sufi culture was moving in the opposite direction. In short, it was a period of time well worth focusing on for scholarly research. In comparison to other societies of the Islamic world, such as the Mamluk, the Safavid or the Timurid empires, Ottoman society was an amalgamation of ethnoreligious and linguistic groups, coexisting in an environment of varying tolerance and contributing, one might say, to a shared culture that was common yet dominated by the Islamic, Turkish (and to an extent Arabic) speaking communities. Furthermore, Christian groups and especially the Greek Orthodox communities constituted privileged channels for communication with Central and Western European scientific traditions, including esoteric ideas; and the same applies for Jewish communities, whether Ashkenazi, Romaniot or Sephardic. The question I wish to raise (but not necessarily answer) with this paper is whether this peculiar position of the Ottoman Empire within the global context was influencing its esoteric production. The paper will focus on an examination of the languages used and mentioned in the texts of Ottoman Muslim esotericism. In doing so, I attempt to establish whether and why there are some languages that seem "privileged" in that they allow access to the supernatural realm.[2] I seek to explore the conflict between the emphasis on Arabic as a sacred language (and thus closely connected to the science of letters), on the one hand, and other languages and alphabets connected to a

2 I was at an advanced stage of writing of this paper when I took notice of Aslıhan Gürbüzel's work and especially of her paper "Bilingual Heaven: Was There a Distinct Persianate Islam in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire?", *Philological Encounters*, 6 (2021), 214–241, which is indispensable for any complete discussion of this topic. I wish to thank Dr. Gürbüzel who generously shared with me her then still unpublished work. On the non-Muslim populations and their conceptions of sacred language, albeit in a period later than the one studied here, see J. Strauss, "Langue(s) sacrées et recherche de langue sacrée(s) dans l'Empire ottoman au XIX^{e} siècle", in R. J. Noël (ed.), *Hiéroglossie I. Moyen-Âge latin, Monde arabo-persan, Tibet, Inde. Collège de France 16–17 juin 2015* (Paris 2019), 115–152.

past associated with Hermetic wisdom, such as Greek or Syriac, on the other. I wish to emphasize that this is a preliminary survey of a topic that has not yet been the focus of scholarly research. For this reason, also, my discussion will not be restricted to a focus on a short interval of the long Ottoman pre-modern period. Conversely, the scarcity of references shaped my preference for presenting examples spanning the vast duration from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. The phenomena being examined were neither static, nor occurring in a vacuum. Rather, major developments in social and cultural milieus continued to have their impacts on the ideas at the core of this study. However, we must be cautious when identifying them in such a peripheral cultural issue, especially with so little material having been studied.

Firstly, a few words are necessary on the languages spoken or understood by the Ottomans—and by "Ottomans" here I mean learned, Muslim, mostly Turkish-speaking members of the intellectual elite, as these form the focus of my research. An educated Ottoman Muslim would normally have at least an adequate reading knowledge of the "three languages" or *elsine-i selase*: Turkish, Arabic, Persian.[3] Ulema would be more competent in Arabic, which they were taught at the medreses, whereas litterateurs and often Sufis were prone to reading and writing in Persian, not to take into account the native tongue of many ulema and Sufis originating from Arab-speaking or Persian-speaking (especially in the first centuries and particularly after the rise of the Safavids in Iran) regions.[4] On the other hand, a great part of the Ottoman military and administrative elite must at least have a cursory understanding of Greek, Russian or Italian, in addition to Bosnian and Georgian, since they originated in the *devşirme* system or were former prisoners of war or slaves. Aside from pashas

3 See the detailed and comprehensive survey by C. Woodhead, "Ottoman Languages", in C. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (London 2011), 143–158; L. Johanson, É. Csató, H. Stein, B. Brendemoen and C. Römer, "The Linguistic Landscape of Istanbul in the Seventeenth Century", in É. Á. Csató, A. Menz, F. Turan (eds), *Spoken Ottoman in Mediator Texts* (Wiesbaden 2016), 35–44. On the social content of Ottoman Turkish language see E. Eldem, "Parler d'empire : le turc ottoman comme langue de discrimination et de ségrégation", in Noël (ed.), *Hiéroglossie I*, 153–167.

4 On the usage of Persian see now M. U. İnan, "Imperial Ambitions, Mystical Aspirations: Persian Learning in the Ottoman World", in N. Green (ed.), *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of an Eurasian Lingua Franca* (Oakland 2019), 75–92; cf. also F. Richard, "Lecteurs ottomans de manuscrits persans du XVI^{e} au XVIII^{e} siècle", *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* [online], 87–88 (1999), 79–83.

and governors, such people could also become scholars.[5] It seems that throughout the eighteenth century more and more Muslim scholars and administrators sought to obtain at least a reading knowledge of European languages, while there are no known cases of speakers of Eastern languages such as the various Indian languages or Chinese among the Ottoman elite.[6]

The languages of the sources of Ottoman esotericism reflect this diversity of the languages spoken and read in the empire. Whereas vernacular culture (more and more visible from the late seventeenth century on) was commonly written in Ottoman Turkish (and Arabic in the Arab regions), the language in which a scholarly text was written was to a degree determined by its genre. Encyclopaedias were more often than not written in Arabic, to fit to the medieval tradition of encyclopaedism, whereas the horoscopes and astrological notes were usually written in Persian, following the large astronomical corpus that had recently flourished in Central Asia. Scholarly treatises on magic, the construction of talismans and the like were often composed in Arabic, since they were heavily relying on the tradition of al-Būnī's thirteenth-century "Great sun of knowledge" (*Shams al-ma'arif al-kubrā*), as it was popularized in the fifteenth century, again in Arabic, by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī (d. ca. 1455), a lettrist scholar who exerted tremendous influence in the Ottoman intelligentsia throughout the fifteenth and most of the sixteenth century; all the more since the first full exposition of the "science of letters" is to be found in Ibn ʿArabī's *Meccan Revelations*. Nevertheless, a multitude of translations into Ottoman Turkish for all these genres are available, and it is probable that if one includes all manuscripts pertaining to esotericism, including vernacular manuals and notebooks, Turkish would be the prevalent language.

5 T. Krstić, "Of Translation and Empire: Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Imperial Interpreters as Renaissance Go-Betweens", in Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World*, 130–142; M. Sariyannis (with a chapter by E. E. Tuşalp Atiyas), *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Leiden 2019), 384–400; G. Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph bei der Arbeit. Entstehung und Gedankenwelt von Katib Celebis* Ğihannüma (Berlin 2003), 66–68 and 277–280.

6 See the studies in Green (ed.), *The Persianate World*.

1. On the origin of languages

Arabic, of course, was not the only language in the world, and as we will see other languages were also associated with the wisdom and prophecy of the ancient world. This association was even more powerful when the names of Idrīs or Hermes were evoked, as they constituted a direct link to Islamic esotericism. Idrīs was usually credited with inventing alphabets or scripts: this attribution is repeated throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by authors as diverse as the Bayrami sheikh Ilyas Ibn ʿĪsā Saruḫānī (d. 1559),[7] the polymath Mustafa ʿĀlī (d. 1600)[8] or the famous traveller Evliya Çelebi (d. after 1684). Evliya, furthermore, explains that

> The first to invent languages of various sorts was the prophet Idrīs, since he was the first whom God invested with the myriad sciences. He was a scribe, and he recorded the scriptures revealed to him and bound them in books. Before the flood he secreted all of these books in the pyramids across the Nile… After the flood these books were taken out and read by the ancient philosophers.[9]

Notably, Evliya speaks not of the invention of alphabets, but of languages; but given his rather haphazard way of writing, he may well have been referring to alphabets, especially since there is no other such reference in Ottoman literature. Certainly, the notion that Idrīs had built the pyramids and inscribed all the knowledge of things celestial he had acquired, so as they would not be lost in the Great Flood (which he had foreseen), was a commonplace in Islamic hermetic tradition;[10] apart from Evliya, we can see it repeated by a series of authors from the sixteenth century up to an anonymous compiler summarizing Taşköprüzade's encyclopaedia in 1741, for instance.[11]

Opinions on man's first language and the successive linguistic differentiation

7 E. Kaçar, "İbn-i İsa'nın *Ḳavāʿid-i tesḫīrāt* isimli eseri: inceleme ve metin", unpublished M.A. thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2019, 112–113.

8 Mustafa ʿĀlī, *Mustafa ʿĀlī's Epic Deeds of Artists: A Critical Edition of the Earliest Ottoman Text about the Calligraphers and Painters of the Islamic World,* edited, translated and commented by E. Akın-Kıvanç (Leiden 2011), 169, 171–172, 176 (=296–297, 298–299, 303).

9 R. Dankoff, *From Mahmud Kaşgari to Evliya Çelebi: Studies in Middle Turkic and Ottoman Literatures* (Istanbul 2008), 283.

10 See *EI*[2], s.v. "Idrīs" (G. Vajda).

11 N. Ü. Karaarslan (ed.), *Kevâkib-i seb'a risâlesi: XVIII. asrın ortalarına kadar Türkiye'de ilim ve ilmiyeye dâir bir eser* (Ankara 2015), 109.

of humanity differed. A debate regarding the language spoken by Adam and on whether language was established by God's decree (*tawqīf*) or by convention (*muwāḍaʿa / iṣṭilāḥ*), is evident in medieval Arabic grammars and treatises thereof. In these works, such debates often merged with the question as to whether the Quran was created or not, in the context of the Muʿtazilite-Ashʿarite controversies.[12] Whereas the discussion of the language spoken by Adam had been perhaps resolved within the realm of traditional *medrese* scholarship by the end of the tenth century. This can be deduced by the fact that no evidence of such ongoing debates can be found. Indeed, fourteenth and early sixteenth century scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya or al-Suyūṭī[13] seem to have favoured the Ashʿari view that language was bestowed by God's decree (*tawqīf*), but with more emphasis to the innate linguistic capacities of man rather than Arabic language *per se*.[14] On the other hand, Sufi thought favoured an elaborate theory on metaphor

12 See H. Loucel, "L'origine du langage d'après les grammairiens arabes", *Arabica,* 11 (1964), 151–187; B. G. Weiss, "Language in Orthodox Muslim Thought: A Study of "Waḍʿ Al-Lughah" and Its Development", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1966; idem, "Medieval Muslim Discussions of the Origin of Language", *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 124 (1974), 33–41; idem, "'Ilm al-waḍʿ: an Introductory Account of a Later Muslim Philological Science", *Arabica*, 34 (1987), 339–356; A. Czapkiewicz, *The Views of the Medieval Arab Philologists on Language and its Origin in the Light of as- Suyūṭī's "al-Muzhir",* (Krakow 1988); K. Versteegh, "Linguistic Attitudes and the Origin of Speech in the Arab World", *Understanding Arabic: Essays in Contemporary Arabic Linguistics in Honor of El-Said Badawi* (Cairo 1996), 24–25; M. Shah, "The Philological Endeavours of the Early Arabic Linguists: Theological Implications of the *tawqīf-iṣṭilāḥ* Antithesis and the *majāz* Controversy — Part I", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies,* 1 (1999), 27–46; idem, "Classical Islamic Discourse on the Origins of Language: Cultural Memory and the Defense of Orthodoxy", *Numen*, 58 (2011), 314–343; M. Lauri, "Three Ways to Happiness. Arabic Grammars of Salvation", in A. Keidan (ed.), *The Study of South Asia Between Antiquity and Modernity. Parallels and Comparisons: Coffee Break Conference 2* [*Supplemento no 2 alla Rivista degli studi orientali, n.s. vol. LXXXVII*] (Pisa 2014), 117–133, esp. 119–123; H. Sak, "The Issue of the Origin of Language in Ibn Jinnī's *Al-Ḫaṣā'iṣ*", unpublished MA thesis, Ibn Haldun University, 2019. On some aspects of the relation between form and meaning in Arabic linguistics and poetics cf. also A. Key, *Language Between God and the Poets:* maʿnā *in the Eleventh Century* (Oakland 2018).

13 F. Grande, "History, Comparativism, and Morphology: Al-Suyūṭī and Modern Historical Linguistics", in A. Ghersetti (ed.), *Al-Suyūṭī, a Polymath of the Mamlūk Period: Proceedings of the themed day of the First Conference of the School of Mamlūk Studies. Ca' Foscari University, Venice 23 June 2014* (Leiden 2017), 201–226.

14 Shah, "Classical Islamic Discourse on the Origins of Language", 334–339.

and the properties of words, such as in this late seventeenth-century description by İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī (d. 1725):

> The true names are not things that can be read, heard, written or learnt by heart. For Sufis, metaphor and truth (*al-majāz wa l-ḥaḳīḳa*) are thus: metaphor and truth are exactly the opposite of what is meant by these terms by the external people, because according to them metaphor is when a word is used out of its real meaning, as this can be found in dictionaries—for instance, when the word "lion" is used for somebody valiant. According to them, truth is when the word is used in its real meaning, as this is recorded in a dictionary—as when the word "lion" is used for the carnivore animal. This is why everything that is metaphor and truth for the external people, is metaphor for the Sufis; because in truth a name is composed by a manifestation (*al-ism fī l-ḥaḳīḳa al-taʿayyun*). The meaning of divine names (*maʿnā al-asmāʾ al-ilāhīyya*) is divine manifestations, which are matters of hidden essence and latent truths (*al-shuʾūnāt al-ẕātīyya al-ġaybīyya wa l-āʿyān al-ṯābita al-ʿilmīyya*); the meaning of cosmic names (*al-asmāʾ al-kawnīyya*) is cosmic manifestations, which are manifestations of spirits and bodies (*taʿayyunāt al-arwāḥ wa l-ajsām*). The former are active and effective, whereas the latter are under these active ones' influence and effect. For instance, the word "man" is a real active agent and influences others; an example to the other [category] is the word "woman" which is influenced by the act of the active one.[15]

For some traditions, linguistic diversity was present already from Adam's times, since "he knew all languages": this is what we read in Yazıcıoğlu Bīcān's late fifteenth-century catechism and in al-Bisṭāmī's encyclopaedic *Fawāʾid al-misḳiyya* (Adam was speaking seven hundred languages, of whom Arabic was the superior),[16] but also in the anonymous 1741 encyclopaedist mentioned above;[17] after all, no less an influential compiler than al-Suyūṭī had recorded a tradition ac-

15 İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, *Tamâmü'l-feyz fî bâbi'r-ricâl: Atpazarî Kutup Osman Efendi menâkıbı (*İnceleme – Çeviri – *Tıpkıbasım)*, eds R. Muslu and A. Namlı (Istanbul 2020), 209–210.

16 A. Beyazit, "Ahmed Bîcan'ın 'Müntehâ' isimli Fusûs tercümesi ışığında tasavvuf düşüncesi", unpublished M.A. thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi, 2008, 331; Ö. Yağmur, "Terceme-i kitāb-ı fevâʾihü'l-miskiyye fi'l-fevâtihi'l-mekkiyye (Metin – sözlük – şahıs, yer, eser, tarikat ve kabile adları indeksi)", unpublished MA thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2007, 106/80b. The same traditions are also mentioned by Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr. 1. Rükün (tenkitli metin)*, eds S. Donuk and D. Örs (Istanbul 2020), 1: 453, who, however, insists that the differentiation of languages only occurred after the Deluge, as we shall see.

17 Karaarslan (ed.), *Kevâkib-i seb'a risâlesi*, 109.

cording to which God had created "a thousand tongues" (*lisān*) for the Throne (*al-ʿarsh*) and "a thousand nations" on earth, each one praising God "with one of the tongues belonging to the throne".[18]

For most authors, however, Adam was granted one language: and this was not always Arabic (whereas it continued to retain its exalted place as God's instrument for creating the world). Syriac, as we shall see, was the primary focus of such discussions, from fifteenth-century authors al-Bisṭāmī and Bīcān to ʿĀlī. And Evliya provides a clear-cut history of languages, where Arabic was spoken in Paradise but not after the expulsion of Adam and Eve:

> First God commanded all the angels to speak Arabic. When the prophet Adam entered Paradise out of the earth, Gabriel taught Adam Arabic, and he spoke Arabic with Eve, with the angels, and with God Himself... But after Adam fell from Paradise he forgot Arabic, out of grief at separation from God. Then Adam met with Eve on Mt. Arafat... and by God's command they spoke a language close to Arabic, namely Hebrew. In fact, the word for Hebrew, *ʿibrī*, is merely a metathesis of the word for Arabic, *ʿarebī*... When the descendants of Adam spread, they spoke Hebrew, Syriac, and Imrani. This was so until Ishmael was sent on his prophetic mission, when for the first time Arabic appeared among them. As for Syriac and Imrani, these and several (other) languages have survived since the time of the prophet and scribe Idrīs.[19]

The confusion of languages was thus a later phenomenon, usually associated with the tower of Babel or, less often, Noah's deluge. Arguing against al-Diyar-

18 A. M. Heinen, *Islamic Cosmology. A Study of as-Suyūṭī's* al-Hayʾa as-sanīya fī l-hayʾa as-sunnīyya *with critical edition, translation, and commentary* (Beirut 1982), 132 (1.15); in another tradition (ibid., 130, 1.3) these tongues are to be understood as organs of the Throne, not languages (cf. Heinen's comment in ibid., 189).

19 Dankoff, *From Mahmud Kaşgari*, 282-283; idem, *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi* (Leiden 2004), 176–177. Imrani is an unidentified language purportedly spoken in Sudan: S. A. Kahraman, Y. Dağlı and R. Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap: Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi Bağdat 306, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi Pertev Paşa 462, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi Hacı Beşir Ağa 452 numaralı yazmalarının mukayeseli transkripsiyonu – dizini* (Istanbul 2007), 497; R. Dankoff, N. Tezcan and M. D. Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile: Evliya Çelebi's 'Matchless Pearl These Reports of the Nile' Map and His Accounts of the Nile and the Horn of Africa in The Book of Travels* (London 2018), 338–339. Dankoff suggests that it "seemingly relates to 'Imran the father of Moses" (Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality*, 177 fn38).

bakrī[20] and Mirkhwand (d. 1498) who had suggested that the diversity of languages was the product of a gradual process due to the growing number of men and their communities, settling in different places, Mustafa ʿĀlī (d. 1600) finds this opinion "completely impossible and idiotic" since "the increasing number of communities and nations does not necessarily bring about a diffusion of languages" and claims that

> the differentiation of languages was caused by the disarray on the 'night of the confusion of languages' when the increasing darkness and growing fear and panic... made everybody forget what he knew, and by the will of God other languages appeared.[21]

At another point, he refers to Coptic/Ḳıbṭiyye as "inspired by God" after the confusion of languages.[22] In contrast, a late-seventeenth-century *Vahdetname*, composed between 1689 and 1691 by the astronomer İshak Hocası Ahmed Efendi (d. 1708), mentions the "differentiation of languages" as a rather late occurrence (in the times of Erġū ibn-i Fāliġ, several generations after Noah), linked to the ongoing corruption and the fragmentation of humanity into diverse groups, each of which produced its own language (*itdi her fırḳa bir lisān iẓhār*).[23]

But if languages other than Arabic were prevalent in pre-Babel times, why did they lose their powers? It appears that the common explanation was borrowed by anti-Christian and anti-Jewish polemic. This is evident in its use of the notion of *taḥrīf*, i.e. that Jews and Christians had distorted the genuine pro-

20 On this rather obscure figure see *EI*², s.v. "al-Diyārbakrī, Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan" (F. Rosenthal). Rosenthal challenges the commonly accepted date of his death (1582) and argues for the much earlier date, somewhere in the 1550s, given by Kâtib Çelebi. Cf. B. Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Égypte. Historiens et conquérants au XVI^e siècle* (Paris 2006), 125.

21 He also refutes the idea that Idrīs used seventy-two languages, since this multiplication only occurred after the Deluge. J. Schmidt, *Pure Water for Thirsty Muslims: A Study of Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī of Gallipoli's* Künhü l-aḫbār (Leiden 1991), 68-69; Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr. 1. Rükün*, eds Donuk and Örs, 1: 855 (reason of the differentiation of languages), 521 (Idrīs).

22 Ibid., 1: 601 (*ilhām-ı ilāhiyye ile*).

23 A. Topal, "Ahmedî (İshak Hocası): *Vahdetnâme-i* âlem-engîz (İnceleme – Metin)", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Atatürk University, 2011, 295; N. Sofuoğlu, "İshak Hocası Ahmed: *Vahdetnâme-i âlem-engîz*. İnceleme – Metin", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dokuz Eylül University, 2012, 441 (v. 1126ff).

phetic discourse of Moses or Jesus.[24] An instance of this occurs when Mahmud b. Kadı-ı Manyâs or Manyasoğlu, author of *ʿAcabü'l-ʿuccāb*, arguably the first Ottoman encyclopaedia dated ca. 1438,[25] stresses that Arabic is the noblest language, explaining that:

> The form of its letters and the order of its words stands stronger in its properties and [power of] influence, compared to other languages... In contrast, Syriac, Hebrew and other languages have their order of letters and syntax corrupted, and they are now spoken by very few people.[26]

2. A hierarchy of sacred languages: Arabic first, but not only

If we were to ask whether in Ottoman culture any languages were considered privileged for establishing contact with the supernatural, the answer would certainly be Arabic. Arabic held a central place in the relationship with the supernatural, being the language of the Quran and thus the Islamic language *par excellence*.

Moreover, there is a further reason for the predominant place of Arabic in these texts. The beginning of the Ottoman imperial age coincided with the great blossoming of the "science of letters", meaning a set of ideas and concepts ascribing divine meaning to the letters of the Arabic alphabet and inventing techniques of using them as symbols and markers of the divine plans and works.

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24 T. Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford 2011), 85.

25 Princeton University, Islamic MSS, New Series 1010; transcribed by Z. Buçukcu, "Mahmud bin Kadı-ı Manyas'ın 'Acebü'l-üccab adlı eserinin transkripsiyon ve dizini", unpublished MA thesis, Hacettepe University, 2017. On the author see *TDVİA*, s.v "Manyasoğlu Mahmud" (Mustafa Özkan); Ş. Kalafat, "Anadolu (Osmanlı) sahasında yazılmış en eski tarihli Türkçe matematik risâlesi: Mahmūd bin Kādī-i Manyās'ın *Aʿcebü'l-*ʿüccāb'ı –Hesap bölümü–", *Turkish Studies: International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, 12/30 (2017), 243–298 (publishing and analysing the mathematical sections); C. Sucu, "The Marvelous Sciences in ʿAcebü'l-ʿuccāb: Disseminating and Reframing of Occult Knowledge for the Ottoman Audience in the Early Fifteenth Century", unpublished MA thesis, Central European University, 2020.

26 Princeton ms. 71b–72a, Buçukcu, "Mahmud bin Kadı-ı Manyas'ın *'Acebü'l-üccab*", 106: *bu teşkîlât-ı hurûf ve nazm-ı kelimât havâssa ve teʾsîrâta ziyâde durur sâyir elsineden... ammâ bu süryânî ve ʿibrânî ve gayrı diller daʾvâtınun nazm-ı hurûfında ve tertîb-i kelimâtında çok tahrîf ve galat olmışdur hem ol dilleri bilür kişi az kalmışdur.*

These theories had deep roots in medieval Arabic alchemy (the so-called Jabirean corpus, attributed to Jābir ibn Ḥayyān), which claimed that every metal has a certain proportion of qualities, reflected in the letters of its Arabic name;[27] but even more, it was a result of the role of the language in Islamic theology. Since the Qur'an was considered (universally after the end of the ninth-century debate with the Mu'tazilites) as *written* in heavens (*umm al-kitāb*), i.e. as an uncreated property (not just the word) of God, co-eternal with Him and pre-eternal in essence, each letter of each *sūra* would be part of this property, and thus incorporated in the hierarchies and correspondences of heaven and earth. As philosophical systems based on the emanation of intelligence through angels (al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, al-Suhrawardī) had already emerged, angels were identified with letters (for Ibn ʿArabī) and with *sūras* of the Qur'an (al-Būnī). Al-Būnī's theory of magic, based on the use of magical squares (*vafḳ*) and the correspondences between letters, numbers, and elements of nature exerted tremendous influence in the Islamicate world for the next three or four centuries.[28] The influence of Hurufism in Ottoman culture, sectarian as it may be, must have enhanced these tendencies.[29]

27 See P. Lory, *Alchimie et mystique en terre d'Islam* (Paris 2003), 130–150.

28 D. Gril, "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 2005), 183–195; C. H. Fleischer, "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; J.C. Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam au Moyen Age* (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; P. Lory, *La science des lettres en Islam* (Paris 2017); M. Melvin-Koushki, "Astrology, Lettrism, Geomancy: The Occult-Scientific Methods of Post-Mongol Islamicate Imperialism", *Medieval History Journal*, 19/1 (2016), 142–50; 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), *Islamicate Occult Sciences in Theory and Practice* (Leiden 2021), 380–419.

29 S. Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurufis* (Oxford 2005); F. Usluer, "Le houroufisme: la doctrine et son influence dans la littérature persane et ottomane", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, 2007; O. Mir-Kasimov, *Words of Power: Ḥurūfī Teachings between Shi'ism and Sufism in Medieval Islam. The Original Doctrine of Faḍl Allāh Astarābādī* (London 2015); idem, "The Occult Sciences in *Ḥurūfī* Discourse: Science of Letters, Alchemy and Astrology in the Works of Faḍlallāh Astarābādī", in N.

Nevertheless, Arabic was by no means the only language that could carry esoteric features. For one thing, it was language itself that could be "esoteric", especially if one accepted the version of language created by God's decree or inspiration, rather than convention. Thus, in his *ʿAcabü'l-ʿuccāb* Manyasoğlu admits that

> a request [from God] can be in any language, Greek, Persian or Arabic; but Arabic is the noblest of all... The form of its letters and the order of its words stands stronger in its properties and [power of] influence, compared to other languages.[30]

Despite the fact that Arabic is stronger in comparison to other languages, it has no monopoly on the properties of the Divine Names:

> These properties are not restricted to the Arabic language; nay, the names of God have properties and exert influence in all languages.[31]

Similarly, Ilyas Ibn ʿĪsā Saruḫānī (d. 1559), a Bayrami sheikh who wrote a number of highly influential lettrist treatises, explains that a certain Quranic excerpt, which could be used as a prayer in order to obtain one's wish, can be said in one's language and has the same influence, and he goes on giving its Turkish translation;[32] and the Celvetī sheikh Atpazarī Seyyid ʿOs̱mān Faẓlī (d. 1691), according to *Tamāmu l-feyẓ fī bābi r-rijāl*, his monumental biography by İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī (d. 1725), asserted that he would urge disciples to acquire

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El-Bizri and E. Orthmann (eds), *The Occult Sciences in Pre-modern Islamic Cultures* (Beirut 2018), 201–221.

30 Princeton ms. 71b–72a, Buçukcu, "Mahmud bin Kadı-ı Manyas'ın *ʿAcebü'l-üccab*", 106: *kankı dilege gerekse edülsün gerek rûmî gerek ʿacemî gerek ʿarabî ammâ arabî mecmû'-ı lüğatlerden eşrefdür... ve bu teşkîlât-ı hurûf ve nazm-ı kelimât havâssa ve te'sîrâta ziyâde durur sâyir elsineden.*

31 Princeton ms. 85b, Buçukcu, "Mahmud bin Kadı-ı Manyas'ın *ʿAcebü'l-üccab*", 124: *ammâ bu havâss yalunuz lisân-ı arabîye mahsûs degüldür belki cemî' elsinede Allah te'âlânun adlarınun havâssı vardur te'sîr eder.*

32 Kaçar, "İbn-i İsa'nın *Ḳavāʿid-i tesḫīrāt*", 150: *ṭālib bu āyet-i kerīmenüñ maʿnāsın kendi diliyle taẖarruʿ itmek ġāyet müʿes̱sirdür... Türkī dili ile meşġūl olanlar işbu terkīb üzerine ḳalbinde meſhūmı baġlayup andan oḳuya*; cf. also ibid., 162. The biography that he wrote for his father, Akhisarî Şeyh İsa, has him asserting that God knows Turkish as well (answering a riddle-like question): İlyas İbn Îsâ Akhisârî Saruhânî, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi (XVI. yüzyıl)*, eds S. Küçük and R. Muslu (Akhisar 2003), 170.

knowledge from Turkish books, if the latter were not able to learn Arabic, because "the aim is knowledge, and knowledge is one, it does not change with languages and vocabularies".[33] In the same vein, figures associated with numerous languages had their share in esoteric knowledge, and conversely, figures associated with esoteric features were often considered as speaking or understanding several languages. To take only a few examples, the legendary narratives of the history of Constantinople that circulated short after the fall of the city relate the story of one Rukiya, a famous sorcerer of the Maghreb, who purportedly had installed a talisman containing "the properties (*havāss*) [of things] [learnt] by Idrīs, the tablets given to Abraham, the properties from the Tora given to Moses, the names (*esmā'*) contained in the Psalms of David, and the wisdom of Loḳmān".[34] In a folk narrative of the early Ottoman dervish Abdāl Mūṣā's life and miracles, some people wish to test his sanctity and say: "We came to this man as a real saint. He possesses every language (*her dil buna müsaḫḫardur*); let's speak to him in Persian"—to which, of course, the saint answers in the same language.[35] In a very similar quote, Sarı Saltuk "could write and read in seventy two languages" and "even in *Habeş* (Ethiopian) language", which he knew "flawlessly (*su gibi*).[36] Such miraculous phenomena reported across the known world included voices speaking in various languages, as for instance a fountain in Tibet speaking in "Turkish, Indian and Persian voices", as we read in a roughly contemporary translation of *Ṭūsī's* cosmography,[37] or an oracle

33 Bursevî, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, eds Muslu and Namlı, 219–220 and facs. 1007–1008.

34 S. Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya efsaneleri, trans. Ş. Tekeli (Istanbul 1993), 21: bir altundan bir levh düzdü İdris peygamberin havaslarından ve İbrahim peygambere inen suhufeden ve hem Musa peygambere gelen Tevrattan içinde olan havaslardan ve Zebur'a gelen esmalardan ve Lokman hekimin hikmetlerinden ve bu esmaları cem'idüb ol levhin üzerine kazdı*. Ottoman *melhemes* or books of prognostication usually take care to note every month in Syriac, Greek (*der-zebân-ı Rûm*) and Persian (they are organized along solar months), but also to note when the new year starts for a series of major peoples (*kavm*): Syrians, Iranians, Arabs, Greeks (*Yunânî, Rûmıyân*), Jews and Franks. See Ş. Boyraz, "Türk halkbiliminin yazılı kaynakları olarak melhemeler", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Hacettepe University, 2000, 342, 344 etc., 370–371.

35 A. Güzel (ed.), *Abdal Mûsâ velâyetnâmesi* (Ankara 1999), 149.

36 Ebü'l Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuk-nâme*, ed. Ş. H. Akalın, 3 vols (Ankara 1990), 1: 226; quoted in Z. Aydoğan, "An Analysis of the *Saltukname* in its Fifteenth Century Context", unpublished MA thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2007, 64.

37 Anonymous, *Tercüme-i Acâ'ibü'l-mahlûkât (*İnceleme – *Metin – Dizin)*, eds B. Sarıkaya and G. Kut (Istanbul 2019), 179. Tebbet is supposed to be in Turkestan (ibid., 227).

in Sudan addressing inquirers in each one's language.[38] Finally, the anonymous encyclopaedist of 1741, seen also above, describes the knowledge acquired by a series of ancient cultures, most of which occult and related to the preternatural, emphasizing their different languages and writing systems.[39]

And of course the Prophet Sulayman (Solomon), one of the major esoteric figures of Islam, was famous for being a master of all languages (including that of the birds). Even in dream interpretation, as we read in an early eighteenth-century treatise by ʿAbd al-Ġani al-Nābulusī (d. 1731), seeing him in a dream meant that one might learn languages—and if somebody dreamt that they spoke diverse languages, they would acquire a vast kingdom because of the association with Sulayman.[40]

Indeed, dream interpretation was a field where esoteric phenomena and techniques combined with language diversity, as dreamers belong to all kinds of linguistic communities. At the end of the sixteenth century, the poet Nevʿī's encyclopaedia notes that dream interpretation can vary according to language, since the image one may see is associated with different words in different languages.[41]

> [Dream interpretation] varies in six factors: difference in language, difference in confession, difference in occupation, difference in time, difference in place, and difference in circumstance. As for the language difference: if, for example, someone dreams in Persian and sees a quince, his matters will go well (*bih*) because quince means "*bih*" in Persian. And if someone dreams [of a quince] in Arabic, then he will go on a long journey (*sefer*) because quince is called in Arabic *sefercel*, which means "long journey" (*sefer-i cell*).

In the same vein, al-Nābulusī makes the same remark (and with the very same example)[42] although he often offers interpretations based on associations of

38 Kahraman, Dağlı and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap,* 471–473; Dankoff, Tezcan, Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 294.

39 Karaarslan (ed.), Kevâkib-i seb'a risâlesi, 110–115.

40 'Abdel-Ghani al-Nâboulsi, *Merveilles de l'interprétation des rêves*, trans. A. Haridi (Paris 2012), 330 and 615.

41 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'î Efendi's Encyclopaedia Netâyic el-Fünûn*, eds G. Procházka-Eisl and H. Çelik (Harvard 2015), 128–129.

42 Al-Nâboulsi, *Merveilles de l'interprétation des rêves*, 805.

Arabic words with names (e.g. Sulayman and *salīm* or Christian/*naṣrānī* and *naṣr*).[43]

In a similar vein, in 1580 there was an effort by the Sufi Muhyiddīn Gülşenī (d. 1605) to create an artificial language, named Bālaybalan, which contained elements from all "three languages" but also had a synthetic structure of its own. Presumably, Muhyiddīn's aim (if indeed it was his own; there are signs that the development of the vocabulary was a collective endeavour that had been taking place for some time) was to facilitate communication between scholars of the Middle East, as well as to aid the spread of knowledge to the common people, for whom, he seems to have thought, learning his language would be easier.[44]

Thus, in this variety of languages Arabic may be the greatest and most important, but its predominance did not go unchallenged. Nor was its primordial character: the question of whether language was arranged by divine decree or by convention set aside, there was no consensus regarding the language innate to man or even the language spoken by Adam (and in which, according to the Qur'an, God taught him the names of all things). In the fifteenth-century adaptation of Ṭūsī's cosmography that we saw above, we read the story, well-known from Herodotus, about the king who had some children isolated to determine

43 Ibid., 330, 752. On the other hand, the same author considers seeing an Arab as a sign of easing difficulties and a non-Arab (*'ajam*) as a sign of difficulties, on the basis of Quranic verses referring to Arab and non-Arab languages (ibid., 527). Elsewhere he speaks of the "strange character" of non-Arabic language (*gharābat kalām al-'ajam*): ibid., 569; https://al-maktaba.org/book/1217/271#p1 (accessed on July 2021).

44 M. Sertoğlu, "İlk Milletlerarası Dili Bir Türk İcat Etmişti," *Hayat Tarih Mecmuası*, 1 (1966), 66–68; M. Koç, *Bâleybelen Muhyî-i Gülşenî: ilk yapma dil* (Istanbul 2005); Encyclopædia Iranica [online edition, 2015], s.v. "Bālaybalan language" (C. G. Häberl), available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/balaybalan-language (accessed on July 2021). It is highly interesting that a similar universal language, āsmānī *zabān* or "heavenly language", based on Persian grammar with a vocabulary of distorted Persian, Arabic and Indian words, was used in a roughly contemporaneous mystic tract of Zoroastrian tendencies: see Encyclopædia Iranica [online edition, 2015], s.v. "Dasātīr" (Fatḥ-Allāh Mojtabā'ī), available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dasatir (accessed on July 2021); D. J. Sheffield, "The Language of Heaven in Safavid Iran: Speech and Cosmology in the Thought of Āzār Kayvān and His Followers", in A. Korangy and D. J. Sheffield (eds), *No Tapping around Philology: A Festschrift in Honor of Wheeler McIntosh Thackston Jr.'s 70th Birthday* (Wiesbaden 2014), 161–183. The influence of al-Suhrawardi in that text is also to be noted; see J. Rose, *Zoroastrianism: An Introduction* (London 2011), 204.

which language they would speak. Contrary to the ancient story, however, which had them speak a Phrygian word, in this case:

> they spoke such a kind of language that did not resemble to any of the known language, with God's inspiration.[45]

Such references may also be seen in the context of the Illuminationist/*işrāḳi* emphasis on the non-linguistic nature of revealed knowledge. Illuminationist philosophy came to play a more and more important role in Ottoman intellectual life from the late sixteenth century onwards,[46] and its stress on revelatory wisdom as the source of knowledge tended to divest Arabic language of its sacral overtones. In the words of Naṣūḥ Efendi of Belgrade (d. 1573):

> The Illuminationists are those who do not speak with the teacher; they absorb the inner meaning of *ḥiḳma* in the presence of the teacher. They do not speak a single word with the teacher, the teacher does not speak to them.[47]

Here perhaps we should also mention language lore pertaining to jinn or even Satan (Iblis). Such languages, of course, carry no tones of sanctity; they have an esoteric value insomuch they are clearly non-human creations, pertaining to supernatural beings and possibly created before the creation of man. For instance, in the same adaptation of Ṭūsī's cosmography we read about someone who managed to enter the pyramid of Giza, regarded as the abode of jinn. Three days later, his head appeared from a hole at the summit; he uttered some mysterious words ("*eyṣāḥ eylehlehin ṣāḥiş biliş*") and was never seen again; the words spoken were in the language of jinn (*div sözi*).[48] And Evliya in his long description of

45 Anonymous, *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, ed. Sarıkaya, 313. A version of the same story in a Syriac *ajaib* cosmography, probably dated in the Ottoman times (between the fifteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century) has the children speaking Syriac: S. Minov, *The Marvels Found in the Great Cities and in the Seas and on the Islands: A Representative of ʿAǧāʾib Literature in Syriac* (Cambridge 2021), 55, 135–137.

46 M. Kurz, *Ways to Heaven, Gates to Hell: Faẓlīzāde ʿAlī's Struggle with the Diversity of Ottoman Islam* (Berlin 2011), 206–215; 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.

47 Quoted in Gürbüzel, "Bilingual Heaven", 232–233.

48 Anonymous, *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, ed. Sarıkaya, 386.

Satan's attributes and lore maintains that "in his words there is a preponderance of the letters *ḳ*, *f* and *j*".[49]

Other sacred languages: Syriac, Hebrew, Persian, Greek

From among the languages of the world, there were some that were specifically granted some sanctity and, therefore, linked with esoteric traditions. Undoubtedly, the language most often associated with the beginning of humankind and the first prophets was Syriac.[50] In the *corpus Bunianum*, it was associated with the language of angels, with their names translated explicitly from Syriac to Arabic;[51] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī, who nonetheless introduced the science of (Arabic) letters into the Ottoman world, considered Syriac the first language spoken in the world, its alphabet being the script of Adam:

> The script of Adam is Syriac... This Syriac script is the first of all scripts. The other scripts are derived from it.[52]

Bîcan wrote that it was spoken (exclusively) up to Ibrahim/Abraham's times;[53] at the end of the sixteenth century, Mustafa ʿĀlī had a similar opinion, as he stated that only after the destruction of the tower of Babel did Syriac make way for Arabic and other languages.[54] He remarked that:

49 Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality*, 184; Y. Dağlı and S. A. Kahraman, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, IV. Kitap* (Istanbul 2000), 339: *kelimātında ḳāf ve fā ve jā ḥurūfu çokdur.*

50 On this idea among Syriac authors see S. Minov, "The Cave of Treasures and the Formation of Syriac Christian Identity in Late Antique Mesopotamia: Between Tradition and Innovation", in B. Bitton-Ashkelony and L. Perrone (eds), *Between Personal and Institutional Religion: Self, Doctrine, and Practice in Late Antique Eastern Christianity* (Turnhout 2013), 155–194 at 171–175; idem, *The Marvels Found in the Great Cities*, 135–136.

51 C. Bonmariage and S. Moureau (eds), *Le Cercle des lettres de l'alphabet: Dāʾirat al-aḥruf al-abjadiyya. Un traité pratique de magie des lettres attribué à Hermès* (Leiden 2017), 20.

52 Yağmur, "Terceme-i kitāb-ı fevâ'ihü'l-miskiyye", 104–105/79b (as we saw, in another point he asserts that Adam spoke seven hundred languages, of whom Arabic is the best: 106/80b); F. Akyıldız, "Erken dönem Osmanlı tarihinde ilim ve tasnif anlayışı: Abdurrahman Bistâmî'nin *el-Fevâ'ihü'l-miskiyye fi'l-fevâtihi'l-mekkiyye* adlı eseri ve etkileri", unpublished MA thesis, Istanbul 29 Mayıs University, 2019, 54.

53 Beyazit, "Ahmed Bîcan'ın 'Müntehâ' isimli Fusûs tercümesi", 212.

54 Schmidt, *Pure Water for Thirsty Muslims*, 292; Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr. 1. Rükün*, ed. Donuk and Örs, 1: 413.

> From among the prophets of old, those who were Syriac (*Süryānī olanlar*) are Adam, Seth, Idrīs and Noah. The Arab ones are Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Ṣuʿayb, Yūnus (Jonah) and Muhammad; the first of the Israelite ones was Moses and the last Jesus.[55]

According to ʿĀlī, Idrīs was able to speak to the clouds in Syriac and they would answer in the same language and obey his orders.[56]

Although not in an Ottoman environment, it is interesting to note here that an early-eighteenth century Moroccan Sufi, Abd al-Aziz al-Dabbāgh (d. 1719), refers to Syriac as "the language of spirits", whose every letter "indicates a self-contained meaning" and in which "the friends of God… talk to one another".[57] To quote another eighteenth-century example, in a 1748 manuscript copy of the well-known cosmography *Dürr-i meknûn*, the paradisiac creatures *burak*, which in all earlier manuscripts are said to speak Arabic, speak "Aramaic";[58] this, however, could simply be a copyist's error.

What is perhaps more (and here I draw from ongoing research by Aslı Niyazioğlu), the Egyptian hieroglyphs on the Istanbul obelisk were interpreted as mysterious signs or "images" (*suretler*). These, as we read in the famous late fifteenth-century cosmography *Dürr-i meknûn*, reveal "through the science of *cifr* the prophets and rules who were in this world and those would arrive later as well as those who would rule over this land"; according to the author, the dates were written in "Syriac" (*süryanîce*).[59] Syriac seems to be a preferred option for

55 Ibid., 1: 436 (Seth's name is Syriac for "God's gift": ibid., 503, 514; however, Nūḥ/Noah's name is Arabic, his Syriac name being Yeşker: ibid., 534); Adam lamented in Syriac verses the loss of his son Hābīl/Abel (ibid., 501). On Syriac as the language of Idrīs see also ibid., 443.

56 Ibid., 1: 529.

57 Z. V. Wright, *Realizing Islam: The Tijaniyya in North Africa and the Eighteenth-Century Muslim World* (Chapel Hill 2020), 91.

58 J.L. Mattei (ed.), *Les perles cachées (Dürr-i meknun), d'après un manuscrit de 1748. Traduction du turc osmanli, études et notes* (Istanbul 2016), 38; cf. L. Kaptein (ed.), *Dürr-i meknun. Kritische Edition mit Kommentar* (Asch 2007), 88–367, A. Demirtaş (ed.), *Dürr-i meknun (Tıpkıbasım – İnceleme – Çevriyazı – Dizin)* (Istanbul 2009), 100; N. Sakaoğlu (ed.), *Dürr-i meknun: saklı inciler* (Istanbul 1999), 29. Unfortunately Jean-Louis Mattei, the editor of the text who died in 2019, only gives a French translation of the manuscript, which was in his possession.

59 *Dürr-i meknûn*, ed. Kaptein, 183–184=456; ed. Demirtaş, 154; ed. Sakaoğlu, 72–73. For Evliya Çelebi, these were just "ciphers" (*rumūz u künūz*: Evliya Çelebi, *Evliyâ* Çelebi *seyahatnâmesi, I. Kitap: Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi Bağdat 304 numaralı yazmanın tran-*

talismanic scriptures: for instance, an inscription in Alexandria, written by Yuʿammir b. Shaddād, the alleged founder of the city (before Iskender/Alexander who repaired it) and builder of the pyramids, is written in Syriac (*Süryân dilince*) according to a late fourteenth-century cosmography;[60] in a slightly later specimen, we read of an inscription by the Prophet Suleyman written in Syriac.[61]

Another candidate as an alternative sacred language was Hebrew, due to its being the language of the sacred books of Torah and Zebur (Psalms). It seems that, contrary to the case of Syriac with its long prehistory in the Islamic tradition, this was more of an Ottoman peculiarity[62] (Mustafa ʿĀlī's detailed account of Jewish history, based on a compilation of pre-Ottoman sources, hardly has any such reference).[63] One might even suggest a connection with the idea that the religion (*millet*) of Abraham was Islam, an idea that had Quranic roots but seems to have been enhanced in sixteenth-century Ottoman catechisms (and fuelled a heated debate throughout the seventeenth century).[64] Thus, the late fifteenth-century *Saltukname* features an inscription in a faraway, mysterious land in Hebrew;[65] a mid-sixteenth century text prophesying future events by the science of letters speaks of a corpse which will be discovered with an

skripsiyonu – dizini, eds R. Dankoff, S. A. Kahraman and Y. Dağlı (Istanbul 2006), 29) or "strange and wondrous signs": *Atmeydânı'ndaki gibi... acâyib hey'et-i garîbeler ile âmâde alâyimâtlar var kim diller ile ta'bîr olunmaz* (Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 429; Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 233). For some medieval, totally un-esoteric accounts of the hieroglyphs, see M. Cooperson, "Al-Ma'mūn, the Pyramids and the Hieroglyphs", in J. Nawas (ed.), *ʿAbbasid Studies II. Occasional Papers of the School of ʿAbbasid Studies. Leuven, 28 June – 1 July 2004* (Leuven – Paris – Walpole 2010), 165–190, esp. 179–187.

60 Ş. B. Al, "'Acâ'ibü'l-mahlûkât (35.–70. varak) (Giriş, metin, inceleme, dizin – Sözlük)", unpublished MA thesis, Sakarya University, 2010, 48/64b.

61 Anonymous, *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, ed. Sarıkaya, 171.

62 Of course, this idea was long glorified in Hebrew, European and Syriac environments. On the latter see Minov, "The Cave of Treasures and the Formation of Syriac Christian Identity", 165–171.

63 Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr. 1. Rükün*, eds Donuk and Örs, 1: 723–786. The only reference to Hebrew is the note that Buḫtunnaṣr/Nebuchadnezzar's name means "Mercury" in Hebrew (ibid., 767; but this is just a "custom of the Jewish tribe": ibid., 783).

64 N. Shafir, "Vernacular Legalism in the Ottoman Empire: Confession, Law, and Popular Politics in the Debate over the 'Religion of Abraham (*millet-i Ibrāhīm*)'", *Islamic Law and Society*, 28 (2021), 32–75.

65 Rûmî, *Saltuk-nâme*, ed. Akalın, 1: 131.

inscription in Hebrew on its forehead, stating that this was a prophet of the Israelites;[66] and a polemic text against Judaism, written in the late fifteenth century by a Jewish convert, mentions Jewish *gematria* calculations and inverses it, claiming that the numerical value of a Biblical expression (in Hebrew, *bi-me'od me'od* meaning "very much") is the equivalent of the name of the Prophet Muhammad.[67] And if this reference might be attributed to the origin and aim of this particular text, Evliya Çelebi's references in the late seventeenth century are much more impressive and difficult to interpret. He asserts that "the scriptures that were revealed by God to Abraham were all in Hebrew, which is the language of truth (*lisân-ı hak*)"[68] and, what is perhaps more, he links Hebrew with the major esoteric figure of Idrīs/Hermes. Idrīs, according to Evliya, is supposed to have spoken Hebrew, as this was the language of the Egyptians until King Ḳıbtīm, and Hermes (Hürmüs) is said to mean Shaikh ("old man") in Hebrew.[69]

Persian also carried its sacred connotations. The debate regarding Persian as a sacred language of Islam dates back to the eighth century; by the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, a lively body of literature had developed focusing on the legitimacy of its liturgical use.[70] These connotations became perhaps even more marked after Feyzullah Astarabadī's Hurufism, which left visible traces in Ottoman culture. The Hurufi doctrine added the four Persian letters (*pa, ça, ja, ga*) to the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet as portents of the divine speech. For instance, a rather obscure Rifa'ī sheikh, Muhammed Fethü'l-Maârif (d. 1824/5), composed in 1778/9 a treatise heavily influenced by Fazlullah's Hurufism, although he never mentions his name; he explains that 32 letters

66 A. Özgül, "İlyas b. Îsâ-yı Saruhânî'nin 'Rumûzü'l-künûz' adlı eserin transkripsiyonu ve değerlendirilmesi", unpublished M.A. thesis, Kırıkkale University, 2004, 74/39a.

67 C. Adang, "Guided to Islam by the Torah: The *Risāla al-hādiya* by 'Abd al-Salām al-Muhtadī al-Muḥammadī", in C. Adang and S. Schmidtke (eds), *Contacts and Controversies Between Muslims, Jews and Christians in the Ottoman Empire and Pre-Modern Iran* (Würzburg 2010), 57–72 at 70–71.

68 Dankoff, *From Mahmud Kaşgari*, 284.

69 Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality*, 177. Cf. Kahraman, Dağlı and Dankoff, *Evliyâ* Çelebi *seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 430, 462, 470; Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 234, 287, 293. On king Ḳıbtīm see e.g. Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr. 1. Rükün*, eds Donuk and Örs, 1: 601.

70 M. A. Amir-Moezzi, "Le persan, seconde langue sacrée de l'islam. Quelques notes brèves", in Noël ed., *Hiéroglossie I*, 169–182.

were contained in the language spoken by Adam, 22 by Moses, 24 by Jesus, 28 (plus lam-elif) by Muhammad. The letters sent to Adam were twenty-nine (Arabic plus lam-elif), and the 29th (lam-elif) corresponds to the four Persian letters (*pa, ça, ja, ga*) reaching thus the number of 32.[71] Fethü'l-Maârif claims that he collected wisdom from:

> external knowledge, the art of *cifr*, the knowledge of divine properties, magic/simya, the sharia [and so on]; some were written in Arabic, some in Turkish, some in Syriac...[72]

The influence of the Hurufis is sometimes evident even in non-Hurufi works. For instance, in Ahmed Bīcān's late-fifteenth century description of language, letters are identified with the sounds the human tongue is capable of producing, and these are the Arabic letters; but, somehow awkwardly, a passing mention is made of the Persian letters: "and this tongue can produce thirty two or twenty eight letters".[73]

Beyond even the Hurufi influence, Persian is present in several cases within an esoteric or occultist context. In a manual for conjuring angels and jinn, composed by Uzun Firdevsī in 1478, the talismanic invocations are all written in Arabic, but one particular invocation is in Persian; interestingly, it may be the only one in the treatise named *efsun* rather than *tesbih* or *du'a*.[74] Persian is also spoken by a jinn in an intriguing story of possession, narrated by the poet Mustafa b. Mehmed Cinani in 1590. As the story takes place in Egypt, the exorcist cannot understand the jinn's words and is forced to use an interpreter:

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71 H. Birgören, "Muhammed Fethü'l-maârif'in mensur Vahdetnâmesi. İnceleme – tenkitli metin", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Sakarya University, 2017, 717/85a (*Ḥaḳḳ Teʿâlâ indirmedi* âdem üzerine*, illâ bu yigirmi ṭoḳuz ḥurûfu indirdi*), 771/139b, 785/153b and passim.

72 Birgören, "Muhammed Fethü'l-maârif'in mensur Vahdetnâmesi", 784/152b: *Bu maʿârifet ve cemîʿ-i aḥkâm üzere, bu muḥabbet ile tamâm-ı maʿârifet-i ṣanʿat-ı ẓâhirî, kimisi maʿârifeti ṣanʿat-ı cifr ve kimisi maʿârifet-i ḥavâss-ı teskîr-i rûḥânî ve simyâ ve kimi şerîʿat ve kimi ṭarîḳat ve kimi maʿârifetullâh ve kimi ḥaḳîḳati bildirerek teʾlîf olunur. Kimisi ʿArabî ve kimi Türkî lisân üzere ve kimi Süryânî, her birisi bir nevʿa ve her birine bir ġayrı isim baḫş idüp tesmiye olunmuşdır*.

73 Beyazit, "Ahmed Bîcan'ın 'Müntehâ' isimli Fusûs tercümesi", 241: *ve bu lisândan zâhir olan otuz iki yâhûd yirmi sekiz harftir*.

74 F. Büyükkarcı (ed.), *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and his Daʿvet-nāme: Interpretation, Transcription, Index, Facsimile and Microfiche* (Harvard 1995), 168.

> "But the jinn who loves the concubine is Persian; it only speaks Persian! Since the exorcist is an Arab, he does not know Persian. This is why we summoned you, so that you translate the Persian words told by the jinn and tell the exorcist in Arabic. By God, you know both languages". "Sure" I said. So I turned to the jinn and asked it in Arabic, *ayyuha l-jinn, li-ayy shay tasra hadha* [!] *l-jariyatahu ta'khudhuha*, which means "O jinn, why are you possessing and torturing this concubine?". The jinn talked from inside the concubine's body and with a high-pitched voice said: *Az-an sabab ki dost midaram o-ra*, that is "I love her, this is why I am possessing her". Then, instructed by the exorcist, I said: "Leave this concubine or else the exorcist will punish you severely". The jinn said: *Na-tavanam kardan yira ki basi dost midaram*, that is, "I love her a lot; I am unable to leave her". Then, under the exorcist's orders, they tied the concubine's feet and started to beat her soles with a thin stick. The jinn, from inside her, cried out: *mazan mazan*, which means "don't hit, don't hit".[75]

Once again the strongest attribution of divine features to Persian comes from the generous Evliya. He adds Persian to the languages of Paradise, which returned to earth along with Arabic at the time of Ishmael, and cites a pertinent hadith. Notably, in order to underscore this connection Evliya couples Persian not with Arabic but with Hebrew. Immediately after claiming that Hebrew is the "language of truth", in which God spoke to Abraham, he states that:

> some words in it agree with Persian, and certain commentators assert that Persian is Hebrew... And the Prophet spoke Persian... It is a refined and elegant language, and, since it has common features with Hebrew, must be quite ancient.[76]

Evliya also refers elsewhere to an alleged ban of Persian books by Ebu'su'ud Efendi, miraculously repelled by İbrāhim Gülşenī (d. 1534).[77]

Actually, these references are concerned with a lively debate in the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire, where the reverence of the Mevlevī dervishes for Mevlana's *Mesnevī* as a sacred text clashed with the so-called Sunna-minded trend usually identified with the Kadızadeli movement. As demonstrated by Aslıhan Gürbüzel, such discussions should be viewed in the context of an anti-Persianate current at the turn of the seventeenth century, targeting mainly the Mevlevī tradition, with its "recognition of the diversity of authoritative Is-

75 O. Ünlü (ed.), *Cinânî: Bedâyiü'l-âsâr* (Harvard 2009), 2: 335–336.
76 Dankoff, *From Mahmud Kaşgari*, 284.
77 Gürbüzel, "Bilingual Heaven", 215.

lamic discourses" and its "positive propensity towards innovations".[78] Undoubtedly, the claim that Persian was spoken in paradise reflects an old debate about languages of Heaven and Hell. The debate was centred on a disputed hadith, according to which Arabic (or, according to some, Syriac) will be spoken in Paradise and Persian in Hell. Ibn Taymiyya had refuted explicitly this idea, stating that there is no evidence for either statement,[79] and no less authoritative a şeyhülislam than Kemālpaşazāde (d. 1534) had asserted that Persian, together with Arabic, constituted one of the languages of Heaven.[80] However, it seems that this debate had resurrected in Ottoman circles by the seventeenth century, when the Mevlevī sheikh İsmāʿīl ʿAnḳaravī (d. 1631) felt compelled to answer Kadızadeli preachers who claimed that Persian was the language of Hell (in their effort to repel the use of Persian verse as sacred text to be used in prayers etc.).[81] In the early eighteenth century, the şeyhülislam Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi (in office 1718–1730) had to answer such a question, ascertaining that both languages were spoken in Paradise.[82] It is interesting to see İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī's late seventeenth-century view on this topic: after relating that his sheikh, Atpazarī Seyyid ʿOs̱mān, had never learnt Persian (*fārisī*) and that he had stated that the Arab language was bestowed upon the people of Paradise, while Persian (*ʿajamī*) was given to the people of Hell, he proceeds to an elaborate distinction between these two Arabic words. "*Fārisī*" is a part of the "ʿAjamī" languages, meaning all non-Arabic languages. God added Persian/*fārisī* to Arabic, as attested by the number of Persian letters (32 letters correspond to the number of teeth, while 28 letters—the Arabic alphabet—to the number of the joints of fingers in both hands), and thus Persian is also a language of Par-

78 Ibid., 217 and passim.

79 See https://abdurrahman.org/2014/10/07/the-language-of-the-people-of-paradise-imam-ibn-taymiyyah/ citing *Majmūʿ fatawa* 4/300–301; see the fetva in https://islamqa.info/en/answers/83262/is-arabic-the-language-of-the-people-of-paradise. His more or less contemporary Ibn Kathir (d. 1373) had postulated that although those who enter the paradise will speak Arabic, the language of the day of Qiyama would be Syriac: https://www.islamweb.net/ar/fatwa/4563/ (all links accessed in July 2021).

80 J. Schmidt, "The Importance of Persian for Ottoman Literary Gentlemen: Two Turkish Treatises on Aspects of the Language by Kemal Pashazade (d. 1536)", in H. Aynur et al. (eds), *Kitaplara vakfedilen bir ömre tuhfe: İsmail E. Erünsal'a armağan* (Istanbul 2014), 851–864; Gürbüzel, "Bilingual Heaven", 218.

81 Ibid., 221–225.

82 F. İz, *Eski Türk edebiyatında nesir: XIV. Yüzyıldan XIX. Yüzyıl ortasına kadar yazmalardan seçilmiş metinler I* (Istanbul 1964), 58.

adise. God gave the Qur'an in Arabic so as to be understood by the Arabs, just like he had given the Torah in Hebrew and the Gospel in Syriac; Muhammad is even reported to have had spoken some Persian.[83]

Aside from Syriac and Hebrew, Greek was imbued with connotations of ancient wisdom, if not of prophecy;[84] significantly, ʿĀlī relates a tradition according to which Greek sages took this knowledge directly from Idrīs's tablets, where he had inscribed all rules and traditions to save them from the Great Flood.[85] This was the result of a long association of ancient Greece with tales of wisdom and occult sciences.[86] This conviction was revived by the final conquest of the last remnants of the Byzantine Empire during Mehmed II's reign: the Conqueror, who had likely attempted to master Greek as a prince (there is a notebook from his childhood, where one may find exercises in both the Greek and the Arabic alphabet),[87] maintained a thriving Greek scriptorium and commissioned translations from Greek to Arabic.[88] Roughly one third of the Greek

83 Bursevî, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, eds Muslu and Namlı, 362–365 and facs. 828–832. Atpazarī, his mentor, had never learnt Persian because in his youth he had overheard some boatmen reciting Persian verses, and they are a perverted tribe (ibid., 362). Cf. a discussion of the different names for the Persian language by Kemālpaşazāde: Schmidt, "The Importance of Persian", 860–862.

84 As an early example, one may cite the reference of the pseudo-Rükneddin cosmography to a stone inscription, excavated in Alexandria, which had a moral advice in "Greek" (the quote is in Arabic) and in "everybody's script" (*Rumca yazmışlar... ve hem bu söz kamu kütübde yazıludur*): Anonymous, *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, ed. Sarıkaya, 205.

85 Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr. 1. Rükün*, eds Donuk and Örs, 1: 557.

86 On the image of ancient Greece in pre-Ottoman Islam, see B. Lewis, "The Use by Muslim Historians of Non-Muslim Sources", in B. Lewis and P. M. Holt (eds), *Historians of the Middle East* (London 1962), 183–84; M. Springberg-Hinsen, *Die Zeit vor dem Islam in arabischen Universalgeschichten des 9. bis 12. Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg – Altenberge 1989); J. N. Mattock, "Islam", in K. J. Dover (ed.), *Perceptions of the Ancient Greeks* (Oxford – Cambridge 1992), 79–99; R. Mottahedeh, "Some Islamic Views of the Pre-Islamic Past", *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review*, 1/1 (1994), 17–26; for the Safavid culture, M. Terrier, "La représentation de la sagesse grecque comme discours et mode de vie chez les philosophes šī'ites de l'Iran safavide (XIe/XVIIe siècle)", *Studia graeco-arabica*, 5 (2015), 299–320. Cf. the survey by M. Bonner and G. Hagen, "Muslim Accounts of the *Dâr al-harb*", in R. Irwin (ed.), *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 4: *Islamic Cultures and Societies to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge 2010), 474–94.

87 S. Ünver (ed.), *Fatih'in çocukluk defteri* (Istanbul 1961 [2nd ed. 2014]).

88 Among the products of the scriptorium one may note dictionaries, grammar books, Arrian's history of Alexander, Homer's, Hesiod's and Pindar's texts and so forth. See J. Raby,

manuscripts produced by the scriptorium dealt with various aspects of esotericism: prophecies, grimoires (the Testament of Solomon), or the famous Byzantine texts on the antiquities of Constantinople. Furthermore, among these translations, which included geographical treatises and maps, one may find Georgios Gemistos or Pletho's (1355–1452) neo-Platonic and esoteric works (*Compendium Zoroastreorum et Platonicorum dogmatum*, and *Chaldaean Oracles*).[89] As Maria Mavroudi illustrated, these texts, presenting complex relationships among ancient Greek deities, planets, and the cosmos, were regarded as items related to theurgy, and the translator explicitly designates Pletho as a pagan and, tellingly, a Sabean. The translator's introduction goes as follows:

> Within these pages [is] the translation of the remainder of the book by Gemistos the pagan (*al-wathanī*), the Sabean (*al-Ṣābī*), on his religion. In it he collected the doctrine of the religion of the ancients regarding idol worship (*'ibādat al-aṣnām*), after it disappeared... The entire book was thrown to the fire and burnt out of fear that the ordinary people (*al-'awāmm*) will be led astray by the propagation of his doctrine.[90]

The reputation of Byzantine scholarship did not survive Mehmed's reign, it

"Mehmed the Conqueror's Greek Scriptorium", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 37 (1983), 15–34; D. Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbâsid Society (2nd–4th/8th–10th c.)* (London – New York 1998), 174ff.

89 M. Mavroudi, "Translators from Greek into Arabic at the court of Mehmet the Conqueror", in A. Ödekan, N. Necipoğlu and E. Akyürek (eds), *The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture. Papers from the Second International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium, Istanbul, 21–23 June 2010* (Istanbul 2013), 195–207; Eadem, "Pletho as Subversive and His Reception in the Islamic World", in D. Angelov and M. Saxby (eds), *Power and Subversion in Byzantium* (Farnham 2013), 177–204; J. Nicolet and M. Tardieu, "Pletho Arabicus. Identification et contenu du manuscrit arabe d'Istanbul, *Topkapı Serâi, Ahmet III 1896*", *Journal Asiatique*, 268 (1980), 35–57. Pletho himself, apart from his neo-Platonism, might have been influenced by both al-Suhrawardī and the Jewish interpretation of Averroes through his apprentice with the Jewish scholar Elissaios (see Mavroudi, "Pletho as Subversive").

90 Mavroudi, "Pletho as Subversive", 185; cf. N. Gardiner, "Books on Occult Sciences", in G. Necipoğlu, C. Kafadar and C. H. Fleischer (eds), *Treasures of Knowledge: An Inventory of the Ottoman Palace Library (1502/3-1503/4)*, 2 vols (Leiden 2019), 1:735–765 at 747. On Greek texts in the palace library, including stories from Ancient Greek literature, see also G. Necipoğlu, "The Spatial Organization of Knowledge in the Ottoman Palace Library: An Encyclopedic Collection and Its Inventory", in ibid., 1–77 at 54–55.

seems (although one can find a reference to Byzantine approaches to earthquakes in an early-sixteenth treatise on talismans, probably composed by the şeyhülislam Ibn Kemāl).[91] However, the position of Greek as a privileged language of wisdom persisted throughout the Ottoman times. Again according to Evliya:

> It was heard from the wise men of King Goliath during the time of the prophet David, and became well-known during the reign of Jeroboam the son of the prophet Solomon. During the time of the prophets Zachariah and John (the Baptist) and Jesus… everyone spoke Greek, so God revealed the gospel to Jesus in that language.[92]

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Thus, despite the elevated place of Arabic in the hierarchy of languages and its privileged relationship with the divine, Ottomans were prepared to admit that the pluralism of human languages implied that multiple linguistic paths could lead to wisdom. Probably, however, this did not mean every path as a rule. What is striking, at a first glance, is the blatant absence of Turkish from almost all esoteric references concerning languages. Although Ottoman historiographers began sanctifying the Turkish origins of Osman's dynasty, citing various genealogies that went up to Noah's sons or connected ancient Turkic rulers with prophets,[93] Ottoman Turkish continued to be the common vernacular and, as such, lacked the exoticism required for a language to be sanctified as having some special connection with the mystical. It goes without saying that the same applies for the other living languages spoken across the empire: amongst contemporary (spoken) Greek, Albanian, Armenian, the Slavic languages, none is mentioned as having any special powers or meanings. Nevertheless, in treatises composed in the vernacular, such as Ibn ʿĪsā Saruḫānī's *Ḳavāʿid-i teshīrāt*, where the science of letters is used to foresee the future through one's name, we may see words of Turkish origin (such as Ağa or Pasha) considered as essential parts

91 A. T. Şen, "Practicing Astral Magic in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Istanbul: A Treatise on Talismans Attributed to Ibn Kemāl (d. 1534)", *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 12 (2017), 66–88 at 79–80.

92 Dankoff, *From Mahmud Kahsgari*, 286.

93 See Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought*, 60–62.

of names and thus included in the calculations.[94] The sheikh Ibrahim Gülşeni, according to his late sixteenth-century biography, takes pride of his ancestor Oğuz, supposed to "have laid down the Turkish language" (*Oğūz, vāżıʿ-ı lisān-ı Türkīdür*);[95] the translator of Bisṭāmī's *Fawā'iḥ al-miskiyya* in 1570 claims that he had the text put off the coarse garb of Arabic and invested it with the brocade of Rum (*ḳabā-yı ʿArabī geydirüp dībā-i Rūmı geydiresin*).[96] Evliya maintains that he had seen Turkish inscriptions, in the fortress of Strumica, that were two thousand years old, and compares them to Turkish invocations of prophets in Crimea. He corroborates the antiquity of the Turkish language with a story concerning the family of Hûşeng Şâh speaking Turkish in Noah's ark; when some Egyptian magicians asked Noah about this language, he answered that people speaking it were bound to conquer the earth.[97] Finally, in İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī's biography of Atpazarī Seyyid ʿOs̱mān, we read that Yūnus Emre had a share in the "sealing" of prophecy (*ḫatamiyya*), because he expressed his knowledge in Turkish, something nobody had done before him.[98]

Finally, I have found no references to languages such as Indian or Chinese (although there is a strong tradition associating parts of occult knowledge to

94 Kaçar, "İbn-i İsa'nın *Ḳavāʿid-i teshīrāt*", 115–116, 145 (where Idris attributes numbers to letters).

95 M. Koç and E. Tanrıverdi (eds), *Muhyî-i Gülşenî* (ö. 1604): *Menâkıb-ı İbrâhim-i Gülşenî (inceleme – metin)* (Istanbul 2014), 43.

96 Yağmur, "Terceme-i kitāb-ı fevâ'ihü'l-miskiyye", 13/3a.

97 Evliya Çelebi, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, VIII. Kitap: Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi Bağdat 308 numaralı yazmanın transkripsiyonu – dizini*, eds S. A. Kahraman, Y. Dağlı and R. Dankoff (Istanbul 2003), 335/374a–374b.

98 Bursevî, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, eds. Muslu and Namlı, 153 and facs. 1088–1089. On the meaning of "sealing" and the way Bursevī tried to impose this concept without denying the dogma of Muhammad being the seal of prophets, see his lengthy discussion in ibid., 139–142. He makes a parallel with the moon: the manifestation of the divine Truth in Muhammad was like the full moon, but then it started to diminish and had again minor manifestations (as minor manifestations were those in Abraham etc.). On Atpazarī Seyyid ʿOs̱mān's appreciation of Yūnus Emre's poetry see also ibid., 358.

India);[99] the reader will recall here ʿĀlī's perhaps unique reference to Coptic as a divinely inspired language.[100]

In this context, it would be an interesting path to explore in what degree non-Muslim esoteric traditions incorporated the Arabic-based vocabulary and formulas of Ottoman grimoires and treatises. Unfortunately, very little is known about Greek, Slavic, Jewish or Armenian esotericism and occultism during the Ottoman period. The few known vernacular Greek specimens of magic have barely attracted scholarly interest. A compilation of magical recipes, known as the Vernardakis Codex (from the name of the family that owned the manuscript) and copied in ca. 1890 from an apparently much earlier text (the title "Introduction to the olden magic" appears in the middle of the manuscript), uses Arabic terms like *vefḳ* (*βεύκι*, *βεύκος*: magic square), *duʿā* (*τουβάς*: prayer), *tılsım* (*τελεσέμια*: talismans), *harf* (*χαρφία*: letters) or *esmā* (*εσμάδες*: the names of God). Prayers and incantations in corrupted Arabic or Turkish are also abundant, often seemingly written after dictation by a Turkish-speaking informant: for instance, the name of the object of an incantation is to be inserted under the term *filan bin filan* (*φιλάν πήν φιλάν*, "So-and-so son of So-and-so"). In other places, Turkish expressions inserted within the Greek text point to a bilingual author (*μουχαπέτ' ητζούν* [*muhabbet içün*] *γράψε τα καθώς ώδε*: "for love, write the following…").[101] Magic squares have Arabic letters or numerals (copied ver-

99 See Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*, 104–110; idem, "The Kitāb Sharāsīm al-Hindiyya and Medieval Islamic Occult Sciences", in Saif, Leoni, Melvin-Koushki and Yahya (eds), Islamicate Occult Sciences, 317–379. Evliya claims that several African languages, including *lisān-ı Dehlevī* which might translated as the language of Delhi (but Dankoff is most probably right noting that it refers to the Dahlak islands in the Red Sea, speaking a language of the Ethiopic group), are similar to Hebrew: Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality*, 180; Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 470. Âlî's lengthy descriptions of China and India contain no references to any esoteric meaning of their languages: Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr. 1. Rükün*, eds Donuk and Örs, 1: 662–723.

100 Ibid., 1: 601.

101 M. Papathomopoulos (ed.), *Βερναρδάκειος μαγικός κώδικας. Εισάγωγον της Μαγείας της πάλαι ποτέ* [Vernardakis magical codex. Introduction to the olden magic], with commentary by M. Varvounis (Athens 2006), 43–44 and *passim*. It is interesting that both the introduction and comments focus on similarities of the text with the Ancient Greek tradition or modern Greek folklore, almost ignoring the heavy influence of Islamicate magic. On the use of various languages in magic literature cf. also V. Menaldi, "One Grimoire, Many Cultures: A Study of Language Use and Cross-Cultural Contact in a 16th Century *Aljamiado* Manu-

batim from an Ottoman Turkish or Arabic original) in their cells.[102] In some cases, the author explicitly refers to prayers and talismans used by "Turks or Arabs" or even "Indians" (*κάλεσμα των χιντλήδων*).[103] On the other hand, the text also contains elements clearly borrowed from the Western tradition of ritual magic.[104] The manuscript also contains many talismanic inscriptions in various magical alphabets, including scripts of the planets. In sum, the Vernardakis Codex is a fascinating example of cultural syncretism, incorporating influences from all the array of the complex cultural habitat of the Ottoman Empire.

Learned texts are even less studied;[105] for one thing, we know that Panayiotis Nicousios or Mamonas (d. 1673), the Grand Dragoman of Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, was competent in Hebrew and even wrote a short note interpreting the Tetragrammaton with Kabbalistic methods as proving the doctrine of the Trinity; interestingly, he also had correspondence with Athanasius Kircher, the famous Jesuit scholar, sending him drawings of the hieroglyphics in the Istanbul hippodrome obelisk.[106]

3. Languages and alphabets

The sacredness and antiquity of Syriac or Hebrew set aside, practitioners of Ottoman occult sciences barely used any other languages than Arabic—in contrast to Christian esotericism that often used "exotic" or "sacred" languages, namely Arabic or Persian (or pseudo-Arabic/Persian) in the first case and

script", in L. L. Baralt and R. Mami (eds), *Mélanges Abdejelil Temini: En hommage à l'œuvre réalisée en moriscologie* (Tunis 2017), 351–383.

102 Papathomopoulos (ed.), *Βερναρδάκειος μαγικός κώδικας*, 29, 37–38. There is also a magic square filled with European numerals: ibid., 34.

103 Ibid., 181–182.

104 Take for example the *sator arepo* square: Ibid., 178; words in Latin alphabet also make occasional appearances (ibid., 46, 224).

105 Mr. Markos Litinas is currently looking into Greek scholarly occultism in the context of his ongoing Ph.D. dissertation.

106 G. Koutzakiotis, *Attendre la fin du monde au XVII^e siècle. Le messie juif et le grand drogman*, trans. D. Morichon (Paris 2014), 121–193 and especially 171–172. Nicousios also uses his competence in Hebrew to refute Vānī Efendi's interpretation of Jesus Christ's exclamation on the crucifix, *Eli Eli lama sabachthani*: G. Koutzakiotis and M. Sariyannis, "Panagiotes Nikousios, 'Dialogue of Panagiotes Nikousios with Vani Efendi, wise doctor of the Hagarenes'", in D. Thomas and J. Chesworth (eds), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 10: *Ottoman and Safavid Empires (1600–1700)* (Leiden 2017), 421–430.

Hebrew in the second, to create an effect of hidden knowledge and wisdom. İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī notes that the famous calligrapher Yāḳūt al-Mustaʿṣimī destroyed Hārūt and Mārūt's magic with spells emanating from his script (*abṭala be-ʿazā'īmi ḳalamihi siḥr Hārūt wa Mārūt*).[107] Even in works written in Ottoman Turkish (and, if we remain at a scholarly level of learned magic, these were far fewer than those written in Arabic), formulas for conjuring angels or jinn and phrases to be inscribed in manuscripts were usually in Arabic; the sole instance of a Persian conjuring we observed above in Uzun Firdevsī's treatise is clearly an exception.

Still, one can see glimpses of linguistic exoticism in Islamic occultist texts as well: alphabets—not so much foreign alphabets as imagined ones.[108] Magic alphabets, usually following the pattern of adding small circles to shapes derived from known letters (known as *caractères à lunettes*), had been used in grimoires and manuals even since Hellenistic times. As they had been relied on extensively by al-Būnī, the main model for Ottoman literature about magic through al-Biṣṭāmī's works, such alphabets make their appearance in Ottoman manuals of talismanic (although quite rarely, it seems, in comparison to the use of Arabic letters proper),[109] until even the late Ottoman period.[110]

Such magic letters were supposed to be associated with jinn or angels and other spiritual entities; but another tradition placed esoteric alphabets or scripts within a line of human creations, together with the alphabets of known peoples and cultures. This tradition arguably began with the famous "Long-desired Fulfilled Knowledge of the Signs of Alphabets" or *Shawq al-mustahām fī maʿrifat rumūz al-aqlām*, long misattributed to the obscure tenth-century author Ibn Wahshiyya,[111] a highly original and interesting treatise on various alphabets (in-

107 Bursevî, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, eds. Muslu and Namlı, 381 and facs. 808. On the calligrapher see *EI²*, s.v. "Yāḳūt al-Mustaʿṣimī" (Sheila R. Canby); *TDVİA*, s.v. "Yâkūt el-Müstaʿsımî" (Muhittin Serin).

108 On the uses of the alphabet in general see J. Drucker, *The Alphabetic Labyrinth: The Letters in History and Imagination* (London 1995) and esp., for uses in magic practices, 65–69.

109 See for instance a collection of prayers and talismans in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS turc 5, f. 39v; Büyükkarcı (ed.), *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and his Daʿvet-nāme*, passim.

110 See e.g. A. Uygun, "Seyyid Süleyman el-Hüseyni'nin *Kenzü'l-havâs* kitabındaki dua ve büyü motifleri", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Süleyman Demirel University, 2013, 106–110, 312.

111 On the grounds most modern scholars argue that this is a misattribution, see J. Hämeen-Anttila, *The Last Pagans of Iraq: Ibn Waḥshiyya and his Nabatean Agriculture* (Leiden

cluding Egyptian hieroglyphic) with references to their uses for magic purposes. In Ottoman times, al-Bisṭāmī also discussed alphabets, in both a kind of universal history that he authored (*Naẓm al-sulūk fī musāmarat al-mulūk*), and in a work specifically dedicated to the secrets of scripts (*Mabāhij al-aʿlām fī manāhij al-aqlām mimmā alqāhu rasūl al-ḥikma min khazāʾin al-raḥma*): he described a number of scripts noting their correspondences to prophets, planets and signs of the zodiac (for instance, Chinese alphabet was ascribed to Japheth, Hebrew to Moses, or Armenian to Daniel), wrote on (in Noah Gardiner's words) "the structural identity of the primordial Syriac script of Adam and the Arabic script" (in *Naẓm al-sulūk;* in *Mabāhij al-aʿlām*, al-Bisṭāmī attributes the invention of the Syriac alphabet to Idrīs) and also dealt with cipher alphabets, attributed to sages such as Hermes or Dioscorides. As Gardiner notes, the idea that such creations are regulated by the stars "could also take to imply that lettrism is a discipline not limited to the Arabic language and/or script but rather one that applies to all languages";[112] and Guy Burak stresses the similarity to the use of *jafr* divinatory techniques on the "Syriac" symbols found on the Istanbul obelisk.[113]

Such examinations of the various alphabets belong to a long and as yet unexplored line of treatises; and we know too little to determine whether they

2006), 21 fn 45; I. Toral-Niehoff and A. Sundermeyer, "Going Egyptian in Medieval Arabic Culture: The Long-Desired Fulfilled Knowledge of Occult Alphabets by Pseudo-Ibn Waḥshiyya", in N. El-Bizri and E. Orthmann (eds), *The Occult Sciences in Pre-modern Islamic Cultures* (Beirut 2018), 249–264 at 250–252. Pseudo-Ibn Wahshiyya's text had been edited and translated by J. Hammer (ed.), *Ancient Alphabets and Hieroglyphic Characters Explained; With an Account of the Egyptian Priests, Their Classes, Initiation, and Sacrifices, in the Arabic Language by Ahmad bin Abubekr bin Wahshih* (London 1806). Cf. also Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*, 127–134; Drucker, *The Alphabetic Labyrinth*, 123–125, focusing on the highly interesting relations of these alphabets with scripts used in the Western medieval tradition.

112 N. Gardiner, "Lettrism and History in ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī's *Naẓm al-sulūk fī musāmarat al-mulūk*", in Saif, Leoni et al. (eds), *Islamicate Occult Sciences*, 230–266 at 237–238. See also the summary description of this chapter (in Turkish) in R. Karaman, "Abdurrahman Bistâmî'nin *Nazmü's-sülûk fî müsâmereti'l-mülûk* adlı eseri ve Osmanlı tarih yazımındaki yeri", unpublished M.A. thesis, Bursa Uludağ University, 2019, 42–43. In another point, however, al-Bisṭāmī makes the usual claim that it was Idrīs or Hermes who invented writing (Yağmur, "Terceme-i kitāb-ı fevâ'ihü'l-miskiyye", 41/26b) and gives a list of alphabets with no celestial correspondences or esoteric nuances (ibid., 104–107/79a–81a).

113 G. Burak, "Reading the Talismanic Compound with ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Bisṭāmī: Materiality and "Calligraphy" in the Inventory of Sultan Beyazid II's Palace Library", forthcoming in *Muqarnas*.

were also an established genre of Ottoman letters. The secret and magic alphabets are indeed mentioned in a work on calligraphers by Mustafa ʿĀlī (d. 1600), *Menākib-i hüner-verān*. ʿĀlī enumerates such scripts or, rather, alphabets (among eighteen scripts altogether, including Greek and Slavic) as follows:

> The third is the *tabi'i* [natural] script. It is this script that the masters of miniature writing (*ashāb-ı ufāk*), [that is] talisman [my correction: magic square, *veffāq*] writers and other astronomer-astrologers have been using. The fourth one is the script of Hermes the philosopher. He is the revered prophet known as Armiya [Uriyā'] the First[114] [or], according to some, the Prophet Idrīs [Enoch]. This was probably the earliest script. The fifth [is] the *qalfaṭīnī* (*qalafṭīnī*, *qalaqṭīnī*?) script. The sixth is the script of philosophers (*qalem-i hukemā*). The seventh is the enigmatic script (*qalem-i esrār*). The eighth is the hidden script (*qalem-i meknūn*). The ninth is the sign script (*qalem-i işāre*). The tenth is the Syriac script (*qalem-i Süryānī*). The eleventh is clay writing (*qalem-i fatīrī*). The twelfth is the script of Joseph the soothsayer...[115]

ʿĀlī, however, does not give examples as al-Bisṭāmī did. I am not aware of any other Ottoman list of such secret alphabets; but a noteworthy fact is that all (or almost all) extant manuscripts of pseudo-Ibn Wahshiyya's *Shawq al-mustahām* were copied in the latter half of the eighteenth century.[116] Although by no means was the text unknown in pre-Ottoman times, one is tempted to suggest that the popularity of this treatise is very much an Ottoman phenomenon (perhaps linked to the revival of an interest in antiquarianism)[117] and even—but

114 The editor translates Armiya and interprets the name as Jeremiah, but the transcription correctly has *Evriyā'-i evvel* (see also facs., f. 15a). Yet, in his *Künhü'l-ahbâr* ʿĀlī explains that the first Evriyā'/Ūriyā' was Seth, the second Ḳādīmūn-ı Mıṣrī and the third Idrīs: Âlî, *Künhü'l-ahbâr. 1. Rükün*, eds Donuk and Örs, 1: 514–515; cf. also ibid., 519 on Idrīs.

115 Quoted in Burak, "Reading the Talismanic Compound", from ʿĀlī, *Mustafa ʿĀlī's Epic Deeds of Artists*, ed. Akın-Kıvanç, 171–172 (=298–299).

116 Toral-Niehoff and Sundermeyer, "Going Egyptian in Medieval Arabic Culture", 254–257. Another manuscript is mentioned in Hämeen-Anttila, *The Last Pagans of Iraq*, 22 fn. 45 without a date of copying.

117 On Ottoman antiquarianism see B. Anderson, "'An Alternative Discourse': Local Interpreters of Antiquities in the Ottoman Empire", *Journal of Field Archaeology*, 40/4 (2015) 450–460; E. K. Fowden, "The Parthenon, Pericles and King Solomon: A Case Study of Ottoman Archaeological Imagination in Greece", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 42/2 (2018), 261–274; E. Neumeier, "Spoils for the New Pyrrhus: Alternative Claims to Antiquity in Ottoman Greece", *International Journal of Islamic Architecture*, 6/2 (2017) 311–337; eadem, "Rivaling Elgin: Ottoman Governors and Archaeological Agency in the

of course much more research is needed—that it might have been reworked in the Ottoman period: a reference to two schools of the followers of Hermes named *ishrāqiyyūn* and *mashshā'ūn*, which seems to be a later addition to *Shawq al-mustahām* manuscripts,[118] has strong Illuminationist overtones and, all the more, of a tradition that began with al-Shahrazūrī (d. after 1288). Indeed, while the contrast between the two schools is, of course, present all over al-Suhrawardī's work, their coexistence as two alternative schools of thought going back to the ancient times (with Hermes, Plato and others described as *ishrāqī*) does not seem to appear until the late thirteenth century, when al-Shahrazūrī implies such a coupling, without mentioning the specific term;[119] and this tradition seems to have been crystallized in the Ottoman times.[120]

The Ottoman interest in ancient scripts is somehow obliquely attested in a strange passage from Evliya, who credits Idrīs with the invention of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, but also (in a markedly Ottoman touch) of the *siyakat* script:

> The Siyakat script first appeared among the ancient Copts of Egypt. The first of mankind to take pen in hand was the prophet Idrīs who was tutored in writing by the angel Gabriel... But according to the Coptic history, the first script of the prophet Idrīs was the Siyakat script. In fact, when I was travelling in the Sudan from Egypt, I was told that the writing on the pillars—like the one set up in the hippodrome in Istanbul—that are in the vast ruined site called Rümeyleti'l-Himal

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Morea", in B. Anderson and F. Rojas (eds), *Antiquarianisms: Contact, Conflict, and Comparison* (Oxford 2017), 134–160; Ü. Rüstem, "Spolia and the Invocation of History in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul", in S. Yalman and I. Jevtić (eds), *Spolia Reincarnated: Afterlives of Objects, Materials, and Spaces in Anatolia from Antiquity to the Ottoman Era* (Istanbul 2018), 289–307.

118 Hammer (ed.), *Ancient Alphabets and Hieroglyphic Characters*, 100 (=[29]–[30] in the translation); Toral-Niehoff and Sundermeyer, "Going Egyptian in Medieval Arabic Culture", 258–259. The reference to *ishrāqiyyūn* is added on a marginal note in all surviving manuscripts (ibid., 257 fn. 42). As noted by Hämeen-Anttila (*The Last Pagans of Iraq*, 22 fn. 45), this calls for a reconsideration of the passage as the earliest reference to the term *ishrāq*.

119 L. W. C. van Lit, *The World of Image in Islamic Philosophy: Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī, Shahrazūrī, and Beyond* (Edinburgh 2017), 95–96. The idea is also present in al-Jurjānī's (d. 1413) work: Arıcı, "Is it Possible to Speak of an Illuminationist Circle?", 14.

120 See e.g. Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 206–207, 216–230; Fowden, "The Parthenon, Pericles and King Solomon". For the popularity of Illuminationist philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 206–215; Arıcı, "Is it Possible to Speak of an Illuminationist Circle?".

> in the province of Funjistan is all by the hand of the prophet Idrīs, and that it is all in Siyakat script.[121]

As far as I know, this is a unique allusion to *siyakat* as a hermetic alphabet. As demonstrated by Guy Burak, Kufic was often credited as having talismanic attributes; but Kufic was an old and revered script, associated with the very early Islamic times, whereas *siyakat* was a script clearly linked to everyday bureaucratic and especially financial practice.[122] True, this was a famously difficult script to read, thus hermetic in the modern sense of the word, but it is still puzzling that an educated (even in Evliya's somehow haphazardly way) Ottoman would place it in such an esoteric context.

It is worthy of remarking that, whereas al-Bisṭāmī and his predecessors attributed magic qualities to such ancient alphabets, later generations preferred to see them in a more antiquarian way. When describing the series of alphabets that we saw above, ʿĀlī explicitly invests these alphabets with esoteric uses, but only in the strict sense of hiding the truth from the unworthy:

> [S]ages of mysticism (*ʿilm-i rūḥānī ʿālimleri*), the chosen men among the learned of the West, enchanters and penmen of various nations who are engaged in astrology, [the composing of] talismans, and in similar esoteric sciences (*fünūn-i ḫafiyye*), adopted certain other scripts that they preferred [to use]. And with those scripts, they safeguarded the noble symbols of those sciences from unworthy persons. So much so that there were some who, by writing a talisman in three or four [different] scripts in order to make it seem confusing and contradictory, hid its secret meaning like a secret treasure protected by a spell.[123]

Indeed, further along in this discussion he ties writing with astrology and geomancy; but again this link has no intrinsic occult value, it is just a *topos* highlighting the fact that such sciences need to be written down: "the explanation or demonstration… is not possible without writing… when [signs of geomancy

121 Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality*, 177. On Egyptian antiquities in the (pre-Ottoman) Islamic imaginary see the detailed study by J.C. Ducène, "Les vestiges de l'Egypte pharaonique chez les auteurs arabes. Entre relecture et imagination", in *Curiosité d'Egypte. Entre quête de soi et découverte de l'autre, de l'Antiquité à l'époque contemporaine* (Paris – Genève 2020), 189–221.

122 See *EI*^{2}, s.v. "Siyākat" (C. Heywood).

123 ʿĀlī, *Mustafa ʿĀlī's Epic Deeds of Artists*, ed. Akın-Kıvanç, 170 (=298).

started to be] drawn on paper, the need for the art of [sand]writing was eliminated".[124] The notion that wisdom should be concealed from the masses by using symbolic language or secret alphabets is not unique to ʿĀlī nor, for that matter, to Ottoman thought:[125] a series of authors from Taşköprüzade to Kâtib Çelebi repeat the story of Aristotle wishing to "make wisdom so difficult to grasp that only those fit will comprehend it",[126] a story coming of course from the medieval Islamicate tradition.[127] But little more than a century after al-Bisṭāmī's highly occultized version of the same topic, it is striking to find such a down-to-earth description without any allusion to astral correspondences or lettrist thoughts.[128] Even in the fifteenth century, we are unable to find any reference to the divine origin and supernatural role of Arabic letters. For instance, in Molla Lutfi's (d. 1495) encyclopaedia, *al-Risala fi al-ulum al-shariyya wa al-arabiyya* (also known as *Mawzu'at al-ulum*), probably composed in 1481: men invented letters in order to communicate, he writes (although there is a comment on the

124 Ibid., 176–177 (=302–303).

125 On the idea that philosophy is not for the masses cf. F. Griffel, "The Project of Enlightenment in Islamic-Arabic Culture", in J. T. Robinson (ed.), *The Cultures of Maimonideanism: New Approaches to the History of Jewish Thought* (Leiden 2009), esp. 1–6. This idea was recurrent in authors as different as al-Ghazali and al-Farabi. Griffel argues that this "pedagogical pessimism" became dominant from the Late Antiquity on and attributes its rise to "the political experience in a highly hierarchical society" (ibid., 19); see also W. Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton 1996), esp. 15–90.

126 Tashkupri-zadah, *Miftâh as-Sa'âdah wa misbâh as-siyâdah fî mawdu'ât al-ulûm, by Ahmad b. Mustafa (Tashkupri-zadah)*, eds K. Bakry and A. Abu'l-Nur (Cairo 1968), 1:314–316; Kâtip Çelebi, *Kâtip* Çelebi'den *seçmeler*, ed. O. Ş. Gökyay (Istanbul 1968), 198–200; Koç, "XVII. Yüzyılın Ortasında Osmanlı Coğrafyası'ndan Antik Dönemlere Bir Bakış: Kâtip Çelebi'nin eserlerinden seçmeler", Doğu Batı, 10 (2007), 264–265; Nevʿī Efendi, *Texts on Popular Learning*, 77–80 (=227–231); Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 206–248.

127 Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, 156–157; M. Mavroudi, "Translations from Greek into Latin and Arabic During the Middle Ages: Searching for the Classical Tradition", *Speculum*, 90/1 (2015) 28–59 at 40; H. Yücesoy, "Translation as Self-Consciousness: Ancient Sciences, Antediluvian Wisdom, and the 'Abbāsid Translation Movement", *Journal of World History,* 20/4 (2009), 523–557 at 549–556.

128 Elsewhere, ʿĀlī shows himself aware of lettrist methods, as when he interprets Murad III's behaviour according to the letters of his name: 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 66.

use of the numeric values of Quranic suras in order to predict the future).[129] The material one is able to work with is rather scarce (at least in the present state-of-the-art), but we can quote another example of antiquarianism from the early eighteenth century: in Şa'banzade Mehmed's (d. 1709) debate between the sword and the pen, the latter boasts that it is of "Indian and Ethiopian origin" and that it was raised "in the banks of the Nile and the Euphrates".[130] The absence of any reference to Idrīs/Hermes in this context is striking (we have to note, however, that such references are not included in the *topoi* of such debates in Ottoman literature, and even Uzun Firdevsī does not allude to Idrīs in his).[131] Notably, Şa'banzade makes the same allusion as ʿĀlī to the occult sciences, like geomancy, astrology and alchemy, as fields facilitated by the use of the pen.[132]

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To summarize, do we have any difference in Ottoman esotericism, compared with its Islamicate predecessors and models? In the present study I raised three points that may reflect Ottomans' peculiar position in the global context: a) the diversity of languages that can be considered sacred, b) the ancient scripts and alphabets that are attributed with "esoteric" qualities, c) a tendency for "de-occultisation" and antiquarianism starting from the late sixteenth century. Certainly, the presence of non-Arabic languages or words in esoteric procedures or in the understanding of the hereafter is no Ottoman novelty, although the inclusion of Hebrew to these languages may perhaps have been one. The same applies for the study of ancient alphabets; my hypothesis on a renewed interest for pseudo-Ibn Wahshiyya's *Shawq al-mustahām* still needs a lot of documentation to be established. One may see a real Ottoman novelty in the third point,

129 S. Arslan, "Molla Lutfî'nin ilimlerin tertibine dâir *er-Risâle fi'l-ulûmi'ş-şer'iyye ve'l-arabiyye* adlı eseri ve haşiyesi: metin – tercüme – değerlendirme", unpublished MA thesis, İstanbul University, 2012, 59–62 and 100–102. Molla Lutfi was also influenced by Illuminationist emphasis to knowledge as a hermeticist revelation: see Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 238–241.

130 E. Tuşalp Atiyas, "Eloquence in Context: Şabanzade Mehmed 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 122: *ḳabīle-i ʿArab sāḥib-i edebden vāsıṭayyu'l-aṣl Hindiyy-i zenciyyu'n-neslem ki ḫıṭṭa-i ḫaṭṭ-ı istivāda baña mevlid ü menşeʾ-i sevāḥil-i Nil ü Furat u melceʾ vü meʾva menāhil-i āb-ı ḥayāt idi.*

131 I draw from unpublished work by Şeyma Benli on the *münazara* genre. From her sample, only Ahmedi's text mentions Idris. For Firdevsî's text, see A. Tanyıldız, "Uzun Firdevsî ve 'Münâzara-i seyf ü kalem'i", *Türk Bilim Araştırmaları*, 22 (2007), 163–188.

132 Tuşalp Atiyas, "Eloquence in Context", 124.

namely that we can perhaps detect an antiquarian outlook gradually replacing the occultist one in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, given that the topic has also not been the focus of significant study in the non-Ottoman Islamicate world, we can understand that there remains a long way to go.

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Manuscripts 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[1]

A. Tunç Şen (New York)[2]

Introduction

Many travelers deem books perfect companions, and this fondness is hardly a modern phenomenon. Before the age of modern transportation, countless people, including early modern Ottomans, had books to read and journals to write in while on the road. We know that military commanders and rank-and-file soldiers in the Ottoman army spending months on the campaign, seafarers seeking

1 I would like to thank Paul Babinski, Stefan Hanß, Basil Salem, Neslihan Şenocak, Hakan Karateke, and Bill Walsh for their time to address my inquiries and provide guidance on certain details unbeknownst to me. It goes without saying that all mistakes and shortcomings remain my own.

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safe harbor, pilgrims striving to reach their sacred sites, merchants hitting the road in pursuit of profits, captives and slaves displaced from one place to another, envoys and go-betweens traversing numerous towns in between different courts, scholars and students in the quest of new patrons in fresh places, officials on their way to their appointed posts, self-proclaimed travelers and geographers wandering around to become acquainted with new places and customs, all had texts in their baggage to turn to on different occasions.

This commonplace assertion raises a number of intriguing questions, not just for Ottoman history and literature but also for broader scholarly inquiry in a variety of fields, from manuscript studies and histories of emotions to military history and early modern mobilities. Where can we find today those copies that we know once accompanied a specific individual or group on a journey? What manuscript notes or other miscellaneous textual fragments might we find in these volumes? Could these notes allow us to capture, in their own contemporaneity, the personal reflections and emotional states of individuals on particular journeys or in struggles for survival? What could such details tell us about their relationship to writing, to the natural world around them, to time, or to the supernatural? And how have these manuscripts in motion, some of which eventually found their way into the hands of non-Ottomans, contribute to the accumulation of Islamic manuscripts in early modern European collections?

This article sets out to address these questions by spotlighting the contents of a curious manuscript of clear Ottoman provenance currently housed in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) in Paris. Internal evidence, specifically paratextual inscriptions, seals, and ownership statements, unequivocally document its use by an Ottoman owner (or owners) in the last quarter of the sixteenth century and its entering the private collection of a French orientalist from the seventeenth century before its being listed in the BnF collection sometime before 1740. The book includes several separate short tracts and textual fragments, mostly dealing with calendric computation and different divination techniques, penned down by manifestly different hands, some not fully literate in Arabic script. It would be more appropriate to categorize the tome as a *majmūʿa* (multi-text volume) or a scrapbook, the contents of which were gradually collected, likely by several individuals. The nature of texts found in the manuscript and some of the curious notes on certain folios of the book (left by an Ottoman sailor taking part in military ventures and directly addressing his fellow seafarers on board) offer a unique window into capturing, with strik-

ing immediacy, the sentiments of a particular Ottoman individual and his respective community in motion that had resort to supernatural forces and other tools of divination in their fight for survival under dire circumstances. As such, the extant BnF volume presents an invaluable opportunity to explore the reflections of Ottoman individuals suffering the perils and uncertainties of travel and warfare and to trace everyday and unscholarly forms of writing and the use of divination among early modern Ottoman subjects.

Ottomans' Texts in Motion

Early modern Ottomans provide us with rich documentary evidence about books and other textual materials that they took with them on the road. First of all, there are various anecdotes with respect to books that accompanied the sultans and soldiers on the march during military campaigns. Some of these items were undoubtedly preferred for their entertainment potential, while others were favored for their ascribed talismanic and protective power, like copies of the Qur'an of different sizes or prayerbooks. For example, there is a late-sixteenth century anecdote about Sultan Selim I (r. 1512–1520), shared by the son of one of the sultan's courtiers, describing how, during his campaign against the Mamluks, Selim enjoyed reading a copy of the *History of Wassaf*.[3] The sultans—when they were still physically leading Ottoman armies in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—might have had the luxury to read for leisure and pleasure on their campaigns. Ottoman soldiers, however, had more urgent and pragmatic reasons to have textual materials in their possession. Unfortunately, due mainly to the relative scarcity of early modern Ottoman soldierly writings, we know very little about the social, personal, and emotional dynamics of warfare from the perspective of men-at-arms.[4] Still, some of the extant sources demonstrate

3 "*merḥūm pādişāh ol nüsḫaya mā'iller olub yolda eğlenceleri imiş*," cited in İ. E. Erünsal, "Fatih Sultan Mehmed'in İlgi Duyduğu Kitaplar ve Kütüphanesi", in C. Yılmaz (ed.), *Düşten Fethe İstanbul* (Istanbul 2015), 203–212 at 203.

4 Rhoads Murphey had also addressed the absence of literature on the personal motivations and experiences of soldiers in the early modern Ottoman world in his *Ottoman Warfare, 1500–1700* (London 1999). For an intriguing textual example from the late seventeenth century written by a certain Hasan, who expressed all the hardships he and his peers suffered as guardians in Podolia, see: O. Ş. Gökyay, "Kamaniçe Muhafızlarının Çektiği", *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi,* 32 (1979), 281–300. Also see the memoirs of a certain sailor with the name Talati, who took part in the naval campaign of 1736–7 in

that there were books and other textual objects in the baggage of some fighting troops. A late-fifteenth-century memoir written by Konstantin Mihailović, a Janissary in the army of Mehmed II (r. 1444–46; 1451–81) of Christian Serbian origin, notes for instance that a particular type of small book he called *hamahely* was frequently carried by his fellow Ottoman soldiers.[5] Mihailović says the Ottoman soldiers believed that these objects, properly *ḥamā'il* (i.e., small, amuletic books of Qur'anic verses, divine names, names of angels, etc., fastened to the arm or turban), provided them with spiritual assistance and protection.

Aside from those hefty sultanic codices and tiny protective booklets carried into combat zones, we know of works drafted or presented during military campaigns. Historians, scholars, artists, secretaries, poets, and other men of knowledge in the service of sultans and ruling elites accompanied their patrons on campaign, often on duty. The extensive campaign-narrative literature (*ġazavātnāmes* and *feṭḥnāmes*) and the surviving manuscripts in this genre, ideally the messy ones, need to be explored from this perspective to find traces of disarranged notes and rough drafts their authors put down during the journey itself. Besides possible sketches of campaign narratives, there are several treatises penned or at least presented in the course of a military expedition for which we have manuscript records. For instance, the autograph copy of the fifteenth-century polymath Ali Qushji's (d. 1474) astronomical treatise *al-Risala al-fathiyya*, currently held in the Süleymaniye Library's Ayasofya collection, reveals through its colophon that it was penned and presented to Qushji's new patron Mehmed II in August 1473 during his campaign against the Aqqoyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan (r. 1457–1478) culminating in victory at Otlukbeli (hence, the treatise is titled *al-fathiyya,* i.e., relating to "victory").[6] Perhaps surprisingly,

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the Black Sea against the Russian fleet: F. Kurtoğlu (ed.), *1736–1737 Seferine İştirak Eden Bir Türk Denizcisinin Hatıraları: 200 Sene Evvel Yazılmıştır* (Istanbul 1935). For an insightful account on early modern soldierly writings in the context of the Hispanic world, see: M. Martínez, *Front Lines: Soldiers' Writing in the Early Modern Hispanic World* (Philadelphia 2016).

5 Konstanty Michałowicz, *Memoirs of a Janissary,* trans. B. Stolz and ed. S. Soucek (Princeton 2010), 5. For *ḥamā'il* and its etymological connection to amulets, which Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall had mentioned in the nineteenth century, see: *EI*, s.v. "Ḥamā'il" (B. C. de Vaux); *EI*^{3}, s.v. "Amulet" (C. Hamès). For the use of amulets on battlefields, see M. Ekhtiar and R. Parikh, "Power and Piety: Islamic Talismans on the Battlefield", in L. Saif et al. (eds), *Islamicate Occult Sciences in Theory and Practice* (Leiden 2020), 420–453.

6 SK Ayasofya 2733, f. 70a, also cited in H. Umut, "Theoretical Astronomy in the Early Mod-

Qushji's treatise is not the only astronomical text copied or presented during an Ottoman campaign. In the 1660s, Tezkireci Köse İbrahim Efendi, a finance bureaucrat in the chancery and translator of a French account of the new Copernican astronomy, wrote that, with the encouragement of the military judge at the time, he worked on his translation while on duty in Belgrade during the Ottoman campaign against Habsburg Austria in the year 1663.[7]

It should come as no surprise that members of the scholarly establishment and bureaucrats in the imperial chancery form the largest body of individuals who composed or consumed texts while on the move. Their texts display a wide variety ranging from captivity narratives and miscellanies of various sorts (like personal letters, official correspondences, poems, law codes, legal opinions, or medical and magical recipes) to individual treatises on different branches of knowledge. With specific regard to captivity narratives, the better-known examples were written by Ottoman bureaucrats and schoolmen taken by corsairs and other entrepreneurs of early modern ransom slavery while sailing or traveling by land toward a post of appointment.[8] The memoir of Macuncuzade Mustafa Efendi, an Ottoman judge from Istanbul who was appointed in 1597 to a post in Cyprus but caught *en route* by the Knights of Malta, is just one example; it was composed in Malta, as Macuncuzade says, during his term of captivity.[9] Of course, we cannot take at face value such authorial assertions that captivity narratives, including Macuncuzade's, were in fact penned while incarcerated. Considering the contents and surviving manuscript records of published cap-

ern Ottoman Empire: ʿAlī al-Qūshjī's *al-Risāla al-Fatḥiyya*", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University, 2019.

7 Kandilli Observatory Library 403, cited in E. İhsanoğlu (ed.), *Osmanlı Astronomi Literatürü Tarihi = History of Astronomy Literature during the Ottoman Period*, vol. 1 (Istanbul 1997), 342.

8 For the socio-economic and cultural significance of early modern ransom slavery from the Ottoman perspective, see the articles in G. Dávid and P. Fodor (eds), *Ransom Slavery Along the Ottoman Borders: Early Fifteenth-Early Eighteenth Centuries* (Leiden – Boston 2007).

9 The text was first introduced by İsmet Parmaksızoğlu in the following study: "Bir Türk Kadısının Esaret Hatıraları", *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi,* 5/8 (1953), 77–84. Fahir İz then published the text in Arabic script based on the sole surviving manuscript at the Selim Ağa Library in Istanbul. See: F. İz, "Macuncuzade Mustafa'nın Malta Anıları: Sergüzeşt-i Esiri-i Malta", *Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yıllığı-Belleten*, 18 (1970), 69–122. For a recent French translation of the text together with an introductory essay on the relevant historical context, see H. G. Özkoray (ed.), *Le captif de Malte: récit autobiographique d'un cadi ottoman* (Toulouse 2019).

tivity narratives, many of them seem to have been written much later as recollections, often well after the end of the author's confinement. Still, no matter where and under what specific conditions these texts were written down, these narratives are striking for the quotidian details they present about life in captivity and, often, circumstances on board ships, as well as their depiction of the role of reading and writing in captives' social interactions.

Captivity narratives offer vivid details of captives' socializing around texts. Macuncuzade's memoir, for instance, contains frequent references to captives' copying or reading texts during their spare time, writing chronograms on the release dates of their fellows, and exchanging papers among themselves with poetry written on them. Among those books copied, Macuncuzade cites a copy of the Qur'an and a sixteenth-century Turkish translation of Husayn Vaiz Kashifi's (d. 1504–5) Persian treatise on ethics and morality, *Ahlak-ı Muhsini*, completed by a certain Azmi.[10] Another late-sixteenth-century captivity narrative by yet another scribe in the imperial chancery, Hindi Mahmud, portrays how the more learned individuals among captives at sea recited verses from the Qur'an and other texts (such as *Mawlid-i nabi* used to celebrate the Prophet Muhammed's nativity) to boost morale on the ship.[11] As a matter of fact, copies of the Qur'an, either full or partial, were the essential component of text-based intercourse that promoted solidarity among peers and hostility across confessional lines. In the autobiographical narrative of the sixteenth-century Ottoman Admiral Seydi Ali Reis (d. 1563) on his adventures in the Indian Ocean (and later in today's India, Afghanistan, parts of Central Asia, and Iran), Qur'an copies appear on several occasions where he and the surviving members of his crew perform the art of bibliomancy (i.e., divination by books) by randomly

10 İz, "Macuncuzade Mustafa'nın Malta Anıları", 78.

11 Hindî Mahmûd, *Sergüzeştname-i Hindi Mahmud: İnebahtı gazisi Hindi Mahmud ve esaret hatıraları,* ed. A. Karataş (Istanbul 2013). Crews often included a specific individual called "mu'allim" or "hoca," a learned person in religious sciences and other branches of knowledge, who offered help to people on the ship to perform prayers properly or pull themselves together in formidable circumstances. In some cases, they interpreted the horoscopes at the moment or consulted books on divination to provide guidance. We know next to nothing about the identities of those *mu'allims* and how they were selected, but both Ottoman and European sources attest to their presence on board. See for instance E. S. Gürkan, *Sultanın Korsanları: Osmanlı Akdenizi'nde Gazâ, Yağma ve Esaret, 1500–1700* (Istanbul 2018), 197, 249.

opening a page and interpreting the first verse chanced upon to find guidance.[12] In another captivity narrative written as a long letter by a scribe in the growing imperial bureaucracy in the early years of Süleyman's reign (r. 1520–1566), the Christian captors are reported as seizing the books of Ottoman captives, specifically Qur'ans and amulets with written verses ("*ḥamāyil-i ʿaẓīme,*" as referred to in the letter) and tossing them into the sea or sometimes a fire, because the "infidel corsairs," believed "the books of the Turks on board were the chief cause of the violent storms in the sea."[13]

There is little doubt that many texts Ottoman subjects brought to the frontiers and combat zones were lost for good due to such instances of destruction and confessionally-driven violence. Yet, many undeniably passed into and were preserved at the hands of non-Ottomans, especially Europeans, in the course of these acts of plunder and confinement.[14] These manuscripts eventually found their way, through a series of intermediaries, into court libraries of monarchs or private collections of European orientalists. This transmission alone is an important but sorely understudied chapter on the history of the formation of Islamic manuscript collections in Europe. The relevant literature on the accumulation of Islamic manuscripts in early modern Europe focuses primarily and justifiably on the role of early modern European orientalists and savants in obtaining manuscripts from the Muslim world.[15] Prompted by philological

12 Seydî Ali Reis, *Mir'âtü'l-memâlik:* İnceleme*, Metin,* İndeks, ed. M. Kiremit (Ankara 1999), 87, 102.

13 BnF Turc 223, f. 66a, also cited in H. Sahillioğlu, "Akdeniz'de Korsanlara Esir Düşen Abdi Çelebi'nin Mektubu", *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, 13/17 (1963), 241–256, the specific detail is on p. 252. In the letters sent by Ottoman captives to their families in their homelands, one could also find references to copies of the Qur'an and prayer books. For instance, in the year 1646, a certain Receb, a *sipahi* from Pécs living under the captivity of the Hungarians, wrote a letter to his mother and asked her to send his "poor father's prayer book." See Zs. J. Újváry, "A Muslim captive's vicissitudes in Ottoman Hungary (mid-seventeenth century)", in Dávid and Fodor (eds), *Ransom Slavery along the Ottoman Borders*, 141–167, the specific detail is on p. 157.

14 The probable consequences of the many decades of Ottoman-Safavid warfare also deserve to be investigated in this regard.

15 The literature is too vast to list here, but I find the following studies particularly useful in gaining an overview of the extent of early modern European scholarly and diplomatic interest in gathering Islamic manuscripts and learning oriental languages: A. Hamilton et al., *The Republic of Letters and the Levant* (Leiden 2005); A. Vrolijk et al., *Arabic Studies in the Netherlands: A Short History in Portraits, 1580–1950* (Leiden 2014); A. Bevilacqua,

and scholarly curiosities tinged with confessional concerns and political and commercial motivations, several generations of European orientalists and diplomats from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries in France, the German lands, England, and the Netherlands collected thousands of books in Arabic script from the Ottoman capital Istanbul and other centers of learning and commerce in the Eastern Mediterranean, either directly during their sojourns in the region or through local agents. Nonetheless, a vast number and variety of books currently housed in various European libraries and museums were also seized as spoils of war and pirates' booty during the early modern military confrontation between the Ottomans and their European rivals.

In his pioneering article on the role of piracy and wars upon the acquisition of Islamic manuscripts in early modern Europe, Robert Jones identifies more than a dozen such manuscripts of Ottoman and North African provenance that made their way into different European collections.[16] In locating those manuscripts, he primarily utilized inscriptions, in Latin or European vernacular languages, left on the flyleaves of volumes by European hands that detail the particular occasion the book in question was seized. For instance, on the flyleaf of Leiden Or. 222, an undated copy of a bilingual (Arabic-Turkish) work of Islamic jurisprudence, there is a note in Spanish by a certain Bernardo de Josa declaring that the book was delivered to him in Rome by Don Guillem de San Clemente, who had obtained it as war booty on 7 October 1571 during the Battle of Lepanto.[17] Unfortunately, Leiden Or. 222 includes no inscriptions or manuscript notes from its former Ottoman owner(s) who fought at Lepanto. Consequently, we can in no way reconstruct the social history of the book,

The Republic of Arabic Letters: Islam and the European Enlightenment (Cambridge 2018); S. Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge: Trade, Religion, and Scholarship between England and the Ottoman Empire, c.1600–1760* (Oxford – New York 2020); P. Babinski, "World Literature in Practice: the Orientalist's Manuscript Between the Ottoman Empire and Germany", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2020.

16 R. Jones, "Piracy, war, and the acquisition of Arabic manuscripts in Renaissance Europe", *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 2 (1987), 96–110. For the intriguing story of the sultan of Morocco's royal book collection's being stolen by French pirates and eventually reaching Spain and later becoming the core of the oriental collection at the Escorial library, see D. Hershenzon, "Traveling Libraries: The Arabic Manuscripts of Muley Zidan and the Escorial Library", *Journal of Early Modern History*, 18/6 (2014), 535–558.

17 See the note in J. Schmidt, *Catalogue of Turkish manuscripts in the library of Leiden University and other collections in the Netherlands*, vol. 1 (Leiden 2000), 25–26.

identify its Ottoman possessor(s), or fathom his motives in bringing a book on jurisprudence into a combat zone.

Other scholars, too, have located manuscripts of Ottoman provenance that were taken by Europeans as spoils of war. There is even a specific research field called *Türkenbeute* (literally "booty from the Turks") that traces objects, including manuscripts, seized from defeated Ottoman soldiers as war trophies. One finds, especially in the manuscript libraries and museums of Germany, Austria, Hungary, Poland, and Italy, books looted from madrasa and mosque libraries or snatched from the bodies of Ottoman soldiers by troops advancing deeper into Ottoman territories in Central and South-Eastern Europe after the failed Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683.[18] Inscriptions and other notes in Latin or vernacular languages found in these manuscripts describe, sometimes in a graphic manner, when and how the item was obtained. One such case from the Gotha Research Library, a volume that includes prayers and extracts from the Qur'an, reveals through a note on 2b that the book was found on the body of a Turk shot when Buda was taken by the Holy League in 1686.[19] There are likely many more manuscripts that lack such descriptive inscriptions but were obtained under similar circumstances. In his study on Arabic-script manuscripts in German libraries, Tilman Seidensticker notes that before the gradual expansion of its Oriental collection, the Gotha Research Library possessed 74 Islamic manuscripts in the eighteenth century, fourteen of which had evidently passed into German hands as war booty, as documented by their inscriptions. Seidensticker estimates further that about "a third or even half" of those 74 manuscripts are "instances of *Türkenbeute*."[20] It would indeed be inaccurate to classify all *Türkenbeute* manuscripts as texts seized from the Ottoman subjects on the move, for most of them were looted from stationary institutions—madrasas, mosques, libraries, private residences—of Ottoman towns in Central Europe captured by European forces from the late seventeenth century onward. Still,

18 See for instance B. Liebrenz, *Arabische, Persische und Türkische Handschriften in Leipzig: Geschichte ihrer Sammlung und Erschliessung von Den Anfängen bis zu Karl Vollers* (Leipzig 2008), 18–28; A. Hamilton, "'To Rescue the Honour of the Germans': Qur'an Translations by Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century German Protestants", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 77 (2014), 173–209; T. Seidensticker, "How Arabic Manuscripts Moved to German Libraries", *Manuscript Cultures*, 10 (2017), 73–82; Babinski, "World Literature in Practice", 283–302.

19 Seidensticker, "How Arabic Manuscripts Moved", 78.

20 Ibid.

there are copious textual materials, including even the Ottoman central administration's bureaucratic ledgers and registers, brought by Ottoman military and administrative officials to the European theatre of war which remained there permanently.[21] Thus, a systematic inventory of such texts which have found their way into European collections by processes initially set in motion by early modern Ottoman subjects on the move is a major desideratum.

This sort of inventory could enable us to identify specific volumes, analyze which particular genres and titles found higher reception among different Ottoman social groups in transit, and explore the contents of books with an eye toward tracking notes of personal and emotional nature by their former Ottoman possessors. Such a task is, however, daunting, for it requires the meticulous work and scholarly collaboration of numerous researchers, including librarians, manuscript cataloguers, philologists, and historians, and it spans a broad spatial and temporal terrain from western to eastern Europe from the early sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. The endeavor becomes even more formidable when one considers the fact that the descriptive manuscript inscriptions on the flyleaves that would easily document the provenance and ownership records of the books are only sporadic. Many more manuscripts where such notes are absent also figured considerably in the holdings of mobile early modern Ottomans, even though it takes often mere good fortune or happy coincidence to spot such items after thoroughly browsing their contents. In an effort to overcome these methodological challenges, it would be helpful to employ a microhistorical approach and reduce the scale down to "exceptionally normal" items that could function as a precious lens to observe the socio-cultural and emotional dynamics of early modern mobility, warfare, and literacy. BnF Turc 186 is, by all means, one such artifact that deserves a closer investigation.[22]

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21 For instances of Ottoman bureaucratic registers brought from the Ottoman capital and remained in European hands, see H. G. Majer (ed.), *Das Osmanische "Registerbuch der Beschwerden" (*Şikāyet Defteri*) vom Jahre 1675:* Österreichische *Nationalbibliothek Cod. mixt. 683* (Vienna 1984); A. Çetin, "Savaşlar ve Arşivler: İstila-yı keferede kalan Osmanlı defterleri", *Türk Dünyası Tarih Dergisi*, 3 (1987), 6–8; F. Emecen, "Sefere Götürülen Defterlerin Defteri", *Prof. Dr. Bekir Kütükoğlu'na Armağan* (Istanbul 1991), 241–268.

22 What I refer to here by "exceptionally normal" (or "exceptional normal" or "the normal exception") is a key concept in Italian microhistory studies first phrased (as *eccezionalmente normale*) by Edoardo Grendi in his "Micro-analisi e storia sociale", *Quaderni storici*, 35 (1977), 506–520. For a brief discussion on the development of the concept, see F. Trivellato,

A Shipboard Manuscript

Let me summarize, at the expense of sounding rather painstakingly descriptive in this section of the study, the contents of BnF Turc 186. This description is essential to historicizing the document and justifying the attribution of its ownership to a particular Ottoman community from the late sixteenth century that was in all likelihood engaged in naval warfare, perhaps at the Battle of Lepanto. The manuscript, in fact, lacks a smoking gun that would clinch the claim that it passed into European hands after a military confrontation between the Ottomans and Europeans. Unlike the aforementioned Leiden Or. 222, in which a short note in Spanish registers that it was obtained at the Battle of Lepanto, or the book cited above which was exhibited in a private auction catalog and bears an inscription in Latin on its flyleaf to record that it was looted from Ottoman Buda by Saxon troops in 1686, BnF Turc 186 has no definitive provenance.[23] The only relevant inscription on page 1a, bibliographic in nature, was added likely in the 1730s by Pierre Armani or one of his associates. As a graduate of the language school in Istanbul *(L'École des Jeunes de langue d'Istanbul)* founded by Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683) in 1669, Armani was hired in the 1730s to catalog the oriental manuscripts at the royal library, and the note on BnF Turc 186 verifies that the manuscript was already in the collection by then. There is another small ownership mark on the same page, a mark that frequently appears, as Paul Babinski mentions, in the manuscripts possessed by the seventeenth-century French orientalist Gilbert Gaulmin (1585–1665). As an erudite scholar and philologist well-versed in Latin, Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, and Turkish, Gaulmin possessed more than five hundred manuscripts in oriental languages. Some of these books, says Babinski, came from the collection of another notable French orientalist, André du Ryer (1580–*ca.* 1660), who had acquired the majority of his collection during his service as a consul in Istanbul and Alexandria. Gaulmin is also known to have purchased manuscripts,

"Microstoria/Microhistoire/Microhistory", *French Politics, Culture & Society,* 33/1 (2015), 122–134.

23 In the Scribe's Hand: A selection of Islamic manuscripts, Bernard Quaritch Ltd Catalogue 1428, accessed via https://www.quaritch.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/quaritch077.pdf I became aware of the catalogue and the manuscript thanks to Nick McBurney's social media thread here: https://twitter.com/mcburney_nick/status/1258806638707908611

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des manuscrits. Turc 186

1a Ownership note by Pierre Armani and ownership mark by Gilbert Gaulmin

through his local agents, from the Ottoman capital and other cities in the Eastern Mediterranean.[24]

Is this manuscript, which appeared in the royal library in the first half of the eighteenth century and was eventually cataloged as BnF Turc 186, one of those items purchased in Ottoman localities, either by du Ryer or Gaulmin (or their associates)? Or did the volume find its way to the private collections of seventeenth-century French orientalists after it was forcefully taken somewhere in the Mediterranean from some Ottomans *en route* sometime around the late sixteenth century? Any interpretation would be purely conjectural in the absence of conclusive evidence, but the manuscript's shabbiness, manifest in its poor binding, torn folios, and erratic contents, makes it a less likely candidate for desirability in the book market.

24 For Gaulmin and his manuscripts, see Babinski, "World Literature in Practice", esp. 82–90.

Bnf Turc 186 consists of 28 folios, with some written content on all pages but 23b. These contents constitute nothing in the way of textual unity, nor is the type of handwriting the same throughout the codex. Nevertheless, there is still a thematic harmony in the volume that brings together texts, charts, and fragments about cognate interests and practical needs: calendar conversion and timekeeping, a perpetual calendar with weather prognostications, different divinatory techniques to seek guidance in a range of occasions from predicting the victorious party in a battle to finding out the fortunes of a missing person, and invocations to divine powers and prayers to recite to ward off the perils of sailing. While different textual communities might have had recourse to these samples of texts, their specific relevance to, and practical use for, people on board ships is beyond any doubt. Some folios also include scattered personal notes that relate specific details regarding the phases of the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 or that precisely record the birth and death dates of several people between 1573 and 1585.

The first coherent textual body in the volume is a set of calendar conversion tables running across eight pages from 1b to 5a. These tables display the months and years, both in the lunar-based Muslim calendar (*taʾrīkh al-ʿArab*, as expressed in the text) and the solar-based Byzantine or Syrian calendar (*taʾrīkh al-Rūm* in the text) which counts the years according to the Seleucid era often misnamed after Alexander the Great.[25] The earliest of the years listed in the tables are the Hijri year 964 (1556–7 in the Gregorian calendar by modern computation) and its corresponding Syrian year of 1869. The latest entries of the tables are the Hijri year 1001 (1592–3 in the Gregorian calendar) and the Syrian year 1906. The *abjad* letters inserted directly below each month in the Hijri calendar part of the table serve to identify the first day of the month. For instance, the letter د —with the numerical value of 4—under Muharram of 964 means that the first day of the month in that year would be Wednesday (*yawm al-arbaʿāʾ* or *çehārşenbih,* literally, "the fourth day"). Aside from tabulating days, months, and years, these tables also note, again in *abjad* letters, the particular degree at which the Sun enters a Zodiac constellation at the beginning of each month (*taḥwīl al-shams*).

The level of technicality in accurately prefiguring the first day of each month

25 For the exact nomenclature of calendars and eras used in the pre-modern Muslim world, see *EI*[2], s.v. "Taʾrīkh" (F. C. De Blois, B. Van Dalen, et al.).

and precisely calculating the degrees of solar movement vis-à-vis Zodiac constellations requires some familiarity with practical astronomical and mathematical knowledge with which some sailors or secretaries were equipped. The above-mentioned Seydi Ali Reis, for instance, is known to have penned several treatises on astronomical theory and practice. During his sojourn in India, he was even asked by the Mughal ruler Humayun (r. 1530–40; 1555–6) to teach him to prepare almanacs by drawing on the data in astronomical tables *(zījes)*.[26] Regarding the celestial and calendrical interests of the Ottoman scribal class, manuscript libraries brim with evidence. Another *majmūʿa* from the BnF, compiled by an Ottoman secretary in the imperial chancery in the 1530s, for instance, contains detailed information about the calculation of days, both in lunar and solar calendars, by relying on the knowledge of celestial spheres (*felekiyāt aḥvāli beyānında*).[27] Likewise, the sixteenth-century miscellany at the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence, which Cornell Fleischer introduced in an inspiring article focusing on the dream logs and other bureaucratic and self-help notes of Ottoman secretaries in the tome, is also rich in technical astrological contents and horoscope calculations.[28] What is more, one of the noteworthy compendia on calendar conversion available to Ottoman readers in the late sixteenth century was written by a finance bureaucrat (*defterī*) named Seyfullah Çelebi (d. 1606).[29] In all these regards, it would be hardly surprising if a sailor or a secretary had inserted the calendar conversion tables in the opening folios of BnF Turc 186. Nevertheless, no colophon or marginal note is found besides those tables that could help identify the copyist.

The particular attention the compilers of the volume show to precise dating and calendrical matters is also discernible in other parts of the tome. Besides the conversion tables on pages 1a–5b, there are similar sections of the text that ei-

26 Seydî Ali Reis, *Mir'âtü'l-memâlik,* ed. Kiremit, 109.

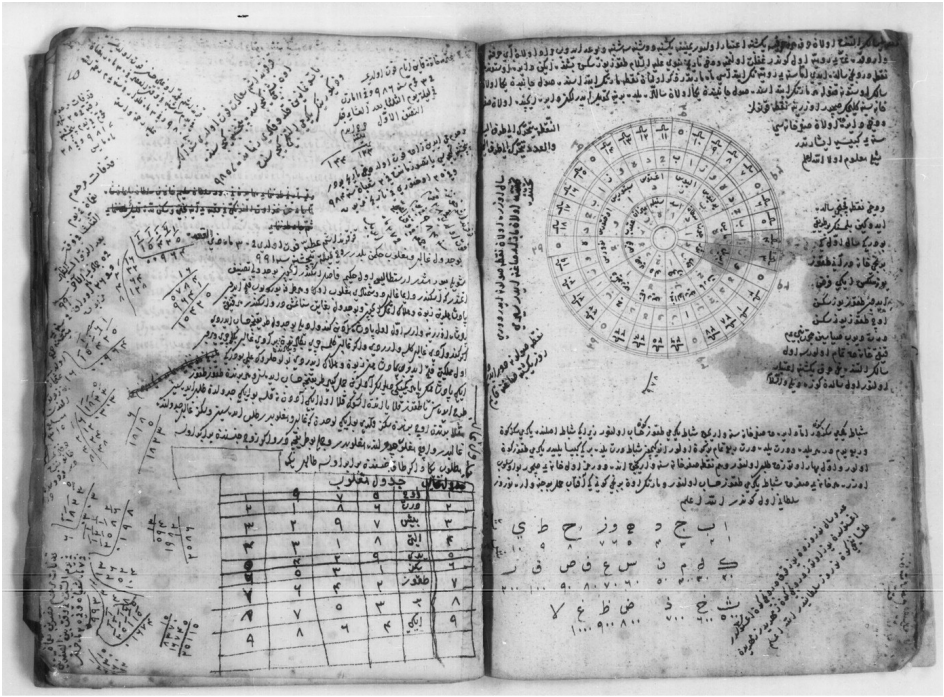
27 BnF Turc 41, 36b.

28 C. H. Fleischer, "Secretaries' Dreams: Augury and Angst in Ottoman Scribal Service", in I. Baldauf and S. Faroqhi (eds), *Armağan: Festschrift für Andreas Tietze* (Prag 1994), 77–88. Although Fleischer tends to think that the specific manuscripts he explores in his article were acquired by the Medicis in the sixteenth century from the environs of the Topkapı Palace, this particular *majmūʿa* (Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Or. 116) seems like a strong candidate for being one of those early modern manuscripts in motion seized forcefully from traveling Ottomans and later reaching the private collections of European dignitaries.

29 SK Hacı Mahmud Efendi 6344, 85–88b, also cited in B. H. Küçük, *Science without Leisure: Practical Naturalism in Istanbul, 1660–1772* (Pittsburgh 2020), 135.

ther offer methods useful for calendar computation or present specific samples of dating according to different calendar systems. The first of these is found on 9a–9b, which pertains to calculating the first day of the new year (*Nevrūz*) in the Jalali calendar. The same folio also includes scattered notes on the birth date of various individuals. The earliest of these dates is about a certain Dervīş Çelebi, who was born in December 1576 as the son of one Rüstem Bey, and the latest record is about another, unnamed son of (presumably the same) Rüstem Bey who came into the world in December 1584. The precision in the marking of time should be noted here, for the note-taker writes not just the day, month, and year of the event in both Hijri and Syrian calendars, but also mentions the hour of it with as much exactitude as possible, sometimes even with specific reference to astral markings. For instance, the note on Dervīş Çelebi reads that he was born before sunrise (*qabl ṭulūʾ al-fajr*) on the night of Wednesday, Şevval the 5th (and *Zīkūris the 26th*) of the year 984, corresponding to December 26, 1576. And the note on ʿAisha, the daughter of a certain ʿAbdī, registers that on February 27, 1582 (*3 Ṣafer 990* and *27 Filvār[is]*) she was born at daybreak during the (auspicious) hour of the planet Mars (*fī waqt ʿind ṭulūʿ al-shams fī sāʿat Merrīḫ*).

The notes on 9a about the birth dates of individuals continue on page 10a with entries on the death dates of different people. The total number of notes on deceased parties is nine, and its temporal range spans a dozen years from 1573 to 1585. One crucial difference in the notes on birth from those on death is the personal references in some of the entries in the latter. Three of the nine records are about the sisters of the note-taker(s): Ḥūnze (died in April 1576), Saʿādet (d. December 1577), and ʿAtiyye (d. December 1583). No additional information is given, unfortunately, as to the ages of the deceased sisters. There are two more personal records, one about the note-taker's brother, Muḥammed b. Ḥasan, who passed away in February 1573, and the other about his mother-in-law, Muḥtereme Ḫātūn, who passed away in March 1578. The precision in dating the birth records is also visible in at least some of these death records. Saʿādet, for instance, is said to have passed away while performing her night prayer (*yātsū namāzın ḳıldıḳları zamānda*). Otherwise, neither the birth nor death records reveal particular locations or occasions. The handwriting in these records also shows noticeable dissimilarities, which suggest that they might have been jotted down by different hands at slightly separate times, implying a collective use of the scrapbook.



10a Entries on the death dates of several individuals; the divination method attributed to Aristotle to predict the outcome of a battle

The other textual units in the volume related to time reckoning involve a copy of a perpetual calendar known as the *Ruzname* of Şeyh Vefa (d. 1491). The longest individual treatise in the *majmūʿa,* it comprises around one-third (10b–19a) of the entire volume, with possibly-related portions and fragments from the text inserted on pages 19b–20a and 21a–22a. The *Ruzname* of Şeyh Vefa corpus, including commentaries and texts attributed (and misattributed) to the author, stands as one of the most popular genres of early modern Ottoman literary culture. Combining calendrical tables with weather prognostications and other practical suggestions derived from astrological lore, the *Ruznames* offered their readers simple methods to calculate the first day of each month and particularly that of the new solar year (*Nevrūz-ı sulṭānī*) —which is essential to identify as it marks the beginning of the campaign season, among other things—to convert dates across Hijri and Syrian calendars, and to navigate their own temporal rhythm through monthly and seasonal ad-

vice about the weather, health, crops, or travel. It is difficult to establish the full textual archaeology and figures of the entire corpus, especially given the varying contents in different *Ruzname* copies. Some of these copies include prayer tables or detailed diagrams showing the position of the moon on the Zodiac, and many of them are housed in miscellaneous *majmū'as* waiting for researchers to save them from obscurity. It can be said with a reasonable certainty that the corpus has survived in hundreds if not thousands of manuscripts dispersed all around the globe. Today, one can easily locate a copy of it in any library with a decent oriental manuscript collection. The Bibliothèque nationale de France, for instance, houses at least five copies, including BnF Turc 186, that David King perused in some of his studies.[30] The exact number in the BnF is most likely greater. The popularity of the *Ruzname* even spilled into Europe at the time. A physician-scholar from seventeenth-century Augsburg, Georg Hieronymus Welsch (d. 1677), published a facsimile of a copy of the text with an extensive Latin commentary.[31]

The *Rūznāme* has often been attributed to Şeyh Vefa, a celebrated mystic and the founder of the Vefaiyye branch of the Zeyniyye order close to the royal circles of Sultan Mehmed II and his son Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512). The standard biographical and hagiographical accounts from the sixteenth century attest to Şeyh Vefa's gift in mathematical sciences, especially in the art of crafting magic squares (*vefḳ*).[32] However, some other contemporary sources, such as Aşık Çelebi's (d. 1572) *Meşa'ir*, dispute his authorship of the *Ruzname* and say instead that the text was compiled in fact by a certain Mehmed Çelebi, a high-ranking judge from the Balkan lands of the empire.[33] In certain copies of the *Ruzname*, additional biographical information is presented about Şeyh Vefa and the particular occasions leading to the composition of the text. It is worth noting here

30 D. King, *In Synchrony with the Heavens: Studies in Astronomical Timekeeping and Instrumentation in Medieval Islamic Civilization, Volume I: The Call of the Muezzin* (Leiden – Boston 2004), 440–443.

31 Georg Hieronymus Welsch, *Commentarius in Ruzname Naurus: Sive Tabulæ* Æquinoctiales *Novi Persarum & Turcarum Anni. Nunc Primum Editæ è bibliotheca Georgii Hieronymi Velschii cujus accedit dissertatio, de earundem usu* (Augustæ Vindelicorum 1676).

32 *TDVİA*, s.v. "Muslihuddin Mustafa" (R. Öngören) accessed via https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/muslihuddin-mustafa For the methods and purposes of constructing *vefḳ,* see EI, s.v. "Wafḳ" (J. Sesiano).

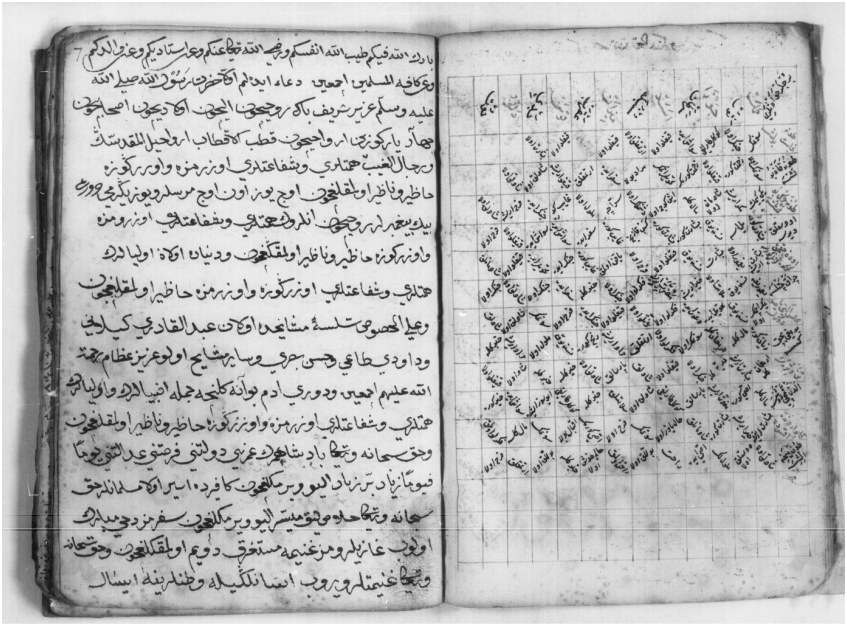
33 F. Kılıç, "Meşa'irü'ş-Şu'ara: İnceleme, Tenkitli Metin", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Gazi University, 1994, 626.

that in these additional descriptions, Şeyh Vefa is characterized as compiling the text while being held captive at the fortress of Rhodes by Christian corsairs who had captured him in the Mediterranean on his pilgrimage to Mecca.[34] Regardless of the historical veracity of the description, the anecdote captures well that texts like *Ruznames* had specific relevance to the social milieus of travelers, pilgrims, or captives, who had an even greater need for instruction in keeping accurate track of days, months, and weather conditions in the absence of readily-available tools and means.

One might object here that the argument is stretched to ascribe BnF Turc 186's ownership to such a specific social group. It is true that the use of texts about time measurement was not the monopoly of seafarers. Nevertheless, certain pages in the volume contain textual fragments definitively documenting that they were penned by Ottoman travelers at sea. For instance, folio 7a and 7b contains a lengthy invocation to God, prophet Muhammad and his companions, the four rightly-guided caliphs, the 313 messengers and 124,000 prophets, saintly figures, including specifically ʿAbd al-Qadir Gīlānī (d. 1166), Hasan al-Basri (d. 728), and Davud al-Ta'i (d. *ca* 781), and other "men of the unseen [world]" (*ricālü'l-ġayb*). At first sight this detail may seem negligible; such litanies appear abundantly in many manuscripts and miscellanies. The invocation, however, goes into specific detail and declares that the request is made for the victory of his fellow sea warriors against "infidels," the protection of their overcrowded ship from afflictions, and the emancipation of Muslim captives held by Christians. Orthographic inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the writing of certain Arabic words and Turkish suffixes suggest that the person in question comes from non-scholastic circles, likely a convert or another latecomer to learning Turkish and Arabic script, who had the habit of adding unnecessary vowels to vocalize words.[35] In any case, the passage is a precious instance of

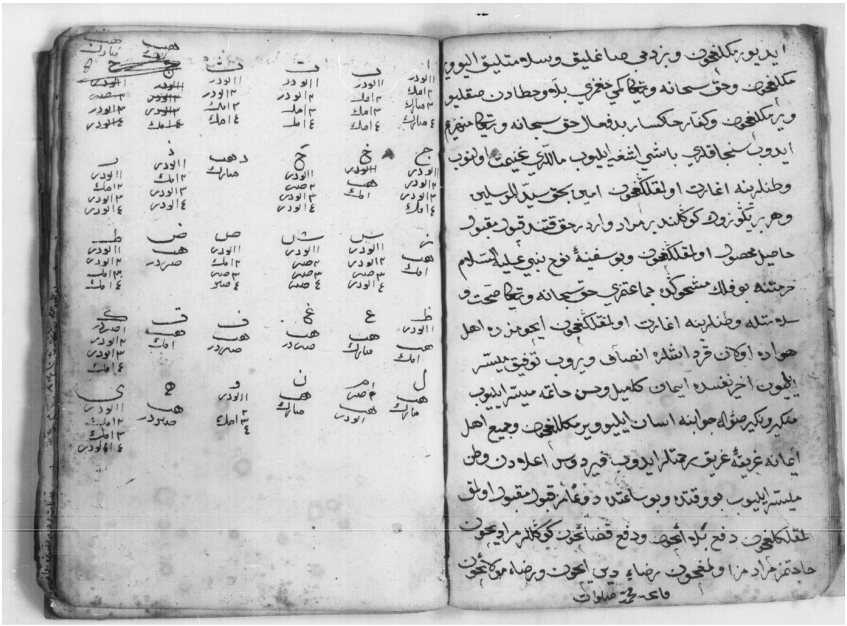
34 King, *In Synchrony with the Heavens,* 442.

35 Due to the challenges of adapting the vowel-poor Arabic alphabet to the spelling of vowel-rich Turkish words, such orthographic inconsistencies were relatively typical for various registers of early modern Ottoman literary culture. Still, new studies on the orthographic preferences of different social groups, especially those who learned Turkish and Arabic script later in their lives, such as converts, Devshirme boys, captives, corsairs, slaves, etc., might offer intriguing perspectives regarding the historical development of written and spoken (Ottoman) Turkish. For a useful study on the complexities of (Ottoman) Turkish orthography, see J. Schmidt, "How to write Turkish? The Vagaries of the Arabo-Persian Script in Ottoman-Turkish Texts", in D. Bondarev, A. Gori and L. Souag (eds), *Creating*



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Turc 186

7a First page of the invocation by a sailor to God and hidden saints



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Turc 186

7b Second page of the invocation by a sailor to God and hidden saints

first-hand, personal use of supplication to spiritual and supernatural forces in coping with the perils of sailing and fighting on board ship. It thus deserves to be quoted here in full in original before I move to its translation and interpretation (the parts in bold are my emphases):

بارک الله فیکم طیب الله انفسکم ورضی الله تعالی عنکم و عن
استادیکم [sic] وعن والدکم وعن کافه المسلمین اجمعین

*Duʿā idelüm evvelā ḥażret-i resūlullah ṣaliyallahu ʿaleyhi vesselam [sic] ʿazīz şerīf pak (*پاک*) rūḥı-içün (*روحیجون*) ā*li-içün *(*الیجون*) evlādı-içün (*اولادیجون*) aṣḥābı-içün (*اصحابییجون*)* çehāryār-güzīn *ervāḥı-içün (*ارواحیجون*) ḳuṭbu'l-aḳṭāb ervāḥıyl[a]? el-muḳaddesiñ ve ricālü'l-ġayb himmetleri ve şefāʿatleri üzerimize (*اوزرمزه*) ve üzeriñüze (*اوزرکوزه*) ḥāẕīr [sic] ve nāẕīr [sic] olmaklığı-içün (*اولمقلغجون*)* üç *yüz on üç mürseller ve yüz yigirmi dört bin peyġamberler rūḥı-içün (*روحیجون*) anlaruñ (*انلروک*) himmetleri ve şefāʿatleri üzerümize (*اوزرومزه*) ve* üzeriñüze *(*اوزرکوزه*) ḥāẕīr [sic] ve nāẕīr [sic] olmaklığı-içün (*اولمقکغجون*) ve dünyāda olan evliyālarıñ himmetleri ve şefāʿatleri üzeriñüze (*اوزرکوزه*) ve üzerimize (*اوزرمزه*) ḥāẕīr [sic] olmaklığı-içün ve ʿale'l-ḥuṣūṣ silsile-i meşāyiḥde olan ʿAbdülḳādirī [sic] Geylānī ve Dāvudī [sic] Ṭā'ī ve Ḥasan Baṣrī ve sā'ir meşāyiḥ [sic] ulu* ʿazīz-i ʿiẕām *raḥmetullah ʿaleyhim ecmaʿīn ve devr-i (*دوری*) Ādem bu āña gelince cümle enbiyālarıñ ve evliyālarıñ himmetleri ve şefāʿatleri üzerimize (*اوزرمزه*) ve üzeriñüze (*اوزرکوزه*) ḥāẕīr [sic] ve nāẕīr [sic] olmaklığı-içün ve ḥaḳ sübḥānehu ve teʿālā pādişāhımızıñ ʿömrünü devletini fırṣatını ʿadāletini yevmen fe-yevmen ziyād-ber-ziyād eyleyüvirmekliği-içün (*الیوویرمکلغجون*) **kāfīrde [sic] esīr ola[n] müslümānlar[a] ḥaḳ sübḥānehu ve teʿālā ḥalāṣlīḳ [sic] müyesser eyleyüvirmekliği-içün (*الیوویرمکلغجون*) seferimiz daḫī mübārek olub ġāẕīlerümüz ġanīme [sic] müstaġraḳ doyum (*دویم*) olmaklığı-içün (*اولمقکلغجون*) ve ḥaḳ sübḥānehu ve teʿālā ġanīmetler virüb āsānlık [sic] ile vaṭanlarına īsāl idivirmekliği-içün ve biz daḫī sağlık (*صاغلیق*) ve selāmetlīḳ [sic] eyleyüvirmekliği-içün (*الیوویرمکلغجون*) ve ḥaḳ sübḥānehu ve teʿālā gemiciğimizi belā ve ḥaṭādan ṣaklayuvirmekliği-içün ve küffār-ı ḥāksār-ı [sic] bed-fi ʿāl[ı] ḥaḳ sübḥānehu ve teʿālā münhezīm [sic] idüb sancāḳları başı aşağa eyleyüb malları ġanīmet olunub vaṭanlarına iġāre (*اغارت*) olmaklığı-içün (*اولمقلکغجون*)* Āmīn *bi-ḥaḳḳ-*ı *seyyid el-mürselīn ve her biriñüzüñ göñlünd[e] bir medār vardır ḥaḳ katınd[a] ḳabūl-ı maḳbūl ḥāṣīl-ı [sic] maḥṣūl olmaklığı-içün ve **bu sefineyi (*سفینه*) Nūḥ nebī ʿaleyhisselām ḥürmetine bu fülk-i meşḥūñda [sic] cemāʿatimizi ḥaḳ sübḥānehu ve teʿālā ṣıḥḥat ve selāmetle vaṭanlarına iġāre olmak-**

Standards: Interactions with Arabic Script in 12 Manuscript Cultures (Berlin – Boston 2019), 131–146.

lığı-içün içimizde ehl-i hevāda olan ḳardāşlara inşāf virüb tevfīḳ müyesser eyleyüb āḫīr ***nefesde īmān-ı kāmīl [sic] ve ḥüsn-i ḫātime [sic] müyesser eyleyüb Münkīr [sic] ve Nekīr [sic] ṣuʾāl [sic] cevābına āsān eyleyüvirmekliği-içün*** *ve cemīʿ-i ehl-i* īmāna ġarīḳa-i ġarīḳ *[sic] raḥmetler idüb Fīrdevs-i [sic] aʿlādan vaṭan müyesser eyleyüb* ***bu vaḳtde ve bu sāʿatde donanmamız ḳabūl-ı maḳbūl olmaklığı-içün (*** اولمقلكلغجون ***) defʿ-i belā içün ve defʿ-i ḳażā içün göñüller murādı-içün ḥācetimiz murādımız olmağı-içün*** *rıżāʾ-yı dīn içün ve rıżāʾ-yı mevlā içün fātiḥa Muḥammed ṣalavāt"*

God bless you, may God bless you with beauty, may God be pleased with you, with your master, with your father, and with all the Muslims.

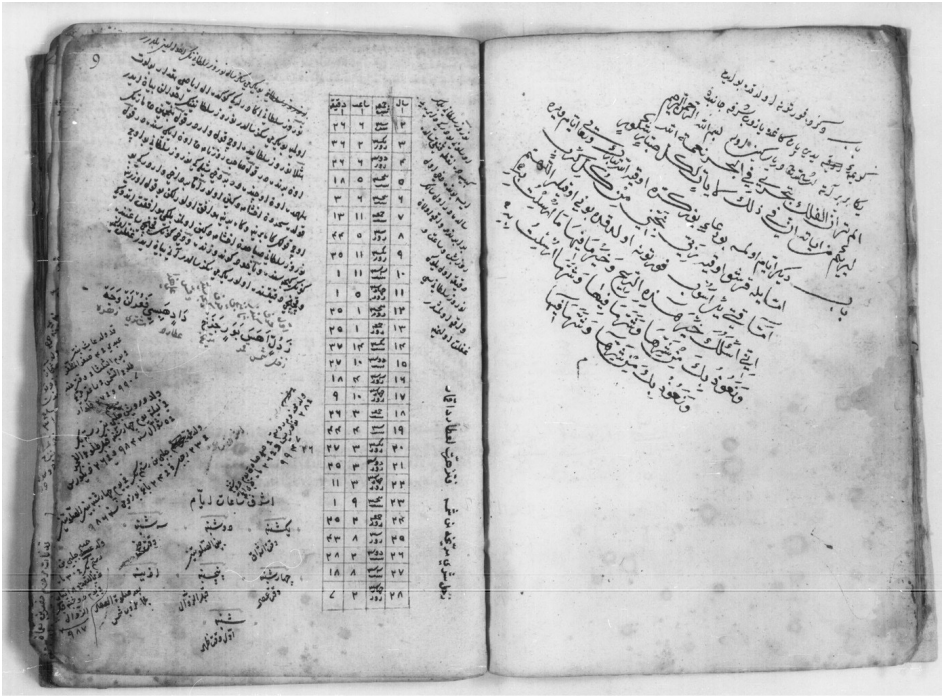
Let us pray first in the name of Prophet Muhammad, the noble and pure spirit of the messenger of God (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him), of his family and children, of his companions, of the spirits of the four rightly guided caliphs. [Let us pray] for the sacred spirits of the pole of the poles and men of the hidden world to bestow upon us and upon you their help and grace. [Let us pray] for the spirit of the 313 messengers and 124,000 prophets to confer on us and on you their aid and favor. [Let us pray] for the chain of saints in the world, specifically Abd al- Qadir Gilani, Dawud al-Ta'i, Hasan al-Basri, and other venerable and noble holy men (may God have mercy upon all of them) to grant to us and to you their assistance. [Let us pray] that all the prophets and saints from the age of Adam till now bestow their aid and grace upon us and upon you. [Let us pray] that God prolongs the life of our sultan and enhances his fortunes and justice every day. **[Let us pray] that God facilitates the release of the Muslims held as captives by the infidels. [Let us pray] that our campaign will be blessed, and our warriors will be inundated with spoils and booty. [Let us pray] that God grants them booty and facilitates their return to their homeland safe and sound. [Let us pray] that God helps us to remain in health and safety, protects our little ship from any calamity and mistake, destroys the despicable and ill-bred infidels, turns their flags upside down, and makes them return their homeland with their goods plundered.** Amen to Prophet Muhammad, the master of the messengers! The heart of each one of you turns to a particular cause (as a desire). [Let us pray] that God allows each of you to attain it. **[Let us pray] that God protects this ship for the sake of Prophet Noah and enables our companion in this overcrowded vessel to arrive in our homeland safe and sound. [Let us pray] that God shows mercy on those self-indulgent companions among us, provides them with divine guidance, and lets them take their final breath with impeccable faith toward a good end so that they can easily answer**

> **the questions of the two angels, Munkar and Nakir [testing the faith of the dead].** [Let us pray] that God shows mercy upon all the believers and allocates each a place in his Heaven. **[Let us pray] that at this time and in this moment, our ship receives the favor [of God]. [Let us pray] for warding off trouble and calamity and for attaining our wishes and desires.** [Let us pray] for the blessing of religion and of God the protector.

What strikes the eye in the invocation, even from the very beginning, is the strong sense of collective "us" the note-taker has in addressing his fellows on board in a distinctly urgent manner. The invocation starts, after the brief Arabic prayer that is written in a second plural pronoun, with an open call to pray together in a way reminiscent of *oremus* (Latin "Let us pray") in Christian liturgical prayer: "let us pray" (*duʿā idelüm*).[36] This collective "us" should not be confused with the royal we or the typical use of the first-person plural in Islamic belles lettres to disguise the real first-person singular self. Whoever jotted down this invocation had a clear identification with, and attachment to, his particular community sharing a similar destiny. The identity of this community is revealed soon after in the specific references in the invocation to "our campaign" (*seferimiz*), "our warriors" (*ġāzīlerimiz*), "our little ship" (*gemiciğimiz*), "our company...in this overcrowded vessel" (*bu fülk-i meşḥūnda...cemāʿatimiz*), or "our fleet" (*donanmamız*). The men at prayer are unmistakably a particular group of Ottoman seafarers sailing and fighting their enemies. It is by nature impossible to identify the exact historical occasion or establish the precise time when the note was inscribed, even whether during or before sailing. In any case, besides the frequent use of first-person plural pronouns that have a special significance in communicating the collective experience in its own present time, some of the specific words the note-taker uses literally capture the "moment" of those unnamed Ottoman individuals on board. As it reads toward the end of the invocation, the supplication is made "at this time and in this moment" (*bu vaḳtde ve bu sāʿatde*) to protect their fleet from calamities and let each of them attain their particular desires.

Page 8b offers another noteworthy example of prayers and invocations explicitly related to the experiences of people aboard ship, in the form of a list of ideal prayers one can resort to for an uneventful sailing experience. The prescribed prayers (written likely by the same hand that inscribed the above invo-

36 I would like to thank Bill Walsh for bringing *oremus* to my attention.



8b Notes on prayers to recite to ward off furious storm

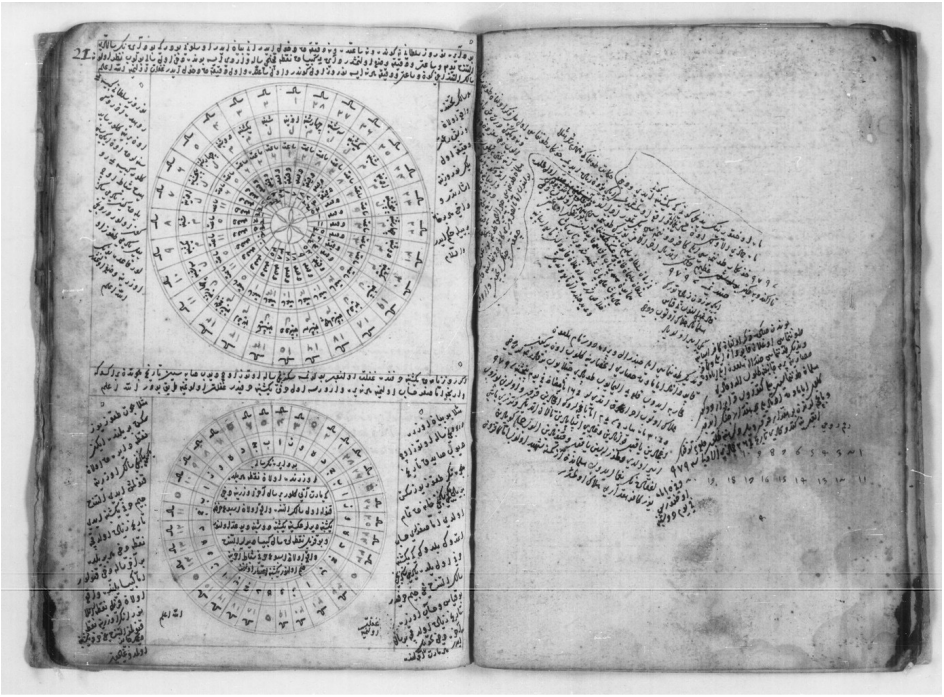
cation) also involve a performative aspect, and readers are instructed to recite or write those prayers in specific manners. The first prayer addresses those occasions when there is a furious storm in the sea (*deñizde forṭuna olduḳda*). The given instruction is to write down a specific Qur'anic verse (31:31) on seven separate sheets of paper and to toss them into the sea, one by one, from the starboard side of the ship. Apparently, the copyist first wrote "recite" (*oḳuna*), but then crossed it out and revised it with "write down" (*yazub*). Unsurprisingly, the select Qur'anic verse for the occasion pertains to ships and sailing: أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ الْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ لِيُرِيَكُم مِّنْ آيَاتِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ("Do you not see that ships sail through the sea by the favor of Allah that He may show you of His signs? Indeed in that are signs for everyone patient and grateful"). The second prayer mentioned in the note also relates to the instances when constant cycles of wind become overwhelming. The recommended prayer to recite in those circumstances, at least 100 times, is not a Qur'anic verse but a simple petition (رَبِّي نَجِّنِي مِن كُلِّ كَرْبٍ: "My Lord, save me from every affliction"). The note

states, however, that the prayer should specifically be performed directly facing the wind. The third and final part of the note advises reciting the following prayer if the repeated cycles of wind turn into an endangering storm: اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنّي اَسئَلُکَ خَيرَ هذِهِ الرِيح وخَيرَ مَا فِيهَا ومَا أُرسِلَت بِهِ وَنَعُوذُ بِکَ مِن شَرِّهَا وشَرّ مَا فِيهَا و شَرّ مَا أُرسِلَت بِهِ وَنَعّوذُ بِکَ مِن شَرِّهَا وَشَرّ مَا فِيهَا ("O God! I solicit from You the good for this wind and the good for all that is in this wind and the good it was sent with, and we take refuge in You from the evil of it and from the evil of all that is in it and the evil it was sent with [and we take refuge in you from the evil of it and the evil of all that is in it]"). All these three suggested prayers hardly require an interpretation; they point, without a doubt, to a particular milieu comprising seafarers who need practical spiritual assistance in a life-and-death situation.

BnF Turc 186 contains other samples of texts that seem to substantiate the claim that the tome might once have been at the hands of Ottoman subjects involved in a naval venture. An instance of this is the lengthy note on page 20b that was inserted into the different parts of the page as detached fragments. When read together, they coalesce to form a brief narrative of the Battle of Lepanto and its immediate aftermath. The precise details presented in the note on the names or monikers of certain commanders in the Holy League's fleet and on specific dates and locations of confrontations suggest that the person who wrote it down had inside knowledge of the narrated incidents, either through his own involvement or via personal acquaintances. Unlike the invocations or prescribed prayers mentioned above that allude to, if not decisively identify, the sentimental dynamics of a particular Ottoman social group on board, this note is written in a nonchalant manner, simply narrating events without using emotionally loaded expressions. The only sentence written in bold on the page reveals what the text is all about: the story of the [Ottoman] navy that was crushed [at the Battle of Lepanto] (*ḥikāyet-i donanma ki münhezim şod*).[37] It then moves to provide details that on Monday, October the 7th, corresponding to the 18th of Cemaziyülevvel (*māh-i Uḫturīsiñ 7. günü ki Yekşenbih günü idi ve daḫī māh-ı Cemāziyülevveliñ 18. günü*), the Ottoman imperial navy confronted the Holy League fleet (*kāfir donanması*) close to the island of Bektemür/Beydemir (پک تمور) around mid-morning.[38] Two fleets fought one another un-

37 Since I only had the opportunity to work on the black-and-white reproduction of the manuscript made freely available on the Bnf website (https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10082401s), the part I see as bold might be in red or another color in the original.

38 I was not able to identify what the *Bektemür/Beydemir adası* refers to today. The name ap-



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des manuscrits. Turc 186

20b Note on the Battle of Lepanto

til mid-afternoon, and eventually, the Ottoman forces (*Türk donanması*) were defeated and crushed (*münhezim olub daḫī şındı*).

The note reports that around 200 Ottoman galleys were seized, and numerous Muslims were killed, including the Grand Admiral Ali Pasha. The commander-in-chief of the expedition (*serʿasker-i donanma-yı hümāyūn*) Pertev Pasha (d. 1572) (written as *Pertāb* in the text) was caught by Don John of Austria (d. 1578), *Oğlan Kāpūdān* in the text ("the Boy Admiral," who was 24), captain-general of the Holy League's fleet in the service of the King of Spain (*tābiʿ-i İspanya*) and by *Cendrāl* (جندرال) serving the Republic of Venice (*tābiʿ-i Venedik*), possibly Gianandrea Doria (d. 1606).[39] The Spanish and

pears in the *Seyahatname* of Evliya Çelebi, who mentions that it was a deserted island, a mile away from the shores of Lepanto and only inhabited by goats in winters. See S. A. Kahraman, Y. Dağlı and R. Dankoff (eds), *Evliya* Çelebi *Seyahatnâmesi,* Vol. 8 (Istanbul 2003), 275.

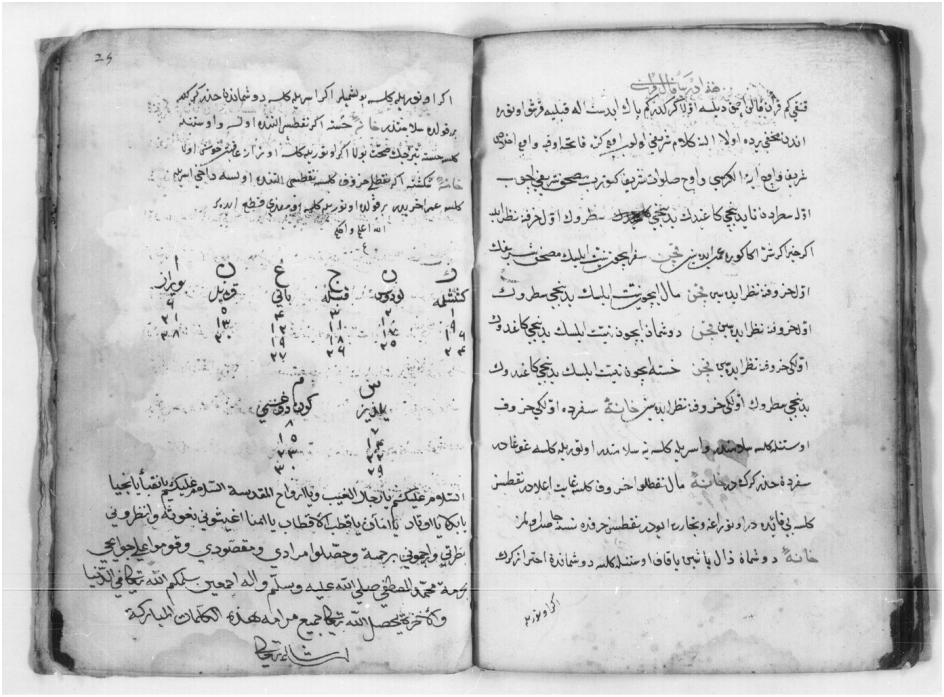
39 One wonders if he's accidentally calling Sebastiano Venier (d. 1578), commander of the Venetian contingent, by Gianandrea Doria's name.

Venetian troops of the Holy League led by the *Oğlan Kāpūdān* and *Cendrāl* later reached, as the note says, the shores of Lefkas (*Ayā Māvra*) along with the galleys they seized from the Ottomans. Here, the use of "*gelüb*" ("came [to]") instead of another verb, begs the question as to whether the note-taker was at the time a resident of Lefkas, an island in Ottoman possession that was at the time a base for Muslim corsairs.[40] As to the possible Lefkadian connection of the note-taker, the volume offers an additional clue on page 20a. A fragment of a chancery register dated February 27, 1572, records on this page the expenses of repairing the fortress of the island (*defter-i icmāl-i bīnā-yı ḳal'e-yi Ayāmāvra vaḳa'a fī 12 Şevvāl…979)*. Returning to the note on page 20b, we read that some fighting took place on Lefkas between the allied forces of the Holy League and local Ottoman forces protecting the fortress. Although the Holy League troops damaged some agricultural lands and ruined the fortress with their arquebus fire, they had to retreat temporarily on Tuesday, October the 15th (*fī 15 māh-ı Uḫturis fi yevm-i duşenbih*). A few months later, according to the narrative, Venetian forces under the command of *Cendrāl* and *Pervedor* (پروه دور) besieged the fortress of Lefkas again.[41] The siege continued for eleven days to no avail. Some of their cannons were cracked, and one of their galleys was set on fire on Thursday, January the 30th (*fī 16 Ramażān fi yevm pençşenbih sene 979 ve fī 30 māh-ı Yenāris*). Still, they ruined many trees in the cultivated lands, damaged several houses, and looted the hives and other belongings of the inhabitants. The salt mine was destructed, and the villagers' herds of sheep flocks were plundered. While only a few Muslim residents of the island were eventually killed, around 100 non-Muslim inhabitants (*kāfirden yüz kāfir miḳdārı*) pere ished during the siege.

Though not explicitly related to the Battle of Lepanto and its human toll, there are additional textual materials in the manuscript, largely divinatory in content, that can be closely associated with war-related concerns and consequences. On page 10a, for instance, the method typically attributed to Aristo-

40 On the significance of Lefkas for the activities of Muslim corsairs, see N. Malcolm, *Agents of Empire: Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean World* (London 2015), 171.

41 Although it is not clear whom exactly the note-taker means by "Pervedor," it is likely that "Pervedor" was the *Provveditore d'Armata* (superintendent of the Venetian fleet) Marco Querini. I would like to thank Stefan Hanß for generously sharing his expert opinion about the term and possible names via personal communication.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des manuscrits. Turc 186

24b–25a Divination by the Qur'an (on the right) and the table for the rijal al-ghayb (on the left)

tle and frequently found in Ottoman compilations of divinatory practices that aims at predicting the outcome of a battle is described in length with an additional easy-to-use table (*bu cedvel ġālib ve maġlūb ḥükmün bildirir*). The page, however, does not offer any signposts to link it with a concrete historical case. Moreover, on 24b–25a, specific instructions for performing divination by the Qur'an treat four separate inquiries. The inquiries exemplified in the instructions are related respectively to campaigns (*sefer için niyet eylesen*), receiving property/booty (*māl*), encounters with the enemy (*düşman*), and the outcome of diseases (*ḫasta*). At the end of 25a is a tabular note that lists all the eight wind directions and adds three or four numbers underneath each. The southwest (*lodos*), for example, has 2-10-17-25 and the northwest (*ḳarayel*) has 5-13-20. All numbers from 1 to 30 are distributed likewise to these eight directions, which overall suggests that the table had a particular function relating to the days of the month. The exact purpose of the table becomes apparent with the prayer

in Arabic inserted below the table that was arguably written by the same hand that inscribed the invocation on pages 7a–7b. Here, the prayer supplicates the aid of the "men of the unseen [world]" (*ricālü'l-ġayb*) by referring specifically to the key figures in the hierarchy of hidden saints, ranging from the *quṭb al-aqṭāb* (the pole of the poles) and *imāmān* (the imams) to the *evtād* ([four] pillars) and *budalā*. What the tabular note does, then, is point to the directions from which and days in each month on which the hidden saints would appear.

What, one must ask, is going on here? Why did Ottoman sailors need to know the times when and places where the men of the hidden world would appear? Originating in early Sufi circles to point to the hidden saints that were believed to offer aid to the inhabitants of the world, and eventually developed by Ibn al-Arabi (d. 1240) in his doctrine of sainthood, the *rijāl al-ghayb* theory describes a hierarchy of spiritual beings led by the pole (*quṭb*) and divided into different ranks.[42] The names, numbers, and functions of the holders of each rank vary in different sources, but the doctrine as a whole found acceptance and was put into practical use within different social milieus beyond Sufi circles. In the eyes of some, it was a risk-management tool helping them make an informed decision about whether or not to fight or travel on certain days in specific directions. For instance, in the lore of astrology and other divinatory practices, one could come across instructions and diagrams to seek the aid of the *rijāl al-ghayb*. Another BnF *majmū'a* from the first half of the sixteenth century that contains at least three almanacs with prognostications (*taqwīm*) has an elegantly drawn diagram of the days and directions of the *rijāl al-ghayb* prefaced by a prayer similar to the one located in BnF Turc 183.[43] Besides the astrological and divinatory corpus, one finds references to the divination of *rijāl al-ghayb* in the writings of sailors or soldiers. In specific passages of his *Kitābu'l-muḥīt,* Seydi Ali Reis informs novice sailors (*mübtedīler*) about the directions that the *rijāl al-ghayb* would appear in particular days of each month, referring explicitly to Ibn al-Arabi.[44] The same instructions and references to Ibn al-Arabi are also found in a text on military arts written by an unnamed Ottoman soldier

42 *TDVİ*, s.v. "Ricâlü'l-gayb" (S. Uludağ), accessed via https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/ricalul-gayb For the *rijāl al-ghayb* doctrine of Ibn al-Arabi, see M. Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn 'Arabī* (Cambridge 1993), esp. 89–102.

43 BnF Turc 183, 35a.

44 SK Nuruosmaniye 2948, 67b–68a.

who fought in the Russo-Ottoman wars of 1735–1739.[45] The presence of *rijāl al-ghayb* doctrine and divination in texts written or appealed to by seafarers, combatants, and travelers illustrates how these early modern Ottoman subjects brought spiritual and supernatural conventions to bear on their earthly concerns and considerations.

Conclusion

It remains a mystery who put together the manuscript in the first place and what phases it went through before it found its way into the BnF in the first half of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, there are adequate clues in the eccentric contents of this miscellaneous volume that enable us to imagine a community of Ottoman seafarers seeking refuge, through writing, in spiritual forces and supernatural methods during their fight for survival. It goes without saying that the possessor(s) of the volume took part in a naval conflict. Based on the specific note regarding the incidents during and after the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 and the chronological range of the entries on several pages about birth and death dates or calendar computation, it seems highly likely that this naval conflict was the Battle of Lepanto. In view of additional details in the volume that manifest the literacy of the note-takers in the Greek alphabet, their broken Turkish and Arabic, and their familiarity with the Greek names of months in the solar calendar and introducing prayers with an Ottoman-language *oremus,* they were perhaps Greek-speaking Christian converts to Islam blending different types of knowledge and elements of faith at the frontiers of warfare.

The distinctive stories and historical possibilities offered by this single surviving manuscript indicate the importance of the microscopic approach to individual textual artifacts, though it is certain that not every single textual item (be it a letter, treatise, poem, or something else) will be a promising window on broader historical and historiographical questions. One must also bear in mind justified concerns about whether single, solitary examples can represent a larger and more complicated whole. Sometimes, however, a deep dive into the contents of a single volume, extracting the "exceptionally normal" elements in

45 H. Söylemez, "Mukaddimetü's-Sefer (1736–1739 Seferi Hakkında Bir Eser): Metin-Değerlendirme", unpublished M.A. thesis, Marmara University, 2007, 39–43. It is worth noting that the text cites historical examples from the Ottoman past, such as the Battle of Mohács in 1526, where he says the Ottoman forces deployed the method.

its details, and juxtaposing them with other relevant textual materials produced by or circulated among individuals from similar social milieus offers invaluable insights into recognizing and reconstructing the cultural, mental, and emotional world of the historical actors in their own complexity.

BnF Turc 186 proves to be a powerful window for descrying and even capturing particular "moments" of obscure Ottoman individuals when they took recourse to strategies, mostly divinatory in nature, to cope with the particular perils of those moments. We are fortunate to have here the textual traces of the actual recourse itself; thereby, we observe them creating texts to record different forms of divination for managing risks and treating immediate or foreseeable pragmatic concerns. It is true that the medieval and early modern Muslim past, including the Ottoman world, abounds with treatises and manuals on different divinatory practices. Nevertheless, by the very nature of their genre-specific qualities, these texts often fall short in revealing how they were put into actual use by real historical actors in various situations. When more texts and manuscript fragments like BnF Turc 186 are discovered, we will be able to address with greater nuance questions about early modern Ottomans' textual and mental relations to faith and fate.

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"Ve Mehdī'ye faḳīḥler düşman olalar":[1] Envisioning the Mahdī in the Narratives of the Early Modern Ottomans

Gülçin Tunalı (Istanbul)[2]

"We live in the age of Apocalypse" states a Canadian professor of Italian origin and continues in the following page as such: "We live in the twenty-first century. We are heirs to the Enlightenment and the scientific, political, and social revolutions that it foaled, fostered, or furthered... Yet still the ancient apocalyptic mindset persists. And not just persists, but thrives."[3] If this is true for 'the modern Westerners', then the mental maps of the Ottomans which were occupied with apocalyptic images before the Tanzimat period—broadly speaking, those who were not the 'heirs' to the Enlightenment—must have been almost beyond imagination. Parallel to this plenty of religious material keeps the expectations about the Mahdī and the lesser and greater signs of the Hour alive in the soci-

1 *Mehdilik Ḥaḳḳında Bir Risāle*, Hacı Mahmud Efendi, SK 1930/2: 207a.

2 I would like to thank Marinos Sariyannis for his corrections, comments and support, and Rıza Yıldırım for his suggestion of the article's subtitle. I would like to dedicate this article to *Fāṭimah al-Zahrā'* or Mother Fatima because without her, the Mahdī phenomenon would not be exist.

3 L. Di Tommazo, "Apocalypse Then and Now", *AJS Perspectives* (Fall 2012): http://perspectives.ajsnet.org/the-apocalypse-issue-fall-2012/apocalypse-then-and-now/

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ety.[4] Unlike the Quran, the *ḥadīth* tradition contains a broad range of information about the portents of the hour.[5] In certain ways, these are like 'signs' in the apocalyptic Judeo-Christian texts. This fact is connected with the presence of Isrāʾīliyyāt (Israelite lore)—a term that signifies the migration of the narratives from especially Judaism and Christianity in the *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* tradition.[6] In medieval times Muslim theologians have divided the apocalyptic signs into two clusters: the Lesser (*suġrā*) and the Greater (*kubrā*) Signs. As Ostřanský clearly depicts, "the Lesser Signs are mostly moral, religious, social, cultural, political, and even natural events, designed to warn humanity that the end is near and to bring people into a state of repentance (*tawba*)."[7] The Greater Signs of the Hour comprise a sequence of occurrences of ever-increasing seriousness that will precede the end of the globe. This dystopian scenario offers a tale of the conflicts between the powers of good and evil, explicitly represented by al-Mahdī, Īsā, al-Dajjāl and al-Sufyānī.[8] The Lesser Hour Signs have been mostly fulfilled according to the most modern Muslim apocalyptists, due to the overall corruption in the society, even though only God knows the Hour. Strikingly, the same thought is true also for Ibrāhīm ibn Bālī from the fifteenth century,[9] Zāʾifi from

4 On the lesser signs, a detailed listing in English is avaible with eighty four items: B. Ostřanský, "The Lesser Signs of the Hour: A Reconstruction of the Islamic Apocalyptic Overture", *Oriental Archive*, 81 (2013), 235–284 at 242–280.

5 M. Cook, "Eschatology and the Dating of Traditions", *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies*, 1 (1992), 23–47 and A. Görke, "Eschatology, History, and the Common Link: A Study in Methodology", in H. Berg (ed.), *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins* (Leiden 2003), 179–208.

6 For the conceptual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*) of the term, see R. Tottoli, "Origin and Use of the Term Isrâ'îliyyât in Muslim Literature", *Arabica*, 46 (1999), 193–210.

7 Ostřanský, "The Lesser Signs of the Hour", 235.

8 In general there are ten Greater signs of the hour: 1) Smoke covers the earth; 2)The Antichrist (*al-Dajjāl*); 3) The Beast of the Earth (*al-Dābba*); 4) The rising of the sun in the west; 5) The return of Jesus (*ʿĪsā*); 6) Gog and Magog; 7–9) A triple solar eclipse (in the East; in the West; in Arabia); 10) The fire before Doomsday: Ibid., 280, ff.235.

9 *"Kaçan kim devr-i müddet âhir ola Niçe dürlü ʿalâmet zâhir ola // Ki dirler anlara eşrât-ı sâʿat Olur bir bir yakın olsa kıyâmet // Emânet refʿ ola evvel âsümâna Sadâkat kalmaya ehl-i zamâna // Benî âdemde az bulına insân Ki ola sâhib-vefâ vü ehl-i peymân // Ataya anaya ʿâkk ola evlâd Tüzetmek hakkını bilmeye ehhâd // ʿAmel itmege ʿilm-ile bilenler Rîyâ-y-ıla kıla tâʿat kılanlar // Melikler zulm ide iklîm içinde Yıkıla memleketler bîm içinde // Zamâna fazla kıla ehl-i fazlı Cihânda câh ide her ehl-i cehli // Asâyil yirine giçe erâzil Erâzil görine göze asâyil // Ayaklar baş ola başlar ayak hem Yaramaz ola halka yahşi âdem // Erenler az ola çog ola zenler Tuta yir yüzini ehl-i fitenler // Cihâna tola dört âfât yeksân Kılıç kozlug kırgun-ıla*

the sixteenth century[10] or Seyyid Nimetī (1610–1650).[11] They all warned that consequently mankind is inevitably nearing the end of history.

Messianic and apocalyptic scenarios have a vast literature in the Islamic world[12] as it is true for Jewish and Christian communities.[13] Studies on apocalypticism in Europe began in the field of theology from the nineteenth century with the writings of Friedrich Lücke in 1832.[14] Established in Göttingen, the *religions geschichtliche Schule*, or the History of Religions School, was founded on interpreting the emergence and historical development of Christianity in relation or opposition to other religions, philosophically and rationally, and this effort naturally included criticism and analysis of the scriptures.[15] While applying the hermeneutic principles to the sacred texts, scholars belonging to this school also touched subjects that had not been studied before in the field of theology. Eschatology and apocalypticism were among these topics. Until the 1970s with very few exceptions, the discussions about apocalypticism monopolized by Göttingen-centered theology have not attracted the attention of historians. Although he was also a theologian, Klaus Koch's work *Ratlos vor der Apokalyptik* brought criticism on the eschatological studies. Thus theologians

kan // 'Adîm ehline irişe münâsib Virile erzelü'n-nâs'a merâtib." İbrahim ibn Bali, *Hikmetname*, ed. A. Şeylan (Ankara 2010), 12483–12496. https://ekitap.ktb.gov.tr/TR-194369/ibrahim-ibn-i-bali-hikmet-name.html

10 "*Âlemi dutdı sitem zulmeti rūşen itmege // Gelse âdil Mehdî vü Îsi'bni Meryem kâşkî*": İ. Gürbüz Atik, "Osmanlı Metinlerinde Mehdi Tasavvurları", *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Araştırma Dergisi,* 89 (2019),11–42 at 21.

11 "*Nüzūl itmez ise Îsâ ümîdüñ kes bu devletten / Cihânda zulm ü âşūbuñ ne haddi var ne pâyânı // İrüp Hak'dan hidâyet ger hurūc itmez ise Mehdî / Çıkar ehl-i zemînüñ âsumâna âh u efgânı*": Ibid., 21.

12 For an overview of the sources, see D. Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton 2002).

13 On the Judaic and Christian apocalyptic literature, see *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. John J. Collins (New York 2014). For a detailed review of these sources including Islamic ones on the subject, see M. Green-Mercado, "Speaking the End Times: Early Modern Politics and Religion from Iberia to Central Asia", *JESHO*, 61 (2018), 1–17.

14 J. J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Michigan 2016 [3rd edition]), 2–3.

15 G. Lüdemann and M. Schröder, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule in Göttingen: eine Dokumentation* (Göttingen 1987) 13–24.

mostly focused on apocalyptic debates in the birth stages of Christianity and Judaism and turned their studies to the ancient Near East to find the origins.[16]

In 1968, Paul Alexander, a Byzantine historian, took a very important step in apocalyptic research and published his article examining the apocalyptic traditions in Byzantium.His importance comes from the fact that he began to use apocalypses as historical sources rather than for theological examination by asserting that, "the historian can learn much from such studies, yet their authors frequently concern themselves with historical matters only to the extent of explaining the historical allusions and prophecies *ex eventu* contained in these texts."[17] *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages*, published by Norman Cohn in 1957, prior to Paul Alexander's article, is also particularly crucial in terms of explaining how apocalyptical ideas have become the ideology of the oppressed in history. Norman Cohn's text was seminal, inspiring all later works that examine how messianic ideas led to revolutions or mass popular movements.[18]

As for the Ottomanists, the first historian who drew our attention to the apocalyptic rhetoric of the Ottomansis Barbara Flemming.[19] After her, Cornell H. Fleisher has investigated the era of Süleyman the Lawgiver in terms of messianic beliefs.[20] Stéphane Yerasimos, Laban Kaptein, Feridun Emecen and Kaya Şahin,[21] have examined the apocalyptic speculations rumoured by the Ot-

16 Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 1.

17 P.J. Alexander, "Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources", *The American Historical Review*, 73 (1968), 997–1018 at 997.

18 J. Collins and J. H. Charlesworth (eds), *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies Since the Uppsala Colloquium* (Sheffield 1991).

19 B. Flemming, "Ṣāḥibḳirān und Mahdī: Türkische Endzeiterwartungen im ersten Jahrzehnt der Regierung Suleymans", in G. Kara (ed.), *Between the Danube and the Caucasus* (Budapest 1987), 43–62.

20 C. H. Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Suleyman", in G. Veinstein (ed.), *Soliman le Magnifique et son Temps* (Paris 1992), 163–167.

21 B. Lellouch and S. Yerasimos (eds), *Les traditions apocalyptiques au tournant de la chute de Constantinople. Actes de la Table ronde d'Istanbul, 13–14 avril 1996* (Istanbul – Paris 1999); S. Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, trans. Ş. Tekeli (Istanbul 1993); K. Şahin, "Constantinople and the End Time: The Ottoman Conquest as a Portent of the Last Hour", *Journal of Early Modern History*, 14 (2010), 317–54; L. Kaptein, *Apocalypse and the Antichrist Dajjal in Islam: Ahmed Bijan's Eschatology Revisited* (Asch 2011); F. Emecen, *Fetih ve Kıyamet: 1453 İstanbul'un Fethi ve Kıyamet Senaryoları* (Istanbul 2012). There

tomans before and after the time of the conquest, seeming to follow the steps of Suliman Bashaer[22] who claims that "major turning points, especially turning of centuries, and human and natural catastrophes provide fertile grounds for nourishing old apocalypses which are adjusted to address the new situations, as well as 'coining' new ones, in the sense of acquiring for them a sublime, prophetical level and authority."[23] Thus, Ottoman versions of '*malāḥim*', '*eşrāt'u's-sā'at*" or the '*fitan*' literature[24] which is based on *ḥadīths* and even the Quran itself, began to be studied parallel to these historiographic developments in the field of eschatological studies.[25]

The sources

In this article I will try to catch the idea of Mahdī in the early Ottoman people's mentalities by exploring an anonymous *Risāle* from Süleymaniye Library. Before going deep into that narrative, it is proper to look at four sources which had a great impact in the mindset of the Ottomans: namely, *Dürr-i meknūn*, *Aḥvāl-i ḳıyāmet*, *Tercüme-yi miftāḥu'l-cifri'l-cāmiʿ*, and *Eşrātu's-sā'at*. There are extensive and detailed records about the Mahdī in the texts of religious and historical sources, but these four key sources were highly influential for the apocalyptic expectations of people.

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are some works on the subject by Turkish theologians, see E. Baş, "Binyılcılık ve Osmanlı Toplumunda Hicrî Milenyum Kıyamet Beklentisi ile İlgili Bazı Veriler", *Dinî Araştırmalar*, 7/ 21 (2004), 163–177.

22 S. Bashaer, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars: A review of Arabic sources", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1/2 (1991), 173–207.

23 Idem, "Muslim Apocalypses and The Hour: A Case-Study in Traditional Reinterppretation", *Israil Oriental Studies*, 13 (1993), 75–99 at 98.

24 D. Cook, *The Syrian Muslim Apocalyptic Heritage: A Translation of Nuʿaym b. Hammad al-Marwazi's Book of Tribulations* (Edinburgh 2017).

25 For the late contributions on Islamic apocalypticism, see A. A. Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism: the Idea of Mahdī in Twelver Shī'ism* (Albany 1981); S. A. Arjomand, "Islamic Apocalypticism in the Classical Period", in B. M. McGinn (ed.), *Apocalypticism in Western History and Culture. Vol. 2 of The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* (New York 1998), 238–283; S. Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions* (Columbia 2003); M. A. Masad, "The Medieval Islamic Apocalyptic Tradition: Divination, Prophecy and the End of Time in the 13th Century Eastern Mediterranean", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Washington University, 2008; H. Yücesoy, *Messianic Beliefs and Imperial Politics in Medieval Islam. The 'Abbasid Caliphate in the Early Ninth Century* (Columbia 2009); J.P. Filiu, *Apocalypse in Islam*, trans. M. B. DeBevoise (Berkeley 2011).

1. *Dürr-i meknūn,*[26] a very popular compilation from the fifteenth century that has been referred to as the first Ottoman encyclopaedia and contains eschatological materials in its very end, despite the fact that stories also abound throughout the cosmography.[27] The work's cosmographic structure not only illuminates Ottoman conceptions of the *ʿajā'ib* genre[28] inspired by Qazwīnī, but also emphasizes its significance in its author's (the work is traditionally attributed to Aḥmed Bīcān of Gelibolu, but this attribution has been disputed)[29] cosmographic world view, which concludes with the Resurrection. *Dürr-i meknūn* consists of eighteenth chapters in parallel to the creation of eighteen thousand universes (*on sekiz bin ʿālem*)[30]: 1. heavens and wonders in the heavens, angels, *ʿarş* and *kürsī*, paradise, *ṭūbā*, moon, sun and the stars; 2. places and their wonders, hell; 3. the Earth;4. science of geometry, climates, days and hours; 5. the wonders of mountains; 6. waters, island and seas; 7. cities and climates; 8. mosques and churches; 9. Prophet Solomon and his throne; 10. Queen of Sheba, her throne and her meeting with prophet Solomon; 11. predestination of the lives; 12. the places that were destroyed by the anger of God; 13. Herbs,fruits and stones; 14. pictures and sculptures and some places with their marvellous things; 15. the legend of Simurg, the mythical bird; 16. symbols of *jafr*; 17. *eşrāṭi's-sāʿa*; 18. appealing to God and the general moral conditions of the begs and the people.[31]

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26 *TDVİA*, s.v. "Ahmed Bican" (Â. Çelebioğlu). Ahmed Bîcân, *Dürr-i meknūn: (inceleme - çevriyazı – dizin – tıpkıbasım),* ed. A. Demirtaş (Istanbul 2009); L. Kaptein (ed.), *Dürr-i meknun*. Kritische Edition mit Kommentar (Asch 2007); Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican, *Dürr-i meknūn*, transcription and notes by N. Sakaoğlu (Istanbul 1999).

27 Although *Envārü'l-ʿĀşıqīn* and *Müntehā* contain much more pages on apocalyptic issues, as *Dürr-i meknūn* has an independent chapter on *jafr*, I prefer to use it. Laban Kaptein (in *Apocalypse and the Antichrist,* p. xvi) and Sakaoğlu (in *Dürr-i meknūn*, 1–18) describe the work as a "cosmological encyclopedia".

28 M. Sariyannis, "Ajā'ib ve gharā'ib: Ottoman Collections of Mirabilia and Perceptions of the Supernatural", *Der Islam*, 92/2 (2015), 442–467.

29 Grenier claims that the author of the text cannot have been Aḥmed Bīcān. He asserts that Kātib Çelebi attributed the work to Aḥmed Bīcān and that this information has remained unchallenged to the present day: C. Grenier, "Reassessing the Authorship of the Dürr-i meknūn", *ArchOtt*, 35 (2018), 193–212. Similar thoughts had already been expressed by Kaptein (ed.), *Dürr-i meknun*, 45–47.

30 S. Karaköse, "Klâsik Edebiyatımızda On Sekiz Bin Âlem Mefhumu", *Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim Dergisi*, 5/2 (2016), 687–704.

31 A. Demirtaş, "Dürr-i meknūn: (inceleme – çevriyazı – dizin – tıpkıbasım)", unpublished

According to Kaya Şahin, Yazıcıoğlu Aḥmed Bīcān, the purported author of the signs of doomsday, experienced moral collapse in the society personally. Rulers became tyrants, judges took bribes, women wandered the streets and bazaar markets and the ulama did not speak out against what was happening.[32] For him, the Ottoman society in this state carries the characteristics of the ummah of the End Times mentioned in the *ḥadīths*, so Doomsday is near.[33] For Şahin, the conquest of Constantinople was more than a military victory for the upper echelons of Ottoman religious and political leaders in the fifteenth century. Establishing a link between the Doomsday discourses and the conquest of Istanbul is the legacy of Byzantium to the Ottomans.[34] In reality, for Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike, the conquest of Constantinople has been linked to the approaching End Time/Last Hour. Because in the Jewish tradition, as a condition of final purification from pre-apocalyptic sins, Constantinople replaced Babylon and Rome in the series of cursed imperial capitals that must be destroyed.[35]According to Şahin, for contemporary observers the conquest meant a message about the closeness of the End for Muslims, Christians and Jews alike.

Ph.D. dissertation, Ondokuz Mayıs University, 2003, 3–4 from *Dürr-i Meknūn*, SK Pertevniyal 456: 4b–5a.

32 "*Mehdi hazretleri hurucunun ilm-i cifirde Resul hazretleri 'alâmetlerin dedi amma, evvel bu halk içre çok türlü ahvâl-i kabayih belire. Mescidler çok amma namaz kılar kişi az ola ve kılanın dahi namazlarında huşū olmaya. Zira kisblerinde helâl ve haram fark olmaya. Zira mushaflar münakkaş ve müzehheb ola, amma okuyup amel etmeyeler. Oğlanlar emir gibi ola. Yüksek çardaklar yapalar. Halk dünyaya haris ola. Ehl-i marifete, ehl-i takvaya rağbet olmaya. Rağbet ehli dünyaya ola. Avretlerde hayâ kalmaya, avret avrete, er ere düşe. Yalancı şeyhler çok ola. Beyler adl sūretinde zulüm edeler. Vüzera rind ve kalleş olalar. Ulema fisk ede. Kadılar rüşvet-hôr olalar. Zina ve livata ve suci içmek aşikâre ola. Halkun şerlisi ümera ola. Erazil başa çıka, ehl-i marifet ayakda kala. Kabrleri kargir bina ola. Ulema yüksek haneler yapup sanki tak-ı kısri veya kayser padişahlarıdur. Yalan tanıklığı çok olup suleha suretinde fesadlar ideler. Avratlar pazarlarda gezeler, kesbler eyleyeler nâmahrem ile. Ulemâ mansıb korkusundan tınmayalar. Avratlar sığır alayı gibi sokaklarda gezeler. Kendilerini ere benzedeler. Yetim malı yiyeler. Zuafayı esirgemeyeler. Begler ulu işleri alçak kimseye ısmarlayalar. Hayinlere emin diyeler ve erler harir giyeler ve avratlar hamr içeler. Fakrler matrud ola. Mazlumlar dinlenmeye. Hükkâm fâcir, ümerâ tâcir ola. Sofılık tac ile hırkada kala. Ehl-i suk mizanda hile idüp dürlü dürlü narhlar ile satalar, ekabire tamam, fukaraya eksük vireler. Beynlerinde yalan söyleyeler. Tariki's-salat, mani'iz-zekat olalar. Zinete haris olalar....*" Demirtaş, "Dürr-i meknūn", 244 from *Dürr-i meknūn*, SK Pertevniyal 456: fols 145a–146a.

33 Şahin, "Constantinople and the End Time", 339–341.

34 Emecen, *Fetih ve Kıyamet,* 40.

35 Yerasimos, *Konstantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri,* 196.

Throughout the history of the Byzantine Empire, apocalypticism was a quite rich and very prominent cultural practice, and the collapse of the empire was closely connected with the end of the world. The political, military and economic problems faced during the last centuries of its history gave apocalypticism a special importance.[36]

Thus, Byzantine and Islamic apocalypticism inspired the author of *Dürr*. He also relied on books of divination (*jafr*). He also thought the conquest was a symbol of the Last Hour (*al-Sā'a*), but he also believed that in the last battles, Muslims and Ottomans had a major part to play.[37] The author mentions a book on *jafr* of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661)[38] in the sixteenth chapter of *Dürr-i meknūn*. He states that this book was preserved in Egypt and discusses its contents. Additionally Abdürrahmanal-Bisṭāmī, a "premier figure of the occult avant-garde of the fifteenth-century Ottoman lands"[39] is also described by the author of *Dürr* as "the most revered scholar who understands and analyzes God's secrets," with *Miftah* cited as a source.[40] His words on the issue might give an idea of his style:

> Indeed, the countries and cities of Rūm and the lands of Crimea [will be ruined] on account of their tyranny, their oppression, their malice, their evil. The scholars will perish. The hearts of the exiles will be destroyed. So prepare... There will be battle and killing and war and punishment. The knowledgeable will flee, the ignorant will stay put. That date is the year of pleasure and joy and folly and [foolish] plans. Do not forget, that Sufi who is exalted goes away, that swindler who is abased [stays].... I was told: soon the ox will bellow, the ass will shirk his work, and the wolf will be happy, the fox will sing, the rabbit will cry out. Delight will be raised. May the righteous come to righteousness and greet it... If you have understood these symbols,

36 Şahin, "Constantinople and the End Time", 322.

37 Ibid., 318.

38 According to Shiites the Mahdī inherits a number of books from his predecessor, including "(i) *al-Jami'a* (the Comprehensive), (ii) *Mushaf Fatima* (the Prophetic Scroll of Fatima), and (iii) *al-Jafr*": Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism,* 21.

39 Grenier, "Reassessing the Authorship", 202.

40 "*Şeyhü›l-muhakkikin el-alimü yekşifü esrarullahi ve ayatihi Şeyh Abdurrahman el-Bestâmî kuddise sırruhü'l-aziz sahibü'l-huruf hazretleri, ol vâridat-ı gaybiyyeden bazı hususla anı kabul eyledi. Hâl diliyle tâbir eyledi. Bu duâyı Türkî dille getirip kitabımıza yazdık. Her ilimden birer şemme tatdırdık.*", Ahmet Demirtaş , ibid., p. 236 from *Dürr-i meknūn*, SK Pertevniyal 456: fol. 139a.

then keep their secret concealed. Know that at the time of Resurrection the lamp will be extinguished, the wise men will hide, the boys will grow beards...[41]

2. *Aḥvāl-i ḳiyāmet*. There are two different versions of *Aḥvāl-i ḳiyāmet.* The first one was penned in verse in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, the second one is a translation from al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505). The first version was written in Anatolian Turkish by Şeyyad Ḥamza or Şeyyad Īsā, a thirteenth century mystical poet, and transformed into prose at the end of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, with miniatures added to the copies.[42] The fact that there are different opinions about the text's author and the time period in which it was written indicates that there are, in fact, two distinct texts. According to Tavukçu, Şeyyad Īsā modified the text of 289 couplets written by Şeyyad Ḥamza in terms of vocabulary and added fifty-five couplets to it.[43] His work details the wars of the Mahdī, the emergence of the Antichrist, the descent of Jesus via the White Minaret in the city of Damascus accompanied by two angels and his fight with Dajjāl, the meeting of Jesus with the Aṣḥāb al-Kahf, the Gog and Magog, the emergence of the apocalyptic creature called Dābbat al-Arḍ as well as social events. The second *Aḥvāl-i ḳiyāmet* is written by the famous Egyptian polymath Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505),[44] and was translated into Turkish in a very short time possibly by Ibn Kemāl or Kemāl Paşazāde (d. 1534), who held numerous teaching and administrative positions during his career and wrote over two hundred books on a variety of subjects, including Arabic grammar, theology, jurisprudence and poetry.[45]

41 Grenier, "Reassessing the Authorship", 202.

42 B. Yaman, "Ahvâl-i Kıyâmet Yazmaları Resimlerinde Kıyamet Sonrası Hayat", *Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 24/2 (2007), 217–234 at 219–220.

43 O. K. Tavukçu, "Şeyyâd Hamza'nın Bilinmeyen Bir Şiiri Münasebetiyle", *International Journal of Central Asian Studies (Prof. Dr. Mustafa Canpolat Armağanı)*, 10/1 (2005), 181–195; C. Dilçin, "XIII. Yüzyıl Metinlerinden Yeni Bir Yapıt: Ahvâl-i Kıyâmet", in Ömer Asım Aksoy Armağanı (Ankara 1978), 49–86. M. Akar, "Şeyyad Hamza Hakkında Yeni Bilgiler I-II", *Marmara Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2 (1987), 1–22.

44 "We are now in the year of Hijri 896. At this time when neither Mahdi, Jesus, nor the signs of Doomsday appear, my only wish from Allah is to grant mujaddidship to this poor person at the beginning of the tenth century." Al-Suyūṭī, *et-Taḥaddus*, p. 227 quoted in R. Aslan, "İmam Suyuti'ye Muasırları Tarafından Yöneltilen Eleştiriler", İslam Düşüncesinde Eleştiri Kültürü ve Tahammül Ahlâkı, III (2019), 451–465 at 453.

45 For an overview of his life and works, see *EI*^{2}, s.v. "Kemāl Pashazāde" (V. L. Ménage); Ö.

In the Islamic world of this period there was a widespread belief that the end of times was close, based on some narrations attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad. The basis of this belief is a *ḥadīth*, saying "the Prophet does not stay in his grave for a thousand years". This rumor, the accuracy of which is not confirmed by reliable sources, meant that Doomsday would come a thousand years after the death of the Prophet. The work of Jalāleddin al-Suyūṭī and its translation was penned to meet this need. Al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505) is an important figure who discussed apocalyptic issues for the first time in the Islamic world as clearly as possible. Tired of the endless questions of the people of his time and annoyed from the expectations that the Doomsday will come in 1000 Hijra, al-Suyūṭī began his treatise by stating that there is evidence that the life of this ummah would be more than 1000 years, "the end would not occur until 1450 AH".[46] He states that the *ḥadīth* in question contradicts the other *ḥadīths*; moreover, he mentioned that no Doomsday alarms have occurred, and that even if there was an alarm, according to the *ḥadīths* there is a certain time period which has to elapse between each alarm.[47]

3. *Tercüme-yi miftāḥu'l-cifri'l-cāmiʿ*

It was written in Arabic by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī (d. 858/1454), the "occultist polymath",[48] and describes the events that will occur in the lead up to the apocalypse. In Fleischer's words; "Al-Bisṭāmī ultimately combined the works of apocalyptic prognostication that he either collected, edited, or composed to form the *Miftāḥ al-jafr al-jāmiʿ*, *The Key to the Comprehensive Prognostication*, a work that effectively codified all that al-Bisṭāmī's generation did know, and that several subsequent generations would care to know, of apocalyptic prophecy."[49]

Şenödeyici, "Kemal Paşazade Tarafından Tercüme Edildiği Düşünülen bir Risale: Ahval-i Kıyamet", *Türklük Bilim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 36 (2014), 291–319.

46 C. Fleischer, "A Mediterranean Apocalypse: Prophecies of Empire in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries", *JESHO*, 61 (2018), 18–90 at 50–51.

47 Şenödeyici, "Kemal Paşazade Tarafından", 305–319.

48 Fleischer, "A Mediterranean Apocalypse", 47.

49 Ibid., 44–45. The most recent publication on al-Bisṭāmī is N. Gardiner, "Lettrism and History in ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī's *Naẓm al-sulūk fī musāmarat al-mulūk*", in L. Saif, F. Leoni, M. Melvin-Koushki and F. Yahya (eds), *Islamicate Occult Sciences in Theory and Practice* (Leiden 2020), 230–266.

It was translated into Turkish by Şerif bin Muḥammad bin Burhan with the name of *Tercüme-i Miftāḥ al-cafr al-cāmiʿ*.[50]

Mainly due to the influential personality of al-Bisṭāmī or his travels from Balkans to Anatolia and Aleppo to Cairo,[51] lettrism or the science of letters (ideas and concepts that assigned divine meaning to the Arabic alphabet letters and invented techniques of using them as symbols and markers of the divine plans) thrived in the early Ottoman empire.[52] As the lettrist perception of the world was popularized through the works of al-Bisṭāmī and the *Corpus Bunianum*,[53] it had become a very popular method of predicting the future by the early sixteenth century[54] and "the science of letters became an umbrella epistemology which subsumed all branches of the religious and non-religious sciences."[55]

The earliest work that we could identify using al-Bisṭāmī as a source is the *Risāle fî Eşrāṭi's-sāʿa* which was written in Iznik by Abdurrahim Karahisārī (d. 1483), one of the leading successors of Akşemseddin (d. 1459). It is the only work written by Karahisārī in Arabic and completed in 1458, five years after the conquest of Istanbul. Karahisārī, who begins his treatise by stating that he wrote down what he learned from Akşemseddīn, states that he made use of his contemporary al-Bisṭāmī's work named *Nazmü's-sulūk* in the introduction of the text.[56]

In the *Tercüme-i Miftāḥ al-cafr al-cāmiʿ* manuscript conserved at the Istanbul University Library (Rare Works Department no. 6624), besides the ceremonial

50 *Tercüme-i Miftāḥ al-cafr al-cāmiʿ*, Millet Kütüphanesi, Şeriyye 1284, 1b.

51 İ. E. Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran: Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī and the Islamicate Republic of Letters* (Cambridge 2016), 104.

52 M. Sariyannis, "Knowledge and the Control of Future in Ottoman Thought", *Aca'ib: Occasional papers on the Ottoman perceptions of the supernatural*, 1 (2020), 49–84 at 63; *El*, s.v. "Al-Bistâmî, ʿAbd Al-Rahman" (M. Smith); *Encyclopedia Iranica IV*, s.v. "Besṭāmī, ʿabd-Al-Raḥmān" (H. Algar).

53 A set of works attributed to the Algerian born Cairene Sufi Abū'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b.ʿAlī b.Yūsuf al-Būnī (d. 1225), a leading authority in magic and the science of letters. For the connection between al-Bisṭāmī and al- Būnī, see J.C. Coulon, "Building al-Būnī's Legend: The Figure of al-Būnī through ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī's *Shams al-āfāq*", *Journal of Sufi Studies*, 5 (2016), 1–26.

54 Sariyannis, "Knowledge and the Control", 64.

55 Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran*, 163.

56 A. T. Orhan, "Abdurrahim Karahisârî'nin tasavvufî görüşleri ve Münyetü'l-Ebrâr ve Gunyetü'l-Ahyâr isimli eseri (metin ve inceleme)", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Marmara University, 2019, 89–90. On Bistami's work see Gardiner, "Lettrism and History".

and war scenes, there are portraits of the sultans, in addition to depictions of cities with their buildings and walls (Istanbul, Medina-i Rumiye [Jerusalem], Akka, Damascus, Medina, Sedd-i Alexander, Alexandria and Nile River, Cairo). Natural and geographical landmarks are represented, including obelisks, dragon heads, a copper horse, the world map with the world's famous castles, cities, seas and rivers. In addition, there are portrayals of the appearance and wars of the Mahdī, the emergence of the Dajjāl and the events that he will cause, the descent of Jesus to the White Minaret in the city of Damascus in the company of two angels and his destruction of the Antichrist/Dajjāl, the meeting of the Prophet Jesus with the Aṣḥāb al-Kahf. Furthermore, Gog and Magog and the Great Wall of Alexander built to protect against them, the features of the wall, the emergence of the apocalyptic creature called Dābbat al-Arḍ, events and entertainment scenes involving social issues are described.[57]

As mentioned above, the main source of al-Bisṭāmī is in fact al-Būnī.[58] Gardiner denotes that al-Bisṭāmī "reports having read al-Būnī's *al-Lumʿal-nūrāniyya fī awrād al-rabbāniyya* in Cairo in 807/1404–1405 under the supervision of ʿIzz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ǧamāʿa (d. 1416–1417), member of a well-known dynasty of scholar-Sufis."[59]

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4. *Niyāzī Miṣrī, Eşrāṭ-i sāʿat*

One of the most widely copied works on the signs of Doomsday in the Ottoman libraries is *Eşrāṭ-i sāʿat* or *Mehdilik Risālesi* by the famous seventeenth-century mystic and poet Şeyh Muḥammad Ibn al-Malāṭī al-Miṣrī al-Burṣavī, better

57 H. Aksu, "Tercüme-i Cifr (Cefr) el- Câmi' Tasvirleri", in M. B. Tanman and U. Tükel (eds), *Yıldız Demiriz'e Armağan* (İstanbul 2002), 19–23 at 20.

58 In addition to his al-Būnī relation, on the other hand Binbaş lists the books from which al-Bisṭāmī's gained the occult knowledge by studying "numerous ancient Greek and medieval Muslim, Jewish, Coptic, Syriac, and Chaldean authors": Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran* , 105.

59 N. D. Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers Through the Mamlūk Period", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2014, 435 quoting al-Bisṭāmī, *Šams al-āfāq fī ʿilm al-ḥurūf wa-l-awfāq*, MS Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, 5076, f. 16b.

known as Niyāzī-i Mısrî (1618–1694).[60] A well-known figure who voiced his opinion in the public discourse of the time, Niyāzī-i Mısrî was born in Malatya. He was educated in various madrasas and developed his knowledge of Sufism in different places such as Diyarbakır, Cairo and Baghdad. After returning to Anatolia, he came under the influence of Halvati sheikh Sinān-ı Ummī in Elmalı, whom he followed until his death. He then sought to provide spiritual guidance to the public by giving sermons across the country. In Bursa, where he had many followers, he was recognized as a *ḳutb* (pole) which refers to the greatest *walī* (friend of God) who is the real secret sovereign of the cosmos.[61] He even gave a sermon at Hagia Sophia, with the Sultan among the congregants. After his criticism against Vani Mehmed Efendi (d. 1685),[62] he was exiled first to the island of Rhodes and then to Limnos, where he lived a life of suffering for more than fifteen years. He was pardoned a year before his death and returned to Bursa. However, after the complaint of the local judge, he was once again sent to Limnos where he died. He produced more than ten volumes of Turkish and Arabic verse and prose.

In *Eşrāṭ-i sāʿat*, Niyāzī Mişrī handled these portents that we just mentioned with a different point of view. He sought to examine the aspects of the Doomsday signs by focusing on human beings, rather than on the universe. According to him, everything in the macrocosm also exists in man, who is the small uni-

60 D. Terzioğlu, "Man in the Image of God in the Image of the Times: Sufi Self-Narratives and the Diary of Niyāzī-i Mısrī (1618–94)", *SI*, 94 (2002), 139–165.

61 It was Ibn Arabi who systematized the term and provided detailed and comprehensive information on it. See A. Atlı, "Tasavvufta Ricâlu'l-Gayb", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ankara University, 2011.

62 Because of its ideological and social aspects, the Kadizadeli movement has been the topic of numerous studies: M. Zilfi, "The Kadizadelis: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 45/4 (1986), 251–269; S. Çavuşoğlu, "The Ḳāḍīzādeli Movement: An Attempt of Şerīʿat-Minded Reform in the Ottoman Empire", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1990; M. Aşkar, "Tarikat – Devlet İlişkisi, Kadızâdeli ve Meşâyıh Tartışmaları Açısından Niyazî-i Mısrî ve Döneme Etkileri", *Tasavvuf: İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, 1/1 (1999), 49–80; M. Sariyannis, "The Kadızadeli Movement as a Social and Political Phenomenon: The Rise of a 'Mercantile Ethic'?", in A. Anastasopoulos, *Political Initiatives "From the Bottom Up" in the Ottoman Empire* (Rhetymmo 2012), 263–291; İ. Kutluay, "Osmanlı Döneminde XVI ve XVII. Yüzyıllarda Kurulan Dârülhadislerin Müfredatı, İlmî Seviyeleri ve Kadızâdeliler Hareketinin Dârülhadislerin Çoğalmasındaki Rolü", *Mîzânü'l-Hak: İslami İlimler Dergisi = Journal of Islamic Studies*, 9 (2019), 13–49.

verse or microcosm. This idea is not unique to Niyāzī Miṣrī. Indeed, in many alchemical and astrological works, the microcosm-macrocosm analogy was a crucial feature and it was part of numerous Sufi writers' views of the world.[63] According to ʿAzīz al-Dīn al-Nasafī (d.1282?), "man *(dervish)* is a small world (microcosm), while the Universe is the great world (macrocosm), and thus ... the Lord created the Universe as a sign of His Being in the form of a book and subsequently said that anyone who read this book would know Him."[64] Therefore, whatever event exists in the macrocosm reflects itself in the microcosm.[65]

According to Niyāzī Miṣrī, the greater sings are the emergence of the sons of Asfar,[66] the appearance of Gog and Magog, Dajjāl, the descent of Christ, the appearance of the Mahdī, Dābbat al-Arḍ, the sun rising in the west, the closing door of repentance. The emergence of the Sons of Asfar consists of the emergence of animal character, because these are the bandits that blocked the path of the *sālik* ("the seeker") for the first time in the human world. The emergence of Gog and Magog is a sign of the emergence of the condemned character in a man completely. The emergence of the Dajjāl consists of the emergence of the attributes of the devil, which are domination, deception and trick. These come from the love of the world. Therefore, the right eye of a person becomes blind and he does not see the Hereafter. The emergence of Dābbat al-Arḍ consists of the appearance of *nafs-i lavvamah,* accusatory self in the heart. In other words, a window to the heavens opens in the heart of the follower of sufism and a tendency towards Allah appears in him. The descent of Jesus, his coming to life with his light, is a sign of man's turning to the Hereafter by giving up his tenden-

63 I. Nokso-Koivisto, "Microcosm-macrocosm analogy in Rasā'il Ikhwān aṣ-Ṣafā and Certain Related Texts", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Helsinki, 2014, 13. Nokso-Koivisto divides sources of macro-microcosm analogy in Islamic tradition into major three groups: "mythological; philosophical, referring to the Greek tradition; and Judeo-Christian thought." Ibid., 15.

64 V. Braginsky, "Universe – Man – Text; The Sufi concept of literature (with special reference to Malay Sufism)", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde,* 149/2 (1993), 201–225 at 204.

65 H. İ. Şimşek, "Kıyâmet ve Alâmetlerinin Tasavvufî Tecrübe Açısından Yorumlanışı", *Tasavvuf: İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, 19 (2007), 123–142; M. Şaşa, "Niyazi Mısrî'nin Perspektifinden Kıyamet Alametleri", in N. Akpolat, F. Karaman and M. Arslan, *Uluslararası Geçmişten Günümüze Malatyalı İlim ve Fikir İnsanları Sempozyumu. 17–19 Kasım 2017 Malatya* (Ankara 2018), I: 581–597.

66 For an evaluation of the term "sons of Asfar", see N. M. El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by The Arabs* (Cambridge 2004), 192.

cy to the world. When he emerges, the Dajjāl is slain. For the darkness of Hell dissipates with the appearance of the heavenly light.

The Mahdī will understand the purpose of his creation and act accordingly upon his emergence. "The sun rises from the west" is the rising of the sun of truth. According to another view, the rising of the sun from the place where it sets signifies the separation of the soul from the body. This is because the animal spirit within man is in the state of the sun in the world. When it enters the body, it sinks there. When it leaves the body, it is born from the place where it sank. "Closing the door of repentance" is a sign that a person has reached the end of his life. As for the width of this door for seventy years; this door does not close until the sun rises from the place where it sets. This door is therefore expansive, as wide as human life itself. When life ends and the sun rises from the place where it sets (that is, when the soul leaves the body), this door is closed.[67]

The Mahdī

> The focal point of immediate expectation is the arrival of the redeeming Mahdī, who combines the secret of divine wisdom with the sword of divine order. He is the Alexandrine World Conqueror (*Dhū'l-qarnayn*), the microcosm and the macrocosm (*al-insān al-saghīr wa'l-insān al-kabīr*), the neo-Platonic emanation corresponding to the sub-lunar world (*sūrat al-ʿālam al-dunyawī*), the Pole of Poles (*Quṭb al-aqṭāb*; the *quṭb* is the center or apex of the hidden saintly hierarchy in each age), and God's vicar in heaven and on earth (*khalīfat Allāh fi-l-arḍ wa-l-samā'*) who joins sanctity and divine mandate with earthly power.
>
> His first enemies will be the clergy par excellence, the jurists, who will refuse to believe in him and order his death. He will defeat his enemies, annihilate all sectarian belief, institute the primal pure religion (*al-dīn al-khāliṣ*) after the abrogation of the established religious laws (*rafʿ al-sharā'iʿ wa-l-adyān*), and conquer the world from China to Constantinople, completing his eschatological function by following his capture of the second Rome with that of the first, where a king rules (i.e., the Pope) whose status among Christians is like that of the caliph among Muslims. As the ruler (*khalīfa*) of the last age, Muḥammad

67 Şaşa, "Niyazi Mısrî'nin Perspektifinden", 593.

son of ʿAbdullāh, of the line of the Prophet, he will fill the world with justice as it has been filled with injustice.[68]

The belief in the Mahdī in Sunnite Sufi and especially Imāmī Shīʿites circles has been widespread throughout the ages.[69] Following the beginning of Major Occultation (329/941 to the present), Shīʿites gathered the doctrines of the Imāms into manuals that soon began to spread relatively openly,[70] and the belief in the Hidden Imam circulated via both oral and written tools.[71] People referred to as *naḳībs* were the assistants of the Mahdī.[72] It is not unusual for Sufi authors to believe that the members of Ahl al-bayt were the inheritors and transmitters of a secret and strong body of wisdom passed on to the prophets but left behind the general mass of the Muslims.[73] Ibn Turka in the fifteenth century also had the same thought. He noted that "indeed, the family of the Prophet, who are his glorious descendants, were entrusted with *jafr*, which included the totality of meanings."[74] Thus, as there is a deep historical relationship and exchange of ideas between Shīʿism and Sufism, the notion of the Hidden Imam was transferred onto the mindset of Sunni Sufis as esoteric knowledge.[75] At

68 Fleischer, "A Mediterranean Apocalypse", 46.

69 It is important to bear in mind that Imāmī Shīʿites and Qızılbash Alevis have the same Mahdī doctrine.

70 Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture", 61.

71 M. A. Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam*, trans. D. Streight (Albany 1994), 115–124.

72 Nuri İbrahim, *Fetih-nâme-i Bağdâd-ı Bihişt-âbâd*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, nr. 1054, 53a: "*Bu tarafda gelen nakībler dahi mahkeme önüne geldiler. Şehir halkı bir tarafda durup nak[ībi]n biri ilerü geldi; "ey kavm-i şehr, bilin ve âgâh olun, Mehdî-i âhir-zamân hurūc eyledi. Biz anun tarafından risâlete geldik. Mehdiyyü'z-zamân hazretlerine bi'at idüp fermân-ber olun. Bu gün hutabâ-yı şehr hutbeyi Mehdî nâm-ı şerîfine okusun. Eger inâd idersenüz mâ-beynimizi kılıç aralar, siz bilürsüz. Âl-i Osmân devri gitdi, şimdi devr-i Mehdî'dir didi*": M. F. Gökçek, "IV. Murâd'ın Bağdâd'ı fethine dair iki eser: Nūrî İbrâhîm, Fetihnâme-i Bağdâd-Kâdî-zâde Ahmed Çelebi, Fetihnâme-i Bağdâd (transkripsiyon-değerlendirme)", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Marmara University Institute of Turkic Studies, 2013, 90.

73 For several examples see H. Algar, "Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim and Ṣūfī Tradition", *Islamic Culture*, 64/1 (1990), 1–14; S. H. Nasr, "Shi'ism and Sufism: Their relationship in essence and in history", *Religious studies*, 6 (1970), 229–242.

74 Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran*, 162 quoting Turka, *Risala-yi shaqq-i qamar va sa'at*, pp. 111–12.

75 P. Lory, "Soufisme et sciences occultes", in A.Popovic and G.Veinstein (eds), *Lesvoies d'Allah:*

the core of this tradition was the common trust in the heritage of Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet himself. It was believed that this knowledge allowed them to foretell the future and reveal the secrets of things that would come to the final days of history.[76] Masad gives the example of Ibn ʿAqab, a medieval *malāḥim* expert[77], who has a legendary tale on how he got the knowledge that made him a *malāḥim* author. In the narrative, he is identified as *muʿallam al-Sibtayn*, that is, tutor of the twin grandsons, i.e. Ali's two sons and the Prophet's grandsons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.

> And as for the tutor of the two grandsons, he was Ibn ʿAqab; and he is buried inCairo, and his tomb is visited [as a shrine]. And it was said that Gabriel...had brought the Prophet[...], as he sat in the mosque, two apples from Paradise.Then [his grandsons] al-Hasan and al-Husayn came in and he gave one to al-Hasan and the other one to al-Husayn. Then they brought the two apples to their tutor and he ate them and God granted him the knowledge of the unknowns. Andthe Prophet said to him, "O Ibn ʿAqab, make [dates] earlier and later [i.e., don't give the exact dates of future happenings]".[78]

The same is true for the Ottomans. As Vefa Erginbaş has clearly demonstrated, in Lāmiʿī Çelebi's (1472–1532) *Şevāhidü'n Nübüvve* ("Witnesses of Prophecy"):

> the outstanding reverence for ʿAlī in this work is unmistakable: he is depicted as the head of the ʿarifīn, those who have attained spiritual knowledge of God. He is said to have received nine-tenths of all knowledge and even to have a share in the remaining tenth.[79]

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les ordres mystiques dans l'islam des origines à aujourd'hui (Paris 1996), 186–89.

76 Masad, "The Medieval Islamic Apocalyptic Tradition", 97.

77 *Malāḥim* represents a specific type of *hadith* narrations about apocalyptic conflicts and battles.

78 The story is told by al-Bistami in *Miftah al-jafr,* Istanbul MS, Hafid Efendi 204, 26a (cf. Masad, "The Medieval Islamic Apocalyptic Tradition", 104); it is also mentioned in *Dürr-i meknūn*, SK Pertevniyal 456: fols 138a–138b: Demirtaş, "Dürr-i meknūn", 236.

79 V. Erginbaş, "Problematizing Ottoman Sunnism: Appropriation of Islamic History and Ahl al-Baytism in Ottoman Literary and Historical Writing in theSixteenth Century", *JESHO*, 60 (2017), 614–646 at 623. On the Sunni *ṭarīqa* connection via mystical genealogies to ʿAlī b. Abī Tālib see R. S. Kazemi, *Justice and Remembrance: Introducing the Spirituality of Imam Ali* (London 2006), 134.

This example is striking because the same person, Lāmiʿī Çelebi, mentions that the Mahdī would be a descendant of Ḥasan b.ʿAlī b. Abī Tālib, not the twelfth Shiʿi Imam, just as in the treatise we will examine below. And the twelfth Imam has not been obscured, but has just passed away.[80] Erginbaş also gives the example of Muṣṭafā Cenābī, an influential sixteenth century historian; although Cenābī shows the pro-Alid approach and comments in his universal history book, *Cenābī Tarihi* or *Aylām al-ẓahir*, "he concludes that the twelfth Shiʿi Imam is not the eschatological Mahdī."[81] Thus, in Rıza Yıldırım's words, "there was no conscious alienation between Sunni and Shi'ite creeds, but rather clusters of faiths in which Sunni and Shi'ite elements intermingled".[82]

The name Mahdī derives from the verbal root h-d-y and while the passive participle (Mahdī: "rightly guided") does not appear in the Quran, words derived from this root, which means 'right guidance', are prevalent[83] with connotations of delivering peace, equality, and eliminating injustice. His arrival was clearly predicted by many *ḥadīths*, both Sunni and Shiʿite, and Mahdī is an inseparable part of Muslim belief both yesterday and today. While predicted with minor differences, various communities of interpretations within Islam all accepted that this eschatological figure would be a man of the Muhammadan line.

Many medieval texts, for example, include long and incoherent lists of locations from which Mahdī and his followers would emerge.[84] Many of the most prominent Islamic scholars have commented in detail on the physical appearance of the Mahdī.[85] As the well-known and well-authenticated *ḥadīth* declared: "Allah will bring out from concealment al-Mahdi from my family and just before the day of Judgment; even if only one day were to remain in the life of the world, and he will spread on this earth justice and equity and will eradicate tyranny and oppression."[86] The reign of Mahdī will also offer welfare

80 Erginbaş, "Problematizing Ottoman Sunnism", 624.

81 Ibid., 634.

82 R. Yıldırım, "Sunni Orthodox vs. Shiite Heterodox?: A Reappraisal of Islamic Piety in Medieval Anatolia", in A.C.S. Peacock et. al (eds), *Islam and Christianity in Mediaeval Anatolia* (London 2015), 277–307 at 306.

83 https://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=hdy

84 Ostřanský, "The Lesser Signs of the Hour", 278–280.

85 *EI*, s.v. "al-Mahdī" (W. Madelung).

86 Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 1:.99. http://www.irshad.org/islam/prophecy/mahdi.htm. "The Mahdī/Qāʾim will rise at the End of Time and will fill the earth with justice just as before it overflowed with oppression and injustice (or "darkness") (*sa-yaqūmu'l-Mahdī/al-qāʾimfī*

for all facets of life. The archetypal battle between good and evil in almost every society or belief system, present and past, is represented with Mahdī and Dajjāl in Islamic literature. Moezzi states that after Mahdī, "the 'Enemies' and their supporters will finally be annihilated; justice will be restored in the world, and humanity will be revived by the light of knowledge."[87] In this sense, the eschatological battle of the Mahdī is the culmination of an 'endless cosmic war' that will mark the definitive triumph of Intelligence over Ignorance.[88] This dichotomy between knowledge (the Mahdī) and ignorance (Dajjāl) also appears in the *Divān* of a nineteenth century sheikh of the Saʿdiyya Ṭarīqa, Şeyh Hacı Mehmed Vehbi (d. 1885) as follows, *"Cehâlet mahv olur irfân tanılur / Âlemde hakîkat ilmi okunur"*.[89]

Muslims commonly believe that the Mahdī will, along with Jesus, confront the apocalyptic waves of Gog and Magog, allowing for the Rules of Justice, in accordance with the prophesied conversion of the Christians into Islam, to be founded for a short time. According to most commentators, the Mahdī will appear prior to the second coming of Jesus, but after the very end of a great battle with the Antichrist, which will result in the Muslim conquest of Constantinople. The Mahdī is the same figure as the hidden Imām of the Shiʿite tradition, being the Lord of Time (*ṣāḥib ez-zamān*). Lastly, the world must be conquered and therefore reunited under the rule of Islam. What is most noteworthy is the contrast between the empirical wording devoted to the majority of signs leading up to this great end, and the Mahdī's law of goodness and justice.

Though no specific time was ever set for his advent, it was generally believed that his revolt (*ẖurūj* and *ẓuhūr*) would occur at the turn of a millennium after his Occultation. The terms *ẖurūj* and *ẓuhūr* were often used in Islamic apocalyptic narratives to characterize the arrival of Mahdī. As the Lord of Time (*ṣāḥib ez-zamān*) and the Riser *(Qā'im)* of the House of the Prophet, he will restore justice and equity to the world when it is filled with evil and oppression.[90] The term *Qā'im* appears only three times in the Quran (3:39; 11:100; 13:33). There-

ākhir al-zamān fa-yamla'u'l-arḍ ʿadlan kamā mali'at jawranwa ẓulman/ẓuluman). M. A. Amir-Moezzi, *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam: Beliefs and Practices* (London 2011), 405.

87 Ibid., 411.

88 Ibid., 415.

89 This verse is from Vehbi Baba's long poem on Mahdi with the chorus of "*Muḥammad Ali'nin oğlu geliyor*": Selim Ağa Ktp., Haşim Paşa 76: 29b–30b.

90 A. Amanat, *Apocalyptic Islam and Iranian Shiʿism* (London 2009), 49.

fore, the *ḥadīth* literature provides a great deal of knowledge for the Islamic *Qā'im* definition that Muslim commentators over the ages have interpreted in a number of ways, depending on their theological or theological opinions.[91]

According to the Sunni tradition, the title of Mahdī—unlike the "expected imam" understanding in Shi'ite doctrine—[92] is not attributed to a specific person. There is no concrete information regarding who the Mahdī will be, when and where it will appear in the sources. However, over time, the concept of the Mahdī ceased to focus in a single person, but instead turned into a *mujaddid* (renewer of religion) idea:"God would ensure the good practice and vitality of Islam through a renewer, whom he would send at the beginning of every century",[93] an idea based on a tradition from the *Kitāb al-Malāḥim* of Sijistāni. In fact, when Islamic historical sources are examined, it will be noticed that from the beginning, in Muslim societies, the expected arrival of the Mahdī is not envisaged in the distant future, but as an event that will take place in the near future or even during the present.[94]

There is an especially strong upsurge in this belief at the beginning of each Islamic century. During almost every period, we come across people in our sources who interpret the beginning of the century as the time for the emergence of

91 M. A. Amir-Moezzi, "Only the Man of God is Human: Theology and Mystical Anthropology According to Early Imāmī Exegesis", in E. Kohlberg (ed.), *The Formation of the Classical World: Shi'ism* (Wiltshire 2003) 22.

92 For a study analysing Maḥdīsm in Ismāīli tradition see F. Daftary, "Hidden Imams and Mahdis in Ismaili History", in B. D. Craig (ed.), *Ismaili and Fatimid Studies in Honour of Paul E.Walker* (Chicago 2010), 1–23.

93 Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran*, 262.

94 The following *nefes* of Pîr Ali (16th century) is an example:

Osmânlu yanına kalır mı sandın//Nice intikâmlar alınsa gerek
Mehdî çıkar ise nic'olur hâlin//Heybetli küsleri çalınsa gerek
Gâzî Mehdî bir gün Uruma çıkar//Yezîd kalesini hem burcun yıkar
On iki imâmın sancağın çeker//Kırmızı tâc ile salınsa gerek
Sanma ki Osmânlu yanına kalır//Tanrının arslanı Şah oğlu gelir
Darb ile elinden tahtını alır//Harâbende erkân sürülse gerek
Yezîd göze almış ol güzel Şâhı//Muhammed Alî'dir anın yardağı
Alim dünyâya gelirse bir dahi//İşiden Yezîdler yerinse gerek
Bir gün bu dünyânın sâhibi gelir//On iki imâmın hakkını alır
Yezîdler aradan hep telef olur//Mü'minlerin hâli sorulsa gerek
Pîr Alî der Mehdî ciğer yanığ//Kırmızıdır donu yeşil sancağı
Düzelim koşalım bahçeyi bağı//Yezîdler aradan sürülse gerek.

A. Gölpınarlı and P. N. Boratav, *Pir Sultan Abdal* (Istanbul 2010), 8.

Mahdī. The 100th year of Hijra was first envisaged as the date for the impending appearance of Mahdī; when a Mahdī did not appear, the 200th Hijri year was then written about as anticipated the date when Mahdī would emerge stronger; this pattern was repeated throughout the centuries.[95]

Mahdī in the Ottoman Narratives

> The interest in the occult and the apocalyptic was popular and intense enough spill over from the standard collections of *ḥ*adīth and specialized occult and eschatological compilations into other kinds of Islamic writings. Full chapters or fragments of anecdotes on apocalypticism and related issues found their way into historical chronicles, literary treatises, polemical works, poetry collections, medicine books, war manuals, and other popular medieval genres such as *fada'il al-buldan*, travelogues, hagiographical works, and biographical dictionaries.[96]

The same is true for the Ottoman sources. For example, the letters of Bālī of Sofya (d. 1553), one of the most famous Ḫalvetī sheikhs of the Balkans, contain the traces of Mahdī faith of the Ottoman literati. What makes him important is his close relations with the Ottoman bureaucrats as well as his exegesis on *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* of Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240). In his letters Bālī Efendi attempts to separate the true Sufis from the imitators, those who are loyal to the Sultan and the false Mahdī who is prone to revolt.[97] In this context, the letters Bālī Efendi wrote to Rüstem Pasha to evaluate various Sufis are remarkable. The letter contains various claims regarding İbrāhīm-i Gülşenī, Sheikh Bedreddīn, Sheikh Üveys

95 E. Öztürk, "Âhir Zaman Beklentilerinin Mezhebî Aidiyetlere Yansıması: Ali el-Kârî el-Herevî'nin "el-Meşrabu'l-Verdî fî Mezhebi'l-Mehdî" İsimli Risalesi Işığında Mehdî'nin ve Hz. İsa'nın Hanefîlikle İlişkisine Dair İddialar", in C. Çuhadar, M. Aykaç and Y. Koçak, *Uluslararası Şeyh Şa'bân-ı Velî Sempozyumu -Hanefîlik-Mâturîdîlik-. 05–07 Mayıs 2017* (Kastamonu 2017), 2: 538–547 at 540.

96 Masad, "The Medieval Islamic Apocalyptic Tradition", 168.

97 This kind of messianic movements, which Ahmet Yaşar Ocak calls mystical Mahdism movements and where there is a Qutb with a charismatic personality in the center, turn into arrogance and pose great dangers for the Sultan, the source of political power. A. Y. Ocak, "Kutb ve İsyan: Osmanlı mehdici hareketlerinin ideolojik arka planı üzerine bazıdüşünceler" *Toplum ve Bilim*, 83 (1999/2000), 48–57; idem, "Türkiye Tarihinde Mehdici Hareketlerin Toplu Tarihine Doğru [Metodolojik Bir Yaklaşım]", in E. Akpınar, *Uluslararası Börklüce Mustafa Sempozyumu. 2–5 Haziran 2016* (İzmir 2016), 48–59.

and Şeyh Kara Dâvud.[98] Bālī Efendi, who was in the service of his sheikh Kasım Çelebi (d. 924/1518) in Istanbul at the time of the incident of Sheikh Üveys, conveys the reactions of the sheikhs with a sharp and constant language.[99] It is possible to ascertain the statements of the person who declared that he was the Mahdī from the details provided by Bālī of Sofia in this letter. According to this, the most important doctrine regarding the Mahdī is based on the *ḥadīth* stating that: "one who dies without knowing the imam of his time, dies upon the death of ignorance". The person declaring their status as the Mahdī therefore harnesses this well-known *ḥadīth* to provide their claim with spiritual validation. This is because, according to this view, the *imām* of the time is himself the Mahdī.[100]

Apart from these, chronicles provide a great deal of information on the Mahdī beliefs among the common Ottoman people. As an example, let us see only the case of Sheikh Īsā from the chronicle of Nūrī İbrahim from seventeenth century. The main indicator of the Mahdī is his revolt against the oppres-

98 O. Şahin, "Sofyalı Bâlî'nin dört şeyhe dair istihbari mektubu", *Hikmet – Akademik Edebiyat Dergisi*, 8 (2018), 37–64 at 47.

99 "*Bilmiş olasız bana keşfümde Peygamber Hazretleri görindi. Haber virdi. Çelebi Halîfe kutbdur. Öldi. Yine yirine Şeyh Üveys kutb oldı. Ol öldükden sonra ben kutb olurum. Benden sonra benüm mürebbîlerümden Hâmid-i Hindî nâm kimesne kutb olur. Ol kimesne Mehdîyi terbiyet ider. Anun zamânında Mehdî hurūc eyler. Ol kimesne Mehdîye vezîr olur. Bizüm mürîdlerümüz Mehdîye 'asker olurlar. İmdi elbettecümlenüz gelesiz Şeyh Üveysden tevbe vü telkîn alasız icâzet alasız ve illâ irşâdunuz sahîh degüldür fâsiddür. Ölümünüz meyyit-i câhiliyye ölümi olur şöyle bilesiz. Bu hâdisede fakîr İstanbulda şeyh hıdmetinde olurıdum. İstanbul şeyhları cümlesi gazaba geldiler. Hâşâ ki peygamber sallallâhu te'âlâ 'aleyhi ve sellem bunun gibi kelimât itmez. Senün gibi câhile görinmez. Senün gibi ve Üveys gibi bâtıl [u] câhil kutb olmaz ve kutbı Allâhdan gayrı kimse bilmez ve kutb olan ben kutbamdimez. Ve sizün gibi bâtıl tâ'ife Mehdîyi terbiyet eylemez ve sizün gibi şeytânî tâ'ife Mehdîye 'asker olmaz. Mehdî bu yakında hurūc eylemez ve Mehdînün hurūcına dörtyüz yâ beş yüz yıl olmak gerekdür didiler. Ol senün gördügün sencileyin bir şeytândur didiler. Bu i'tikâddan rücū' eylen [114b] yohsa dînünüz îmânunuz gitdi kâfir oldunuz şöyle bilesiz didiler. Mektūbların pâre pâre eylediler. Gelen tâ'ifeyi kovdılar. Şeyh Üveyse âdem gönderdiler. Nasîhatlar eylediler. Şerî'atı terk eyledünbâtıl yola gitdün ol Şemsüddîn-i bâtılun keşfine uydun. Dînün îmânun harâb eyledün. Dâll ü mudill oldun. Şemsüddîn[i] reddeyle. Sözine uyma. Yohsa dünyâda ve âhıretde yüzün kara olur şöyle bilesiz didiler. Müyesser olmadı. Nasîhat kâr eylemedi. Nasîhat eyleyen sūfîleri itâle-yi lisân ile teshîr eylediler. İstanbulda olan meşâyıh cümlesi muztarib oldılar*": Şahin, "Sofyalı Bâlî", 50.

100 For the evaluation of the *ḥadīth*, see Abdulmajid Zehadet, "Eʿtebār-e hadīṯ 'man māta wa lam yaʿref imām zamānihi' az dîdgāh-e farīqīn", *Tuluʿ* 34 (1389), 119–134.

sion. Throughout the ages, this belief remains. For example, after the Kalender Çelebi incident in 1527, the most important Mahdist rebellion in Anatolia occurred during the reign of Murad IV: Sheikh Īsā (Ahmed) rebelled in Sakarya against the Ottoman administration in 1638, claiming to be the Mahdī. His followers urged him to prove his identity, since he was identifying himself with the Mahdī: "İmam Muḥammad Mehdi benim dersin, niçün isbat-ı vücüd itmekde tekasül idersin?" After these types of critiques, Şeyh Īsā went to the cave where he always retreated to rest. While he was in a dream, he was given the good news that he was the Mahdī and that all people would come under his command, that he would eliminate the oppressors who reign in the world, and that the time of revolt has come.[101]

The phenomenon of the Mahdī's arrival is also dealt with extensively in *Künhü'l-aḫbār*, the classic history-*cum*-cosmography of the famous Ottoman scholar *Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī* (1541–1600). Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī asserts that all reliable *ḥadīth* compilers announce the coming of the Mahdī. He recounts the qualities of Mahdī and the circumstances of his reappearance, based on these sources. By this, Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī differs from the Ottoman historians who, however, deny the eschatological implications of the Twelfth Imam. He takes eschatological arguments for the Twelfth Imam as opposed to mainstream Sunni doctrine. He maintains that al-Mahdī, the Twelfth Imam, is indeed "the *Sāhibu'l-zamān; gālibu'l-Burhān* (the definitive evidence) and the proof of religion, *huccetu'l-dīn* (the true Mahdī, the subject of the proof)."[102] As Erginbaş further notes, *Künhü'l-aḫbār* contains a lengthy account of al-Mahdī's mother, Mālika, a Byzantine convert to Islam who was said to be a descendant of both the Sasanian emperor and Shamʿūn, also known as Simon Peter, Jesus' apostle.[103] Mālika

101 See Nuri İbrahim, *Fetih-nâme-i Bağdâd-ı Bihişt-âbâd*, 78–81; Mehmet Fatih Gökçek, "XVII. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Anadolu'da Sahte Bir Mehdi: Sakarya Şeyhi İsa (Ahmed)", *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları*, 115/227 (2017), 183–196 at 191. Idrīs Bidlīsī calls the revolt of Şahkulu as "This Shiite mob did bad deeds with *khurūc* claim": İdris-i Bidlisi, *Heşt Bihişt*, quoted in V. Genç, "Acem'den Rum'a: İdris-i Bidlîsî'nin hayatı, tarihçiliği ve Heşt Behişt'in II. Bayezid kısmı (1481–1512)", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Istanbul University, 2017, 917.

102 Erginbaş, "Problematizing Ottoman Sunnism", 638.

103 It seems that Erginbaş or Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī—it is not clear in the article—confuses Shahr Bānū with Narjis Khātūn (Mālika). Shahr Bānū was narrated as the daughter of Yazdegerd III of Persia, from Sasanid lineage and the mother of Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, the Fourth Imam

converted to Islam after having a series of visions involving Jesus, Mary, the prophet Muhammad, and his daughter Fāṭima.[104]

Apart from this type of texts, signs of Doomsday and the expectation of the Mahdī might be detected in *tafsīr* literature of the Ottomans.[105] Although usually neglected by Ottomanists, the *tafsīr* genre reflects the horizons of the Islamic society and its history much more than many literary genres.[106] In the words of Mustafa Öztürk, the *tafsīr* corpus contains "...much more than *tafsīrs* themselves, history of culture and science..."[107] As the audience changes, the interpretation also changes both in terms of method and subject. Therefore, commentaries are not independent of the value judgments and ways of thinking of the age they belong; the Quran has been understood within the framework of every respective *Zeitgeist* throughout the ages. Thus, detecting the changing perspectives on the Doomsday signs by the means of *tafsir* corpus of the Ottomans would be the subject of another project.

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not the Twelfth Imam, Mahdī. In fact, there is no narration or information on the link between Sasanids and Narjis.

104 Ibid., 639.

105 On the first hand sources concerning Ottoman *tafsir* literature, see M. Abay, "Osmanlı Döneminde Yazılan Tefsir ile İlgili Eserler Bibliyografyası: Tefsirler, Haşiyeler, Sure Tefsirleri, Tercümeler", *Dîvân: İlmî Araştırmalar,* IV: 6/1 (1999), 249–303; A. Birışık and R. Arpa, "Osmanlı Dönemi Tefsir Çevirileri", *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, IX/18 (2011), 191–232.

106 N. Yavari, "Tafsir and the Mythology of Islamic Fundamentalism", in A. Görke and J. Pink (eds), *Tafsir and Islamic intellectual history: exploring the boundaries of a Genre* (London 2014), 289–321 at 313. There are some articles by the theologians who mention the socio-political or cultural atmosphere of the era while studying on Ottoman *tafsīr* narratives, see İ. Çalışkan, "Tefsiri Mehmed Efendi'nin Tefsir-i Tibyan Adlı Eserinin Osmanlı Dönemi Tefsir Faaliyetindeki Yeri ve Dönemin Siyasi-Sosyal Yapısı İçin Anlamı", in B. Gökkır et al. (eds), *Osmanlı Toplumunda Kur'an Kültürü ve Tefsir Çalışmaları -I-* (Istanbul 2011), 215–240; E. Hacımüftüoğlu, "Bağdat'ın Şia'dan Alınması Münasebetiyle 1639 Yılında Osmanlıca Te'lif Edilmiş el-'Âdiyât Sûresi Tefsiri", *EKEV Akademi Dergisi – Sosyal Bilimler,* XX/65 (2016), 171–194.

107 M. Öztürk, *Kur'an'ı Kendi Tarihinde Okumak: Anakronizme Ret Yazıları* (Ankara 2015), 43.

Mehdîlik Haḳḳında Bir Risāle

In addition to the above mentioned sources, there are unpublished *rîsāles* which contain ideas on Mahdî.[108] *Mehdîlik Haḳḳında Bir Risāle* is one of the treatises written about Mahdî in Turkish. We do not know for certain neither the author nor the title of the treatise, which is preserved with three copies in the Süleymaniye library. According to Eyüp Öztürk, the titles were probably given by the librarians.[109] *Mehdîlik Haḳḳında Bir Risāle*, the one we use here, comes from the collection Hacı Mahmud Efendi 1930/2. The second copy registered at Pertevnihal 417/3 bears the title of *Aḫir zamān, Deccāl ve Ye'cūc ve Me'cūc ḥaḳḳında bir Risāle*; the same title is born by the third one, Zühdü Bey 96/2. There is no record of the date of transcription in any of the copies of the *Risāle*. However, according to Öztürk, in the copy in Zühdü Bey collection the date 1001 was added to the catalog by the library staff. If it is remembered that the year 1000 Hijri witnessed intense Mahdî expectations, the given date may be correct.[110]

The author explains the purpose of writing the treatise as to give information about the time when the signs of the apocalypse will appear from the appearance of Mahdî to the Gog and Magog.[111] We come across several names in the pages as the sources he used. His references are Ḫālid bin Miḳdād(?), Dāvūd-ı

108 E. Öztürk, "Osmanlı Mehdîlik Literatürü", *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, XV/29 (2017), 375–407; Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād (d. 843): *el-Melāḥim ve'l-Fiten;* Sadreddin el-Ḳonevi (d.1274): *Risāletü'l-Mehdî (*657/1258–1259); Muḥammed Ṣafevî el-Îcî (d. 1500): *Mehdîlik Hakkında Bir Risāle;* Suyūṭî(d. 1505): *el-ʿUrfu'l-verdîfi'l-Ahbāri'l-Mehdî;* Suyūṭî (d. 1505): *el-Keşfü an Mucāvezeti'l-ummeti'l-elfi fi Ḫurūci'l Mehdî* (898/1492–1493); Suyūṭî (d. 1505): *Risāle fi Mecīi'l-Mehdî;* İbn Ḥacer el-Heytemî (d. 1566): *el-Ḳavlu'l-muḫtaṣar fîʿalāmāti'l Mehdiyyi'l-Muntaẓar;*ʿAli el-Muttaḳī el-Hindî (d. 1567): *Kitābu'l-burhān fi ʿalâmâti'l-Mehdî-iāhiri'z-zemān;* ʿAli el-Ḳārî (d. 1605): *el-Meşrebu'l-verdî fi'l-mezhebi'l-Mehdî;* Niyāz-ī Mısrî (d. 1694): *Risāle-i Mehdiyye/Eşrāt-ı Sāʿat Risālesi;* ʿAbdulhay b. Ahmed b. Muḥammed: *Risāle fîeşrāti's-sāʿati ve ẓuhūri'l-Mehdî; Risāle-i nüzūl-i ʿÎsā ve ḫurūci'l-Mehdî; Mehdîlik Haḳḳında Bir Risāle* (1001?/ 1591–1593?).

109 Öztürk, "Osmanlı Mehdîlik Literatürü", 403.

110 Ibid., 404.

111 *Mehdîlik Haḳḳında Bir Risāle*, Hacı Mahmud Efendi: 1930/2, fols 20b–21a.

Sicistānī,[112] Mārinüs-i Hekīm,[113] Muḳātil,[114] Nevvās ibn Semʿān,[115] Ebū ʿĪsā-yı Tirmīzī,[116] Danyal,[117] Ḳātāde,[118] Ḥuzeyfe-i Yemānī,[119] Ḳazvīnī,[120] Muḥammed bin Ḥāmid (?), Şeyḫ Necmü'l-ʿAvā-i Haḳḳānī (?). Additionally, he makes use of other books that he does not name. As we will see below, one of these is Ibn ʿArabī's *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, and another is *Muḥammediye* by Aḥmed Bīcān's brother, Meḥmed.

The text begins by alluding to the classical information found in the sources, namely that the world will be filled with darkness and persecution will spread all over the world before Mahdī's appearance. When he does emerge, the text continues, he will eliminate all of the irreligious things and evil deeds and will leave nothing against Sharia. On his flag it will be written that "Allegiance is only for Allah". Then the author lists the important events that will occur with the appearance of Mahdī as follows: he will take the Psalter out of the sea of Tiberia and the ark which Prophet Moses threw into the sea of Tiberia by the order of God, so that his tribe would not seek or find it. His staff is also in that ark. With the permission of God Almighty, he will even take that chest out of the sea. It is said that Mahdī will come out of the cave in the city of Antioch and seventy thousand descendants of Isaac, son of Abraham, will become his soldiers. What is emphasized in the text is the belief that Mahdī will fill the world, full of mischief and cruelty, with justice. The unknown author says that

112 Abū Dāwūd Sulaimān b. al-Ashʿath al-Azdī al-Siǧistānī (d.888), traditionalist, author of *Kitāb al-sunan*.

113 Μαρῖνος ὁ Τύριος (AD. 130), founder of mathematical geography. Although his work is lost, Ptolemy used his treatise extensively in his classical *Geography*. And apart from Ptolemy, al-Mas'udi gives reference to him.

114 Muḳātil b. Sulaymān (d. 767), traditionalist and commentor of the Ḳurʾān.

115 He is known for Dajjal *ḥadīth* in *Riyāḍ aṣ-Ṣāliḥīn* number 1812: https://www.hadiskitaplari.com/riyazus-salihin/riyazus-salihin-1812-nolu-hadis

116 al-Tirmiḏhī (d. 892), famous *ḥadīth* collector.

117 Biblical figure of Daniel and the well known reporter of Islamic apocalptic literature, *Malḥamāt Dānyāl*: D. Cook, "Early Muslim Daniel Apocalypse", *Arabica*, 49 (2002), 55–96.

118 Qatāda b. Diʿāma (d. 735), blind mufassir and traditionalist famous for his strong memory.

119 Another narrator who lived in the Prophet Muḥammad's time. He is known for Dajjal *ḥadīth* in *Riyāḍ aṣ-Ṣāliḥīn* number 1813: https://www.hadiskitaplari.com/riyazus-salihin/riyazus-salihin-1813-nolu-hadis

120 Author of famous cosmography book, *Nüzhetü'l-ḳulūb: El*, s.v. "*al-Ḳazwīnī*" (V. F. Büchner).

"*cevr ü biʿdat fısk u fücūr ve ẓulm ü sitem çok ola ʿālem fesād ile ṭola pes ol vaḳt benüm evlādumdan Ḥak Teʿālā bir ḫalīfe göndere ʿālemi ʿadl ile ṭoldura ve emn ü emān içinde olalar*". As Sariyannis has demonstrated in his study of seventeenth century rebellions and riots, some of these words are widely used to characterise marginalized behaviour. As for the Mahdī texts, the same is valid for denoting the darkness of the period prior to the arrival of the Mahdī: the terms are the ones widely used by Ottoman authorities to mention public disorder. Among them, "*fısk u fücūr*, meaning 'indulgence of the fleshy lusts, debauchery'; *fesad*, 'badness, fraud, depravity, intrigue, riot, disorder'; *fitne*, 'temptation, disorder, intrigue'; or şürūr, 'evils, disputes, disturbances'."[121] Particularly, *cevr* and *ẓulm* mean the opposite of justice, established rights and equality. So, Imam Mahdī "will not only deliver the oppressed of the period but also avenge all the accumulated injustices over the ages."[122] He then continues with a discussion of the identity of the Mahdī. The author seems to employ a perfectly balanced amalgam of Sunni and Shi'ite beliefs by writing that Mahdī will be the descendant of Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 670), his father's name will be Abdullah and his mother will be Nercis, from Abbasid or Christian origin.[123] As mentioned above, in the Shi'ite belief system the promised Mahdī is the Twelfth Imam, his father is the eleventh Imam, al-ʿAskari, and he is the descendent of the martyr of Karbala, Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 680), not of his elder brother Ḥasan. On the other hand, although the author mentions the possibility of Abbasid lineage alongside the Byzantium one, he refers to the figure of Nercis or Malīka, who is a slave girl from Byzantium in Shi'ite tradition.[124]

From the text, we are able to discern that the writer also employs Ibn ʿArabī's narrative on the Mahdī. The best sign of the reference to Ibn ʿArabī is the author's strong judgment on the jurists. He says that the greatest enemies of the Mahdī will be the jurists. Ibn ʿArabī claims the same in his *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* in depth. According to him, this is because the legislative method adop-

121 M. Sariyannis, "'Mob', 'Scamps' and Rebels in Seventeenth Century Istanbul: Some Remarks on Ottoman Social Vocabulary", *IJTS*, 11/1–2 (2005), 1–15 at 9–10.

122 Amir-Moezzi, *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam*, 406.

123 It is possible that the author of the *Risāle* confuses Narjis' death place, Samarra of the Abbasids, with her birthplace.

124 Şeyh Saduk, *Kemalu'd-din ve tamamu'n-nimeh: Dinin Kemali*, trans. A. Orak (Istanbul 2020), 481–492. From the mouth of Hakima, "daughter of Muhammad al-Jawad (the Ninth Imam) and paternal aunt of the Eleventh Imam al-'Askari," the hagiographic birth of the Mahdī by Narjis is told in detail: Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism*, 71.

ted by the jurists includes *qiyās*, analogy; after the Mahdī's state law and decrees, the jurists' presidency will not have legal validity and they will be inseparable from ordinary people. So they will lose their religious and legislative positions and their methods will become worthless. As with the existence of the Mahdī, differences of opinion regarding the decrees will be eliminated and a single legal order will be established. According to Ibn ʿArabī, "if the power, the sword, was not in the hands of Mahdī, the jurists would even give a fatwa to kill him."[125] The same sentence is copied without providing the name of the referee: "*eger Mehdī'nüñ ḳılıcı ḳorḳusı olmasa ol zemānun faḳīhleri Mehdī'nüñ ḳatline fetvā virürlerdi ve Mehdī'nüñ hīç fermānın ṭutmazlardı*".[126] Parallel to them, in his *Rumūzü'l-künūz fi'l-cifr*, İlyās b. İsā Saruhānī (d. 1554) states that in the time of the Mahdī and the Prophet Jesus, the institution of the *muftis* will disappear because both of them will make the decisions themselves.[127] Similarly, among the Shiʿites, we find the idea that the Mahdī's opponents in the final fight are not disbelievers, but rather misguided Muslims:

> On the occasion of his Rising, our Qāʾim will have to confront ignorance (*jahl*) even greater than that of the ignorant ones facedby the Messenger of God during the Age of Ignorance [before Islam] (*juhhāl al-jāhiliyya*)...For, at the time of the Prophet, the people worshipped stones, rocks, plants and wooden statues, but when our Qāʾim will summon the people [to his Cause], they will interpret the entire Book of God [i.e. the Qurʾān] against him and will argue against him and use the Book to fight him (*kulluhum yataʾawwalū ʿalayhi kitābi'llāh yaḥtajjū ʿalayhi bihi wa yuqātilūnahu ʿalayhi*).[128]

The other reference to Ibn ʿArabī comes from the sentence that provides information on the viziers who will attend the Mahdī. Ibn ʿArabī notes that the companions of the Mahdī will be ʿAcem but they will speak Arabic.[129] The same is

125 Ö. Öztürk, "Tasavvuf Kültüründe Beklenen Kurtarıcı İnancı", in Y. Ş. Yavuz (ed.), *Beklenen Kurtarıcı İnancı* (İstanbul 2017), 221–261 at 246 quoting *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, VI, p. 63.

126 *Mehdilik Haḳḳında Bir Risāle*, p. 207a.

127 A. Özgül, "İlyas bin Îsâ-yı Saruhânî'nin "Rumûzü'l-Künûz" adlı eserin transkripsiyonu ve değerlendirmesi", unpublished M.A. thesis, Kırıkkale University, 2004, 64, 24a.

128 Amir-Moezzi, *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam*, 410 quoting Al-Nuʿmānī, *Kitāb al-ghayba* (tradition attributed to Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq).

129 Öztürk, "Tasavvuf Kültüründe", 249.

mentioned in the text: "*bunlar heb ʿAcemdür ammā (ġayrisi) söylerler*", meaning that "whereas they are not from Arabic tribes (or: they are all Iranians), they do not speak Persian [they speak Arabic]". The text mentions the seven viziers of the Mahdī with their names; Ibn ʿArabī gives the same number, but he does not mention their names. Aside from these, it is written in the text that the Mahdī will emerge from between the *Rukn* and *Maqām*, two places in the Kaʿba, and people would pay homage to him, which is also in line with the Shiʿite view.[130] Besides these, Sufyānī is also mentioned in the text.[131] Muawiya II's brother is said to have spread the rumours about an expected saviour of Sufyānī origin, similar to the narrative about an expected Mahdī originating from ʿAlī's sons. As a result, the Sufyānī became an antagonist household name, diametrically opposed to the Mahdī.[132] Intriguingly, the author also states that when he emerges on Iran, the Sufyānī will slay a man named ʿAlī and a women called Fāṭima.

After detailing the Sufyānī's travels to various places, such as Qom, the author turns to the narratives focusing on the Dajjāl. The Antichrist Dajjāl was not a particularly popular figure in the Muslim apocalyptic stories during the classical period. During the last century particularly, the figure of the Dajjāl has been increasingly at the forefront in religious discourse. Consequently, the Antichrist has become an attractive subject for Muslim writers and publishers.[133] The author first remarks the difference between Constantinople and Rome with reference to Marinos of Tyre.[134] He states that the Mahdī will conquer *Ḳosṭanṭiniyye-i ʿuẓmā* with his soldiers of the sons of Prophet Isaac from the Kurds of Damascus: "*yetmiş biñ kimesne ola İsḥāḳ peyġamber oġlānlarından ve bunlar Şām'uñ Kürdlerinden ola*." He then begins to discuss the time periods

130 A. M. C. Horosani, *Alametleriyle Birlikte Beklenen Mehdi*, trans. M. Acar (Istanbul 2006), 369.

131 For an evaluation about the Sufyānī and different people who use this title, see Ö. Aras, "Halid b. Yezid (ve Ailesi): Siyasi ve Kültürel Etkinliği Üzerine Değerlendirmeler", *İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, V (2017), 160–76 and W. Madelung, "The Sufyānī between Tradition and History", *SI*, 63 (1986), 5–48.

132 Y. Oktan, "Siyasi ve Mezhebî Olayların Ortaya Çıkardığı Süfyânî Rivayetleri", *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, XXIV/3 (2020), 1135–1156.

133 R. Tottoli, "Hadiths and traditions in some recent books upon the Dağğāl", *Oriente Moderno*, 21/82, no. 1 (2002), 55–75 at 56.

134 Constantinople was also included in the eschatological texts by Christians and Jews, and it was known as the New Jerusalem where the Messiah will take home: Yücesoy, *Messianic Beliefs and Imperial Politics*, 47.

between the occurrence of the Dajjāl and the conquests of *Rūmiyye-i Kübrā* and *Ḳosṭanṭiniyye-i ʿuẓmā*. He references Dāvūd-ı Sicistānī and states that seven years after the conquest of the two cities, the Dajjāl will emerge. However, he also provides the numbers of six months, seven months, eight months, and eighteen days. While he mentions the difference between Constantinople, built by Constantin who was a *Naẓrānī*, and Rome, built by "an emperor called Rūmīs" (*Rūmīs adlu bir pādişāh*), he notes the name of *Mārinüs-i Hekīm*'s Geography book which "describes all the cities and mountains and seas of the earth" (*cemīʿ-i yiryüzin şehrleriyle ve ṭāġları ve deñizleri birle anda tasvīr eylemişdür*). It is also stated that the Prophet advised his ummah to read the first ten verses of surah of al-Kahf in order to be protected from the evilness of the Dajjāl.[135] A well-known detail regarding the Dajjāl relates to his eye. In our *Risāle*, his eye is compared to an exploded grape and it is written that most of his subjects will be of Turkish and Jewish origin. He travels astride a kind of donkey.[136] It is written that the width between the two ears of this very large donkey is forty cubits. The information regarding the donkey of Dajjāl is taken directly from *ḥadīth* narratives.[137] The Dajjāl will rule for forty days and will travel across the entire world except for Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem and Tarsus. He will meet Khidr and slay him. However, God will resurrect Khidr.

On the subsequent pages, some famous Muslim doomsday motifs are repeated. It is noted that the Prophet Īsā will return to earth from heaven (where he ascended without dying on the cross, according to the Quran) with his green turban on his head to lead the final fight against the Dajjāl.[138] He will descend over Damascus' Eastern Minaret,[139] and the (remaining) Christians will assemble around him. The Dajjāl will flee toward Jerusalem, but Jesus will slay him at the passage to the Dead Sea. Meanwhile, the Seven Sleepers will return to the world. The Torah, the Psalms, the Bible and the Quran will be joined. While the Prophet Īsā leads his followers to the Mount of aṭ-Ṭūr, now

135 Abu Dawud, *Malahim*, 14; Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad*, 36/43; 45/508.

136 In an anonymous six pages long text, the donkey of Dajjāl is also mentioned: *Bażı Eşrāṭ-ı Sāat Ḥakkında Eser*, SK, Hacı Mahmud 4491: 5b.

137 Ahmad b. Hanbal, *al-Musnad*, 3/367; Al-Nishapuri, *al-Mustadrak*, 4/530.

138 The motif of Prophet Īsā is repeated in various texts, see SK, Kemankeş 391; Hacı Beşir Ağa 656; Hacı Mahmud 4491; Hacı Mahmud 1741; Hafid Efendi 139; Kemankeş 391; Yazma Bağışlar 6784; Yazma Bağışlar 7333.

139 Muslim, *Fitan*, Bab: 20, 110/2937; Abu Dawud, ibid., Bab:14, 4321 IV/117.

Gog and Magog[140] will emerge from every hill, drinking all available water, even Lake Tiberias, until beaten and murdered. After the Prophet Īsā offers a prayer, they will be destroyed by a worm which is found in the noses of camels and sheep.

At the very end of the text, the author mentions Dābbat al-Arḍ, the Beast of the Earth. According to Islamic eschatology, one of the signs of Doomsday is the emergence of Dābbat al-Arḍ. This creature is a hybrid, bearing elements of various animals, and unlike any living creature encountered in reality. It is envisioned as a creature that God will release from underground, and it will declare that people do not believe God's scriptures. This apocalyptic creature was depicted in different sources and miniatures in various ways.[141] However, the fact that the creature contains elements taken from various animals is seen as a common feature. According to the *Risāle,* Dābbat al-Arḍ is a four-legged beast whose ears are like an elephant's ear, its head is like a cattle's head, its eyes are like a pig's eyes, its horn is like a goat's horn, its breast is like a lion's breast, its shape is like a frog, its tail is like a sheep's tail. Its feet would be like a camel's feet, twelve cubits from its groin to its thigh, and ten cubits from its thigh to its toe.[142] This portrait in the treatise reveals a decidedly mythological appearance and, although this is not mentioned, it is sourced from Aḥmed Bīcān of Gelibolu's *Muḫammadiye*. Furthermore, it is written that Moses' scepter will shine on the faces of believers and that the Seal of Solomon will be stamped on the noses of the unbelievers.

Conclusion

> Thus, the growing corruption and destruction of our natural environment, so awesomely—if as yet only partially—demonstrated in our time, is here predicted as "an outcome of what men's hands have wrought", i.e., of that self-destructive—because utterly materialistic- inventiveness and frenzied activity which now threatens mankind with previously unimaginable ecological disasters:an unbridled pollution of

140 E. van Donzel and A. Schmidt, *Gog and Magog in Early Eastern Christian and Islamic Sources: Sallam's Quest for Alexander's Wall* (Leiden 2010).

141 M. And, *Minyatürlerle Osmanlı-İslam Mitologyası* (Istanbul 1998), 300–305.

142 Interestingly, centuries after the *Risāle*, another Ottoman author comments on the identity of Dābbat al-Arḍ and says that Dābbat al-Arḍ is Jesuit clergy: Haşim Veli, "Kıyâmet Alâmetleri", ed. K. Çakın, *Dinî Araştırmalar,* VI/16 (2003), 183–198 at 193. In the same article, he identifies *Dajjāl* with Sultan Abdulhamid.

> land, air and water through industrial and urban waste, a progressive poisoning of plant and marine life, all manner of genetic malformations in men's own bodies through an ever-widening use of drugs and seemingly "beneficial" chemicals, and the gradual extinction of many animal species essential to human well-being. To all this may be added the rapid deterioration and decomposition of man's social life, the all-round increase in sexual perversion, crime and violence, with, perhaps, nuclear annihilation as the ultimate stage: all of which is, in the last resort, an outcome of man's oblivion of God and, hence, of all absolute moral values, and their supersession by the belief that material "progress" is the on thing that matters.[143]

When Mohammad Asad (1900–1992) explains the Surah Rum/ 41 in his translation of the Quran, he uses the above-mentioned statements that resemble early modern Ottoman authors' ideas on Doomsday, except for environmental and nuclear disasters.[144] The tone is reminiscent of books that have been translated into Turkish or written for the expectation of "Doomsday" in recent years.[145] At the turn of the millennium in 2012 and with the Covid-19 *pandemic* of 2020, the expectations of the "last hour" and "the end of the world" have meant that there was an especially large market demand for cultural production— television series, movies, books, and internet content —with apocalyptic themes. Parallel to these, there is a literature on popular belief focused on doomsday that has arisen out of a "renewed interest in the traditional apocalyptic paradigm"[146] in the Islamic world. This cultural phenomenon combines popular belief based on the *ḥadīth* literature with modern interpretations and

143 M. Asad, *The Message of the Quran* (Bristol 2003), 850.

144 It should be bear in mind that Mohammad Asad (Leopold Weiss) born in Lviv and converted from Judaism to Islam. His comments on this verse with strong Apocalyptic elements might stem from his background. Ironically, when I have looked at the contemporary Shiite *tafsīrs*, especially *Tafsīr al Mīzan* of famous scholar and gnostic Allamah Tabataba'i (1903–1981), I have not found any Apocalyptical explanation on the same verse.

145 There is a vast literature on the subject. To give an idea, see P. Davies, *Son Üç Dakika*, trans. S. Gül (Istanbul 1999); A. Bilgin, *Sona Doğru Geri Sayım: Armagedon Kıyamet* (Istanbul 2005); M. Karaca, *Evreni Bekleyen Büyük Son: Kıyamet* (Istanbul 2006); B. Taylan, *Kıyamet Asrında Hz. İsa'nın Duası: biyolojik savaşçı olarak dabbetü'l-arz ve negaf* (Istanbul 2015); E. Trükten, *Deccal Derin Devleti* (Istanbul 2019).

146 E. K. Rosen, *Apocalyptic Transformation: Apocalypse and the Postmodern Imagination* (Lanham 2008), xviii.

prevails across the Islamic world. However, according to the Quran, God proclaims that knowledge about the doomsday hour belongs to Him alone.[147]

The expectation of a saviour, a Mahdī who will save the society from the havoc that befalls Muslim societies in troubled times, such as when they are facing religious violence or when they are invaded by a foreign state, has become very popular. According to the definition of Jamāl-al-dīn Afġānī (d. 1897), this situation is compared to the "man who stumbles his way in a wide field in the dark night and waits impatiently for the emergence of a star that will guide him" in terms of society.[148] As stated above, in parallel with the social and political crises in specific periods of Ottoman history (fourteenth, seventeenth and nineteenth centuries), various remedies were produced for this popular anguish in the form of Mahdism. During these periods, it can be clearly observed that the idea of an eschatological saviour is vividly grounded. When people grew weary of the war and chaos, they began to seek out someone to rescue them from their predicament. He is the prophesied figure in the conscience of the common people upon which they pin their faith when they fall into despair and longed for peace and order, and their only hope for salvation in the end of times. For this reason, the subject of "Doomsday signs" is also of great importance for the early modern Ottoman world. The four treatises mentioned in the beginning of this article might give some idea on the sources of the doomsday expectations of the early modern Ottomans. These treatises were effective in the formation of the traditional Islamic understanding of Ottoman society and greatly affected their imaginations and the understanding of life. By the guidance of the Doomsday signs, they could freshen their hopes for the Godly oriented eschatological saviour.

Frank Kermode, one of the most important literary critics of the twentieth century, links fictional and historical apocalyptic discourses with the concept of "crisis". According to Kermode, crises are a kind of warning for people to perceive the world and time in a more holistic way, thus functioning as a bridge that connects the past and the future.[149] The present, perhaps more so than in

147 Araf, 7/187.

148 BOA, Yıldız Esas Evrakı No: 34/76, v. 2 quoted in İ. Şık and T. Yürük, "Bir Osmanlı Arşiv Belgesi Işığında Cemaleddin Afgani'de Mehdilik Anlayışı", *Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, XVII/1 (2012), 31–50.

149 F. Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in The Theory of Fiction* (New York 1967), 94–95.

past centuries, is a period in which "everything solid melts into air" and almost all existing socio-cultural and economic stability has been shaken. However, in times past the various sui generis problems and troubles were so prevalent that our predecessors felt the Doomsday alarms as strongly as we feel them today.

APPENDIX

[201b]

Bismillāhi'r-rahmāni'r-rahīm

Elḥamdulillāhi Rabbi'l-ʿĀlemīn ve's-salatu ʿalāḫayri ḫalkihi Muḥammedin ve Ālihi Ecmaʿīn. Fasl āḫir zemānda Mehdīʿaleyhi's-selām ne resme ḫurūc ider ve Deccāl-i laʿīn ne vaḳt ḫurūc ider ve Ye'cüc ve Me'cüc ne vaḳt gelürler ve Ḥazret-i ʿĪsāʿaleyhi's-selām gökden ne vaḳt iner ve Kosṭanṭiniyye-i ʿuẓmā ve Rūmiyye-i kübra ne vaḳt feth olur ve daḫī bunlardan ġayrı ḳıyāmet ʿalāmetlerin beyān ider Ḥazret-i Resūl ʿaleyhi›s-selām eydür āhir zemānda cevr ü biʿdat fısk ufücūr ve ẓulm ü sitem çok olaʿālem fesādile ṭola pes ol vaḳt benüm evlādumdan Ḥak Teʿālā bir halīfe göndere ʿālemi ʿadl ile ṭoldura ve emn ü emān içinde olalar ol halīfenüñ adı Muḥammed bin ʿAbdullah ola ol emīr'ül-mü'minīn Ḥasan bin Emīr›ül-müminīn ʿĀli kerremallahu veche oġlānlarından ola anası nesl-i ʿAbbasīlerden ola baʿḍılar eydür ḥavāriyyenden

[202a]

ola anası adı Nercis ola kaçanki ẓuhūr bula ʿālemde ne kadar bidʿat ve şerrū şūr var ise pāk ide ve muḫālif-i şerʿ hiç nesne ḳomayave ʿadedlerden ġayrı ʿālemde nesne olmaya ve anun sancāġında yazılmış ola ki 'El Bīʿatü Lillah ve anun zemānında Ṭaberī Deñizi'nden Zebūr'ı çıkaralar ve ol sandūk ki Ḳavm-i Mūsā ve Harūn aramaya kim Allah emri birle Ṭaberī Deñizi'ne atmışlardı Mūsa peyġamber ʿaleyhi's-selām ve ʿasāsı ol sandūḳdadur Ḥak Teʿāla fermān birle ol sandūḳı dahī deryādan çıḳaralar eydürler ki Anṭākiyye şehrindeki maġāradan çıḳa İsḥāḳ bin İbrāhīm oġlānlarından yetmiş biñ kişi anuñ leşkerinden ola Ḳosṭanṭiniyye-i ʿuẓmā ve Rūmiyye-i kübrāyı ve Çin şehrlerini ve Deylem ṭāġlarını feṭḥideler ve kendü zemānında ḫālis dīn-i Muḥammed ʿaleyhi's-selām ḳala ġayrı mezāhib götürile her yire ki ḳadem basa feṭḥ ü nusret yoldāşı

[202b]

ola ve cemīʿ-i ʿāleme ḥükm ide beş yıl veyā yedi yıl veyā ṭoḳuz yıl baʿḍılar ḳırḳ yıl baʿḍılar ḳırḳ gün dimişler saḥīḥ degildür evvelki ḳavl esaḥdur daḫī anuñ zemanında gökden yire hīç yaġmūr inmeye küffārı dīn-i ḥakka daʿvet eyleyeler her ki ḳabūl eylemese evvel ḥarāc-ı şerʿi Muḥammedi vazʿ eyleye eger aña dahī rāżı olmasalar cenge meşġūl olub kāfirleri ḳıra ve anuñ zemānında ehl-i ḳüfr ve ehl-i fesād ḥāli tebāh olub hemīşe ġamdan ve ġussadan ḫalās olmayalar ve ehl-i İslām feraḥ ve şād olalar Şām abdālları ve ʿIrāk asḥābı Ṭālūt miḳdarı[150] yaʿnī üç yüz on üç kişi Mekke-i Şerefhallahu ṭavāf idüb ve şerā'it-i ḥācc temām itdükden soñra Ḥacer'ül-esved ile maḳām-ı İbrāhīm arāsında Mehdī ile bīʿat ideler ve daḫī Mehdi'nüñ yedi vezīri ola cümlesinüñ adı Muḥammed olaMuḥammed-i Mısrī Muḥammed-i Kūfī Muḥammed Rūmī Muḥammed Hindī Muḥammed-i Mekkī

[203a]

Muḥammed-i Dımışḳī Muḥammed-i Ḥalebī bunlar heb ʿAcemdür ammā (ġayri-si) söylerler Mehdi'nüñ Ḫurūcunuñ evvel ʿalāmeti budur ki Ramazān ayınuñ on beşinde güneş ṭuṭıla ve daḫī Ehl-i kenduk(?) ʿulemāsı vilāyet-i Ḫorāsān'a geleler ve daḫī ḳullar efendilerine ʿāsī olalar ve daḫī altmış kişi ittifāḳla peyġamberliḳ daʿvāsın ḳılalar ve bunlaruñ on ikisi Ebū Ṭālib oġlānlarından olalar daʿvā-yı ʿimāmet eyleyeler Ḫālid bin Miḳdād eydür Tāḥarastā adlu köy Şāmda yire geç-meye Mehdi ḫurūc eylemeye ve daḫī Mehdi zemānında Süfyāniler peydā olalar Dımışḳ ġuṭasında bir aġācun ḳatında pes andan yüriyüb Medīne'ye varalar ve üç gün Medīne'de karār idüb Mekke'ye ḳast ideler ḳaçān Mekke beyābānına irişeler cemīʿ-i leşker bile yire geçe Ḫālid bin Miḳdād eydür Süfyāniler iki kerre cenk ideler ikisinde daḫī sıyalar ve andan soñra helāk olalar ve daḫī şol zemān-daki Ẕilhicce ayında ve Muḥarrem ayında güneş ṭutıla

[203b]

Süfyāniler ḫurūc idecek vaḳtdür ve ol yıluñ Cemāẕīye'l-evvelīsiyle Recebi ārāsında fitneden ve Süfyānilerüñ cenginden ʿacā'ibler ẓāhir ola ve Mehdī'nüñ ḫurūcı Şevvāl ayında ola vallahu āʿlem ve daḫī eydürler ol günlerde bir kişi ẓāhir ola Şām Vilāyeti'nde ʿİntebe(?) adlu ve ʿAcemistān'a ḳast eyleye ve tā

150 Talut (Saul) sets out to fight Jalut (Goliath) and tells his soldiers that Allah will test them in a river, so they should not drink more than a handful of water from the river. However, most of the soldiers drink from the water and lose their fighting power. Soldiers who obey Talut's instructions cross the river and collide with Jalut's army. According to some interpretations, the number of people who crossed this river is 4000 or 313 people. The "amount of Talut" expressed in the text stems from this event.

Ḳum Şehri'ne degin irişe ve her yere ki irişe ḫarāb eyleye ve çok kimesne ḳatl ide ve andan soñra bir er ve bir ʿavret öldürüb ve eyde ki bu er ʿAli'dür ve bu ʿavret Fātıma'dur ve bir kimesne daḫī Cü'eyne'den çıḳa Mısır'a ḳast eyleye ve ol zemānda ehl-i Mısr'uñ ve ehl-i Şām'uñ ve ehl-i Remle'nüñ bāşına ʿaẓīm belālar irişe ve ol kimesne Ḳudüs'e varamaya ve elbette Mehdī Ḳosṭanṭiniyye-i ʿuẓmāyı feṭḥ itse gerekdür ve Mehdi'nüñ leşkerinde yetmiş biñ kimesne ola İsḥāḳ peyġamber oġlānlarından ve bunlar Şām'uñ Kürdlerinden ola ve andan soñra Deccāl-ı laʿīn ḫurūc itse

[204a]
gerekdür ammā Ḳosṭanṭiniyye-i ʿuẓmānuñ feṭḥinde bir niçe ḳavl vardur baʿḍılar eydür feṭḥ-i Ḳosṭanṭiniyye-i ʿuẓmā bile ve Rūmiyye-i Kübrā ile ḫurūc-ı Deccāl ārālıġı altı ay olsa gerekdür ve baʿḍılar eydür sekiz ay olsa gerekdürve baʿḍılar eydür yedi ay olsa gerekdür saḥīḥ rivāyet oldur ki Ḳosṭanṭiniyye-i ʿuẓmā ve Rūmiyye-i Kübrā feṭḥ oldukdan yedi yıl sonradan Deccāl-ı laʿīn peydā ola ve Dāvūd-ı Sicistānī eydür esaḥ kavl budur ammāʿulemā-i ehl-i esrār eydür bu iki şehrüñ feṭḥiyle Deccāl-ı laʿīn ḫurūcınun mā-beyni on sekiz gün ola ve Ḳosṭanṭiniyye-i ʿuẓmā Rūmiyye-i kübrānuñ ġayridür Ḳosṭanṭiniyye-i ʿuẓmānuñ bir pādişāhı var idi. Ḳosṭanṭin adlu Naẓrānīydi Ḳosṭanṭiniyye'yi ol binā eylemişdi ve Rūmiyye-i kübrāyı Rūmīs adlu bir pādişāh bina itmişdür ve Rūmiyelerüñ evvel pādişāhı oldur her kimesnenüñ kim bu söze gümānı ola Mārinüs-i Hekīmüñ Cogrāfyā adlu kitābına naẓar

[204b]
eyleye ki cemīʿ-i yiryüzin şehrleriyle ve ṭāġları ve deñizleri birle anda tasvīr eylemişdür girü Deccāl-ı laʿīnüñ sözine gelelüm Ḥażret-i Resūl ʿaleyhi's-selām Deccāl-ı laʿīn çıḳacaḳ vaḳt ol vaḳtdür ki halā'iḳ Ḥaḳ Teʿāla'nuñ adın anmaḳda süstlik eyleyeler taḥḳīḳ bilüb itmişler ki Deccāl-ı laʿīn İsfahān'dan peydā ola ekser tābiʿ olan Türkler ve Yāhūdīler olalar şöyle ki yetmiş biñ Ṭaylasānlu Yāhūdī Deccāl ile bile ola ve Deccāl bir erdür orta boyluḳırı sepmiş sāġ gözi kördür güyā kiṭāfiye benzer ṭāfiye diyüʿArab şol üzümedür kim içi çürümiş ḳābı sāġ ola ol laʿīnüñ kör gözi ol asl üzüme benzeye ve iki gözinüñ ortāsında yazılmış ola küfrun yaʿnī küfr laʿanehullahu Deccāl-ı laʿīn yir yüzinde ḳırḳ gün ola evvelki gün bir yıl ḳadar ola ve ikinci gün bir ay ḳadar ola ve üçünci gün bir hafta ḳadar ola ve ḳalan günler bu

[205a]
günler kadar ola Ḥażret-i Resūl ʿaleyhi's-selām'dan sordılar ki yā Resūlullah ol üç gün ki Deccāl-ı laʿīn ḫurūc idicek uzūn ola anda namāzı girü beş ve ḳatı mı ḳılıruz eyitdi ḳıyās idüb gün ḥesābı üzre ḳılmaḳ gerekdür şöyle ki her gün

miḳdārında beş vaḳt namāz ḳılına ve Resūl ḥażreti ʿaleyhi's-selam buyurdı ki Deccāl-ı laʿīnüñ uçmāġı ve ṭāmūsı ola ammā ol ṭāmū didügi ki kendüye iʿtiḳād idüb uymayanları aña ḳoyar uçmāḳ ola ve ol uçmāḳ didügi ki kendüye uyanları aña ḳoyar ṭāmū ola ve Deccāl-ı laʿīn bir aḳ eşege bine ki ol eşegüñ iki kulāġı ārāsı altmış arşūn ola ve her ḳulāġı ḳırḳ arşūn ola ol eşegün iki ḳulāgınuñ gölgesinde yetmiş biñ kişi sıga ve daḫī ne kadar rū-sāzende var ise anuñ eşegi öñince piyāde yüriyüb ṭāvullar ve surnālar ve defler ve zinceler(?) çalalar ve her kimesne kim ol sāzları işide anuñ ardına düşe meger şol kimesneler kim

[205b]

ḥakkun ʿināyeti irmiş ola anlar Deccāl-ı laʿīnüñ sāzların işidicek iltifāt itmeyüb tābiʿolmayalar Muḳātil eydür radıyallahu ʿanh ḳıyāmetüñ evvel ʿalāmeti ḫurūc-ı Deccāl ve āḫir ʿalāmeti güneş maġribden ṭogmak ola ve daḫī Deccāl-i laʿīn ḳırḳ günde cemīʿ-i vilāyetleri ve şehrleri ve köyleri geze ve cemīʿ-i diyāra irişe illā dört maḳāma varamaya Mekke şerrefehallahu ve Medīne şerrefehallahu ve Ḳudüs şerrefehallahu ve Ṭarsūs her harābe ki irişe eyde ki sende gizlü olan mālı ṭaşra çıḳar hemān sāʿat yer altında ne ḳadar gizlü māl var ise ṭaşra çıḳara altūn ve gümüş ve cevāhir ol melʿūnuñ ardına bāl arısı gibi üşeler Deccāl-i laʿīn ḳaçan Bābil vilāyetine irişe Ḫıżır ʿaleyhi's-selam ol melʿūnuñ önüne gele ve Ḫıżır'a eyde ki ben Tengriyem Ḫıżır ol melʿūnuñ sözin red eyledügiçün ol melʿūn Ḫıżır'ı vurub öldüre ve eyde eger bunun Tengrisi olaydı bunı ölmekten kurtaraydı

[206a]

pes cebbār-ı ʿālem girü Ḫıżır'ı diri ḳıla andan soñra iş Mehdī'ye ve ashāb-ı Mehdī'ye düşe Mehdī ve asḥābı-ı MehdīDeccāl-ı laʿīnüñ elinden kaçub Beytü'l-Maḳdis'e varalar Beytü'l-Maḳdis'üñ kapūlarun baġlayalarDeccāl gelüb Beytü'l-Maḳdis'i hisār ideve ol zemānda Ḫażret-iʿĪsāʿaleyhi's-selām gökden yire ine Dımışḳ'uñ şarḳdan yakāsında Mehdūdīn ārāsında bir mināre vardur ki ol mināreye Beyżā dirler ol minārenüñ yanunda yire ine iki ferişte daḫī bile ineler Ḫażret-i ʿĪsā'nuñ iki el ol iki ferištenüñ omūzında ola Beytü'l-maḳdis'den yana revān ola ve gökden bir āvāz işidile ki iyi Müselmānlar meded irişdi fi'l-ḥāl ʿĪsā ʿaleyhi's-selām irişe bāşında yāşıl ʿimāme ola ve ata binmiş ve ḳılınc ḳuşanmış ola ve elinde ḥarbesi ola Deccāl-ı laʿīni Lūt dervāzesinde bulub öldüre ve bir rivāyetde budur ki Nevās ibni Semʿān eydür Ḫażret-i Resūl

[206b]

ʿaleyhi's-selām huẓūrunda Deccāl anıldı Ḫażret-i Resūl ʿaleyhi's-selām buyurdı ki eger Deccāl çıḳıcaḳ ben sizüñ arañuzda olursam aña cevāb virem eger ben sizüñ arañuzda olmazsam Ḥak Teʿālā size yardım ide sizden her ḳangıñuz ki

ḫurūc-ı Deccāl'e irişe Sūre-i Kehf'ün evvelinde on āyet okısun Ḥak Teʿālā anuñ şerrinden emīn ḳıla eyitdiler yā Resūlullah yiryüzinde ne ḳadar gün ṭura eyitdi ḳırḳ gün ṭura diyüb yuḳaruda geçen nişānları ve miḳdārı beyān eyledi el-ḳıssa çün ʿĪsā ʿaleyhi's-selām Deccāl-ı laʿīni öldürüb Mehdī'yi ve Müselmānları anuñ şerrinden emīn eyleye ve eline ḳılıc alub ne ḳadar ehl-i bidʿat ve ehl-i ṭuġyān var ise öldürüb yiryüzin şerden ve ehl-i şerden pāk eyleye ve ʿālem emīn ü emān birle ṭola ve şöyle ola ki ḳurt ḳoyun ile yüriye ve daḫī yir yüzinde hīç faḳīr ḳalmayup cümle ġanīler olalar ve Ḥażret-iʿĪsā'yla Tevrīt ve Zebūr

[207a]

ve İncīl ve Furḳān bile ola ve Ḥaḳ Sübḥānehu ve Teʿālā asḥāb-ı Kehfi diri ḳıla ve Mehdī'ye faḳīhler düşmān olalar ve eger Mehdī'nüñ ḳılıcı ḳorḳusı olmasa ol zemānun faḳīhleri Mehdī'nüñ ḳatline fetvā virürlerdi ve Mehdī'nüñ hīç fermānın ṭutmazlardıçün Deccāl-ı laʿīnüñ cānı cehenneme gide ve dünyā fitneden ve şerden ve şūr(ur)dan ḫāli ola Ḥak Teʿālāʿīsā'ya vaḫī ide ki yā ʿĪsā benüm ḳullarımı Ṭūr'a ilet ki ġayrı ḳullarum gelse gerekdür ol ḳadaru çoḳdurlar ki hīç kimesne anlara ṭākat getürmez ve anlar ile cenk idemez ve anlara ġālib olmaz pes Ḥażret-i ʿĪsā ḳavmi Ṭūr'a iletandan soñra Ye'cüc ve Me'cüc çıḳa ol ḳadar çoḳ olalar kigelüb deryā-yı Ṭaberī'yi içüb dükedeler anlardan soñra ḳalan ṭā'ife kimesne su bulmayub eydeler ki bir zemānda bunda su var imiş ve anlaruñ çoḳluġundan ḳuşlar yir yüzinde maḳām bulmayup bāşlarında yuva yapalar pes

[207b]

Beytü'l-Maḳdis'den yaña teveccüh ideler bunı maḳsūd idineler ki Ḥażret-i ʿĪsā'yı öldürevüz deyü çün Kudüs'e irişeler ok atalar bunlaruñ okundan yir ile gök ārāsı ṭola ṭopṭolu olaʿĪsā ʿaleyhi's-selām bunlaruñ helākı içün duʿā ideler Ḥak Sübḥānehu ve Teʿālā cinnīlerden bir ṭā'ife emr ide kim anları helāk eyleye ʿĪsā ʿaleyhi's-selām ve daḫī ʿĪsā'ya tābiʿ olanlar cemīʿ-i Ye'cüc ve Me'cüc'üñ şerrinden ḫalās olalar ve bir rivāyetde eydür çün Ye'cüc'ün ve Me'cüc'üñ āḫeri Ṭaberiyye Deñizi'ne irişeler su bulmayalar cümle yüzi Beytü'l-maḳdis Ṭāġı'na dutub ol ṭarafa ʿazm ideler ve eydeler cümle yir ehlin helāk eyledük şimden soñra gök ehliyle cenk idelüm diyüb göge oklar atalar Ḥak Teʿālā anlaruñ okların ḳāna bulaşdurub yire göndere andan Ṭūr'a varalar Ḥażret-i ʿĪsa'yı hisār ideler ʿĪsā ḳavmi içinde ol ḳadar ḳaht ola ki bir sıġır

[208a]

bāşı elli dinārdan artūġa ola ʿĪsā ʿaleyhi's-selām anları helāk itmek içün duʿā ide Ḥak Subḥānehu ve Teʿālā nafaḳa buyura tā kim anları helāk eyleye nafaḳa bir ḳurtcugāzdur ki devenüñ ve koyunuñ burnunda olur Ye'cüc'i ve Me'cüc'i Ḥak Teʿālā ol ḳurtçugāz ile helāk eyleyüb yoġ eyleye ʿĪsā ʿaleyhi's-selām

cemīʿ-i tevābiʿyle Ṭūr'dan ineler yir yüzinde bir ḳarış miḳdārı yer pāk bulmayalar anlaruñ ḫabīs bedeninden ve murdār rāyihasından pes ʿĪsā ʿaleyhi's-selām yüzin dergāh-ı Ḥakka dutub yir yüzinüñ pāk olmasın ṭaleb eyleye Ḥak Teʿālā ḳuşlar göndere şol erkek gibi cemīʿ-i anlaruñ güdesin yir yüzinden pāk ideler ve ādem-i zād yire varmaz atalar ve Müselmānlar yedi yıl Ye'cüc ve Me'cüc okın ve yāyın ve kalkānın yakalar hīç oduna muḥtāc olmayalar andan soñra Ḥak Subḥānehu ve Teʿālā bir ʿazīm yaġmūr vire yir yüzin yuyub pāk eyleye yir yüzi

[208b]

pāk u pākīze olub bir bāġçe gibi ola andan soñra Ḥak Teʿālā yire emr eyleye ki bereketüñ çıkar yir bereketin çıḳarub ol ḳadar niʿmet çoḳ ola ki nihāyeti ve pāyānı olmaya ḥatta deve koyun ve sıġır ol ḳadar sütlü ne ḳadar isterlerse saġalar hīç dükenmeye bir müddet ʿālem bu ṭavr üzre ṭura andan soñra Ḥak Teʿālā bir yumuşaḳ ve hoş ḳoḳulu yil göndere Müselmānlaruñ dimāġına irişe esānlıġıyla cān teslīm ideler ve yir yüzinde müfsidler ve münāfıḳlardan ġayrı kimesne ḳalmaya ḳıyāmet anlaruñ üzerine kopa Ebū ʿĪsā-yı Tirmīzī ki Kütüb-i Sitte-i ḥadīsün bir mü'ellifi oldur eydür bu rivāyet ki zikr olundı ḥadīs-i nebevīdür ḥasendür ve ġarībdür ve saḥīḥdür Dānyāl eydür çün Ādem ʿaleyhi's-selām zemānından yedi bin yıl geçüb ve sekiz yüz altmış dört yıl temām ola Ye'cüc Me'cüc çıḳacaḳ vaḳtidür göz ve ḳulaḳ ṭuta ṭurmaḳ gerekdür Ye'cüc

[209a]

ve Me'cüc Yāfes bin Nūḥ oġlānlarındandur Ḳātāde eydür bunlar on on iki ḳabīledür Ḫuzeyfe-i Yemānī eydür Ye'cüc bir ṭā'ifedür ve Me'cüc bir ṭā'ifedür her birisi bu ṭā'ifenün dört kerre yüz bin bölükdür ve Ye'cüc ve Me'cüc birisi olmaz kendü neslinden biñ ādem görmeyince ve anlar üç sınıfdur bir sınıfı ġāyet uzūndur ve enlidür eni ve uzūnı yüz yigirmi arşūn ola ve her arşūn yigirmi dört barmaḳ ola ki enlüligine ḳoyalar uzūnlugına ḳomayalar Ve bir sınıfı daḫī yüz yigirmi arşūndur ammā eni maʿlūm degildür ve bir sınıfı daḫī uyuduġı vaḳt bir ḳulāġın döşek ve bir ḳulāgın yorġān idinür Ḳazvīnī eydür bir sınıfı daḫī vardur ki boyı beş ḳarışdur Muḥammed bin Ḥāmid eydür ʿĪsā ʿaleyhi's-selām gökden üç kerre ine evvel ḥaḳḳı evliyāya göstere ve ikinci sulehāya göstere ve üçünci ḫāssa-i ʿāma göstere ve ḳırḳyıl yıl yirde Ṭūr'a ve baʿḍılar ḳırḳ beş dimişler evvelki ḳavli

[209b]

saḥīḥdür ve ʿArab'dan bir ʿavret alub evlene ve Ḥażret-i Resūl ʿaleyhi's-selām şerīʿat(ı?) üzre ola ve dīn-i Muḥammed'e nusret ide geçen ḳırḳ yıl temām ola vefāt ide Ḥażret-i Resūl'ün ḳabrine ḳoyalar ḳaçanki Ḥażret-i ʿĪsā fevt ola ehli Habeş'e gelüb Mekke'yi yıḳalar andan soñra ḥācc olmaya Ḳatāde eydür tevbe

ḳabūl olur tā güneş maġribden ol vaḳt ṭoġa ki ḳıyāmet yüz yigirmi yıl ḳalmış olave ḳıyāmetüñ āḫir ʿalāmeti Dābbat al-Arḍ'dur Dābbat al-Arḍ Safāyla Merve ārāsında peydā ola ve gökden yana gitse gerekdür ve cemīʿ-i pīr ehli anı göre ve Süleymān peyġamberüñ yüzügi ve Mūsā peyġamberün ʿasāsı anuñla ola ve ḳırḳ gün yir yüzinde ṭurub andan soñra gide ve maḫlūḳāt andan soñra yüz yıl azgūnlıḳ ve nā-dānlıḳ içinde olalar tā bir mertebeye vara ki yir yüzinde lā-ilāhe illa'l-lāh dir kimesne kalmaya ḳıyāmet anlaruñ üzerine ḳopa Şeyḫ Necmü'l-ʿAvā-i Haḳḳānī eydür Ḥażret-i Ḫızır ʿaleyhi's-selām Ḥak

[210a]

Teʿālā'dan dilemiş ki yā rabbi ol vaḳt kur'ān götürüle benüm cānımı alasın tā kim anı görmeyem ve bir dahī rivāyet oldur ki Dābbat al-Arḍ üç kerre çıka evvel Mehdī zemānında ikinci ʿĪsā zemānında ve üçünci güneş maġribden toġdukdan sonra Dābbat al-Arḍ bir cānavardur ki dört ayaklu kulāgı fil kulāgı gibi ola bāşı sıgır bāşı gibi ola gözi toñūz gözi gibi ola boynūzı keçi boynūzı gibi ola göġsi arslān gögsi gibi ola hey'eti yaʿnī şekilleri kurba gibi ola kuyrūġı koyun kuyrūġı gibi ola ayakları deve ayakları gibi ola kasūġından tā uylūġına degin on iki arşūn ola ve uylūġından tā ayaġı barmaġına varınca on ki arşūn ola Mūsā'nun ʿasāsı ve Süleymān yüziġi anunla bile ola [çün mü'mine][151] irişe ol yüzikle alına basa mü'mīn yazıla yüzi [münevver ola ḳaçān] kāfire irişe ol yüzikle alına basa kāfir yazılub [yüzi ḳab ḳara ola] Allahumme ʿāfinā ammā kāfirün burnı sınuk gibi ola [her gâh ki mü'minle kāfir buluşa]

[210b]

birbirine buluşa mü'mīn kāfiri bile ve kāfir mü'mīni bile ve Dābbat al-Arḍ'uñ evvel sözi bu ola ki ehl-i Mekke Muḥammed Resūlullah'a inanmadılar ve kāfir oldılar ve her kimesneyi görse bile ve eyde ki cennetlik midür andan soñra bir bulūt peydā ola yeşil renklü ki ḳarāya mā'il ola ġarb ṭarafından her ki görse sana ki yaġmūr buludıdur ḳaçan ol bulūt yaḳīn gele her kim anuñ gölgesinde ola cānı teninden ayrıla Allah izni birle Allahümme ʿāfina min muḥsin el-ḳıyāme (...) temmet.

151 There are erasures and tears in this folio of the ms. Hacı Mahmud Efendi 1930/2. The sections in square brackets are filled according to mss. Pertevnihal 417/3 and Zühdü Bey 96/2.

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C. Research reports

The views of Gerasimos Vlachos on astral influences: Aristotelic, hermetic, and astrological approaches to the heavenly bodies

Markos Litinas (Rethymno)[1]

The Greek Orthodox populations of the Ottoman empire have not been the subject of a great deal of historical focus in academia. Being a part of an empire, or to be more precise, an Orthodox minority within a Muslim empire, historians tend to neglect the philosophical and scientific achievements produced by the Greek Orthodox scholars, preferring to delve into the religious aspects of the various Patriarchates. This academic approach has brought to light some impressive results, not only in terms of political studies of the period but also in our understanding of the everyday lives of the Orthodox people. However, this approach seems to generally be focused on specifically Orthodox aspects, neglecting other approaches that were not compatible within the official Or-

1 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).

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thodox doctrine. To further elaborate, there are countless philosophical currents, like Hermeticism, that resurfaced in the Western Christianities after the 15th century, eventually finding their way to the Greek-speaking philosophers of the Ottoman Empire. Scholars incorporated these philosophical and scientific currents into the Orthodox doctrine, developing them and using them to answer focal questions. However, their scientific contributions seem to be mostly ignored by historians, theologians, and scientists. Especially during the 17th century, the Greek Orthodox scientific communities were quite prolific and eager to accept, study, and modify "foreign" doctrines to offer explanations and philosophical answers to the questions of the time. In recent years, historiography has shifted its attention to the abundance of manuscripts and works produced by the hands of Orthodox philosophers, especially during the proliferation and influx of manuscripts from the West during the mid-17th century and onward. Scholars such as Theophilos Korydalleas,[2] Leo Allatios,[3] and many others, along with their works, have eventually received the attention they deserve from historical academia. Although this recent resurgence of interest in Orthodox scholarly works of the 17th century is noteworthy and essential, there have emerged some problems regarding the framework through which these sources are approached. The aforementioned issues, which will be elaborated on in the following lines, serve as motivation for this discussion of the life of Gerasimos Vlachos and a valuable primary source he produced: an original as-of-yet unstudied manuscript produced in the 17th century that is marked by the abundant Hermetic influences that co-existed with the theological and philosophical status quo of the period.

Gerasimos Vlachos (1605/7–1685) has drawn some minor attention from historians and researchers. One of the first historians to mention Gerasimos Vlachos is Konstantinos Sathas (1842–1914), in his collected works "Biographies of illustrious literary Greeks".[4] Sathas provides biographical details on the

2 For more details, see C. P. Marazopoulos, *Θεόφιλος Κορυδαλλέας: Ο Πρωτοφιλόσοφος Του Ελληνικού Νεοαριστοτελισμού* [Theophilos Korydalleas: the First Philosopher of Greek Neo-Aristotelianism] (Athens 2008).

3 For more details, see K. Hartnup, *'On the Beliefs of the Greeks': Leo Allatios and Popular Orthodoxy* (Leiden 2004).

4 K. Sathas, *Νεοελληνική φιλολογία: βιογραφίαι των εν τοις γράμμασι διαλαμψάντων Ελλήνων, από της καταλύσεως της Βυζαντινής Αυτοκρατορίας μέχρι της Ελληνικής Εθνεγερσίας* (1453–1821) [Neohellenic philology: biographies of the illustrious Greek scholars, from the end of the Byzantine Empire until the Greek Resurrection (1453–1821)] (Athens 1868).

life of Gerasimos Vlachos, alongside some information on his studies and research. The importance afforded to this figure is limited: Sathas' writing on Vlachos is roughly only three pages in length (in contrast to more famous scholars such as Theophilos Korydalleas, whose detailed biographical details fill more than 10 pages). There are very few comments on the manuscripts produced by Vlachos, and although he was listed among the "Illustrious Greeks", his works and achievements are overshadowed by those of his contemporaries. This last statement also seems to be true for modern historiography. Gerasimos Vlachos is perceived as a minor scholar following the Neo-Aristotelian current, writing in the shadow of the scholar who established Neo-Aristotelianism in the Greek Orthodox communities, Theophilos Korydalleas (1570–1646). Even though the scholar following of Gerasimos Vlachos is minor, there are some extensive dissertations produced by historians and scholars like Vasileios Tatakis, Dimitris Paradoulakis, Konstantinos Mertzios and others, who shed light to various topics regarding Vlachos' academic career and biography.[5]

But who was Gerasimos Vlachos? And why should historiography focus more on his scholarly work? To answer this question, some background on his career as a clergyman and scholar is required as these two roles deeply influenced his process of thinking and the works he produced. Gerasimos Vlachos was born on the island of Crete in 1605 or 1607. Details on his early life are scarce and fragmentary, with sources offering conflicting evidence.[6] This includes his alleged date of birth, with historiographies speculating about his birth date based on his date of death. Sathas does not provide an exact date of birth, but the archive of the Greek community of Venice states that Vlachos' death was

5 K. Mertzios, "Νέαι ειδήσεις περί Κρητών εκ των αρχείων της Βενετίας. Δ' Γεράσιμος Βλάχος" [New information on Cretans from the Venetian archives. IV: Gerasimos Vlachos], *Kritika Chronika*, 2 (1948), 281–297; idem, "Η διαθήκη του Γερασίμου Βλάχου του Κρητός" [The testament of Gerasimos Vlachos the Cretan], O *Mikros Hellinomnimon*, 2 (1960); V. Tatakis, *Ιεράσιμος Βλάχος ο Κρης (1605/7–1685): φιλόσοφος, θεολόγος, φιλόλογος* [Gerasimos Vlachos the Cretan (1605/7–1685): the philosopher, the theologian, the philologist] (Venice 1973); V. Tokmaki, "Η Αρμονία Οριστική του Γεράσιμου Βλάχου και το ζήτημα των πηγών του" [Gerasimos Vlachos' *Armonia Oristiki* and the problem of his sources], unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Ioannina, 2001; D. Paradoulakis, "Coexistence and Conciliation between Greek Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism in Venice : The Case of Gerasimos Vlachos (1607–1685) Cretan Metropolitan of Philadelphia", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Universitat Hamburg, 2021.

6 Tatakis, *Ιεράσιμος Βλάχος*, 3.

1685 at the age of 78 and that he therefore must have been born in 1607. On the other hand, the archives of the Saint Antonios church of Venice informs us that he died at the age of 80, and that consequently, he must have been born in 1605.[7] His early education was taken care of by the Sinaitic glebe of Saint Aikaterini in Crete.[8] For his higher studies, Vlachos appears to have moved to either Venice or Padua,[9] where he completed his studies. At some point, Vlachos must have been anointed as a priest and became active in his home place of Candia. In these prolific years of his life, Vlachos began producing some of his major works on Aristotelian philosophy, combining his career as priest with the responsibilities of a teacher-scholar and philosopher. Tokmaki mentions that this part of Vlachos' life revolved around preaching, teaching, and writing.[10] These were the years where Vlachos gave himself the self-proclaimed titles of "teacher of sciences and erudite theologian", which he used after his name in the majority of his manuscripts. These two titles, personally selected by Vlachos to describe his spiritual and philosophical erudition, are not a simple choice of words but a mirror that reflects his ways of thinking and approaching his philosophical quest and will be examined in more detail below.

Biography and works of Gerasimos Vlachos

Vlachos' early life coincided with the invasion of the Venetian-ruled Crete by Ottoman forces. During the great siege of Candia (1648–1669), Gerasimos Vlachos took an active role, supporting the Venetian and Cretan resistance and assisting the operations of the besieged. We are informed about his actions against the Ottoman invasion through a letter he sent to the *Serenissima Respublica* in 1656 requesting financial aid and patronage from the *Serenissimo Principe*. According to this letter, during the early years of the siege Gerasimos Vlachos feverishly preached against the Ottoman invasion to the people of the regions of Pediada and Mirambello, calling for their financial and active assistance. Further on in the letter, Vlachos mentions that he willingly put himself through the dangers of the ravaging plague for the public good and also offered

7 Tokmaki, "Η *Αρμονία Οριστική*", 22.
8 Mertzios, "Η διαθήκη του Γερασίμου Βλάχου", 14.
9 G. K. Spyridakis, "Γεράσιμος Βλάχος (1607;–1685)" [Gerasimos Vlachos (1607?–1685], *Epetiris tou Mesaionikou Archeiou* 2 (1940), 73.
10 Tokmaki, "Η *Αρμονία Οριστική*", 4.

his own residences (which produced 100 ducats per year) as impromptu barracks for the Venetian army. Finally, Vlachos' letter also mentions his donations in material and valuable for the defense of the city.[11]

During the period of 1649 to 1654, Gerasimos Vlachos decided to flee from his war-ravaged homeland to the safe haven of the Serenissima Republic of Venice. We have gained more details about this period in Vlachos' life through the dissertation of Dimitris Paradoulakis. Paradoulakis uncovered traces of the path Gerasimos Vlachos followed from Crete to the Venetian metropolis. "Already from 10 September 1649 Vlachos authorized someone named Sozon Barbaro as his procurator and commissioner in order to arrange the transfer of his movable property from Candia to Venice. At the same time, he appointed two more commissioners, Marco and Hieronymo Corner on 28 July 1649 and 7 March 1651, respectively, who would be responsible for his personal belongings (clothes, books, icons, silver, tapestries, etc.). During this time the latter would be stored in Venice."[12] Before his departure, Vlachos twice applied for the position of Professor at the School of the Greek Community in Venice (*Scuola di San Nicolo dei Greci, or Scuola dei Greci*), with both applications being rejected.[13] In October of 1654, Gerasimos Vlachos finally left Candia for Venice, accompanied by his two nephews Arsenios Kaloudis and Grigorios Vlachos, where his third application for the *Scuola di San Nicolo dei Greci* was accepted (in 1655) and he thus acquired the highly sought-after position of professor.[14] The academic and scholarly environment of Venice inspired Vlachos to produce some of his greatest works, all the while fulfilling his duties as a teacher. The Republic of Venice was a thriving metropolis characterized by religious, philosophical, and political tolerance. The Greek community of Venice had already built a Greek Orthodox church (*San Giorgio dei Greci*), a female monastery, and a school. Within this prosperous and academically thriving environment, Gerasimos Vlachos was exposed to various philosophical theories, in a school where many well-known and respected Greek teachers and philosophers left their mark, with Theophilos Korydalleas being among them. However, after facing financial difficulties (his teacher salary was not enough to sustain

11 Mertzios, "Νέαι ειδήσεις περί Κρητών".

12 Paradoulakis, "Coexistence and Conciliation", 36.

13 The exact dates are January 1651 and December 1653. Paradoulakis, "Coexistence and Conciliation", 40.

14 Ibid.

himself and his two nephews), Vlachos appears to have resolved the situation by requesting economic assistance from the *Principe* with the aforementioned letter sent in 1656. He was subsequently awarded with the lifelong monthly financial aid of 10 ducats.[15] Gerasimos Vlachos remained in Venice until 1662. During these years, Vlachos acquired a reputation for his erudition and respect and appreciation as a teacher, as well as a favorable position among Venetian authorities and the Greek community alike. The *Thesaurus of Encyclopedic Basis*,[16] a vocabulary of the vernacular Greek dialect with translations of entries in Ancient Greek, Latin, and Italian, and the *Harmonia*,[17] an encyclopedic collection of various definitions regarding scientific knowledge and the relationship between humans and God, were both produced during Vlachos' stay in Venice and are demonstrative of his prolific academic career.

Unfortunately for Gerasimos Vlachos, his failure to be re-elected as a teacher in the *Scuola di San Nicolo dei Greci* and his pre-existing financial issues forced him to appeal once again to the Venetian Senate in February 1662, requesting a position in the first vacant Orthodox monastery that would arise on the island of Corfu. In his work, Mertzios informs us of the positive reply of the Venetian Senate to this request on the 8th of February 1661 (1662),[18] through which Gerasimos Vlachos was offered the position of abbot in the monastery of the Virgin Mary of Paleopolis. Legal frictions between the Venetian Senate and the council of the monastery, which preferred a locally elected abbot, delayed his appointment, however, and Vlachos was only able to accept his new position in 1665.

He remained in this Corfu monastery for almost 15 years. During this period, Vlachos was forced to deal with local issues and power struggles between the Corfiot authorities and the Venetian Senate, which even threatened his position as an abbot. He also endured a destructive outbreak of the plague on

15 Mertzios, "Νέαι ειδήσεις".

16 The full title in Latin is *Thesaurus encyclopaedicae basis quadrilinguis. Cum Epithetorum delectu ac duplici Latinarum, ac Italicarum dictionum Indice. De pluribus antiquis ac Recentioribus Dictionariis colectus a P. Gerasimo Vlacho Cretensi, Abbate D. Georgii Scalotae, Sacri Evangelii concionatore, ac scientiarum in utroque idiomate*'.

17 The full title in Latin is *Harmonia definitiva entium, de mente Graecorum Doctorum, auctore Gerasimo Vlacho Cretensi, Abbate D. Georgii Scalotae, Sacri Evangelii concionatori, ac scientiarum Magistro*.

18 Mertzios, "Νέαι ειδήσεις", 12.

the island during the summer of 1673,[19] as well as spiritual and social unrest originating from the Jewish messianic movement of Sabbatai Sevi.[20] Sabbatai Zevi's foretelling that the end of the world would come in the year 1666 motivated many Jewish groups scattered across Europe and the Ottoman Empire to sell their property and move to Istanbul to seek the guidance of the prophet, further troubling the respective authorities with mass migration flows. With panic spreading even to the non-Jewish population, many Christian and Muslim preachers reacted by spreading anti-Jewish sermons, and Vlachos was no exception. In defense of the validity of the Orthodox faith against this newfound Jewish threat, Vlachos composed his treatise *Against the Jews*.[21] By structuring his main argument around the different interpretations of the Bible by the Jewish and Christian traditions, he aimed to present the fundamental differences between Christianity and Judaism and endorse the superiority of the first over the latter with theological arguments.[22] *Against the Jews* was not the only treatise that Vlachos wrote on Corfu. He wrote two more dissertations: *On Muhammad's Religion and Against the Turks*,[23] a theological dissertation of a similar tone to the aforementioned one, and *Teaching on the Pure Way to Teach the Divine and Holy Gospel*, a manual of methods to teach the Orthodox gospel. It is important to highlight that despite the spiritual and administrative challenges he faced, Vlachos never interrupted his career as a scholar. Even with the ever-increasing responsibilities of being an abbot, Gerasimos Vlachos continued his attempts to renovate the monastery of the Virgin Mary of Paleopolis, all the while producing his manuscripts.

The last chapter of Vlachos' prolific life finds him elected as Archbishop of Philadelphia, back in Venice. In these last four years of his life, between 1681 and 1685, the frail archbishop occupied himself with ecclesiastical, religious confes-

19 For the plague that struck Corfu in 1673, see the reports of the then Proveditore Generale da Màr Andrea Valier in K. M. Setton, *Venice, Austria, and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia 1991), 253–255.

20 For more details, see G. Koutzakiotis, *Attendre la fin du monde au XVIIe siècle - le messie juif et le grand drogman*, trans. D. Morichon (Paris 2014).

21 For additional details, see M. Manousakas, "Δύο ἀγνωστα ἐργα του Γερασίμου Βλάχου εις Αγιορειτικόν κώδικα" [Two unknown works by Gerasimos Vlachos in an Athonite codex], *Kritika Chronika*, 8 (1954), 55–60.

22 Paradoulakis, "Coexistence and Conciliation", 61.

23 *Περί της του Μωάμεθ θρησκείας και κατά Τούρκων*, Xenophontos Monastery of Mount Athos library, no. 213.

sional, educational, and social-philanthropic goals, until his timely death from apoplexy in either 1685 or 1687.[24] His prolific writing career comprised 12 treatises on rhetoric, philosophy, natural philosophy, and theology, with all of his books finding wide circulation in Ottoman and Christian regions alike. During his life, the Cretan archbishop enjoyed great admiration for his scholarly work, appreciation for his teaching activities, and respect for his scientific work. An extensive circle of scholars, academics, and theologians—both Greek and Italian—mourned his death. His close friend and then Chaplain of San Giorgio, the poet and painter of icons, Emmanuel Zane Bounialis (1610–1690), dedicated his religious book, a hymn in verses to Virgin Mary written in vernacular Greek, to Vlachos.[25] Gerasimos Vlachos was among the first theologians who did not remain within the narrow borders of theology. Instead, he attempted to combine the theological and scholarly status quo with research in other philosophical and scientific currents, in an attempt to broaden the limits of Orthodox understanding while reshaping the acceptance of ancient "heretical" knowledge in the Orthodox dogma of the time. His combination of scholastic Neo-Aristotelianism and Orthodox theology is indicated by the titles he introduced himself with at the beginning of most of his manuscripts: "priest-monk" (*ιερομόναχος*) and "preacher of the holy scripts" (*κήρυκος του Ιερού Ευαγγελίου*), alongside "teacher of sciences" *των επιστημών διδάσκαλος*). It is important to note here that the valuable contribution of Vlachos to the renovation and reshaping of philosophical studies in the Orthodox Greek-speaking communities surpasses the borders of Neo-Aristotelianism and is often underestimated, if not entirely ignored, by the majority of modern Greek historians and philosophers. In fact, in most historical accounts he is portrayed as a representative of Neo-Aristotelianism, a figure without further interest in terms of the history of modernity. However, some of his achievements have led historians to scour Greek and Venetian primary sources for details regarding his life. Scholars such as Tokmaki and Paradoulakis have collected and compiled rich knowledge about Vlachos' life. Furthermore, Tatakis, Psimenos, Tokmaki, and Karras[26] have delved into his academic output, and even though his works are currently

24 Paradoulakis, "Coexistence and Conciliation", 70.

25 Paradoulakis, "Coexistence and Conciliation", 71.

26 Tatakis, *Γεράσιμος Βλάχος*; Tokmaki, "Η *Αρμονία Οριστική*"; I. Karras, *Οι επιστήμες στην Τουρκοκρατία* [Sciences under Turkish rule], vol. II (Athens 1980); N. Psimenos, *Μελετήματα νεοελληνικής φιλοσοφίας* [Studies on modern Greek philosophy], vol. III: *Κορυδαλική*

perceived as products of the Neo-Aristotelian wave of the 17th century, at least they are included in the scientific and cultural heritage of Greek Orthodoxy.

Despite the aforementioned investigations into this figure, the work of Gerasimos Vlachos—or to be more specific, a certain aspect of it—continues to be generally overlooked by the historical community. Gerasimos Vlachos, a preacher, teacher, and archbishop, was among the scholars of the 17th century who effectively combined the Orthodox doctrine with various resurging esoteric movements that do not easily fit under the umbrella term of "Aristotelianism". Esoteric movements and their respective philosophies were generally not the focus of much study in Greek Orthodox communities during the 15th–18th century, despite various well-respected scholars and teachers accepting the knowledge they acquired from esoteric philosophies and incorporating it in their workbooks and manuscripts. Vlachos is, of course, not the sole "culprit" who studied and practiced esotericism. Athanasios Rhetor.[27] For example, another high-ranking clergyman and scholar, feverishly studied the art of alchemy, alongside theology and philosophy. Even Theophilos Korydalleas,[28] an esteemed scholar of the 17th century, did not shy away from using astrological predictions based on the Ptolemaic charts in his works. Transmutation and astrological predictions coexisted in the philosophical way of thinking of the 17th century, with philosophical works adapting and incorporating esoteric philosophies. In contrast to magical practices and rituals, which were considered by Orthodox scholars to be unscientific and full of superstition, astrology and alchemy were considered to be scientifically valid fields of knowledge.

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Περίοδος: Οι πρώτοι φιλοσοφήσαντες [Korydalleas' period: the first philosophers] (Ioannina 2008).

27 R. Franckowiak, "Athanasius Rhetor and the Greek Chemistry in the 17th Century Ottoman Empire", in E. Nikolaidis (ed.), *Greek Alchemy from Late Antiquity to Early Modernity* (Brepols 2014), 131–47.

28 V. Tsiotras, "Κλαύδιος Πτολεμαίος και Θεόφιλος Κορυδαλλεύς: τα αστρολογικά κείμενα" [Claudius Ptolemy and Theophilos Korydalleus: the astrological texts], *Σιναϊτικά Ανάλεκτα Α'* [Miscellanea sinaitica I] (Athens 2002), 171–208.

The manuscript *"Comments on Aristotle's Meteorologica"*

In Gerasimos Vlachos' commentary on *Meteorologica* by Aristotle, he offers a coherent guide to understanding the universe. By closely examining this unpublished manuscript we can say that Vlachos indeed adopts the Aristotelic methodology and method of philosophical exposition. However, as is revealed in his writings, he appears to be far more flexible and lenient toward non-Aristotelian alternatives and especially Hermeticism than would be expected for a mainstream scholastic figure. Thirteen copies of the original manuscript have survived until today. The dates of the copies vary from the mid-17th century to the 18th century. From the number of surviving copies, we can safely assume that *Comments on Aristotle's Meterologica* were moderately widespread and would have been available to the academic community of the period. The copy presented here is listed as the second most important copy in Karras' compilation on the Greek sciences under Ottoman rule.[29] The authentic copy resides in the Library of the Hellenic Parliament, with code B.T.B. MS 49. The title of the manuscript, as presented on the 5th recto page, is *Εις το α β°ν και γ°ν βιβλίον των μετεωρολογικών του Αριστοτέλους σχολαστικά ζητήματα εκδοθέντα παρά Γερασίμου Ιερομονάχου Βλάχου του Κρητός, κήρυκος του Ιερού Ευαγγελίου, και κοινού κατ' αμφοτέρας τας διαλέκτους των επιστημών διδασκάλου* [Scholastic chapters upon the 1st, 2nd and 3rd book of Aristotle's *Meteorologica*, issued by Gerasimos Vlachos the Cretan, the priest-monk, preacher of the holy scripts, and teacher of the sciences in both dialects].[30] The copy was part of Spyridon Milias' collection, as we can see from a marginal note on the same page, which provides an approximate date of 1728. The manuscript is divided into three parts. Each part is further subdivided into chapters or «*ζητήματα*». There are a total of forty-eight chapters divided in the three parts of the manuscript. Vlachos follows the peripatetic Aristotelian form of posing a question with *δόξα εστί*" or "*δόξα κατά τον φιλόσοφον*" which translates as "the common belief is" or "the belief of the philosopher is". Regarding the answer provided, Vlachos often starts with "*η ημετέρα θέσις*" ("our opinion"), and in many cases he also provides the answers of other scholars, either from the philosophical movements of the West of the time or presenting philosophies originating from the ancient corpus of knowledge. Vlachos' commentary does not cover Aristotle's full work, as his disser-

29 Karras, *Οι επιστήμες στην Τουρκοκρατία*.

30 Library of the Hellenic Parliament, Ms 49.

tation seems to focus on the first three tomes of the original work. In addition, Vlachos does not adhere to a specific flow based on the structure of Aristotle's work. Instead, Vlachos focuses his attention on specific questions. In the first section, Vlachos provides an explanation regarding the "astral influences", with his comments showing evidence of having been heavily inspired by the Hermetic world vision of a microcosm being closely tied to the astral macrocosm. The second chapter provides explanations for natural phenomena, following the Aristotelian philosophies of "exhalations", with the last chapter focusing on the alchemical theories of metallogenesis. In this chapter, Vlachos provides his opinion on the topic of metals. His opinion seems to be composed of three different theories: the theory of astral influences, the Aristotelian theory of exhalations, and the sulfur-mercury theory of the "chymists".

Esoteric approaches in Vlachos' philosophy

This work by Vlachos is extensive, filling more than 200 pages. The author dedicates extensive paragraphs to explaining the technical details of astral influences before analyzing these influences themselves and how they affect life in the sublunar world. The current paper examines some of the chapters addressed, or "*ζητήματα*" as they are referred to by Gerasimos Vlachos. After the analysis, we will take a brief look at the primary sources and the philosophical works selected by the Cretan scholar to support his arguments, as a way of delving into the knowledge that shaped his philosophical way of thinking and led to the writing of the manuscript. In these first three chapters that are presented in the first part of the manuscript, we focus mainly on the beliefs regarding astral influences held by Gerasimos Vlachos. The Aristotelian theory of exhalations and the sulfur-mercury theory are described in the second and third parts of the manuscript, respectively and they are going to be briefly examined.

The first chapter tackled by Gerasimos Vlachos focuses on whether celestial bodies influence the sublunar bodies. From the very beginning, Gerasimos Vlachos introduces the reader to the theories of astral influences and discusses whether they are true or not. He elaborates on the above question by stating that "The general belief is that the world is comprised of different parts and so the celestial bodies (*υπέρτατον μέρος του κόσμου*) influence the sublunar bodies (*κατώτατα μέρη του κόσμου*)."[31] He concludes by stating that the common belief

31 Library of the Hellenic Parliament, Ms 49, 5r.

is that the macrocosm influences the microcosm.[32] From even the first few sentences, Gerasimos Vlachos reveals his inclination towards hermetic cosmology. For Vlachos, understanding that the world is partitioned into an upper (celestial bodies such as comets, planets) and the lower realm (earth, humans, and the natural world), with the upper world greatly influencing the events of the lower (sublunar) world. The first chapter is essentially the cornerstone of hermetic philosophy ("as above, so below").

Moving to the answer provided to the first question, Gerasimos Vlachos states that the celestial bodies greatly influence the sublunar world. This belief is held by both philosophers and theologians alike (*Τα ουράνια σώματα εν τοίς υπό την σελήνην σώμασι ενεργούσιν. Η θέσις εστί κοινή των φιλοσόφων και θεολόγων*). He then proceeds by stating that the human being, representative of the microcosm, communicates with the macrocosm. The energy and influence of the macrocosm for Vlachos derives from the Christian God, and the human body is able to perceive this influence through his intellect. God controls the harmonious celestial bodies, and humans have imagination (*φαντασία*) in order to perceive the influence.[33] Vlachos concludes that such astral influences affect the imagination (which according to the author is the essential lens through which we perceive the world around us), and this is the way the macrocosm affects the microcosm.

Finally, in his conclusions Gerasimos Vlachos provides the reader with some astrological insights that stride further away both from Aristotelianism and Hermeticism alike.

> According to astronomers, the seven planets influence the stages of pregnancy, with each planet influencing each month as the embryo is being shaped. The first month is influenced by Saturn, the second by Jupiter, the third by Mars, the fourth by Mercury, the fifth by the Sun, the sixth by Venus, and the seventh by the Moon; the eighth is also influenced by Saturn, who is considered to be deadly to the embryo, and the ninth is again ruled by Jupiter, who is considered to be life bringing.[34]

The Cretan philosopher continues his examination on the issue by providing

32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 5r–5v.
34 Ibid., 6r–7v.

another analogy, this time connecting the planets with human parts and the stages of life. The human parts of the body correspond to a planet that protects them, and the five stages of life (infant, child, adolescent, adult, elder, senior) are assigned to planets accordingly. Vlachos concludes this last part with a quick glimpse into mercury-sulfur theory, which is discussed later in the manuscript and connects the seven planets with metals as well. It is important to highlight that these beliefs are put under the "Our beliefs" (*ημετέρα άποψις*) part of the chapter. By placing the beliefs perpetuated by astronomers here, we can safely assume that these astrological views were an integral part of Gerasimos Vlachos' philosophy, and possibly of the academic circles of Venice more generally. The writer seems to be well versed in astrological theories, further integrating them into his philosophical arsenal. Saturn is described as a deadly planet for the embryo, increasing the chances of a child being stillborn. On the other hand, Jupiter is described as life giving, protecting the ninth month of pregnancy. Furthermore, iatrosophical theories are imbibed with astrological elements in the correlation of the planets with the human parts.

In the second chapter, Gerasimos Vlachos focuses on the details of astral influence. He shifts his attention to the movement of the celestial bodies and the light that spreads through this movement as the main reason for the astral influence. After examining the theories provided by Avicenna and Aristotle, Gerasimos Vlachos concludes that both the movement of the stars and the spread of light are responsible for astral influences on the sublunar world. In the third chapter, Vlachos mentions a methodological problem that needs to be addressed, however. "In the earth, there are a multitude of material entities, like some metals, for example, which may be influenced by the celestial bodies even though neither movement nor light can reach them." The writer provides the example of the "magnetic" stone that magnetizes metals (the author considers this a perfect example of astral influence) even though it is buried deep in the core of the earth where the light cannot penetrate and the influence of planetary movement cannot reach. To tackle this problem, Gerasimos Vlachos claims that aside from the movement and light of the planets (which, of course, exert an influence), there is a third "apocryphal" mystical power that is named "*επιρροή*" (the literal translation would be "influence"). This "*επιρροή*" is not a result of light nor movement and can penetrate each and every body of the sublunar world.

Thus, the first three chapters of the manuscript *Εις το α β°ν καί γ°ν βιβλίον*

των μετεωρολογικών του αριστοτέλους σχολαστικά ζητήματα put the question of astral influences at the center. Gerasimos Vlachos does not deny their existence, and this fact should not surprise us as this was not an uncommon theory during the 17th century. Similar views can be found in the works of Theophilos Korydalleas, in which he also accepts the astral influences over the terrestrial. It is the dedication and determination of Gerasimos Vlachos to provide a coherent and scientific manual on understanding these heavenly powers that makes the manuscript so unique in Greek historical sources. By delving deep into Aristotelian, Platonic, Hermetic, and modern sources, Gerasimos Vlachos tries to find a balance between theology and philosophy in his tackling of the concept of the astral influences. This does not mean that Gerasimos Vlachos accepts every astrological or Aristotelian theory without question. Although the author accepted some iatrosophical and astrological theories without further explanation, he does not shy away from rejecting the theories of Aristotle, Hermes Trismegistus, Pico della Mirandola, and Albertus Magnus wherever they do not adhere to the general structure of his own theories[35]. Moreover, with a true scholastic methodology, he dedicates full paragraphs to opposing philosophies before deconstructing them. In order to remain concise, the full extent of the primary sources used by Gerasimos Vlachos will not be analyzed here; however, his erudition is certainly noteworthy and includes many theological works as well as a good number of other sources that can be characterized as esoteric such as "Asclepius" attributed to Hermes Trismegistus[36], the *Disputations Against Astrology* by Pico della Mirandola,[37] the theories of the Chaldean Oracles[38] and of the "astrologers"[39] etc.

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35 For example, Vlachos rejects the theory of Albertus Magnus who claims that there are four exhalations (Library of the Hellenic Parliament, Ms 49, 17r–20v). The same happens with the opinions of Pico della Mirandola (ibid., 10v–13r). On the other hand, the author seems to agree with the theories attributed to Hermes Trismegistus and never challenges them directly.

36 Library of the Hellenic Parliament, Ms 49, 4v.

37 Ibid., 10v.

38 Ibid., 13r–15v.

39 Ibid., 4v–7v.

Influential burning spheres and comets

To gain a better understanding of the astral influences and the esoteric connotations of the philosophy of Gerasimos Vlachos, we must investigate two specific chapters addressed in the manuscript: the 11th chapter and the 16th chapter. In the eleventh chapter, entitled "What is the movement and the prediction of the flaming meteors",[40] the Cretan scholar narrows down his research to a study of meteors and how their influence on the world can be used to predict the future. According to Vlachos, there are three results that we can expect when a flaming comet is observed in the night sky. First and foremost, we should expect pestilence. Due to the burning nature of the comet and the supposedly sulfurous surface, the comet's fumes contaminate the air around the path of the celestial body, resulting in infections and death. Second, great waves shall rise from the sea below the path while winds rise, bringing storms. Third and finally, if a fiery comet is observed, the death of a king should be expected. He bases this claim on a passage by Albertus Magnus, which reports that a fiery sphere appearing in the night sky predicted Caesar's death. In this passage, Gerasimos Vlachos does not follow his usual scientific way of providing sources and explaining the exact reasons for the comet's influence. Apart from the explanation provided for the first result expected from the observance of a comet (pestilence due to sulfurous fumes and great heat), there is no explanation for the other events to be expected. However, these are just statements of some negative results originating from the influence of a comet. In the sixteenth chapter,[41] Vlachos further describes the positive and negative effects of comets on human life and provides a more scientific approach in order to offer greater understanding for the reader:

According to the worldview in question, comets may foretell various positive and negative events. The mechanisms via which these events unfold originate from the planets, which have a direct bearing on comets. Depending on such planetary influence, the colors and outcomes of a comet's appearance may vary. If the comet glows in multiple colors, this portends that it is under the influence of the planet Mercury, and that eloquence and ingenuity will be observed in humanity. If the comet is influenced by Venus, this can only mean lust and lechery. In this specific sentence, Vlachos does not mention anything about the color. If the comet has a fiery glow, this indicates that it is influenced

40 Ibid., 51r–52r.

41 Ibid.

by Mars and that war and destruction will follow in its wake. If a golden color is observed, then the comet is influenced by Jupiter and worthy kings will ascend the throne. Finally, the planet Saturn is commanding the comet if it features darker colors, and only ills and bad omens are foretold when this is observed.

In the discussion of this chapter, Vlachos utilizes the Aristotelian qualities of matter alongside the theory of exhalations to provide a "scientific" guideline for what to expect when a comet (with dark colors) appears in the sky:

> First, we have to expect great famine due to the heat of the comet, which parches the earth. Second, winds and storms will follow, with an overflow of the seas. Additionally, earthquakes will destroy cities and mountains. Due to the great energy the comet has, the exhalations residing in the earth are violently pushed out, causing this mayhem. Pestilence comes next due to the dry, thick, and warm exhalation of the comet, which corrupts the air close to its path. If animals breathe this air they shall become ill, causing famine.[42]

Humans are not immune to the influence of comets, with Gerasimos Vlachos stating that

> The great temperature of the comet intrigues the vital organs of the human, especially the gallbladder. Since rage originates from the gallbladder, this irritation transforms to rage and rage to thirst for vengeance. Thus, wars shall fall upon humanity.[43]

Furthermore, the death of a king should be expected when a black comet appears. Vlachos explains that this death will come either naturally or violently: natural death due the extreme heat that the comet brings—the bodies of kings being more sensitive and thus more susceptible—and violent death due to wars kings will wage against each other.

Concluding his thoughts on comet prophesying, Gerasimos Vlachos offers important advice to the observer of comets to not always trust the signs of the sky but analyze them and wait before reaching any conclusions.

> Just as the advisor does not rush to conclusions when he instructs the king, so the sight of a comet does not necessarily mean bad omens since it is possible that

42 Ibid., 34r–35v, 51v–52r.

43 Ibid.

the counterforce of earth will disperse the exhalations, preventing the negative events.[44]

The sections of Gerasimos Vlachos' work focusing on comets offers a great opportunity to observe the dual nature of his approach. On the one hand, Gerasimos Vlachos adheres to the Aristotelian approach of the exhalations and qualities of matter and tries to approach the topic in an academic way. Despite the fact that he did not offer any comment on the reasons why comets affect humanity in the first part, he compensates in the second part, using the Aristotelian approach to provide the reader with logical answers derived from the theories accepted by academia. On the other hand, he does fall into astrological paths despite his attempt to find scientific reasoning behind the comet sightings. However, his attempts to offer a rational explanation for the astral influences is noteworthy. The comets may bring war and destruction, but this happens due to the "natural" reaction of the irritation of the gallbladder by the warm exhalation of the comet. Kings may die, but this happens due to their non-resilient bodies, which are prone to the heat of the comet. There is always a logical explanation (at least in the eyes of Vlachos) based on evidence derived from the academic Aristotelian achievements of the period and not in some supernatural or divine power that dictates the lives of humans. Nevertheless, Vlachos does not avoid esoteric beliefs in his manuscript. His approach and core beliefs are based both in Aristotelianism and Hermeticism alike, with Aristotelianism representing the more "scientific" part and Hermeticism the esoteric one. He is a firm supporter of the macrocosm/microcosm theory and an adamant believer in astral influences. He continuously supports the theories of cometology, to the extent that comets can even cause death and destruction, and as we will see in the next paragraph, he additionally supports alchemical sulfur-mercury theories as well. In the next paragraph, we will delve deeper into the chapter where Gerasimos Vlachos reveals his knowledge of the theories regarding the genesis of metals and we will put his personal opinion on the subject under the microscope.

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44 Ibid.

Alchemical theories in the manuscript

In a less extensive part of the manuscript, Vlachos offers his views on metallogenesis and astral influences on the properties of metals. Gerasimos Vlachos dedicates only two chapters to the metals, along with some other brief mentions throughout the dissertation, in contrast to astral influences which occupy almost the full length of the first part and appear again in the third. Despite the cursory appearance of these ideas in the manuscript, it is more than enough to give us an indication of the wide range of sources Gerasimos Vlachos was familiar with regarding the topic of metallogenesis and alchemy, as well as his own opinions on these subjects.

The first appearance of metals in the theories of Gerasimos Vlachos is in the first chapter of the manuscript, where he connects the metals and their attributes with the seven planets.[45] Further down in the same paragraph, he attributes some properties of the "magnetic" stone to astral influences, in order to support his argument of the apocryphal "*επιρροή*". Of course, the focus of this paragraph is not metals, and this is the main reason there is no other detail or comments regarding the origins of metals. However, in the eleventh chapter of the third part, Vlachos decided to dedicate an entire chapter to metallogenesis, which is entitled "What is the reason for the genesis of metals?".[46] He begins the paragraph by stating that the common knowledge regarding metallogenesis is that metals originate from the two different exhalations of the earth. Putting forward the theories of Aristotle, of Plinius, and of Albertus Magnus, he claims that the "*πνευματωδεστέρα*" or "dry exhalation" creates certain metals, including sulfur, while the other exhalation, "*ατμιδωδεστέρα*" or "moist exhalation" is responsible for the creation of the rest of the metals, including gold, silver, etc.

The subsequent section is of great importance. Gerasimos Vlachos mentions some well-known theories regarding the creation of metals. An interesting thing to note is that among the six sources cited by the author, he mentions the theories of the "chymists" (and later, he agrees with them) and of the "astrologers". According to Vlachos, the chymists claim that sulfur and mercury are created from the *ατμιδωδεστέρα* exhalation and the rest of the metals are created by the combination of mercury and sulfur. The theory of the astrologers' claims that

45 Ibid., 4v–6v.

46 Ibid., 177r–180v.

metals are created by the seven planets, with planetary influences determining their attributes and shapes.

After Gerasimos Vlachos cites eight different sources from philosophers who focused on the creation of metals, he offers his own opinion on the matter. Gerasimos seems to accept the Aristotelian theory of metallogenesis, which claims that metals are created by the cooling of the *ατμιδωδεστέρα* exhalation. Furthermore, he also agrees with the theories of the chemists in that the first metals created by this process are sulfur and mercury, with the rest of the metals being a mixture of the two prime metals. He does not seem to disagree with the theories of the astrologers, however, stating that the ultimate agent or "*ποιητικό αίτιο*" for the creation of metals would be the astral influence of the planets. He continues by claiming that metals cannot be found across the entire Earth, but only in places like forests and deep caverns where the sulfurous and mercurial exhalations are abundant and the *ατμιδωδεστέρα* exhalation can cool enough to form them. After offering some details on the structure and creation of metals and analyzing their inherent qualities, Gerasimos Vlachos ends this part by commenting on how the exhalation, in combination with the cold quality of the Earth, contributes to the creation of valuable gems.

Gerasimos Vlachos's treatment of this topic is invaluable for the researcher of esotericism in Greek Orthodox communities. Although it lacks direct esoteric philosophies (for example, Western alchemy or Christian Kabbalah) or even alchemical recipes for the creation or transmutation of metals, it reveals the erudition and the flexibility in Gerasimos Vlachos' philosophical approach to metals. We must also bear in mind that unlike the Western historiography where astrological, alchemical, and esoteric manuscripts are abundant, this is one of the very few dissertations in which a scholar (especially a clergyman scholar) focuses on astral influences, alchemical theories, and Aristotelianism, even providing source-based annotations for a better understanding of celestial influences and the qualities of metals. The sulfur-mercury theory had its roots in the work of Aristotle. "Meteorology" was adopted and became widespread through the works of Jabir ibn Hayyan, an Arab scholar of the ninth century, and became the basis of all theories of metallic composition until the 18th century.[47] Gerasimos Vlachos seems to be quite adept with this theory, to the

47 J. A. Norris, "The Mineral Exhalation Theory of Metallogenesis in Pre-Modern Mineral Science", *Ambix*, 53/1 (2006), 43–65.

point that he accepts it as the correct way of understanding the composition of metals. This fact is not remarkable when compared to the Western products of philosophy. In the Greek Orthodox context, however, there is a dearth of academic discussions regarding topics like the astral influences and alchemy in the early modern period. With the exceptions of Athanasios Rhetor, who wrote an extensive dissertation on alchemy, and Theophilos Korydalleas, who simply mentions and accepts the possibility of foretelling the future through the stars, and countless, nameless, low-quality grimoires meant for the laity, Gerasimos Vlachos' interest in these topics stands out for the scientific scholastic views he espouses regarding Aristotelic issues of celestial influence in his quest to acquire a better understanding of the sky and the surrounding world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the manuscript *Εις το α β°ν καί γ°ν βιβλίον των μετεωρολογικών του Αριστοτέλους σχολαστικά ζητήματα* produced by Gerasimos Vlachos is not esoteric or apocryphal per se. It lacks the philosophical mysticism and complexity that can be observed in the Gnostic or Neoplatonic texts, and it does not elevate the celestial bodies to supernatural actors who influence the human world entirely based on their own will, as often observed in Hermetic works. However, the manuscript tackles the issues of the astral influences and alchemy through a strict Aristotelian approach, following the scholastic methodologies in order to provide answers. After all, Aristotelianism greatly influenced the course of both astrology and alchemy, and since the original Meteorology by Aristotle tackles these issues, Vlachos' commentary on *Meteorology* must tackle them as well. Vlachos is quite well versed in esoteric philosophies, however, and this seems to have exerted a great influence on his philosophical framework. Aristotle, Plato, Plotinus, Hermes Trismegistus, Psellos, Albertus Magnus, Marsilio Ficino Pico della Mirandola, and Francesco Piccolomino, scholars with a well-known interest in esoteric sciences (either in terms of Neoplatonic aspects, alchemical philosophies, or astrological/Hermetic approaches) are often cited and called to support Vlachos' claims. Even when Vlachos mentions their theories in order to deconstruct them, he seems to be quite adept with their philosophical views and the finer details of their frameworks. The focus on the esoteric aspects of the manuscript may thus be a little unfair towards Vlachos. In many instances, Vlachos seems to accept old astrological beliefs without much re-

search, but it seems that he tried his best to follow the scientific scholastic approach and avoid superstitions and doctrines that were considered unscientific. In doing so, he spent countless pages attempting to systemize and understand all aspects of the astral influences and basing his claims on the Aristotelian approach before proceeding to these astrological additions. In certain pages, the content of the text leads us to assume that it was mainly Hermeticism and Neoplatonism that influenced Vlachos' philosophy, to the point that he accepts some structures (such as the microcosm/macrocosm dichotomy or the linking of the planets with childbirth, etc.) as a priori true and thus decided to add them to his manuscript without further research. The outcome of this is one of the very few Greek manuscripts produced by a high clergyman, acclaimed scholar, and teacher of sciences to tackle these matters. As the historiography of early modern Greek esotericism continues to develop, manuscripts such as the one presented here are invaluable in that they demonstrate that the esotericism was destined not only for the laity (through magic rituals and talismans) but troubled and occupied the minds of even some of the best scholars Orthodoxy produced. One of the hopes for this paper is that it will increase interest in the topic of early modern Greek esotericism, as there is much more to be uncovered. Investing time and effort into further examination of this topic of study will certainly lead to the disclosure of manuscripts that can provide further insights into Orthodox esotericism.

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D. Sources

Introduction from Aḥmed Bīcān Yazıcıoġlu's *ʿAcāʾibüʾl-maḫlūḳāt*

With more than forty copies, Aḥmed-i Bīcān (d. after 1465)'s abridged translation of al-Qazwīnī's *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* is one of the most copied Ottoman geographical texts. Aḥmed-i Bīcān was an Ottoman scholar and mystic from Gelibolu. He was a disciple of Ḥacı Bayram Velī and he got the sobriquet "Bīcān", 'lifeless' due to his ascetic way of life.

The copy of his translation at the Sadberk Hanım Museum contains chapters on the description of the universe, planets, angels, days, months, seas, mountains, rivers, minerals, stones, animals and plants. It also presents a south-oriented world map where the southernmost part of the map is marked by the Mountains of Moon, attributed as the source of the Nile and the northernmost part is marked as the lands of Bulgar and the land of Gog and Magog. The world is surrounded by the all-Encompassing Ocean, and the names of the seas are dispersed within it due to lack of space. Gelibolu, the town where Aḥmed-i Bīcān lived is inserted into the map between Europe (*Frenc*) and Istanbul.

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[1b] This book is *Wonders of Creation*. In the name of Allāh the compassionate, the merciful. Praise be to God, the Lord of the Universe, and blessings and peace be upon the most blissful of (all) creatures, Muḥammad, and his family and his companions altogether.[1] Thereafter, says Yazıcıoğlu Aḥmed Bīcān—may Allāh be pleased with him—an affectionate friend of learned men and a servant of the poor: The reason for [the composition of] this book occurred to me while I contemplate about the creations that I should compile some wonders of the universe. Specifically, universal rulers in the time of Alexander had gathered and revealed all strange things in the universe, from the Throne of [God] to the Earth. However, since that work was in Arabic, the uneducated of our land were unable to make use of it. Thanks to the high endeavor of my Sheikh, Ḥācī Bayram Velī, the Sultan of Sheikhs, the Pole of the seekers of truth, I compiled this book. I hope that it will be read.

It is not an attainment [of skill][2] to look at the universe only by eye; even an animal looks at it [in this way] like man does. On the contrary, [attainment of skill] is to think about the intention of what is perceived. To know the truths of the universe by fair means is the cause of earthly pleasure **[2a]** and ethereal benefits. And they only accrue for those informed about the conceivable and the perceived.

I compiled this book in Gallipoli when Ġāzī Meḥmed Ḫān conquered Istanbul in the year of 857. It shall be known that, by wonder, philosophers refer to the astonishment that befalls man when he does not know the reason for something or does not know the characteristics of its effect. Now reflect on the greatness and sublimity of the present universe and even reflect on the heavens revolving differently, some [revolve] like a mill, some like a baldric, some like a water-wheel, and reflect on some spheres standing without pillars, or stars whose risings and settings vary. Although the cycles of the heavens vary, [the stars] move uniformly on [the sphere] of the signs of the zodiac; and reflect on the forms of the heavens; some are white, some scarlet, some silver, some gold and some ruby, and some in the shape of a pearl. And reflect on the movement of the Sun in the fourth heaven; it passes through 28 [lunar] houses in a year and arrives back at its spot and it shows much variety day and night [?]. **[2b]** And reflect on the Moon, how much light it acquires from the Sun and how it substitutes for the Sun during the night, and how it becomes a full moon and a crescent, and even how the Sun and the Moon are unveiled [following

1 A customary Arabic phrase used at the beginning of the text to praise Allāh and the Prophet Muḥammad.

2 In some other copies it appears as *kemāl-i maʿrifet*.

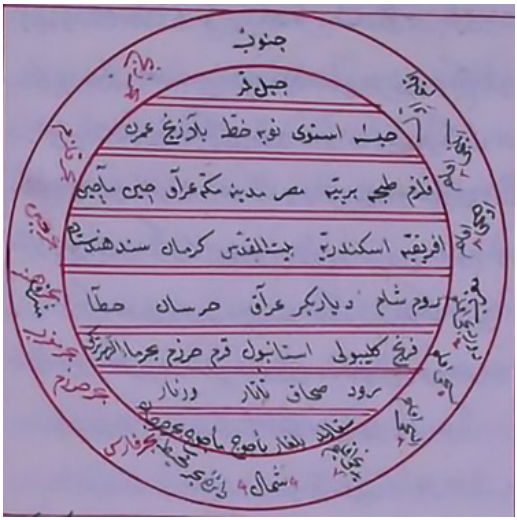
an eclipse]. Reflect on how the stars fall from the heavens[3] and thunder and flashes of lightning become fire, and how stone rains, and rain and snow fall and various winds come about, and [reflect on] how the clouds carry water across the air and how they revolve in compliance with the wisdom of the elements of the universe and how drops from the clouds get separated and become rain. If drops were gathered together in a certain place and then flowed from there, they would riddle the Earth with holes and destroy the crops and rain in streams; animals would perish and they [the drops] would permeate into their skin.[4] And reflect on the winds; some drive the clouds, some scatter the clouds, and some gather them again, and some squeeze them until it rains, and some make trees grow leaves, yield fruit, and shed leaves. Each of them is [a different] variety. In total, there are thirty-two varieties. And even reflect on at the lands, how they were spread so that they became a bed for the people, and He [God] made the upper side of ground an abode for the living while underneath is an abode for the dead, and held the Earth firm with mountains **[3a]** so that it keeps still.

He created water on the peaks of the mountains, like treasure, always emerging below to grow clean grass for the animals to feed on and not to perish. And reflect on the seas: each is like a gulf from the Encircling Ocean, and in comparison with the Encircling Ocean, the inhabited world is like a small island, and there are twice as many extant things in the seas as there are on land, or even more, and reflect on the mother of pearl in the water, and then the pearl inside that, and reflect on how coral and ambergris come from the water. And reflect on the minerals, some melt like gold and silver and naphtha, sulfur and tar, and some do not, like turquoise. And reflect on the various plants and the kinds of fruits and the different forms, colors, tastes, and scents, and reflect on how one seed forms several fruits and in every fruit there are plentiful benefits, and reflect on the meadows, and reflect on the animals: some fly, some walk, and some have eight feet while some have forty and some one hundred. Part on the Days: Now the days are six in number. God decrees in His Noble Qur'an as follows: "He [God] who created the heavens and the Earth in six days.[5]" So seven celestial spheres are created in stages. Here it is **[3b]**

3 Probably refers to perseid (göktaşı yağmuru) or shooting stars.

4 Here the text says "derisine sinir akmazdı". In another manuscript I read it as "postuna sinip akmazdı". Therefore I translated it as "sinip" rather than "sinir".

5 This is a reference to the Quranic verse 7:54.



You are to know that God created the substance of the Earth in one day, and in one day He created the forms of the whole Earth, and in one day He created the substance of the heavens, and in one day He created all forms, and in two days He created all the mountains and the stars and He created the people, and He created the creations on Earth from that wind, and He created some of them from fire and water, and some from water and Earth.

Those were inanimate creations. After that, the minerals, and then plants, and [then] animals and [then] men were created. Part: It should be known that all extramental entities are divided into two: The first [type] are those for which we never know the true essence and form, such as the Throne and the Footstool, and the angels, djinn, and humans. We never know the reality of these. And the second [type] are those that we know all about. We can understand the lands and the heavens and the stars by observing how they revolve around each other. We know about the mountains and the mist and mineral[s] and plant[s] and animal[s], and what is between the Earth and the heavens through to the clouds, the rains, the snow, and flashing thunderbolts. All of these are things [**4a**] that can be observed. None of them act without wisdom.

Part on the description of Spica [the star α Virginis]: Philosophers surmised that heaven is a simple body, its form is spherical, it is nested, and its centre moves. Upon this centre, the heaven is neither light nor low nor hot. It is neither cold nor

humid, nor dry. The first of heaven is made of green chrysolite. The second one is of yellow ruby. The third is scarlet ruby. The fourth is white silver. The fifth is scarlet gold. The sixth is white pearl. The seventh is made of white light. They are all one sphere.

The lowest are determined according to the [four basic] elements. First is the sphere of the Moon, above that is the sphere of Mercury, and then the sphere of Venus; above that is the sphere of the Sun, and then the sphere of Mars; above that is the sphere of the Jupiter and then the sphere of Saturn; above that is the sphere of the Fixed Stars, and above that, finally, is the greatest sphere. Each sphere has its own place. It moves in its own orbit. It does not transfer to anywhere else and the movement of the heavens is the fastest. It became evident in the science of geometry that the Throne moves nine thousand miles, just as a riding horse lifts its foot **[4b]** and puts it back on the ground again. And the movement of the Throne is from the East to the West, and it gets seventy-thousand different colors every day, and the sphere of the Fixed Stars and the spheres of the planets are from West to East, and those nine spheres contain the circle yet the center is the center of the universe and there is a sphere which does not contain a surface like the sphere of epicycles, and there is also a sphere that has only one star while there is a sphere whose star we do not know, like the Fixed Stars, and there is a sphere that has no star like the Throne. It is called the sphere of Atlas [the Ninth Sphere].

Part: The philosophers came to an agreement that the thickness of the Moon is a hundred and eighteen thousand sixty-six (118,066) miles. In the science of mathematics, the Moon's gain [of the light] comes from the Sun, and the Moon is related to common people, liars, informers, and the envious; and it stands still for every two nights and a third of a night, and it covers the sphere in a distance of a month, and the mass of the Moon constitutes one part of thirty-nine parts of the Earth and its cycle is a hundred fifty-two [152] miles and its diameter is four hundred and forty [440] miles. And its mass is dense, dark and disposed [to the light?]. **[5a]** In terms of light, it appears like a two sided mirror. One of its sides faces the Sun and the other faces the Earth. Whenever it approaches the Sun, its light decreases; when they do not face each other, the light of the Moon increases. This is how the full moon and the crescent appear. And the reason for its eclipse is that the shadow of the Earth comes between the Sun and the Moon. In this situation, the Moon reverts to its own dark essence since the Sun is larger than the Earth. In this situation, the shadow of the Earth adopts the shape of a cone and therefore the lines of the external rays do not coincide with the Sun.
When it is connected to the circuit of the Earth, the direction of the Moon chang-

es. [The shadow of] the Earth takes on the form of a cone. When the width of the Moon is not larger [than the shadow of the Earth] , the whole of the Moon is eclipsed from the Ninth Sphere[?]. When the width of the Moon becomes [to the shadow], then part of it [sees the Sun] and part of it [sees] the Earth and then it is partially eclipsed. When it is eclipsed, while the light of the Moon increases, the meat and skin of animals become dry and their hair becomes long. Bird eggs become white, men tend to sit and sleep more, and fish become fatty and wild beasts have more prey, and there are more fruits and the harvest is good and scents **[5b]** become pleasant. And when the Moon is in its last quarter, all of these conditions are reversed.

Part on the Milky Way: In the sky, the Milky Way is composed of small stars that clustered together. Arabs referred to it as the Mother of the Stars. Some [of the stars] cover some others, and they appear exactly like clouds. Part on Mercury: Regarding its motion, it arrives in the East from the West in one year and its thickness is three hundred thousand eighty-eight (300,088) miles and its nature is composite. It becomes auspicious with the auspicious [planets] and inauspicious with the inauspicious [planets], and its mass is equal to one part of twenty-two parts [of the mass of the Earth]. Its cycle is four hundred twenty (420) miles and its diameter is two hundred seventy-three (273) miles. It remains in each sign of the zodiac for about twenty-seven (27) days. It is associated with viziers, members of the council of state, scribes, standard-bearers, merchants, and teachers.

Part on Venus: It is known as "the Little Auspicious". In terms of motion, it is similar to Mercury, but sometimes it goes before the Sun or sometimes after it, and the thickness of this sphere is three thousand seven hundred ninety-five (3795) miles. It is associated with servants, women, musicians, and libertines, and its mass is equal to one part of thirty-four parts of it and its diameter is four hundred ninety **[6a]** four [494] miles, and it stays in each sign [of the zodiac] for twenty-nine (29) days. Anyone who becomes disheartened and stares at Venus has their low-spiritedness disappear.

Part on the Sun: It is the most auspicious [planet]. The cycle of the sphere of the Sun is three hundred sixty (360) days in a year and its motion is from the East to the West, and the thickness of its sphere is three hundred thousand times fifty-five thousand seventy-four (300,000 x 55,074) miles. In terms of mass, it is the greatest star, and in terms of light, it has more light than any other star, and in the sphere, the Sun is like the Sultan and the stars are like soldiers; the Moon is like a vizier and Mercury is like a scribe and Venus is like a servant and Mars is like a commander

and Jupiter is like a judge and Saturn is like a treasurer. The sphere is like regions, while the sign [-s of the zodiac] are like cities, and degrees are like villages and minutes are like neighborhoods, and the Fixed Stars are like stations.

The Fourth Heaven is there so that the whole universe will be in order and its benefit becomes complete. If [the Sun] were positioned higher, the universe would perish, and if it were positioned lower, the universe would be destroyed because of the heat. The mass of the Sun is one hundred sixty-six (166) times that of the Earth plus one-quarter [of that amount], plus one-eighth [of that total] and its diameter is forty-one thousand and ninety-nine (41,990) miles. **[6b]** The reason for [the Sun's] eclipse is that the Moon comes in between the light of the Sun and us, and that is why the mass of the Moon looks like a black ball, covered beyond. When it comes closer, the Sun is eclipsed between the tail and the head [of the Moon].

Part on Mars: It is known as the "Little Inauspicious" and its nature is hot and dry. It completes its circulation around the twelve signs [of the zodiac] in one year, ten months, and twenty-two days and returns to its place [of origin], and its thickness is twenty thousand times one thousand [20,000 x 1000] and three hundred thousand [300,000] and seventy-six thousand [76,000] and nine hundred and ninety-eight [998] miles. It is in the Fifth Heaven and is related to executioners, highwaymen, and intriguers and its mass is equal to one and a half as related to the Earth and it stays in each sign for forty days.

Part on Jupiter: Its nature is warm-blooded. It circulates through all the signs in eleven years, ten months, and fifteen days and its thickness is twenty thousand times one thousand and three hundred thirty thousand and four hundred and thirty-two [20,000 x 1000 + 330,432: 20,330,432], and it is the most auspicious planet. It is related to chiefs, sultans, and viziers and its mass equals eighty-four times that of the Earth; its diameter equals four times that of the Earth and it moves five minutes in one day.

Part on Saturn: **[7a]** It circulates through all the signs [of the zodiac] in twenty-nine years, five months, and six days and its thickness is twenty times one thousand and six hundred thirty-six thousand and six hundred and six (20 x 1000 + 636,000 + 606). It is related to Turks and commoners [the common people], and its nature is cold and dry. It is the most inauspicious [planet] and its mass is equal to eighty-one times that of the Earth and its diameter is forty times that of the Earth. If they ask how you measure the heavens and the stars with regard to miles, the answer is: In the science of geometry, it becomes evident with certain proofs that for every type

of work there are [capable] men [*Fe-inne li-külli ʿamelin ricālen*]. The inhabitants of the heavens are angels and angels are made of a simple essence. They have life and logic [stemming] from the sacred [Being]. They are [removed] from darkness of desire, and carnal afflictions and they are creature[s] of various forms, they are creations for the betterment of the [other] creations. If they ask how it is known that there are angels in the spheres of space, the answer is [to ask] how it would be compatible with the wisdom of God if He made the spheres devoid of His light? This is the situation of creation: [God] did not leave the space of the deepest part of the seas devoid of animal species and God did not leave the air devoid of various kinds of birds and He did not leave the dry land devoid of kinds of predators **[7b]** and wild animals and He did not leave the darkness devoid of species of reptiles and insects.

SOURCE: Aḥmed Bīcān Yazıcıoğlu, *ʿAcā'ibü'l-maḫlūḳāt*. Sadberk Hanım Museum Library, No. 481–1, fols 1b–7b.

Translation by Feray Coşkun.[6]

6 I am grateful to Taha Yasin Arslan, Marinos Sariyannis, Uğur Köroğlu, Selim Sırrı Kuru and A. Tunç Şen for their comments on my translation.

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Examples of translated materials for the study of Ottoman occultism II

A mid-sixteenth century Bayrami sheikh's lettrist predictions for the future, and his methods:

> The reason for al-Fatiha to be in the beginning of the book, is that in the letters of *Bi-smi l-lāhi* is to be found the caliphate from Adam up to Muhammad. Muhammad Mustafa began with the letters of *al-ḥamdu li-l-lāhi*; in the letters of *al-ḥamdu li-l-lāhi*, there is Muḥammad and Aḥmad. The letters of *rabbi l-ʿālamīn* are the letters of the four friends [the first four caliphs] [a marginal note remarks that Hasan and Husayn are found in the two ḥ*a* of ar-raḥmāni r-raḥīm]. From then on up to Osman, [the caliphate] was in the letters of *ar-raḥmāni r-raḥīm*, *Māliki yawmi d-dīn*. The caliphate of Sultan Alāu'd-dīn began with the letters of *yawmi d-dīn*; and the House of Osman with *'iyyāka naʿbudu*. Now it is in the letters of *ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭa l-mustaqīm*. When Fatiha reaches its end, when its letters finish, the House of Osman will not stop... We are now in the year 922; now up to the year 1450 the caliphate will be at the House of Osman. Reaching the letters of *'anʿamta*, the son of one of the daughters of the House of Osman will rise to the sultanate, but he will go promptly, and kingship will be again at the House of Osman. When the letters reach again *al-ḥamdu*, then Ahmed will appear. He will not have to belong to this line, but he may belong as well. From their line, Ali and Veli will come.[1]

1 The full text of al-Fatiha: [1] Bi-smi l-lāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm [2] al-ḥamdu li-l-lāhi rabbi l-ʿālamīn [3] ar-raḥmāni r-raḥīm [4] Māliki yawmi d-dīn [5] 'iyyāka naʿbudu wa-'iyyāka nastaʿīn [6]

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... If one asks why he [Baba Ḥamdī?] has the form of the name "Settār", he must know the natures of the letters (*ṭabāyiʿ-i ḥurūf*) and to understand. For instance: "Settār" has four letters. Firstly, the letter *sin* belongs to the letters of water; its number is six [by adding the digits of its *ebced* value, 6+0]. Secondly, *te* belongs to the letters of air; its number is four [same way: 4+0+0]. Thirdly, *elif* belongs to the letters of fire; its number is one [*ebced* value 1]. Fourthly, *ra* belongs to the letters of earth; its number is eight [for this see below]. Now this rule comes with taking one tenth of the numbers of the letters. *Sin* is sixty [in the *ebced* system]; its tenth is six, so its number remains six. Six is the number corresponding to *vav* [in *ebced*], so *sin* becomes *vav*. Thus we took *vav* out of *sin*; *dal* out of *te* [actually, by taking its hundredth rather than tenth: *te* is 400, *dal* is 4]; *elif* out of *elif*; *ḥa* out of *ra* [for this see the explanation below; the value of *ra* is 200]. Thus we have four letters, *vav*, *dal*, *elif*, *ḥa*: this corresponds to *vāḥid* ("one"). By consequence, there are two forms of effects, both similar to each other. It is because *vāḥid* is the esoteric form (*ḥurūf-i bāṭınīsi*) of *settār*:

ḥa 8 *ra* – earth, *elif* 1 *elif* – fire, *dal* 4 *te* – air, *vav* 6 *sin* – water. Air prevails; because four prevails over six, eight and one.

Question: If they say, "from the name *settār* comes *devāb* ("beasts"); because the one tenth [actually, one hundredth] of *ra* is two, which bears the letter *ba*"?

Answer: The last letter of each name corresponds to its sign (*buruc iʿtibārı üzerinedir*). That is why we do not take the tenth of *ra*, but subtract two from ten; the difference is eight, and this is the reason the letter *ḥa* [8 in the *ebced* system] is produced. In every name, the first letter shows its element (ʿunṣurī), the second its nature i.e. its star (*ṭabiʿīdir yaʿni kevkebdir*), the third its heavens (*felekī*) and the fourth its zodiac sign (*burūcī*). The rule of *cifr* is this: they subtract [successively] by four from the first letter of every name; by seven from the second letter; by nine from the third; and by twelve from the fourth [*ra* has the value 200; by subtracting sixteen times the number twelve we get 8, the value of *ḥa*. Ibn Isa does not explain why this procedure is applied only in the last letter of the world].

Saruhânî İlyas ibn Îsâ Akhisarî, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi (XVI. yüzyıl)*, eds. Sezai Küçük – Ramazan Muslu (Akhisar: Akhisar Belediyesi 2003), 197, 235–236.

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ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭa l-mustaqīm [7] Ṣirāṭa l-laḏīna ʾanʿamta ʿalayhim, ġayri l-maġḍūbi ʿalayhim wa-lā ḍ-ḍāllīn.

A Celveti sheikh's worldview:

The world of incorporeal existence (*al-mujarradāt*) is called "world of *jabarūt*". The people of *cabarūt* are entities with spiritual forms (*ṣuwar rūḥānīyya*). Incorporeal souls are the same as incorporeal minds (*wa l-nufūs al-mujarrada wa l-ʿuḳūl al-mujarrada shayy wāḥid*). From the point of view of the external reality and of the visible world, they are called souls (*nufūs*); from the point of view of the internal reality and of the hidden world, they are called minds (*ʿuḳūl*). For instance, the rank of spirits is called "souls" being a manifestation of forms of knowledge (*maẓāhir al-ṣuwar al-ʿilmīyya*), and "minds" being latent realities (*aʿyān ṯābita*). Also we call "substances" (*jawāhir*) the things that make the celestial bodies, such as planets and stars, move, that is the things that secure their first voluntary circular movement (*al-mabādī ḥarakātihā bi l-ḥaraka al-irādīyya ʿila l-istidāra*); in their essence and soul, these substances are of the same matter planets are made of, and as for their movement, they are linked to the planets. The reason for this is that they constitute the principles for the movement of the planets. These incorporeal substances are also called "speaking celestial souls" (*al-nufūs al-nāṭiḳa al-falakīyya*).

[Adam is the first manifestation (*maẓhar*) of the truth of man in the world of *jabarūt*]... Eve is the first manifestation of the truth of man in the world of *malakūt*. The world of *malakūt* is the world of angels; people of this world are entities with fine bodies (*ṣuwar jismānīyya laṭīfa*). And this is the universal soul (*al-nafs al-kullīyya*), from which particular souls (*al-nufūs al-juzʾiyya*) are born. Eve is the universal nature from which the bodies [are born] (*wa Ḥuwwā al-ṭabīʿa al-kullīyya allati fī al-ajsām*); because, for the people of truth, nature is the [world of] *malakūt* of the bodies (*yaʿni inna al-ṭabīʿa ʿind ahl al-ḥaḳḳ taṭliḳa ʿilā malakūt al-jism*). Because in all bodies, be them elemental or celestial, simple or complex, there is one power. For the universal soul, this power is like an instrument for manifesting and arranging the bodies...

In their turn, universal soul, universal nature, dust (*habāʾ*), universal form, universal body, the Throne, the upper sphere, the sphere of Atlas [the empyrean sphere], the sphere of the mansions, the heaven of Saturn, the heaven of Jupiter, the heaven of Mars, the heaven of Sun, the heaven of Venus, the heaven of Venus, the heaven of Mercury, the heaven of the Moon, fire, air, water, earth, minerals, plants, animals, angels, jinn, man and rank (*martaba*) all follow. These twenty-eight entities are called the external letters of the Divine Soul (*ḥurūf ẓāhir al-nafs al-raḥmānī*). They correspond to the internal letters of the Divine Soul (*ḥurūf bāṭin al-nafs al-raḥmānī*): al-Badīʿ, al-Bāʿiṯ, al-Bāṭin, al-Āḫir, al-Ẓāhir, al-Ḥakīm, al-Muḥīṭ, al-

Shakūr, al-Ġanīyy, al-Muḳtadir, al-Rabb, al-ʿAlīm, al-Ḳāhir, al-Nūr, al-Muṣavvir, al-Muḥṣī, al-Mubīn, al-Ḳābiż, al-Ḥayy, al-Muḥyī, al-Mumīt, al-ʿAzīz, al-Razzāḳ, al-Muẓill, al-Ḳawwī, al-Laṭīf, al-Jāmiʿ, al-Rafīʿ... These twenty-eight names correspond to the absolute letters of the Divine Soul (*ḥurūf muṭlaḳ al-nafs al-raḥmānī*) ... These are spiritual letters (*ḥurūf majāzīyya*); because, just as the corresponding [divine] names are spiritual, so are the letters.

His attitude against miracles:

those who seek miracles and extraordinary deeds (*ṭālibūn li-l-karāma wa māhuwa ḫāriḳ li-l-ʿāda*) do so because they are strongly tied to this world, i.e. the world of bodies (*ʿālam al-ajsām*). But above the world of bodies, there is the world of divinity (*ʿālam al-ilāh*)... Mystics and those who know God do not take notice of things of the rank of the manifestation of extraordinary states, which belong to the cosmic world (*aẓhār al-ḫawāriḳ al-mutaʿalliḳa bi-ʿālam al-kawn*); because the difference between [such] ranks comes only with the knowledge of God ...

People of miracles of knowledge are more virtuous than those of cosmic miracles; for the former open the gates of all truths pertaining to God's acts, properties and essence... As for cosmic miracles, they are just revelations pertaining to the truths of the creation, because a follower of this path (unless he receives assistance by the eternal favour to reach the degree of Unity) stays in any repetition (*ṭavr*) and thus becomes a man of *barzaḫ*: for instance, he reaches the world of elements (*ʿālam al-ʿanāṣir*) but cannot pass beyond nature (*māwarāʾ min al-ṭabīʿyyāt*); or cannot pass beyond this to the degree of spirits (*māwarāʾha min martaba al-arwāḥ*) ...

Those who are dominated by such states, such as walking upon water, flying in the air, shortening space or lengthening time, should not be addicted to showing cosmic miracles, i.e. extraordinary deeds (*ḫawāriḳ al-ādāt*). There are some who exhibit cosmic miracles, if they are strongly impelled and have a spiritual permission to do so; but this is rarely seen. As for the people of *barzaḫ*, they are addicted to the cosmic miracles that happen to them. Most of the cosmic miracles come from these people of *barzaḫ*, and not from others. If you ask "Why are saints exhibiting cosmic miracles so few compared to those with miracles of knowledge?", I say: These are like sultans, whereas people of cosmic miracles are like viziers. External power has been given to viziers. They carry upon their shoulders the affairs of people, with which the sultans cannot deal. That is why they are always strolling around in fear and hope, constantly supplicating: "Our lord, do not make our hearts fall into error after having reached the right path". As a matter of fact, this is a state of righteous people; not of those near [God's] throne; the latter have the rank of sultans, for they have no fear, nor will they feel grief.

How one may communicate with the dead:

... It was revealed to me that this world in the *berzaḫ* (*ʿālam al-dunyā fī l-barzaḫ*) will be like the world of dreams in this world (*ka-ʿālam al-rūʾyā fī l-dunyā*). Because even if the world of images (ʿālam al-miṯāl) is the closest thing to the senses, people differ from one another on the subject of dreams according to the thinness and thickness of the veil [separating them from that world]. The source is one, but the reception differs. When they go to the *berzaḫ*, they find there this same difference. For the cloudy souls, in this creation *berzaḫ* is the hidden and this world is the visible. In the same vein, for those being in the creation of *berzaḫ*, this world is hidden and *berzaḫ* is visible by attribution. For those who have lucid souls, it is the opposite: because, just as for them dreams are visible and sensible in this world, this world for them is like a dream in *berzaḫ*. The truth of this matter and especially the truth of death can be reached only by the people of *insilaḫ*, for they are free from all fetters. They can look at the world of images (*ʿālam al-miṯāl*) using *insilaḫ* and sleep ...

Ṣadreddīn Ḳonevī said: The Greatest Sheikh [Ibn ʿArabī] could meet with the spirit of whoever from the prophets, the saints or other dead people in three ways: if he wished, he would call the spiritual entity (*rūḥānīyyatuhu*) of the deceased to come into this world and take a form similar to the sensual features he had in his worldly life, without any deficiency, wrapped up in his body. If he wished, he would make him appear in his sleep. And if he wished, he would himself depart from his body (*insilaḫ min haykalihi*) and meet [with the desired person] in the celestial world (*al-ʿālam al-ʿulwī*) where the latter would appear in the rank of soul (*martaba nafsihi*) ...

The truth of the matter is that the first thing prophets see is imaginal forms (*al-ṣuwar al-miṯālīyya*) seen in sleep. Then they are elevated to a state where they see the angel in a free or bound image (*fī l-miṯāl al-muṭlaḳ aw al-muḳayyad*), out of the state of sleep. But this happens in a state, called *insilaḫ*, where one is feeble in the senses and loses the ability to think and discern. When revelation came to them, they were lying flat on their back; because when they receive the divine revelation... their human spirit (*al-rūḥ al-insānī*) leaves the body, which remains behind. There is nothing to keep the body straight or sitting ...

Ascent to heaven (*miʿrāj*) happens either with the body and the spirit (*rūḥ*) together or [only] with the spirit and the knowledge (*ʿilm*). The first [sort] is preserved to the Prophet; because he ascended thirty-three times with his spirit, and one time with his body and spirit. The second [sort] happens to the saints as well. Those who

are weak ascend in their sleep, those who are powerful ascend while awake in the state of *insilaḫ*.

On alchemy:

One day the sheikh [Atpazari Osman Dede] talked at length about the science of elixir (*ʿilm al-iksīr*). I was amazed. He said: "Somebody brought me a book and said, 'Have a look, what is this?' I look at the book, and lo, it was *Nihāyat al-ṭalab [fī] sharḥ [al-muḳtasab]* by Aydemur ʿAlī al-Jaldakī [d. 1342] on the science of elixir. I studied it from the beginning to the end, but I could not make out what the author's purpose was. I read it carefully and deeply for a second time, and then, even before reaching the end of the book, I understood all its purpose. Then I started writing a book named *Ġāyat al-muntaḫab*, pertaining to this science and containing my selections from that book; but I abandoned writing before it was completed. God tied and locked me at the second body (*al-jasad al-ṯānī* [the seven primitive metals]), which is the most sublime topic of this book, because I was thinking that the sultan or a vizier could make me produce some elixirs for their needs against my will. But God did not allow me to do this." And the sheikh said: "The science of elixir resembles from the beginning till the end to the science of following a dervish path (*sulūk*): without completing the path one can learn nothing from this science, and it can be learned only by those possessing it".

I [Bursevī] say that the sheikh showed me his work named *Ġāyat al-muntaḫab*, and told me: "In general, the purpose of mercury, lead, iron and the like is not what everybody knows. Every one of these has a technical meaning known by those who possess this science; if you don't know this terminology, you cannot learn the science of elixir. Those who try to learn this science from outside, try in vain and have no result except from failure and poverty ..." God knows that I [Bursevī] asked the sheikh nothing about the ways, the elements and the keys to the science of elixir; for I knew well that his purpose in showing me this book was to see if I would covet the worldly affairs or not—he was testing me. Until his death, the sheikh never practiced anything from this science; he had completely cut his links with this world and its temptations.

Know that the science of elixir is one of the great sciences (*min al-ʿulūm al-jalīla*), and that it is shared between the philosopher sages and the divine sages (*al-mushtaraka bayn al-ḥukamāʾ al-falāsifa wa bayn al-ḥukamāʾ al-ilāhīyya*) ... The philosophers reached this science with studying and learning (*bi-ṭarīḳ al-taʿallum wa l-kasb*), and with no other way. But for the divine sages, there is also a second

way, by revelation and bestowing (*al-kashf wa l-wahb*). Those who follow this way are the ones who have reached the end of the path. This is done as follows: the treatment of the elixir is from the beginning till the end like the arrangements; because one has to practice blackening, soiling, graying, whitening and gilding (*al-taswīd wa l-taġbīr wa l-tashhīb wa l-tabyīż wa l-taẕhīb*), just like the spiritual degrees (*marātib al-nafs*). For undoubtedly these correspond to the spiritual degrees of unchastened, blamed, inspired, tranquil. resigned, contented and pure [spirit] (*ammāra wa lawwāma wa mulhama wa muṭmaʾinna rāżīyya marżīyya wa ṣāfīyya*). This is why philosophers call this task "the philosophical man" (*insān al-filāsafa*), whereas the divine sages have given the name "child of the heart" (*walad al-ḳalb*) to the thing that is born from them [in the process] after they have passed through all the stages; it is the child of the caliph of God in the land of existence. Man is the last condescension of existence after passing through nature, the elements and the three natural kingdoms [metals, flora and fauna] (*al-insān āẖir min tanazzul ilā ḥaṣīṣ al-wujūd baʿd ʿubūriḥi min al-ṭabīʿīyyāt wa l-ʿunṣūriyyāt wa l-mawālīd al-ṯalaṯa*). In the dervish path all things, high and low, are called horizons and souls [macrocosm and microcosm; āfāḳ wa anfus]; in the [science of] elixir, they are called this way and it is said that "man is like minerals". As a matter of fact, the elixir can be reached only by distancing the bodies from their carnal defects (*al-ʿawāriż al-nafsānīyya*) and by cleansing them from their corrupt qualities. By the same token, man can only be "man" after having passed through these stages. Whoever reaches the end of this path, contains all these degrees. This is why only such a person is entitled to know the secret of the elixir.

There is a difference between elixir and alchemy (*kimyā*). The term "elixir" is used for some stages before the completion of the process, as well as for some stages after its completion; but "alchemy" is used only for the stage after the completion and preparation of the whole process ... Elixir has four degrees: in the first, one gains ten *dirhems* for every *dirhem* [one invests]; in the second, one *dirhem* brings forth a hundred *dirhems*; in the third, a thousand *dirhems* are produced by one *dirhem*; and there is a [fourth], where for one *dirhem* a hundred thousand or even unlimited *dirhems* are produced, enough to fill the east and the west. And it has phases: congealment (*ʿaḳd*), mixture (*tarkīb*), liquefaction (*ḥall*), and melting (*iẕāba*) of various sorts. If you look carefully at the four seasons, the creation of the omniscient and sage God in the seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter is the same with the process of the elixir. Don't you know that the farmer plows the earth in autumn, and after the earth is dissolved (*ḥall*) he sows the seed. In winter, this seed gets mixed (*tarkīb*) with the earth and then freezes and congeals (*ʿaḳd*) with the cold. When spring comes, God warms up the earth slowly with the hotness of

the sun; the influence of this hotness reaches the soil, first as a lamp, then as a furnace, and it grows continuously until the season of the harvest. With the harvest the process is complete. Thus, the seed first congeals, then sprouts and becomes crop ...

I recommend you not to occupy yourself with this affair, because it will destroy your wealth and make your life vain—unless God makes you a philosopher like Ibn Najdah or Ṭallāʿ Anjudah [?]. God sent this science to Adam, to Hermes of Hermeses and it reached the Prophet, passing from hand to hand through time. Sheikh Ġamrī,[2] in some of his essays in Turkish, mentions that Moses has used this science in times of need. But as far as we know our Prophet never practiced this science. ...

I [Bursevī] say that toward the end of Mehmed IV's reign, the *ka'immakam* of the vizier Receb Pasha invited the sheikh to eat together ... When they started eating, someone asked the sheikh: "We believe that you know the science of alchemy. And the proof for this is that you seem to have a lot of followers and yet little wealth". The sheikh smiled and said: "I have nothing but the alchemy of satisfaction and resignation".

İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, *Tamâmü'l-feyz fî bâbi'r-ricâl: Atpazarî Kutup Osman Efendi menâkıbı (İnceleme – Çeviri – Tıpkıbasım)*, eds Ramazan Muslu – Ali Namlı (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı 2020), 120–121 (worldview); 96, 231–232 (miracles); 319, 332–333, 519 (communication with the dead and *insilaḫ*); 282–287 (on alchemy).

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A theory of magic, giving also a psychological explanation of miracles, in the novel *Muḥayyelāt*, written by Giritli ʿAzīz Efendi in 1796:

One of the strange sciences (*ʿulūm-i ġarībe*) is magic (*siḥr*), which, God forbid, does wrong to the divine will (*ḫilāf-ı rızā-yı Rabbāniyye'ye irtikâb edip*) through the lowness of dispositions (*süfliyyet-i mizāç ile*); it depends on the uttering of hideous words that are seeking to disgrace the divine glory (*naḳīṣa-i şān-ı Ṣamedīye dā'ir elfāẓ-i ḳabīḥa tekellümüne menūṭ*) and is a devilish temptation (*istidrāc*) bound to abominable acts. But another [of these sciences] is what is called *simyā*, i.e. the mar-

2 Muhammed al-Gamrī al-Mısrī (d. 1639), author of a treatise (*el-İksîrü'l-muʿaẓẓam ve'l-ḥacerü'l-mükerrem*) copied by İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî: *TDVİA*, s.v. "İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî" (Ali Namlı).

vellous things (*ʿacāʾibāt*) that appear with some names of spiritual entities, properties of things and *ġazāyimāt* (?) (*esāmī-i rūḥānīyān ve ḫavāṣṣ-ı eşyāʾ ve ġazāyimāt*); and another one is called talismanic and enchantment (*ṭılsım ve nārencāt*), and it is related to the course of the stars (*kevākib iṣrine dāʾir*). Another one is called knowledge of properties (*ʿilm-i ḫavāṣṣ*), and it exerts its influence through retirement, forty-days penitence, abstinence, asceticism, and also some Quranic verses and divine names and magic squares (*evfāḳ*). And [finally] there is divine science and knowledge of God (*ʿilm-i ilāhīyye ve maʿrīfet-i Rabbānīyye*) ... Let it be known that people of truth and enlightenment have verified that they possess the power of imagination (*ḳuvve-i vehmiyye*) in twenty-seven subjects (*madde*); for instance, a person of pure intent that knows the grace of God can formulate in full someone's face and body in his memory, and then compress it and keep it in a place like a [mental] cupboard. It is obvious that then this existence will be afflicted with inner narrowness and uneasiness of the heart at the place where it is imagined (*ol vücūd, müteḫayyil olduğu maḥalde ẕayḳ-i derūn ve ṣıḳlet-i ḳalbiyyeye dūçār*). Such a folding of time and place (*ṭayy-i zamān ü mekân*) is a wonder subject to the disposal of knowledge. This is why the chants and magic you know were of no use and you could not get out of the narrow prison: because the divine knowledge (*maʿrīfet-i ilāhīyye*) is superior to all other sciences.

Showing the troubles of practicing alchemy:

For instance, take a free and easy lad (*ḳalender*) who knows alchemy (*kimyā*); if he is hungry, he needs only three or five *para* to repel hunger; then he will procure himself a furnace, a pair of bellows, a crucible and coal. It would be a thousand times easier to repel his hunger by blowing into a flute and beg as a dervish, rather than to be concerned with the preparations of quicksilver, calcination, sal-ammoniac, sulphur, tin and arsenic (*ʿabd ve teklīs ve ʿuḳāb ve ʿaḳreb ve erzīz ve semmü>l-fār*). And if this pauper who knows the hidden secrets named as *simyā*, influencing forms (*teʾşīr*), contraction and expansion [?] (*ḳabż ü basṭ*), properties (*ḫavāṣṣ*) and knowledge of the divinity (*maʿrifetüllāh*), happens to be married and have family, he will not stand the worldly concerns of his children and relatives; he will fall into defilement and filth and he is bound to lose his submissive soul in the valley of rogues. It is because of these requirements that the itinerant dervishes who have chosen poverty and wander about the world avoid marriage and family. I, your humble slave, have stayed a celibate because I am seeking possession of the occult sciences (*maʿārif-i ġarībe*).

A fictional description of various sorts of magic in the same novel:

"My prince, it is at your hands to order me to teach you the secrets of this knowledge. But you have to persuade me that you will not practice ever again the deeds I am going to disclose and teach you now" said [the magician Cevād]. After [the prince] İklīl took several oaths to this effect, [Cevād] brought some paper, a pen and a pen-case, gave them to İklīl and instructed him how to plan a magic square of five dimensions without central cell [?] (*bir ḫālīyü'l-vasaṭ vefḳ-i muḫammes ṭarḥını taʿlīm eyledi*). Thus: in an empty grid, he had him begin from the first [cell] with the number eighteen and add four in every subsequent cell, and subtract fifty-one from the total; he then wrote the appointed spiritual name (*ism-i müʾekkel-i rūḥānī*) that became apparent in the middle cell. He cut off the redundant paper and left the magic square on the ground, and then instructed İklīl to recite the spiritual name again for as many times as the first side [of the triangle? *ḍlʿ-i vāḥid ʿadedince*]. As soon as the number of the recitations of the appointed spiritual name reached the first side [?], the paper was raised from the ground and, moving like a bird, began to float in the air up to a man's height. Cevād and İklīl followed it; they had not walked for more than forty or fifty paces and the magic square fell down to the earth. When they reached it, the paper was set on fire and became ashes. İklīl was amazed.

Then Cevād brought again paper, pen and pen-case and gave them to İklīl. He instructed him to draw, from left to right, a ladder, three eggs, four perpendicular staffs, four horizontal staffs and a small sacred seal (*bir resm-i süllem ve üç beyża ve dört ʿaṣā-yı ḳāʾime ve dört ʿaṣā-yi müsteviyye ve bir mühr-i şerīf-i ṣaġīr*). When this was finished, they put it on the burnt magic square and came to the umbrella [they had set before]. [Cevād] wrote the aforementioned forms on another piece of paper and instructed İklīl to turn around the umbrella reciting the said spiritual name. When the recitations reached the [appointed] number, at the place where the magic square had been the earth blew up with an awful noise, as if a mine had exploded, creating something like an abyss. They went there and saw that a gate had been opened! They entered it and found a big room full of treasures ...

[Then Cevād teaches İklīl how to look for hidden treasures:] He produced some paper, a pen and a pen-case and gave them to İklīl: "My lord, with a sincere purpose ask yourself (*niyet-i ḫāliṣ ėdüp*) whether there is something esteemed that is concealed and that you seek, and where this might be; read the Quranic verse "*wa ʿindehu mefātiḥ al-ġayb*" ("and He has the keys for the hidden"), puff upon the pen and write four series of dots in a row (*ḳaleme nefḫ ėdüp dört bend noḳṭa sebk eyle*)", he said. After having drawn the rows of dots according to Cevād's instructions, he showed him the way to lay them out [*ṭarḥ*; i.e., to make the geomantical figures].

After laying them out and endowing them, they saw that the first figure (şekl) was the *ʿatebe-i dāḫil*, the second the *liḥyān*, the third the *enkīs* and the fourth the *cemāʿat*. When Cevād saw these, he exclaimed: "My prince, good tidings: the *dāḫil* in the first house (*beyt*) shows that what you are looking for exists.". After producing (*tevlīd*) the rest of the figures according to the rules, he instructed [his disciple]: "Multiply (*żarb*) the second house with the tenth and the third with the fourteenth; and multiply the two figures that result with one another to extract one figure!". After performing these operations, the figure *ḥumre* appeared; they saw that *ḥumre* was at the fifth house. Cevād interpreted this as follows: "The first clime is Africa, the second America, the third Europe, the fourth Persia and Central Asia, the fifth China. What you seek must be in this [fifth] clime. But in which city?" And by showing İklīl the rules of laying out the cardinal points (*ṭarḥ-i cihāt*), he showed him that the wanted city was Ḫānbālıḳ.

Passing on to another science then, Cevād taught İklīl the science (*fenn*) of *zāʾirca* and described it thus: "My lord İklīl, the easiest part of the science (*fenn*) of *cifr* is the excellent science of *zāʾirca*. And *zāʾirca* has two ways: one is the causal (*sebebiyye*) and the other the Chinese (*Ḫaṭāʾiyye*). The Chinese is easier than the causal way; let us proceed with easiness. First ask your slave: we established that the girl we are looking for is in Ḫānbālıḳ. But ask in any words you wish, at which quarter and whose [daughter] is she and what is her name". İklīl did thus. "Now break off the letters of this phrase [you said]; lay out those repeated and, starting from the last, separate the corrected ones (?) (*muḳattaʿ ėdüp mükerrerātını ṭarḥ ile āḫırından bidāʾ ėdüp münaḳḳaḥını ifrāz eyle*)", he said. When [İklīl] did thus, eighteen letters remained. "My lord İklīl, in the terminology of onomancers the word is interpreted [with] the secret of *cifr* that is alluded from it." [Then Cevād, from a meaningless distich deduces a verse in Arabic showing the requested information].

SOURCE: Hüseyin Alacatlı (ed.), *Muhayyelât-ı Aziz Efendi* (Istanbul: Akçağ Yayınları 1999), 91–92 (theory of magic), 146–147 (alchemy), 173–176 (teaching of magic); Recep Duymaz (ed.), *Muhayyelât üzerinde bir inceleme* (Istanbul: Arma Yayınları 1999), 218, 254, 272–274; Ali Aziz Giridî, *Muhayyelât* (Konstantiniyye 1284 H./1868), 87, 138, 162–165.

Translations by M. Sariyannis.

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Excerpts from the *Velāyetnāme* of Otman Baba

The First Chapter of the *Velāyetnāme* of Otman Baba, the Pole of the Poles (*Der Beyān -ı ibtidā'-i kutb'ul-aktāb sultān Otmān Bābā*)

O faithful disciples of *velāyet*, o loving servants of *abdālan*, friends of Truth, following the year 833 AH (1403 CE) a *kutb'ul-aktāb* appeared in the province of Rūm. He proclaimed that he embodied the Prophets Muhammad, Jesus, Moses and Adam. His name was known to be Hüssām Şāh among the friends of God (*evliyāu'llāh*) but people called him Otman Baba. He spoke the Oghuz language. He was broad-shouldered with light-brown eyes, reddish skin, majestic and solid stature. He was dignified in his stance, strong-looking on the outside and infinite on the inside. The mystery [of his being][1] could not be unraveled. "My secret cannot be grasped even by other masters (*sultān*), so how could you?" he would say to his *abdāls*. "I am the iron pole from the earth to the sky. Only a strong person as magnificent as I am can slice a chip," he would say. Not a single soul knew, either in this world or in the hidden one, where he had come from and been wandering [C21b]. He would drift from the mountains to the countryside, from rattraps to lodging houses, from ruins to places

1 The word *sırr* can variably be translated as secret, mystery or hidden. Inferred from what is hidden in the interior of our existence, it often refers to the soul.

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of worship. Nobody knew where and in which state he would have been. His outer appearance was extremely wretched and deprived of any sign [of sainthood]. The hadith says: "*evliyâ'i taḥte ḳabâ'i lâ ya'rifehum ġayrî* ('the *evliyâ* are under my dome, nobody knows who they are but me')." This hadith confirms why he did not manifest any sign [of sainthood].

[C23a] ... The storyteller relates the following: One day the *kān-ı velāyet* ('mine of sainthood')[2] appeared on the shore of the Black Sea. He was noticed by an imperceptive (*bī-basīret*) man who immediately got off his horse. Thinking he is a fugitive the man tied [Otman Baba's] hands behind his back, wrapped a cord around his neck and brought him to his village. When they entered the village the whole village mobbed around them and asked the man where he had found that madman (*delü*). The man replied that he was not a madman but a fugitive. The *kān-ı velāyet* strikes one among them with his glance. When his gaze [of sainthood] fell upon him this person's [spiritual] sight became unveiled. He fell at [Otman Baba]'s feet [AG11a], dispersed the crowd and started crying sobbingly. The people who witnessed this incident were struck by oddity and bewilderment (*'ibrete ve hayrete varurlar*)."

[C23b] ... One day the *kān-ı velāyet* ('mine of sainthood') disappeared (from sight, "*ġā'ib olur*"). He reappeared (*zāhir olub*) somewhere called Sa'īd Çukūrı next to the Mount of Ağrı in the province of Azerbaijan and stayed there for a while. The master at that convent was called Er Hācı. One day with his perfect humanity he [Otman Baba] told them that he was heading back to Rūm. He mounted a cloud, made a bolt of lightning his whip, and disappeared (*gayb olur*). He reappeared (*zāhir olur*) on a hill overlooking İstanbul and said: 'I came to conquer this city and recite the prayer of Muhammed[3] in the great churches [of the city]. For forty days the kān-ı *velāyet* ('mine of sainthood') stayed on that hill, his face turned towards İslāmbol [C24a]. Near that place there was a man of perception (*basīret sahibi*), a friend of God who was called Şāh Kulı Baba. He was the *gözci* of that clime.[4] He (fore-)saw

2 The term "*kān-ı velāyet*" is predominantly used to refer to Otman Baba.

3 "Bāng-ı Muhammedī" may be related to the concept of *gulbāng*, 'the song of the nightingale' in Persian. In Turkish usage, *gülbāng* is applied either to the call for prayer or to the war-cry (*Allāhu Akbar* and *Allāh Allāh*). The term is also used in the Bektashi and Mevlevi rituals. Ed. s.v. "Gulbāng", *EI*^{2}, vol. 2, p. 1135.

4 *Gözcü*, 'watchman', is one of the twelve positions in the Alevi *cem* rituals. In the early usage as in here, the beholder of this title is bestowed with the ability to foresee. In the *Velāyetnāme of Hacı Bektāş*, Karaca Ahmet is referred as the watchman of the *abdālan* of Rūm. Hamiye Duran, *Hâcı Bektâş Velî ve Velâyetnâmesi*, PhD Thesis (Ankara Gazi Üniversitesi, 1995), p. 86.

three men arriving at Rūm. One of them was extremely imposing and sturdy (*begāyet heybetlüve salābetlü*), from the *kutbu'l-aktāb* level. When Şāh Kulı Baba turned his gaze towards the direction from where they came, he understood that they all descended from the sky. People who heard all this from that holy man were struck by oddity and bewilderment.

[C24b] ... If they ask: "The phrase *ene'l Hakk* ('I am God') is blasphemy. Why did the *kān-ı velāyet* utter such a phrase?" The answer is as follows: Neither on earth or in the heavens, he [Otman Baba] does not see anything else but God. [United] with God he becomes God. There is nothing else but God which is transfigured in his heart. Even if they try to kill him in no way they can. One saintly figure once said: "*leyse fi cübbetī siva'lāh.*" That is to say, God is under my kaftan. The kaftan is not the one worn as an ornament in this world. That kaftan is the one upon which befalls the look of God the Greatest seventy times a day with all His magnificence. Another holy man once said: "*mā fi'l-vücūdun siva'l-lāh.*" That is, the sun of two worlds is inside my existence. With the divine name of God's Unity (*vahdāniyyet*) Oneness becomes manifest (*zāhir*). Whoever intends to kill those whose heart and soul is with God [C25a] in fact attempt on their own life.

[C78b] ... The Account of the Arrival of Otman Baba to the Balkan Mountain and His Manifestation of Signs [of Sainthood] in the city of Kiligra (*Der beyān-ı kadem nihāden-i ān kān-ı velāyet ber kūh-ı Balķan ve alāmethā zāhir şoden-i der şehr-i kiliğra*)

That standard-bearer of sharia, the forerunner of *tarīkat*, the secret commander-in-chief of *maʿrifet*[5], the mine of sainthood and the point of truth (*hakīkat*) [Otman Baba] left the convent of Mūsā *Beg* and set off for the Balkan Mountain with the army of *abdālān*. After reaching the top of the mountain he [Otman Baba] retreated to rest. That night a story occured to his mind. There is a city called Kiligra on the shore of the Black Sea. Sarı Saltuk had arrived in that city together with Ulu Abdāl and Kiçi Abdāl after having crossed the sea without a vessel, and killed a dragon (*ejderhā*) there with the help of a wooden sword and the power of sainthood. In those times there was a ruler in that country whose name was Dobra Han. He was

5 Maʿrifet (or *maʿrifa*), 'knowledge', 'cognition' came to signify in Islamic mystical thought the cognition of divine nature by means of 'proving indications' that constitute the proof of the Creator. *Maʿrifa* is realized only for those who are revealed something of the hidden (*al-ghayb*) and considered to be one of the four stages of the mystical path along with *sharia* (exoteric path), *tarika* (esoteric path) and *hakika* (truth). R. Arnaldez, "maʿrifa," in *EI*², vol. 6: 568–71; Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2000), p. 238.

informed one day that the dragon disappeared from the fortress [C79a] and three people were seen walking around the surroundings of the fortress. The ruler came and saw three people sitting on a mound and holding wooden swords. He asked them who they were, where they came from and how they showed up there. They answered him by saying that they crossed the sea from one side to the other and that they killed the dragon in the fortress. The ruler upon hearing this dispatched a note to the holy monk living in that country and summoned him. He asked the monk what kind of person would be girded with a wooden sword. [AG47a] "This one [Sarı Saltuk] is more exalted and stronger than the other two," he said. He also said, incorrectly, that these were probably wizards (*cādū*). Following the advice of the monk the ruler ordered that the holy man be tied to a millstone by the neck and dumped at sea. Just then, the chief sultan of sainthood appeared at the shore and came out from the sea. [C79b] In this manner, he thwarted the infidels and those daemons who did not believe in his sainthood, and they all became dizzy and confused (*māt u ser-gerdān eyledi*). The third story was thus where the mine of divine mystery (*kān-ı sırr-ı hikmet*) was released to the sea. In the fourth one, Sarı Saltuk asked the ruler whose advice he had been acting on. Upon hearing that the ruler was following the instructions of a holy man (*evliyā*) in his court he asked the ruler to summon him. He proposed that they both be put inside a boiling cauldron on fire. Dobra Han liked this idea. So they brought a cauldron, filled it with water and put it on a fire. When the water boiled up Sarı Saltuk grabbed the monk by his wrists and plunged into the boiling water like he was diving into the sea. When the ruler and all the people there saw this sign [of miraculous power] (*ʿalāmet*) they were struck by oddity and bewilderment and all became dizzy and wonder-struck (*ʿibrete ve hayrete varub ser-mest ü hayrān*). The storyteller related the following. At that moment Hünkār Hācı [C80a] Bektaş Velī (God bless his exalted soul[6]) was sitting by the side of a spring. As he was sprinkling water on a piece of marble the holy men asked him why he was doing so. The pole of the poles (*kutb'ul-aktāb*) told them about Sarı Saltuk and his having been put in a boiling cauldron by the infidels. Thus [AG47b] he was sprinkling water to prevent Sarı Saltuk from passing out. Just as the infidel ruler was waiting in wonder, Sarı Saltuk came out from the cauldron in one stroke. Sound and alive, he looked like the wall of Alexander. When those infidels saw this sign of saintliness (*velāyet*) they fell at the feet of the mine of sainthood. They saw that there was nothing left of their monk's body and that his bones were boiling up. All of them submitted to the chief of *velāyet* straight away and became his loving servants... [C80b] ... That same night when the *kān-ı velāyet* was at the Balkan Mountain, the relics of Sarı Saltuk which were located in

6 "*kaddesallāhu sırre'l-aʿlā*" is a prayer phrase specifically used for saintly figures after their passing. Süleyman Uludağ, s.v. "*kaddesallāhu sırrahu*", *DİA*.

the fortress of Kiligra, his sacred footprints on a stone and the hoof prints of the horse of Prophet Hızır who had come to Sarı Saltuk's aid, flew away to the sea as a sign of sainthood of the *kān-ı velāyet* and his power. The inhabitants of Kiligra upon witnessing (*müşāhede ile*) this became extremely scared. Even the fortress trembled by his magnificence When the people of Kiligra witnessed such holiness they were struck by oddity and bewilderment. "You did not create an earthquake or strike a bolt of lightning, what kind of miracle is this then?" they wondered.

SOURCE: Küçük Abdal, *Otman Baba Velāyetnāmesi*, edited by Filiz Kılıç, Mustafa Arslan and Tuncay Bülbül (Ankara: 2007). The critical edition is based on the manuscripts preserved in the Ankara Cebeci Public Library, MS. 495 (C) and Ankara General Library, MS. 643 (AG).

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