Teachers of the Public, Advisors to the Sultan: Preachers and the Rise of a Political Public Sphere in Early Modern Istanbul (1600-1675)

The Harvard community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you. Your story matters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Gurbuzel, Sumeyra A. 2016. Teachers of the Public, Advisors to the Sultan: Preachers and the Rise of a Political Public Sphere in Early Modern Istanbul (1600-1675). Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, Graduate School of Arts &amp; Sciences.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citable link</td>
<td><a href="http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:33493572">http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:33493572</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms of Use</td>
<td>This article was downloaded from Harvard University’s DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <a href="http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA">http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers of the Public, Advisors to the Sultan:
Preachers and the Rise of a Political Public Sphere in Early Modern Istanbul

(1600-1675)

A dissertation presented

by

Sumeyra Aslihan Gurbuzel

to

The Committee on Middle Eastern Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

History and Middle Eastern Studies

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

May 2016
Teachers of the Public, Advisors to the Sultan: Preachers and the Rise of a Political Public Sphere in Early Modern Istanbul (1600-1675)

Abstract

This dissertation focuses on preachers as key actors in the rise of a political public sphere in the early modern Ottoman Empire. Recently, literature on the political importance of corporate bodies and voluntary associations has transformed the understanding of the early modern Ottoman polity. Emphasis has shifted from the valorization of centralized institutions to understanding power as negotiated between the court and other stakeholders. My dissertation joins in this collective effort by way of studying preachers, and through them examining the negotiation of religious authority between the central administration and civic groups. I depict preachers as “mediating” religious power between the elite and the non-elite, and between the written and the oral cultures. I argue that the production of religious doctrine and authority took place at this intermediary space of encounter.

This study of early modern Islam with reference to the frame of public sphere has two main implications. Firstly, I present a “preacher-political advisor” type in order to demonstrate that the critical potential of religion was preserved in a new guise. Secondly, I show that informal circles of education gained primacy in the seventeenth century, giving rise to the vernacularization of formal sciences. The close reading of the manuscript sources left by preachers and their pupils also constitutes the first systematic exploration of the intersection between orality and literacy, and an important contribution to the study of Ottoman popular culture.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... iii

Table of Contents ............................................................................................................................... iv

Dedication .......................................................................................................................................... vii

Acknowledgments ............................................................................................................................... viii

INTRODUCTION: “THE THEATER OF THE CITY:” DEFINING THE EARLY MODERN OTTOMAN PUBLIC SPHERE................................................................. 1

I. One Preacher, Many Questions: Emir İştibî (d. 1015/1606)......................................................... 4

II. Seventeenth Century Historiography and an Intermediate “Third Realm” ..................... 8

III. “Public Sphere”: A Note on Terminology and Historiography............................................. 19

IV. Preachers as Public Agents or Instrumental Fundamentalists?: An Evaluation of the Secondary Literature on Preachers ................................................................. 24

V. Chapters and Sources .................................................................................................................. 32

CHAPTER I: HOW TO BECOME A PREACHER IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY OTTOMAN EMPIRE: INFORMAL SULAHA NETWORKS and UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY................................................................. 39

I. Sources ........................................................................................................................................ 43

II. The Şulaḥā as an Indigenous Identity Marker: A Social Group of Intermediaries Between the State and Society.............................................................................................................. 51

III. Preachers and Upward Mobility: To Whom Did the Mosques Belong? ......................... 60

IV. Expressions of Belonging In the Public Sphere ...................................................................... 74

CONCLUSION ................................................................................................................................. 83
CHAPTER II: THE LAWGIVER AS ADVISEE: SULAHĀ AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF OTTOMAN POLITICAL CULTURE

I. Sources
II. Advice from “Hzir”s of the Age: Sulaha and the Assertion of Moral Authority
III. Sulaha as Intermediaries Between the Public and the Ruler
CONCLUSION

CHAPTER III: SERMON AND SLOGAN: PREACHERS AND THE PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC CRITIQUE

I. Preaching “According to People’s Capacities”: Popular Culture and Preaching
II. An Advice to Memorize: ‘Ömer Fuadî (d. 1636)’s Public Instruction Through Poetry
III. Who Read a Versified Nasihatname?: An Inquiry into the Reception of Versified Counsel
CONCLUSION

CHAPTER IV: PREACHERS, INFORMAL LEARNING, and THE VERNACULARIZATION of FORMAL SCIENCES

I. Learning at the Mosque and Lodge: The Education of a Preacher
II. Partial Literacies
III. Languages and Rhetoric in Practice: Sufis, Preachers, and Poets
IV. The Vernacularization of Rhetorical Sciences
CONCLUSION
CHAPTER V: KNOWLEDGE AND AUTHORITY: PREACHERS AND THE
TRANSMISSION OF MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE ------- 225

I. Vernacular Medical Works and the Transmission of Experience------------------ 229
II. Healing Practices at the Mosque and the Lodge: Medical Knowledge in Practice------- 246
III. Pragmatic Authority at the Mosque ------------------------------------------- 259

CONCLUSION--------------------------------------------------------------------- 264

CONCLUSION--------------------------------------------------------------------- 266

BIBLIOGRAPHY------------------------------------------------------------------ 269

I. REFERENCE WORKS------------------------------------------------------------- 269
II. PRIMARY SOURCES------------------------------------------------------------ 270
III. SECONDARY SOURCES--------------------------------------------------------- 275
In loving memories of

Denizciğim Aksoy

(1984-2012)

and

Mohammed Shahab Ahmed

(1966-2015)
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Finally! I will not conceal my pride and relief at finishing the very long engagement that is graduate school. I am genuinely grateful for this academic tradition of writing acknowledgments, since it has allowed me to realize how fortunate I have been. My conversion to the historian’s path, which took place nearly a decade ago, took place not because of a dream but because of a dream diary. Reading Cemal Kafadar’s brilliant introduction to the dream logs of a sixteenth century Sufi woman changed my conception of what history could be. I am grateful for the many seminars and one-on-one conversations with Professor Kafadar, which have shaped not only my knowledge of the Ottoman world, but created in me an awareness of the many fine points of the historian’s craft. Working with Ann Blair has been a wonderful opportunity; she has been an unwavering source of support and guidance. Finding my way and staying on it would have been much more of a challenge had it not been for her advice. Her responsible, diligent scholarship and her openness to a multitude of fields is one I would like to emulate in my future academic life. Dana Sajdi has been a life saver, always providing the right insight at the right juncture. It has been a privilege to work closely with her, a scholar whose work I have always admired both in content and in style. I have also learned a great deal from working with Khaled al-Rouayheb, not only about Islamic thought but also about academic rigor.
The research that this dissertation is based on has been made possible by the support of a number of institutions. A research fellowship at the Research Center for Anatolian Studies in 2012-2013; a Scaliger fellowship at Leiden Rare Books Collection in 2013, a research fellowship at the Orient Institut İstanbul in 2013-2014, and a visiting residence at the Center for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) in Hamburg in Fall 2014, have helped me carry out my research while finding platforms in which I could share my work with other scholars. I am particularly thankful to Raoul Motika and Michael Friedrich for their generosity and hospitality at the CSMC. The staff at Süleymaniye Library, İstanbul University Rare Books Collection and Ankara Vakıflar Arşivi have also been very helpful during my research.

I thank many friends and colleagues who have kept me company during the past years. I thank Aytuğ Şaşmaz and Akif Yerlioğlu, who came to my rescue at a trying time and restored my faith in true friendship. I have thrived on the joy they brought into my days during the past year. Moreover, the readiness with which Akif and Aytuğ were willing to engage with the details of my thinking and writing process has been priceless. I could say the same thing for Ardeta Gjikola, who has been my go-to person for honest feedback on anything and everything. She has always inspired me as a source of wisdom and unending intellectual excitement. Nir Shafir has been an exemplary colleague and a wonderful friend. Tülin Değirmenci and Pınar Özgüner brought the gift of an excellent year in İstanbul in 2012-2013. Janina Karolewski made my Integration into Hamburg not only smooth, but also delightful. I would also like to thank the invaluable friendships and collegiality of Rositsa Atanasova, Nilay Karahan, Eugenia Kermeli, Zeke-Sasha-Naia Mazur, Nergiz Nazlar, Meredith Quinn, Arafat Razzaque, Kathryn Schwartz, Yavuz Sezer, Melis Taner, Nihal Terzi, Gülşah and Berke Torunoğlu, Ekin Tuşalp-Atiyas, Deniz Türker, and Hilal Uğurlu. Hakan Köklü and Ayşegül Yönet have brought tremendous joy to my
life ever since we have met. My dearest friends Tuğba Karaca and Burcu Erşekerci have kept me company despite all the distance, and have practically been my acquired family.

Having a sister is the best thing that could happen to anyone, and it happened to me not once but twice. My indebtedness to my sisters Merve and Münire is enormous. I am particularly thankful to them for their humor, which has been the best remedy at times when I took life and myself too seriously. My parents, Kezban and Ramazan, have always trusted my instincts and made me feel their sense of pride in me. I am grateful to them for their affection, and for unconditionally supporting my choices in life, even when they involved moving further and further away from home for longer and longer periods.

Last, but by no means the least, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the entirety of my graduate education carries the stamp of Mohammad Shahab Ahmed. Unfortunately, he departed before I could express the extent of my indebtedness to him. Everything I have written and will write in the future will seem somehow incomplete, since Shahab, my most supportive colleague and fiercest critique, will not have read it. I find consolation in the fact that I spent significant time in his company, seeing him encounter, immerse in, let himself be overwhelmed by, and then take apart, and finally reform ideas ever so passionately. Thanks to the precious, memorable hours we spent translating and analyzing Ottoman poetry, many words in English, Persian, and Arabic will always have a depth associated specifically with him. He has been an immense inspiration to me. You will always be dearly remembered and missed.
INTRODUCTION
“THE THEATER OF THE CITY:” DEFINING THE EARLY MODERN OTTOMAN PUBLIC SPHERE

This maxim is attributed to the Caliph Mansur: Rulers are in need of four things, which are effectively four requisites of rulership. The first is a loyal servant to whom I can entrust the wealth and the affairs of the subjects….. He shall protect the wealth of the subjects from me and mine from the subjects. The second is a vizier unmatched in all the qualities that a vizier must possess, which will be explained below. The third is a theater of the city (sahne-i şehr) that is devoid of animosity. The fourth is an honest believer who shall explain to me, openly and without recourse to lies, the major and minor causes of decline, and tell me who ignites the fires of unrest. 1

This dissertation seeks to define and bring to life the Ottoman “theater of city”, better known to the modern historian as “the public sphere”. As of the early seventeenth century, Ottoman town dwellers developed languages of speaking about “the public” as the locus of moral authority, and by extension, as political actors. The Ottoman public sphere was a force to be reckoned with not only politically, but also intellectually, as a significant site of knowledge production. This public life is yet to be studied as seriously as Ottoman courtly, bureaucratic or institutional history.

Aiming at a scrutiny of Ottoman public political and intellectual culture, this dissertation focuses on a group of individuals whose occupation was precisely to understand, respond to, and shape public culture on a day-to-day basis, namely preachers.

Many political actions that are usually ascribed to the ‘state’ in a pre-modern context were indeed carried out at the intersection of the formal state apparatus and the society. The

distribution of posts, provision of education, the production of knowledge, and the legitimization of order became increasingly ‘publicized’ as of the early seventeenth century. The significance of this intermediary realm warrants a systematic study on the public sphere as a legitimate institution.

The “public sphere” is an indispensable term for the early modern Ottoman context not only because non-establishment actors played salient roles in matters political, social, or educational. Moreover, I trace in this study the development of an ethical-political language that placed moral authority in the ‘non-establishment.’ I emphasize this discursive development as an important consciousness that differentiated a ‘public’ from a mere ‘crowd.’ The preacher expressed and embraced this new political ideal as the public orator.

Preachers provide an exceptional entry point into studying the articulation of the political justification for the burgeoning public sphere. Manuscript works authored by or attributed to preachers attempt to do much more than simply offer religious instruction. Preachers provide the poems, slogans, and songs that the public employed in political conversations (devlet sohbeti, literally “conversations about the state”), therefore functioning as the early modern media in Ottoman cities. One of the main contributions of this dissertation is to study vernacular political discourse in the early modern Ottoman city, which has heretofore remained largely unexplored due to the orality of public discussions.

Studying vernacular political discourse through preachers illuminates one thorny issue of Ottoman political history that is yet to be treated with the complexity that it deserves. The tendency to study religious thought by exclusively focusing on doctrinal treatises all too often results in the fruitless exercise of placing a person, group, or the entire society on a spectrum of
more to less law-abiding. Instead, I focus on intermediation in order to provide a more accurate place for understanding the place of origin for much Ottoman political and intellectual discourse. I steer away from discussing the increasing prominence of preachers as “the rise of Sunnitization,” or the development of a stricter orthodoxy in the Ottoman Empire. Instead, I study the written and oral engagements of preachers as reflecting and constituting a self-identified group who channel public opinion. This approach is important because it provides a new perspective to study the religious culture of the early modern empire that is not limited to the question of “orthodoxy-heterodoxy.” Instead, it underlines the social and political imagination that underlies religious discourse, hence promises a richer and more complex engagement with early modern religious culture.

My study of the vernacular public discourse channelled by preachers is not limited to ethical-political discourse. In addition, I study the informal educational practices in which preachers partook as teachers and pupils. I argue that informal education was more than a supplement to formal madrasa education. As preaching becomes a prestigious career path in the seventeenth century, thanks to the social and political prestige ascribed to the position, the informal learning circles at the mosque or the lodge became meaningful educational entities in and of themselves. A noteworthy development is the vernacularization of formal sciences, as evidenced most prominently in the fields of rhetoric and epistolography. The circulation of commentaries, treatises, and letters in these circles testify to the emergence of a reading public that was not necessarily scholarly.

In this introductory chapter, I first provide the historical context of the seventeenth century as it pertains to the rise of public political culture and to the preachers. Following the
historical context I discuss the potential usefulness of the term ‘public’. I argue that speaking about ‘public sphere’ will provide a useful umbrella for seeing the many developments of the early modern period in a comprehensive way. Moreover, the term will provide a bridge between the otherwise disjointed courses of social history and intellectual history. Following the historiographical overview and the terminological clarification, I provide a general view of the literature on preachers within Ottoman historiography. Finally, I conclude with a synopsis of the chapters and sources of this study.

I. One Preacher, Many Questions: Emir İştibi (d. 1015/1606)

The obituary sections of Ottoman chronicles and biographical dictionaries featured preachers with more regularity as of the seventeenth century.² The preachers in chronicles were multidimensional characters and influential public figures with social and economic capital. One of these preachers was the preacher Abdülkerim Efendi, often known as Emir İştibi (d. 1015/1606). İştibi was not a scholar with any significant written output, he did not occupy a high post at the court or bureaucracy, nor was he one of the salafî preachers that historians consider as typical of

the seventeenth century. Yet all of the major chroniclers of seventeenth century İstanbul wrote about him, and with high respect. Why?

A close look at Emir İştibi as a public figure sheds much light on preachers in the Ottoman Empire. The seventeenth century chronicler İbrahim Peçevi (d. 1649) mentions İştibi among the respected preachers of İstanbul at the beginning of the century. He was unmatched in the science of exegesis and in oratory. People flocked to hear his sermons at the Süleymaniye Mosque. The number of letters that people placed on his pulpit on complicated questions was particularly high. He responded to each letter with such clarity that the audience would be amazed. Even the lads (şehir oğlanları) hang out at the coffeehouses, and would come [to the mosque] when they heard that he started to read [and respond to] the letters. He was very bold in his sermons, not hesitating to criticize and reproach men of power. For that reason, he was sent to exile to his hometown for a few times. [In both cases] he was brought back [to Istanbul] by invitation and was treated with deference. All in all, he was an exalted man at the caliber of the earliest Muslims. He was a man of dignity who knew many respected sheikhs and esteemed saints.

Peçevi’s description of the preacher İştibi is interesting for a number of reasons. First of all, while Emir İştibi was against coffeehouses, which would be a “salafi” characteristic, his audience was also partly from among the “city boys,” an early modern term for urban


3 I refer here to the Kadızadeli movement, which is described as a salafi/fundamentalist movement that advocated a return to Islam as practiced in the early Muslim community and hence opposed to many innovations of their age. I explain the movement and its place in historiography in greater detail in Section IV of this introduction.

4 Alongside Abdülmecid Sivâsi and Cerrah Şeyhi İbrahim. See İbrahim Peçevi, Tarih-i Peçevi. İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1283 [1866], vol II, pp 357-359.


6 As the epithet implies, Emir İştibi was from a small town “İştib” near Skopje.

7 İbrahim Peçevi, Tarih-i Peçevi. vol II, p 359.

8 Based on MS Süleymaniye Library Ali Nihat Tarlan 181.
populations who took to the new form of coffeehouse socialization and other urban entertainments. Moreover, İbrahim Peçevi mentions İştibî as among the prominent preachers of İstanbul, alongside two other preachers. One of these two preachers is İbrahim Efendi of the Cerrahpaşa Mosque, known mostly for his opposition to the Sûfî dance, the new habit of smoking tobacco, and coffeehouse socialization. These opinions could place İbrahim Efendi squarely in the salafî/fundamentalist camp. The second preacher is Abdülmecid Sivâsî, whose fame largely stems from his opposition to the salafî Kadızadeli movement and defense of the Sufi practices. The historian Peçevi casually throws in these two names together, and Emir İştibî in the mix, without any mention of their position vis-a-vis the “Kadızadeli debates,” which are treated as the most definitive divide of the seventeenth century. Given its irrelevance to many contemporary Ottomans, how explanatory and significant are the “salafî revival,” or “Sunnitized social disciplining” frameworks?

Moreover, contemporary sources portray the preacher Emir İştibî as economically well off and socially well connected. Evliya Çelebi writes that Emir İştibî “…endowed mosques, bathhouses, inns and lodges in İştib; and owned shops and bazaars in Skopje.” In addition to these properties, Evliya notes that the preacher went on pilgrimage three times. The triple pilgrimage is not only a sign of piety, but also of affluence. İştibî’s example reminds us that the

9 For more information on Cerrah Şeyhi Ibrahim Efendi, see Chapters 3 and 4 of this study.

10 While Peçevî is the earliest chronicler, the Kadızadeli question remains similarly irrelevant in the chronicles of Katip Çelebi and Evliya Çelebi for the majority of preachers and sheikhs.

mosque preacher as the struggling, unattached individual who thus reverts to a reactional fanaticism is more an assumption than the result of historical research.\(^{12}\) Mosque preachers came from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, including the propertied or at least the comfortable.

Not only were mosque preachers from a variety of economic strata, but they were hardly “disconnected.” Many of them were well connected through Sufi networks, or else had ties to the notables (particularly the șulaḥā, the religious ʾayān) of their communities. Hence, even though Emir İştibi is associated with no particular Sufi order, Peçevi notes his connections to the respected sheikhs of his time, in other words, his social capital. Peçevi was not the only one among İştibi’s contemporaries who noticed the preacher’s social and political potential. During a clash between the sipâhis (cavalry) and the defterdâr (head of financial affairs) on September 10, 1602, the court invited Emir İştibi to intervene and intermediate, alongside with another mosque preacher.\(^{13}\) The historian Katip Çelebi (d. 1667) writes that the cavalry troops, not satisfied with the salary (‘ulûfe) they received, mutinied and demanded that the defterdar Şerif Mehmed Paşa be decapitated. In the ensuing debacle, the following individuals were called by the court to soothe the mutinying soldiers:

The military judges addressed [the cavalrymen], saying “You have received your salaries. The defterdâr is a descendant of the prophet, how dare you kill him, violating the shariʿa?”; they were not heeded. Then an imperial decree (ḥattı) including advice was

---


issued and read aloud; not heeded. Then, the viziers went out to confront [the
cavalrymen]; they were stoned. After that, the preacher of the Süleymaniye Mosque Emir
Efendi and the preacher of the Küçük Ayasofya Mosque İbrahim Efendi were invited
along with their disciples (...) [The preachers] briefed and admonished [the mutineers],
to no avail. Finally, fifteen-twenty descendants of the prophet came forward to remind
that it is inappropriate to murder descendants of the prophet for no good reason; the
mutineers stoned them and wounded two of them.  

Katib Çelebi’s narrative underlines that the authority of the preacher was not limited to
the articulation of correct doctrine. İštibi’s power was derived from his social and economic
position, partly stemming from his post as a preacher yet partly independent of it. Moreover, the
preacher appears as literally carrying out an intermediating function, employing his authority in
order to settle a dispute. While the preacher appears as intervening in order to soothe the
rebellion soldiers in this instance, the same preacher appears as publicly criticizing state
authorities in other instances. Hence, just as it is necessary to recognize that the preacher could
possess independent social and economic power, it is crucial to note that he could possess
independent moral authority. Therefore, a proper evaluation of the post of preaching must place
the preacher and the sermon in the intermediate realm between the state and society, rather than
tyning him to either end of this “third realm.”

II.    Seventeenth Century Historiography and an Intermediate “Third Realm”

The increasing importance of the preachers was a result of the significant transformation that
took place as of the early seventeenth century where the court-oriented, centralized Ottoman


14 Katib Çelebi, Fezleke, pp 226-227.
polity transformed into a decentralized state. This slow but steady transformation allowed new stake-holders to partake in the imperial system. In this section, I provide a brief overview of the secondary literature that studies each of these new political actors. I argue that the political public sphere comes to occupy significant political and social space in the seventeenth century, and that this overarching term is needed in order to bring into dialogue the already existing clusters of literature on what one historian has termed “the expansion of the political nation,” another historian dubbed as “political initiatives from the bottom up,” and yet another one announced as “constitutionalist tendencies prior to Westernization.”

The rise of the grandee household has been a well-studied theme in Ottoman historiography. The financial and social power of viziers was on the ascent as of the late sixteenth century, as evidenced by the growth of their retinues. As Hüseyin Yılmaz

15 “The expansion of the political nation” is a key term in the study by Baki Tezcan on Ottoman early modernity. He evaluates this development and the concomitant rise of the public sphere as important signs of a transition from a patrimonial to an early modern state. See Baki Tezcan, The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.


17 Hüseyin Yılmaz. “Osmanlı Devleti’nde Batılılaşma Öncesi Meşrutiyetçi Gelişmeler”. Divan Disiplinerarası Çalışmalar Dergisi 13/24 (2008/1), pp 1-30. “Constitutionalism” is one of the main terms of Baki Tezcan’s study, The Second Ottoman Empire, who proposes to view the seventeenth century as a long struggle between the absolutists and the constitutionalists. Cemal Kafadar has been the only historian to question the applicability of the term “public sphere” to the early modern Ottoman context. Kafadar particularly emphasizes the connection between Habermas’ public sphere and his vision of decentralized politics, therefore making seventeenth century Ottoman context fertile ground for an investigation of the formation of the public. See Cemal Kafadar, “Tarih Yazıcılığında Kamu Alani Kavramı Tartışmaları ve Osmanlı Örneği,” in Coşkun Çakır (Ed.), Osmanlı Medeniyeti: Siyaset İktisat Sanat. İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları 2005, pp 65-87.

demonstrates with reference to the age of Suleiman (r. 1520-1566), the practical increase of the viziers’ power was accompanied by an outpour of political writing that emphasized the importance of the autonomy of the high ranking military elite.\textsuperscript{19} The pasha households never directly challenged the authority of the sultan, from whom their power was derived. However, starting in the early seventeenth century, they worked to expand their autonomy that was based on the delegation of the power of the sultan.

In addition to the expansion of the military household, the seventeenth century also marks the increasing political involvement of the two Ottoman bureaucratic establishments, namely the scribal and scholarly bureaucracy – (kalemiyye) and (‘ilmiyye). Until recently, the bureaucratic establishment has received scholarly attention only with regard to the sixteenth century, which is when bureaucratic career paths were established and completely tied to the central state.\textsuperscript{20} While the study of kalemiyye and the ‘ilmiyye beyond the sixteenth century is still a largely untapped project, some recent studies have underlined the significance of treating the bureaucratic elite as more than the servants of the dynasty.

In her study, Ekin Tuşalp-Atiyas focuses on the political discourse of the scribal community, which underlines the indispensability of the scribes for intellectual and cultural

\textsuperscript{19} Hüseyin Yılmaz, Dissertation. In “Meşrutiyetçi Eğilimler”, Hüseyin Yılmaz refers to the work of advice by Suleiman’s vizier, Lutfi Paşa, in which the vizier opines that the sultan must follow the vizier’s informed suggestion. In addition, Yılmaz underlines the age of the vizier Köprülü Mehmed Paşa (d. 1661) as the zenith of grand vizieral autonomy and power. See Yılmaz, “”. For the rise of the vizieral household, see also Artan, Tülay, “The making of the Sublime Porte near the Alay Köşkü and a tour of a grand vizierial palace at Süleymaniye”, Turcica, 43, 2011, pp. 145-206.

\textsuperscript{20} Ekin Tuşalp-Atiyas underlines the gap in the study of bureaucratic institutions between their regulation in the sixteenth century and the modernization efforts of the late eighteenth century. See Tuşalp-Atiyas, Political Literacy and the Politics of Eloquence: Ottoman Scribal Community in the Seventeenth Century. Harvard University: History and Middle Eastern Studies, 2013, p 6.
vitality of the Ottoman polity. Similar inquiries have been pursued regarding the scholarly bureaucracy (‘ilmiyye). The study of the office of the mufti has recently received some interest by historians interested in limited government in the Ottoman Empire. Baki Tezcan has recognized the significance of the office of chief mufti in the seventeenth century. Tezcan closely studies the engagements of the chief mufti Es’ad Efendi (d.1625), who played a leading role in the enthronement of Mustafa I in 1617 using an argument from jurist’s law to justify the accession of the brother of the former sultan instead of the son, the traditional heir. Hüseyin Yılmaz, too, underlines the office of the chief mufti as the coequal of the grand vizier in terms of authority over the religious affairs, even though this balance was unsteady and subject to negotiation.

In a refreshing article on the public sphere in the Ottoman Empire, Haim Gerber radically challenges the notion that the scholarly bureaucracy (‘ulamā) was merely in the service of the central authority. Gerber studies religious scholars as members of the public sphere, providing as an example the case of the Palestinian scholar Ḥayraddin Ramli (d.1671). Ramli was an esteemed scholar, whose fame as a mufti and scholar went far beyond Palestine. Yet he never

21 ibid.
22 Tezcan, The Second Ottoman Empire, pp 72-76.
23 Hüseyin Yılmaz, “Meşrutiyetçi Girişimler.”

took any state posts, nor made any efforts to do so.\textsuperscript{25} Haim Gerber’s treatment of the scholarly bureaucracy as entrenched in the public sphere thus challenges the predominant view on the ‘ulamâ. The state’s organization of religious scholars has been idealized and presented as absolute within this historiographical background.\textsuperscript{26} In this perspective, the ‘ulamâ’s raison d’être was to embody the ideal of Islamic education and legitimacy, thereby to establish and enhance the credibility of the ruling dynasty. By tying ‘ulamâ’s fate to the favors of the state, the argument goes, the Ottoman system curbed their potential for political disagreement or even meaningful political participation. In contrast with this earlier view that equates bureaucratic engagement with political conformity, the studies by Tezcan, Yılmaz, and Gerber emphasize the religious scholars as powerful agents who capitalize their legal literacy and their potential to grant religious legitimacy. As such, they appear as providing independent legal opinions, cooperating with urban populations, partaking in protests, making and unmaking kings.

The treatment of the ‘ulamâ as vocal political actors in the public sphere also fits in more easily with the observations of contemporary sources. In a treatise entitled “Blueprint for Action for Correcting Wrong” (Düsturu ‘l-‘Amel li-Islahi ‘l-Halel), Kâtib Çelebi describes the society as

\textsuperscript{25} For a study on Hayraddin Ramli, see Haim Gerber, “Rigidity versus Openness in Late Classical Islamic Law: The Case of the Seventeenth Century Palestinian Mufti Khayr al-Din al-Ramli” Islamic Law and Society 5/2, 1998, pp 165-195.

a composite of four components that have to remain in balance for the society to be a healthy whole. The theory draws parallels with ideas from Galenic medicine, particularly regarding the theory of the four humours that have to be kept in balance for a healthy body. Hence, the society is comprised of four “humours”: the soldier (phlegm), the tradesman (yellow bile), the subject (black bile), and the scholar (blood). In explaining why the ‘ulamā were a sound analogy for blood, Kātib Çelebi writes:

The exalted assembly of ‘ulamā is analogous to blood, which is the noble humor of the body. The heart, which is the source of the animal spirit, and the spirit is a delicate substance which, due to extreme delicacy, cannot circulate within the body on its own. Therefore, blood carries [the spirit] through veins to the parts and depths of the body, and extends it to all organs and extremities. Certainly, just as the body subsists on it, the scholars of the law and truth too transfer noble knowledge, which is analogous to animal spirit, from the overflowing source directly or through a medium. They extend this (noble knowledge) to the illiterate and the commoner, who are like the sides of the body. In the same way that the body benefits from the animal spirit, those (commoners) benefit from the ‘ulamā. Just as the animal spirit is the reason that the body subsists, knowledge is the reason that the society subsists.

In this passage ‘ulamā appear as the heart that not only embodies knowledge, the life source of the society, but also delivers knowledge to all parts and organs of the body. These “organs” include the uneducated and the simplefolk, as emphasized here in this passage. Therefore, the ‘ulama not only represent intellectual superiority or religious legitimacy, but also


28 For an analysis of Kātib Çelebi’s ideas on state, see Marinos Sariyannis, “Ruler and State, State and Society in Ottoman Political Thought”, Turkish Historical Review 4, 2013, pp 92-126. Sariyannis observes the novelty of Kātib Çelebi’s approach to defining the word “devlet” to refer to the larger society rather than as the ruling groups.

connect and transform the society at large with their knowledge. The emphasis on the connection of the ‘ulama with the larger society, down to the level of the simple folk is particularly pronounced in the seventeenth century. In this period, a new discourse develops in which the ‘ulama emphasize not only their embodiment of knowledge in general and religious norms in particular, but also their ties with the society at large. This new discourse develops as a result of the changing nature of the state-society relationships in this period, where the state’s growing reliance on an intermediating third realm led to a marked increase in upward mobility and invigorated the public sphere.

The janissaries are perhaps the first actors to come to mind regarding public sphere, due to a large number of rebellions, some of which result with dethronements and enthronements. There were six janissary uprisings in the first half of the seventeenth century: 1031/1622, 1042/1632, 1057-58/1648, 1061/1651, 1066/1655, and 1066-67/1656. Janissaries remain a prominent yet elusive element of seventeenth century Ottoman towns. In the most recent analysis of the janissaries as urban actors, Gülay Yılmaz situates her work within the framework of an ongoing historiographical search for civic cultures of the Ottoman Empire, alongside the court and waqf, the guilds, the neighborhood structures of Ottoman cities, and the changing dynamic


nature of Ottoman civic culture.” Studies by André Raymond, Cemal Kafadar, and Eunjeong Yi have focused on the economic engagements of the janissaries in order to conceptualize their place within the urban culture. The economic entanglements of the janissaries not only provided them with financial resources. Such entanglements also allowed them to form tight networks among each other, as well as with the city population at large. Therefore, seventeenth century janissary rebellions differ from those of the sixteenth century. While the early rebellions were military rebellions proper, the later rebellions had significant civil involvement.

An important tool that the Ottoman public utilized to make their voices heard was that of petitioning the sultan. Suraiya Faroqhi’s work underlines the practice of addressing grievances to the sultan as more than a question of seeking private redress. Faroqhi studies the discursive practices in petitions carefully, highlighting the significance of these communications as channels through which the public learned, practiced, and reproduced political discourse. Temporally, too, Faroqhi’s studies are significant since she shows that the practice of petitioning starts to gain primacy in the late sixteenth century, possibly as a result of the economic and social

---

32 Gülay Yılmaz, Janissaries, p 8. Elsewhere she writes “Contrary to the Orientalist approach, which narrates how soldiers prevented the emergence of a civic identity in the Ottoman Empire, this thesis concentrates on how soldiers actually became a part of a city’s identity”.


34 This is one of the main arguments of Gülay Yılmaz, Janissaries; Kafadar, “Janissaries and Other Riffraff.”

35 Faroqhi, “Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers.”
crisis at the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{36} Faroqhi casts petitioning as a form of “political activity from the bottom up”, a form of political action that she puts forward as a challenge to the Weberian notion of “Oriental despotism.”\textsuperscript{37}

Suraiya Faroqhi’s early works on petitions and political activities of the Ottoman public have inspired two recent studies on Ottoman civic culture writ large. The first is a symposium convened at Crete University in 2009 with the title, \textit{Political Initiatives from the Bottom Up: Halcyon Days in Crete VII}.\textsuperscript{38} The adaptation of the theoretically less pointed term “political initiatives from the bottom up” enables contributors to focus on case studies without having to grapple with the broader conceptual question of civil society. This task befalls the editor of the volume, who concludes the volume with a chapter entitled “The Ottomans and Civil Society: A Discussion of the Concept and the Relevant Literature.”\textsuperscript{39} In his concluding piece,

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[36]{\textsuperscript{36} Faroqhi revists and expounds upon the theme of registers of complaints and petitions (\textit{mühimmeye şikayet defterleri}) as indicators of popular political involvement in several other articles. For an edited volume, see Suraiya Faroqhi, \textit{Coping with the State: Political Conflict and Crime in the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1720}. Istanbul: Isis, 1995; \textit{idem}, “Political Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanic Legitimation (1570-1650)”, \textit{Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient} 35, 1992, pp 1-39.}
\footnotetext[37]{\textsuperscript{37} Halil İnalcık, "Comments on" Sultanism": Max Weber's Typification of the Ottoman Polity." Charles Issawi and Bernard Lewis (Ed.s), \textit{Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies} 1 (1992), pp 49-72.}
\footnotetext[38]{\textsuperscript{38} Antonis Anastasopoulos (Ed.), \textit{Political Initiatives ‘From the Bottom Up’ in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon Days in Crete VII. A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 9-11 January 2009}. Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2012. The question of where to draw the line between the bottom and the up, the state and society is an important one. Haim Gerber has expressed perhaps the most extreme position by defining the state as “the ruler and his closest aides”. See Gerber, “Ottomans and Civil Society”. Anastasopoulos defines “up” as central authorities in Istanbul and high bureaucracy, while also acknowledging potential shortcomings of adopting an office-holding based approach: “If we define the public sphere as spaces where issues of common/public interest are freely discussed in public, which encourages political participation…[this public sphere] found its spatial expression as the mosque, the church, the synagogue, the market-place, the port, the coffeehouse, the \textit{hamam}, the kadı court.”}
\end{footnotes}
Anastasopoulos divides the society into two: Sultan (up), and the people (bottom) and writes that anything from the bottom up is the act of civil society. For civil society, he writes: “opposition to despotic rule is one of its main characteristics”. The second project inspired by Faroqhi’s early work is *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire*. The main themes covered in these two volumes are similar: rebellion and unrest, petitioning the sultan, and local and associational bodies of governance. While the specializations of the contributors to these two projects vary diversely, the shared theme is to underline practical limitations of the central authority’s power.

The attempts to understand public political participation have hence been arguments against Weberian “Oriental Despotism,” in the spirit of Faroqhi’s earliest works. The multitude of studies that ensued from the need to respond to the “Oriental Despotism” model developed a more complex understanding of state-society relationships where the state not only dictated, but also responded. An important venue of scholarship in this respect is studies on local notables, which conceptualize negotiation between state and society as a significant process of the seventeenth century. Studies by Hülya Canbakal on ‘Ayntab and Charles Wilkins on Aleppo have underlined the importance of local intermediaries in administrative functions such as tax allotment and collection, in conscription, and dispute settlement. Thanks to them, the

---

40 Eleni Gara, Erdem Kabadayı, Christoph Neumann (Ed.s), *Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire*: Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2011. The themes covered in the volume are practices of petitioning, local governance, janissaries, guilds, and popular protest. The volume has a heavier emphasis on the nineteenth century.

significance of a third realm – an intermediating stratum – has been established as pertinent as of the first half of the seventeenth century.

Another important finding regarding state-society relationships is that, in the early seventeenth century, the state’s need to cooperate with various social and political notables increased dramatically. As a result, the number of individuals with the title ‘askerî (elite) expanded considerably. Hülya Canbakal has made this point convincingly through her studies of not only local governance, but also the distribution of the sayyid and sharîf titles. Canbakal explains that the state’s interest in granting titles and privileges to a larger group of people signified the central authority’s need to co-opt a larger group of individuals invested in the state’s efficacy.

The implications of the recent studies of the state-society relationships are threefold. Firstly, the studies underline the inadequacy of the state society dichotomy, positing instead the importance of a “third realm” that intermediated between these two realms. Secondly, the rapid expansion of the ‘askerî class documents the phenomenon of upward mobility. This is key for this study on preachers, since mosque and lodge preachers were among the upwardly mobile population groups as of the early seventeenth century. Finally, defining the intermediating realm and the inclusion of more groups into the political nation connects the study of the public sphere with the discussions on early modern state formation.

III. “Public Sphere”: A Note on Terminology and Historiography

The term “public sphere” has earned a safe place in academic parlance since the translation of Jürgen Habermas’ *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* into English in 1986, with the English title *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.\(^{43}\) In *Structural Transformation*, Habermas posits the emergence of a bourgeois public sphere in eighteenth century Europe characterized by rational, open discussion. Habermas narrates the emergence of this rational public sphere in contrast with the preceding state structures, namely absolutist *ancien régime* s. The new public sphere formed an intermediary zone between the state and the society, a feature that the *ancien régime* lacked. Moreover, the existence of this sphere spurred the development of a related philosophical consciousness of public participation and its importance.\(^{44}\) It must be considered a minor miracle, though admittedly of a bizarre sort, that even though every single component of Habermas’ original definition of the “public sphere” has been attacked and refuted by historians, his theory still stands relevant and full of potential.

The three decades of historical work spurred on by Habermas’ work have shown that public sphere is a meaningful historical category across different polities — in China as well as in Iran- and prior to the eighteenth century — particularly with regard to the early modern age-, albeit not in the format originally proposed by Habermas. While Habermas originally described the “public sphere” as bourgeois, therefore economically independent of the state, in complete


\(^{44}\) This is reflected in the work of many key philosophers of the day, including Tocqueville, Mill, Kant, Hegel and Marx, each of whom Habermas briefly discusses. See Habermas, *Structural Transformation*.  

19
opposition to the state, characterized by rational discourse, singular, and inclusive, historians have agreed that this description was an ideal intended to be used as a foil to criticize the inferior public discourse of modern capitalist societies. The actual, historical public spheres could be closely connected with the state, in fact created and nurtured by the state, characterized by “mob” and “slogan,” divided into ‘counter-publics,’ and exclusive. Moreover, “the public sphere” can be a fleeting social and political formation rather than a once-and-for all appearance. The main achievement of the historical critical work on Habermas’ theory has been to free “public sphere” from being tightly bound with European modernity, therefore making it applicable to pre-modern and non-Western contexts.


48 Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy", in Craig Calhoun (Ed.) Habermas and the Public Sphere, Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992, pp. 109–142.

49 This point has been made most persuasively from a gender perspective. See Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere”.

50 Pincus and Lake make this point persuasively with regard to the early modern British public sphere. See Pincus and Lake, “Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England.”

51 For discussions of the applicability of the term “public sphere” specifically to Islamic societies, see Dale F. Eickelman, and Armando Salvatore. “Muslim Publics”. In Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman (Ed.s), Public Islam and the Common Good. Leiden: Brill, 2004, pp 3-29; Dale F. Eickelman and John W. Anderson. “Redefining Muslim Publics”. In Dale F. Eickelman and John W. Anderson (Ed.s), New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003, pp 1-18; Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, 'Multiple...
Despite the existence of considerable literature on early modern public spheres elsewhere, the term in Ottoman historiography remains mainly associated with the modernization paradigm, hence with the nineteenth century and beyond. Apart from the casual usage of the term by historians who intend to place the Ottoman Empire within a broader early modernity, the uses of the terms “public sphere”, “public opinion”, and “civil society” is limited to the nineteenth century. In the same manner, the emergence of a public sphere in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire usually presupposes a completely absolutist, Weberian-sultanist Ottoman public culture. Therefore, Cengiz Kırlı writes, “A basic principle of early modern governments that informed the relationship between the ruling elite and its subjects was that politics were the prerogative of the ruler. To the extent that this was so, and that it was...


Şerif Mardin’s “Ottomans and Civil Society” is the first work written on the subject, and remains a point of reference to this day. See idem, “Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire”. Comparative Studies in Society and History 11/3 (1969), pp 258–281. In this article, Mardin emphasizes that the Islamic legal system conferred property rights and autonomy to none other than the state, therefore entirely barring the emergence of civil society not only in the Ottoman Empire, but also in all Islamic societies. In 1995, Mardin revisits the concept of civil society in Islam, where he makes similar claims: “Civil society did not translate into Islamic terms. Islamic law does not attribute a legal personality to corporations, Islamic cities are not guaranteed any rights or privileges by law, rulers are not contractually bound to respect any such rights” See Şerif Mardin, “Civil Society and Islam”. in John A. Hall (Ed), Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1995. Other references to the idea of an Ottoman public sphere come predominantly from the historiography of the nineteenth century, i.e. “modernizing” Ottoman Empire. Hence, Reşat Kasaba argues that the economic foundations of a civil society develops only in the latter part of the nineteenth century, basing his argument on a certain understanding of civil society as necessarily bourgeois (Reşat Kasaba, “Economic Foundations of a Civil Society: Greeks in the Trade of Western Anatolia, 1840-1876” in Dimitri Gondicas and Charles Issawi (Ed.s) Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism: Politics, Economy, and Society in the Nineteenth Century” Princeton: The Darwin Press 1999, pp 77-87). In contrast, Binnaz Toprak has shown in their work that it was the state itself that laid the foundations for the orderly functioning of civil society. See Binnaz Toprak, “Civil Society in Turkey”, in A.R. Norton (Ed.), Civil Society in the Middle East (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp 87-118.
recognized as the embodiment of the state, popular utterances regarding politics, government, and administrative matters were legally forbidden.”

The assumption that there was no space in early modern Ottoman political thinking for political engagement of the non-elite reflects the current state of scholarship. Editors of a recent volume on political participation in the Ottoman Empire observe that the continued presence of the decline paradigm is largely responsible for this assumption. Any popular movement of protest or social involvement, political struggle in the provinces, the impact of local notables, factionalism, the rise of new social groups are all explained within this paradigm as the weakening of central authority or the disintegration of the established Ottoman system. Since the demise of the decline paradigm, however, we have not yet developed adequate explanatory frameworks.

The expansion of the political nation and the increase of upward mobility are two important realities of seventeenth century Ottoman social and political history. This dissertation contends that a related significant development, and one that truly qualifies Ottoman publics to be considered a “public sphere” is the recognition of the political relevance of the publics. That is, a new political discourse that placed moral authority with the public and in opposition to the state emerged. Following the general dictum that “public sphere” is a useful conceptual tool


54 Eleni Gara, Erdem Kabadayı, Christoph Neumann, “Introduction” in idem (Ed.s), Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire: Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2011.

provided that it is carefully defined for any given context, I provide a working definition of the term for the early modern Ottoman state. By “public sphere,” I refer to an intermediary stratum between the state and society that rose in tandem with the rise of upward mobility in the seventeenth century. More significantly, the relevance of this intermediating body was recognized and articulated by contemporaries. It is owing to this articulation that we can safely assume the public sphere to be politically and culturally relevant and potent.

There were indigenous terms that correspond to “public” (halk, cumhur) that occasionally appeared in historical sources. 56 Two historians have referred to this phenomenon - both within the context of janissary uprisings. Cemal Kafadar has underlined the janissaries’ reference to a popular assembly (cumhur cem iyyeti). 57 Hüseyin Yılmaz has made a similar observation in an article about constitutional forces in the early modern Ottoman Empire, underlining the “novelty” of a remark attributed to revolting janissaries. During one of the many janissary rebellions of the age, one of the janissaries blames the sultan for not attending to state administration properly, and asks: “Why are the viziers and the muftis in full control of the state?” 58 As exciting and novel as these remarks are, they have been the subject of very few

56 The closest category to ‘public’ in classical models of Ottoman political thought is re ‘âyâ, the landed peasantry. In a classic theory of statecraft known as “the circle of justice”, the landed peasantry appears as subjects who provide the main fiscal revenue of the state, hence must be kept safely. This fiscally focused model articulates the state’s relationship with the populace in terms of providing security in exchange for stable tax income to the treasury. For a detailed examination of the theory of the circle of justice, see Linda T. Darling, A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East: The Circle of Justice from Mesopotamia to Globalization. New York: Routledge, 2013; Fahri Unan, “Osmanlı İdari Felsefesinde Adalet”, in Halil İnalcık, Bülent Ari, Selim Aslantaş (Ed.s), Adalet Kitabı. Ankara: Kadim Yayınları, 2012, pp 105-121.

57 Kafadar, “Janissaries and Other Riffraff”.

studies simply because of their scarcity. A promising insight, and one which this study explores in detail, is that the idea of “public” as a critical authority was articulated through its binary opposite, the establishment. A consistent reference to its binary opposite, the “state”, and a valorization of extra-institutionalism is a notable trend. The significance of studying preachers surfaces here once again, since sources by preachers refer to this anti-institutional discourse openly and frequently.

The rise of a political landscape which increasingly acknowledged the extra-official actors as the loci not only of economic and fiscal activity, but also of moral authority is a transformation of prime importance. In the Ottoman case, the emergence and expansion of this intermediary sphere is the development that enables a constraint of the patrimonial power.

IV. Preachers as Public Agents or Instrumental Fundamentalists? : An Evaluation of the Secondary Literature on Preachers

Historians have paid attention to sermons for quite a long time. However, it is only in the past couple of decades that studies focusing on the context and reception of sermons, as opposed to their literary and formal construction, began to appear in significant numbers. Studies on

59 Habermas casts the reconfiguration of publics as the locus of moral authority and as a critical judge as the key development that marks the rise of a public sphere. Habermas, *Structural Transformation, passim*, particularly pp 89-129. I explore the rise of an extra-institutionally defined public as the locus of moral authority in Chapters I-III of this study.

60 Apart from rhetorical analysis, an important line of research focuses on social contexts of preaching, based on the premise that “…preaching was the product of a social milieu, hence collective rather than singular” See Larissa Taylor, “Introduction”, in *idem, Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Europe*. A New History of the Sermon, 2: Köln and Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001. An important publication in this regard is a series of studies published by Brill, under the title *A New History of the Sermon*. The series covers the period from early Christianity to the nineteenth century in five volumes) brings together eleven articles on the
preaching within the Islamicate context have followed three main paths. The first line of inquiry focuses, much like in European historiography, on rhetorical aspects of preaching. The recent work by Linda Taylor, *The Power of Oratory in the Medieval Muslim World*, shares this interest in the formal aspects of sermons, yet also argues for looking for information regarding questions of performance, social context and reception of sermon texts. Another line of inquiry adopts the “popular-learned dichotomy” and studies preachers as the unlearned religious leaders who merely are under constant criticism and even attack by the learned men of their communities, the ‘ulamā. The third group of work on the Islamic preacher is anthropological studies of modern sermons and mosquegoers. These studies underline the potential of the preacher as “a pivotal social figure, a culture broker, and an authoritative interpreter or reformer of tradition”.

preaching cultures of Early Modern Europe. The essays in this volume explore a variety of subjects including the role of women, the role of magistrates, the places and occasions of sermons, the self-image of the preacher, the physical dangers preaching entailed, the relationship of sermons to liturgy, and the political and economic settings. For a similar undertaking focusing on medieval preaching, see Jacqueline Hamesse and Beverly Mayne Kinze. *Medieval Sermons and Society: Cloister, City, University. Proceedings of International Symposia at Kalamazoo and New York*. Louvain-La-Neuve : Fédération Internationale des Instituts d’études médiévales, 1998.


As for Ottoman historiography, it is possible to speak about a recently developing recognition of the importance of preachers. Baki Tezcan’s work on the deposition of Osman II has been one of the first to underline the prominence of preachers in Ottoman sources as of the early seventeenth century. Derin Terzioğlu’s article on a work of political advice by a Khalwatí preacher is the first study on this significant topic. By and large, however, the study of preachers in the Ottoman world has been colored by the literature on the Kadızadeli movement. One of the best known episodes of Ottoman religious history, the “Kadızadeli movement” was a religious reform movement led by mosque preachers against Sufis, a large number of whom were also preachers. The Kadızadeli preachers targeted religious innovations that, in their perspective, represented divergence from the practice of the early Muslim community and hence led to nothing but the wholesale corruption of the Muslim polities.

The Kadızadeli movement was a social movement with three phases, each led by an anti-Sufi preacher publicly debating with a Sufi preacher. Hence, the three phases were: Kadızade

---


67 The public debates are lumped together under the “Kadızadeli” title based on the account by the early eighteenth century chronicler, Mustafa Naímâ (d. 1716). However, the texts by the preachers do not signify any group cohesion or identity, therefore it must be noted that the term movement is merely a historiographical convention and needs to be taken with a grain of salt.
The main themes of the Kadızadeli debates would appear familiar to students of any Islamic society at any time. The issues of contention were the Sufi practices of employing music and dance for ritual, shrine visitation, the legitimacy of well-known mystical thinkers such as Ibn ‘Arabi. In addition, the novelties of the seventeenth century received fierce criticism from the Kadızadeli preachers. Smoking tobacco and socializing at the coffeehouse were two of these novel practices that the Ottoman public debated vigorously, spurring on literature for and against coffee and tobacco.

Besides the specific practices that the Kadızadeli criticized, their trademark statement was that every good Muslim had the right to “command right and forbid wrong”. Originally a Quranic statement, the right to command or forbid one’s fellow Muslims has been associated with different social groups throughout Islamic history such as the political authority, the jurists, the military, the merchant guilds, the urban lower classes, and the Sufis. The Kadızadeli preachers and their followers envisioned themselves as the custodians of that right, and they worked to reclaim that right for themselves.

68 The dates of each stage are based on Semiramis Çavuşoğlu’s study, who develops the periodization based on the tenures of the preachers involved. See Çavuşoğlu, The Kadızadeli Movement.


or the hidden imām.\textsuperscript{71} By ascribing this responsibility to “any law-abiding Muslim”, the Kadızadelis advocated a form of vigilante piety. That is, the novelty of the movement lay not so much in the content, but the activist and confrontational social attitude its preachers advocated.

The Kadızadeli movement has provided a reference point that has guided the few studies on Ottoman preachers. Studies on preaching in particular, and early modern religiosity in general, have thus been largely limited to inquire and debate whether and how a “grassroots fundamentalism” arose.\textsuperscript{72} However, there is little hard evidence that the Kadızadeli movement had a lasting transformative effect on Ottoman society as a whole. Therefore, the disproportionate focus on this movement as an explanatory of early modern religious public sphere is unwarranted. One of the aims of this dissertation is to situate Kadızadelis and their written product within a vast world of mosque and lodge preachers in order to provide a true-to-size portrayal of this small group.

A relevant question as to how influential this group of fundamentalist preachers was whether they received any political support. While close relationships between the court and the Kadızadeli preachers did occur, these moments of cooperation lasted too briefly. Moreover, with the exception of a brief interlude during the age of Mehmed IV (r. 1648-1687), the court never

\textsuperscript{71} For the classic study on this subject, see Michael Cook, \textit{Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought}. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

cooperated with preachers at the expense of the Sufis. Murad IV (r. 1623-1640), for instance, had close relations with Kadızade Mehmed’s opponent, Sivasi as well. There is, further, no indication that the anti-Sufi preachers were seen as more instrumental by the state than the Sufi preachers. An interesting case in point is the grand vizier Köprülü Mehmed Paşa (d. 1661), who sent the preacher Üstüvani Mehmed Efendi (d. 1661) to exile and fought against his followers, arguing that the salafi preachers were a threat to the power of the state.

Earlier interpretations of the Kadızadeli preachers were under the influence of a larger narrative of the seventeenth century as the age of decline. Hence, historian Ahmet Yaşar Ocak interprets the movement as a classic reactionary movement that arises at moments of social and economic crisis. Madeleine Zilfi proposes a more socio-economically oriented approach. She portrays mosque preachers as alienated, disadvantaged individuals whose fundamentalist religiosity was but a reaction to the difficulty of finding a respectable position in the state or at the endowments. She underlines the congestion of the scholarly bureaucratic cadres and the advantage of Sufi preachers in securing a preaching position as the double factors that the preachers without connections suffered from.

---

73 The brief interlude refers to the closing down of a Khalwati lodge during the Grand Vizierate of Melek Ahmed Paşa (1650-1651) following the provocation of the preacher Üstüvani Mehmed Efendi. Zilfi, “Kadızadeli.”


76 Madeline Zilfi, “Kadızadelis: Discordant Revivalism.”
The most recent contribution to the Kadızadeli debate and to the study of preaching and popular religiosity is the proposition to consider seventeenth century as an age of Sunnitization. Derin Terzioğlu and Tjana Krstic propose “Sunnitization”, an Ottoman counterpart to the “Confessionalization” in Western Europe, as a useful framework. Terzioğlu suggests that the Ottoman society experienced a similar transformation where confessional boundaries became drawn more carefully, and the state took active interest in proselytizing a bookish, hardline, “Sunnitized” version of Islam as an extension of its authority. The potential of Islam is therefore exploited by the state in order to impose social discipline more effectively.

A significant merit of the Sunnitization framework is to divert the discussion from the highly charged concept of fundamentalism (or its equivalent, salafism). Moreover, particularly the latest study by Derin Terzioğlu has dispensed with the “Sufi versus salafi” dichotomy that did not reflect the historical reality. In addition, Terzioğlu’s work on the work of counsel


78 Even though the application of the terms “Sunnitization” and “confessionalization” to the early modern Ottoman context are couched as recent developments in the scholarly literature, this recent dicussion has much in common with an earlier generation of Ottoman history writing. Represented most prominently by Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, and Mehmet Öz, this line of thinking equates the official ideology of the Ottoman state with hard-line Sunni orthodoxy, and presents the ‘ulama led religious bureaucracy merely as tools of the state in disciplining the crowds. Particularly Ahmet Yaşar Ocak builds his pioneering work on the idea of the instrumentality of religious obedience and uniformity for the ideological purposes of the early modern state (Ahmet Yaşar Ocak., Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Müllhidler (15.-17. Yüzyıllar) İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1998.

79 Derin Terzioğlu, “Sunna-minded Sufi preachers” studies a preacher with the penname “Nushi Nashhi” who is a “sunnitizing Sufi.”
(nasihatname) by a Khalwati preacher recognizes and underlines for the first time the political engagement of preachers, and their potential to mold the crowds.

However, there is one significant point of divergence between the Western European confessionalization and the Ottoman religio-political scene. The confessionalization framework that treats religious policies as a tool for social discipline fits in a larger literature on state formation in Western Europe. According to this literature, the stricter religious boundaries and observation were employed successfully by increasingly centralizing European states.\(^8^0\) In other cases, the will to establish stronger social discipline by dominant institutions resulted in clashes with social groups who were opposed to this project.\(^8^1\) In a similar manner, Derin Terzioğlu argues that the main drive behind the political involvement of preachers was Murad IV’s centralist ambitions.\(^8^2\) However, it is important to make a differentiation between “will” and “fact”, and not hasten towards a comprehensive theory explaining a linear shift towards strict doctrinal boundaries.

Important in discussing religious trends is the question of agency. The treatment of such a question must take into account the larger political and social condition of the Ottoman seventeenth century, which is characterized by decentralization as opposed to centralization as in the case of centralizing Western Europe. Within this larger framework, preachers were one of the many socio-political groups who wrestled increasing political and social autonomy, rather than


\(^{81}\) Schilling, “Confessionalization: Historical and Scholarly Perspectives.”

\(^{82}\) Terzioğlu, “Sunna-minded Sufi preachers.”
As this dissertation demonstrates, preachers were intermediaries between the state and society, with social, economic, and political power of their own that they could use in order to negotiate with the political authorities.

Adopting the notion of “intermediation” reflects the reality of religious authority accurately. This approach recognizes the religious notables of the community as having independent bases of power. Moreover, the approach allows for a more complex understanding of religious authority by dispensing with a reductionist reading of religious discourse as a spectrum that ranges from “strict” to “syncretic”. Rather than merely adopting the corollary that more insistence on religious law necessarily translated into political conformism, this perspective recognizes that doctrine, too, was made at the intermediate realm, or the public sphere. An insistence on religious observance meant different political positions across Islamist contexts, sometimes becoming the very means by which interest groups delimit the authority of the state. Therefore, before interpreting the political translation of an insistence on shari’a, we must explore in greater detail the dynamics of the origin of this discourse, that is the public sphere.

V. Chapters and Sources

Chapter I examines the question of upward social mobility and paths to securing a preaching post. The chapter emphasizes that preachers must be studied as part of a larger, well-connected,

83 ibid.

and self recognizing group of religious notables, the *sulaḥā* (‘the pious’). Focusing on the self-articulation of this group affords the possibility to flesh out the complex relationships between the elite and the non-elite, and the routes to social mobility. In the seventeenth century, the *sulaḥā* were cohesive enough to produce biographical sources that articulated a group identity in a consistent manner. The *sulaḥā* included madrasa instructors, judges, preachers and other mosque attendants, descendants of the prophet, and Sufis. The networks of *sulaḥā* played a major role in the distribution of middle and low ranking religious posts through practices such as writing references, or venality of office. The relatively free space in which to effect the decisions as to the conferral of the ‘*askerî* titles provided an important source of power to leaders of *sulaḥā* and arguably contributed to their group cohesion.

This chapter utilizes archival documents in order to shed light on the appointment procedures of preachers. Moreover, two little known biographical dictionaries have been utilized in order to collect narrative information about the social and educational backgrounds of preachers, their career trajectories, and the impact of Sufi and *sulaḥā* networks on post distribution. The first of these biographical dictionaries is by the provincial judge Sayyid Ḥasan Rizāī (d. 1667), who writes biographies of middle and lower level religious notables whom he meets during his tenures in Istanbul, Anatolia, and Syria. The second biographical dictionary is by a former judge, Baldırzâde Mehmed Selîsî of Bursa (d. 1650). In addition to important prosopographical content, Baldırzâde’s biographical dictionary deserves close attention as a bold commentary on the public preacher over the establishment ‘*ulamâ*.’
Having posed the question of moral authority in the first chapter, I dedicate the second chapter fully to an exploration of that question and the political implications thereof. The chapter, entitled “The Lawgiver as Advisee: Sulaḥā and the Transformation of Ottoman Political Culture”, closely studies two manuscripts of political counsel by two Sufis, the Khalwati preacher Abdülmecid Sivāsī (d.1639) and the Mawlawī sheikh İsmail Ankaravī (d. 1631). I underline two noteworthy developments in seventeenth century moral-political counsel. First of all, the counsel provided in these texts places political authority as subservient to moral authority, in contrast with earlier political writing which sought to present these two forms of authority as inseparable. Shared among the higher and lower religious dignitaries of this period is a notion of “servant-king” in contrast to the earlier political topos of “messiah-king”. In advising the sultan in person, or speaking within their circles about sultanate using the popular genre of mirrors for princes, preachers consistently use the “servant-king” motif as their guide. This motif encapsulates a new discourse that developed in the Ottoman public sphere, which portrayed the sultan as an ordinary Muslim in need of the counsel provided by preachers in order to achieve salvation. At this juncture, preachers emphasize their potential for offering consent and support for the ruling power, thereby pointing out to their own significance as intermediaries between the state and the society.

The second important change in the counsel literature of seventeenth century is the social position of the advisors. Increasingly, the sphere of ethical-political authority is claimed by not only the higher-ranked scholars, but also lower ʿulamā, notably preachers. The practical basis of this claim is the key position of preachers as intermediaries, not only between the ruler and the ruled, but also between the written and oral cultures. As will be alluded to in this chapter, this
period witnesses a trend whereby political counsel goes public. That is, the genre is no longer a correspondence between the court and an educated individual. Counsels are now read and discussed publicly, which is part of where preachers derive their influence.

Aiming to prove the public circulation of counsel, the next chapter, “Sermon and Slogan: Preachers and The Production of Public Critique,” focuses on the oral circulation of moral-political advice. Before exploring orality in full, this chapter emphasizes the reciprocal nature of the exchange of information between preachers and the larger public. Descriptions of preachers often report on the preacher’s ability to connect with the larger public “in accordance with their capacity” as a consistent item of praise in hagiographies. Furthermore, hagiographical sources record stories of preachers’ conversions from a more bookishly orthodox understanding of Islam to embracing popular practice. The impact of a preacher’s connection plays a significant role in his overall outlook and therefore the content of his sermons and scholarly production. This impact is large not only in the presumably more peripheral areas of the empire that are far from the sight of the center. This chapter provides the example of Abdülmecid Sivâsi, the preacher at the Hagia Sophia and Sultan Ahmed mosques — the top prestigious mosques that are closest to the palace. Sivâsi’s conversion to a more lenient form of Islam that embraces music and dance as part of ritual attests to the significant impact of being structurally connected to the public sphere.

The opinions and works of preachers therefore were strongly entrenched in the public sphere. The seventeenth century that witnessed the increasing politicization of the public sphere saw the rise of a new cultural type, the “preacher-advisor” type. Many works of social and political content were either actually written by preachers, or were attributed to them. These works draw on a shared vocabulary and conceptual world. The entanglement of a widely
recognized political language and the figure of preachers suggests that the preachers were able to
draw on the well known *nasiḥatnāme* genre and popularize this genre.

This chapter focuses on manuscript miscellanies (*mecmu‘ā*) that compile vernacular
counsel attributed to preachers. This close study of circulation suggests that the genre circulated
among other works of oral culture, including but not limited to songs or hymns. The circulation
evidence suggests that preachers acted as early modern media, in providing a popular language
to discussions on current politics or doctrinal matters. Although much oral culture is inaccesible
to us, we can find an entry into the oral cultures of the public sphere by studying the lore of
preachers who draw on and cater to the oral culture of their day. In doing so, they popularized
better-known genres and debates, and even scholarly references. This aspect underlines
preachers’ role as intermediaries between the written and the oral cultures.

Having investigated the question of orality and vernacularization with regard to moral-
political advice, the next two chapters investigate vernacular learning with special focus on
preachers and their teaching circles. The fourth chapter, “Preachers, Informal Education, and the
Vernacularization of Formal Sciences” turns to informal educational circles formed at the
mosque or the lodge. Religious sciences were often taught and produced at such circles, and this
informal transmission of knowledge was significant in terms of the social history of knowledge.
More importantly, the broad and indistinct term “religious sciences” encompassed not only
Quran and hadith, but also linguistic and logical sciences. The latter, often considered scholastic
topics strictly, were therefore relevant at the mosque and the lodge and were taught in extra-
institutional learning circles.
The study of rhetorical sciences in particular assumed an increasingly public nature in the seventeenth century. Vernacular commentaries were composed on madrasa textbooks of rhetoric beginning in the early seventeenth century. The vernacularization of rhetorical sciences was directly connected to the increasing prestige of preaching posts, which provided an incentive to join learning circles at the mosque and the lodge. For the would-be preacher, rhetorical sciences were indispensable as a field of knowledge related to oratory, exegesis, and literary composition. This chapter studies vernacular commentaries on the science of rhetoric and epistolography, while integrating the study of manuscript miscellanies by students of preachers. While the inclusion of anecdotes about preachers of the city in chronicles is the tip of the iceberg, personal miscellanies point to a larger number of readers who copied or heard the epistles of preachers and the stories about the epistles. The epistles thus constituted the news of their day, and also were used as educational material, particularly for studying languages. The engagement of preachers with a public readership as teachers of the public place them as the connecting and mediating circle between the learned and the unlearned of the Ottoman society.

The final chapter, “Knowledge and Authority: Preachers and the Transmission of Medical Knowledge in the Public Sphere” continues the theme of vernacular learning with a focus on the transmission of medical knowledge in miscellanies. Perhaps the most intriguing feature of early modern medicine for a modern reader is the intertwined nature of the medical and moral realms. The integration of the medical and the moral went beyond the theoretical premise that glorified man’s full knowledge of himself, both as body and soul. This theoretical premise had a socio-intellectual incarnation whereby religious authorities were often attributed medical authority. Apart from practices whereby the men of religion were believed to have
healing powers as a result of ascetic and spiritual purity, their medical authority had a pragmatic basis. The pragmatic basis was the position of preachers and Sufi sheikhs as the intermediaries between the learned and the unlearned, between the written and the oral.

Medical knowledge was not only practically useful, but also constituted part of a larger cultural canon (adab). Therefore, medical treatments and recipes were transmitted publicly via vernacular works, most notably within Sufi circles. Moreover, the significant place dedicated to personal experience in medical miscellanies allowed readers and copyists to intervene, turning vernacular medical works into conversational-communal works rather than scholarly treatises. The public nature of medicine went beyond the transmission and transformation of vernacular medical works. Miscellanies show that mosque-goers turned to preachers in order to ask questions about medical issues. The access of preachers and Sufis to written medical knowledge provided an important aspect of their communication with the larger public. Whether by assuming the role of healers, or preparing medications, or providing medical information, the Sufis and preachers played the role of intermediaries of the medical culture to the public at large.
CHAPTER I
HOW TO BECOME A PREACHER IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
OTTOMAN EMPIRE: INFORMAL SULAHA NETWORKS and UPWARD
SOCIAL MOBILITY

Introduction

The greatest collective effort in Ottoman historiography of the past decades has been to re-frame
the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as one of early modern state formation rather than of
“decline.” The weakening of central authority is no more a sign of a governmental ineptitude, but
of the creation of a decentralized polity. The fluidity of career lines is no more a sign of an
impotent administrative system, but of increasing social mobility. This new understanding of the
early modern Ottoman state is key to the main questions of this chapter: How has the new
vivacity of public life effected the constitution of Ottoman political order? Who made use of the
possibilities of upward mobility, and how? Has the state’s increasing reliance on intermediary
actors, religious notables being among them, created new forms of political expression?

Historians have long written about the changing nature of Ottoman public life as of the
seventeenth century. However, the definition of this transformation in terms such as “increased
political participation”, or the rise of a “civic culture”\(^1\) is a fairly recent turn. A former tradition

\(^1\) For the employment of these term to early modern Ottoman Empire, see, respectively, Suraiya Faroqhi, “Political
Activity among Ottoman Taxpayers and the Problem of Sultanic Legitimation (1570-1650)”. Journal of the
Economic and Social History of the Orient 35/1 (1992), pp. 1-39; Gülay Yılmaz, The Economic and Social Roles of
Janissaries in a 17th Century Ottoman City: The Case of İstanbul. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. Institute of
Islamic Studies, McGill University, 2011.
of historiography has seen systemized civic engagements in public life as a sign of the weakness of the central authority, hence as the “age of decline”, a century long deterioration of the entire empire which followed “the golden age” that was the reign of Suleiman I (r. 1520-1566). The argument had its roots in a tradition of Ottoman political writing, known as the “decline literature.” As of the sixteenth century, a tradition of Ottoman literary production that diagnosed the state and economy with an unprecedented state of crises proliferated. An early tradition of Ottomanist scholarship consumed this literature unsuspiciously, hence claiming that the Ottoman institutions and economic practices came to a halt and finally a collapse as of the late sixteenth century, a process that continued well into the modernizing reforms of the nineteenth century. Starting with the 1980s, a new critical tradition of history writing questioned the nature and reality of the said “decline.” Propositions have been made to approach the sources as situated voices instead of as objective observers; to differentiate between various types and contexts of potential crisis (agricultural? political? fiscal?); and to question the very notion of crisis by focusing on change and transformation. This last term, “transformation” encapsulates a happy consensus among historians of the Ottoman Empire. The next task facing historians is to fully expound the nature and process of transformation.

---


4 For a general evaluation and criticism of the literature on Ottoman decline, see Cemal Kaftadar, “The Question of Ottoman Decline,” *Harvard Middle East and Islamic Review* 4/1 (1998), pp 30-75; Donald Quataert, "Ottoman History Writing and Changing Attitudes Towards the Notion of “Decline”." *History Compass* 1/1 (2003).
One significant aspect of the socio-political transformation of the early modern Ottoman Empire was the rise of a new political public sphere. The new political public sphere enhanced the social and political power of preachers and elevated their standing, once predominantly of local nature, to an institutional level. Hence, preachers not only formed but also thrived on a new public culture in which they played a significant role as makers of public opinion, allocators of religious legitimacy, and guardians of learning.

Studying preachers is a uniquely productive entypoint to studying the public political culture of the early modern Ottoman Empire. A transition from earlier understandings of the Ottoman polity as “Oriental Despotism,” or as a declining dysfunctional polity has been made largely possible by a study of civic groups that intermediated between the state and society. This intermediating sphere has been treated as a practical-administrative necessity. An interesting question for Ottoman political thought is whether the de facto political map produced any political discourse.

What distinguishes preachers from all the other social and political groups that came to exploit the greater chance of political participation is their moral and religious authority and their unique access to the public at large. No other group had such a unique connection with the public. It is not only their daily contact with urban and rural populations that makes them voices of public opinion. In addition, preachers develop a new discourse in which they position themselves as possessor of moral authority precisely for being not involved with the state. This language valorizes the extra-institutional—the “public”—as not only a legitimate but also a superior moral authority. As such, this discourse provides an important key to understand public
political culture as a native and consequential component of early modern Ottoman political thought.

This chapter explores the valorization of the extra-institutional as the true sphere of moral authority, an important public political discourse that has not been recognized or studied yet. Before focusing on preachers more narrowly in the next chapters, this chapter studies preachers as part of a broader social group that self identifies as sulaḥā (literally the pious). The sulaḥā brings together not only members of the formal scholarly bureaucracy (‘ulamā), such as judges or madrasa professors, but other dignitaries whose livelihood depended on public endowments, such as endowment overseers, mosque attendants, Sufi sheikhs and disciples, and descendants of the prophet. Hence, as a consistently applied epithet, “sulahā” symbolizes a group identity that is not based on institutional belonging, but on informal networks of belonging.

I study sulahā as a social group that owed its power not only to religious and moral legitimacy, but also to their political potential. The sulahā networks played significant roles in the distribution of posts that could change an individual’s status from subject (reʿāyā) to elite (‘askerī). The expansion of the ‘askerī class was a reality of the seventeenth century that resulted from the state’s increasing reliance on societal groups that acted as intermediaries between the state and the society. The rise of the sulahā as a consistent, self-professed identity in the biographical works of the period stems from this socio-political reality.

I start this chapter by describing the two main sources of this chapter, two un(der)utilized biographical dictionaries from the first half of the seventeenth century. Then I discuss the term “sulaḥā” and its significance as identity marker that brings together the elite and non-elite
religious officials based on these two sources. In the next section, I touch upon the question of how endowment posts, and particularly preaching posts, could be obtained. In the last section of this chapter, I discuss a public political discourse that accompanied the new political balance. This discourse expresses itself through its binary opposite: state-belonging.

I. Sources

Sixteenth-century scholar Ahmed Taşköprülüzade (d. 1561) compiled a biographical dictionary of scholars, entitled Şakai-i Nu ‘mâniyya. An appendage to this work was written and the appendage written to this work by the seventeenth century scholar Nev’izâde ‘Atâî (d. 1635). These have been the main primary sources for the study of the ‘ulamâ cadres in the Ottoman Empire.5 This series of canonized biographical dictionaries (tazkira) and its sequels focus for the most part on İstanbul’s well known and high-ranking ‘ulamâ and have been utilized by scholars as the primary source material for studies on the higher scholarly bureaucracy. The mid-level ‘ulama and other religious dignitaries who were in close connection with the ‘ulamâ, yet lacked a

high bureaucratic title, have fallen out of sight of not only the canonized Şakaiķ series, but also of many modern scholars.

There are, however, primary sources for the study of the mid-level ‘ulama, whose daily life intersects consistently with other members of şulaḥā, the religiously literate notables of Ottoman cities. This chapter is based on two of these narratives. The personal memoirs of Sayyid Hasan Rızāī el-Aksarāyī (d.1667), a judge, describes the networks he was involved with in his numerous provinces of appointment. His account is a testament that Sufi ties and the sayyid title were significant identity markers that could earn someone not only social recognition and instant inclusion in local networks, but could lead to one’s designation as ‘askerī, member of the military elite. The second source is Baldırzāde Meḥmed Selīṣī Efendi’s biographical dictionary of Bursa, painting a portrait of an Ottoman city run —almost owned — by Sufis, preachers and the lower and higher ranking scholars.

I.a. Encounters with Sulaḥā: Sayyid Ḥasan Rızāī el-Aksarāyī (d.1667)’s Autobiographical Dictionaries

Neglected by the biographical dictionaries of his era, Sayyid Hasan Rızai was a judge who was nonetheless very important as a vocal observer of his age. He has written two works that might be considered as autobiographical dictionaries: *The Biographies of Wayfarers and Epistle on Companions (Tezkiretü’s-sâlikîn ve Risâletü’n-nâdimîn,)* and *Maḥmûdiye.* In these two works, he describes his encounters with the religious notables of the districts to which he was appointed in Istanbul and across the Anatolian-Syrian geography. His accounts include portraits of many middle level ‘ulamā—from court employees to the descendants of the prophet (sayyids and
Therefore, the work deserves to be classified as an “autobiographical dictionary,” since it is a biographical dictionary that includes the social peers of the author. Both of Rızâi’s works are replete with vivid descriptions of cultural life in seventeenth-century Ottoman Anatolia and Syria. Moreover, these biographical works provide valuable insights into the relationships between the higher and lower ʿulamā, in addition to the non-official ʂulaḥā. Therefore, the works provide enough ground to question the “state-society”- or “bureaucracy-public” divide and to examine the role of the preachers as cultural intermediaries.

Rızai’s works fortunately include enough autobiographical detail to enable us to piece his life story together. Rızai was born in Aksaray in 1598 as the son of Hacı Abdurrahman Efendi (d. 1639), a judge who was employed presumably in many towns, since the circulation rate of judges between posts was particularly high in this period. Among his father’s appointments, Rızai only mentions ʿAama, a Syria town in which his father established some endowments, and from which he went on to the pilgrimage to Mecca. We also know that Rızai’s father was a Sūfī and a devotee of Aziz Maḥmūd Hüdāyī (d. 1628), a Khalwatī sheikh who was known to have great influence at the palace. The importance of this sheikh in the fate of Rızai’s family is noteworthy, as will be shown below. In fact, Rızai’s father had his family registered as sayyids – members of the prophet’s family – during his lifetime, owing to the reference of Hüdāyī.

---

6 I coin this term in relation to Rızâi’s collections of biographies since the author combines two different genres. He combines a biographical dictionary format and autobiographical writing, therefore opening up a unique space for autobiography. The author’s appropriation of the biographical dictionary genre parallels the sohbetnâmê genre, a genre based on one’s recording of social peers and meetings. For sohbetnâmê, see Cemal Kafadar, “Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature”. Studia Islamica 69 (1989), pp 121-150; Dana Sajdi, The Barber of Damascus, pp 128-136.

7 For different conceptualizations of the “state-society” or “bottom-up” divide, see the introduction of this study.
After his initial education in Aksaray, Rızāī wanted to continue his education in the capital, and moved to İstanbul to study at a madrasa. He resided in İstanbul with his father, who was possibly on a mülâzemet (a waiting period between posts) at the time. The two of them frequented the social gatherings of Hüdāyi. Finally Rızāī obtained a position as assistant to the chief mufti Esad Efendi, a position he held from 1030 to 1034 (1620-1624). Details in his memoir make it clear that he acquired this post thanks to the reference of his father’s sheikh Hüdāyi, and that he attained the rank of judge in the end not only because of his service as an assistant to the chief mufti, but also thanks to the Hüdāyi connection.

Rızāī’s career as a judge spans over sixty districts, small and large, in or East of Istanbul. None of these were the more prestigious mavlaviyets, except for short tenures at Ankara and Konya. The towns he mentions are İstanbul, Lazkiye (Denizli), Humus, Sermin, Hama, Haleb, Antep, Amasya, Çorum, Kars, Kırşehir, Niğde, Lârende (Karaman), Ereğli, Kayseri, Antalya, Antakya, Ankara, Malatya, Karahisar (Afyon), Hisnimansur (Adiyaman), Akşehir, Konya, Kars, Diyarbakır.

While leading a mobile life as Ottoman provincial judges had to, Rızāī also produced a hefty written output, placing him in an exceptional space among peers. In addition to the two autobiographical dictionaries I examine here, he wrote another, shorter work dedicated to the sulaḥā of Aksaray and entitled Nüzhetü’l-Ebrār min Ehli’l-Esrār (The Purity of the Veracious

8 Mavlaviyats were high-level judgements that were prestigious. These positions not only were much more highly paid, but also held a potential for promotion to military-judgments.
This is the first of his biographical works, which he completed in 1646 in Denizli. The work was later incorporated into the two autobiographical dictionaries mentioned here. In addition to the works he authored, Rızāī was interested in translation and commentary. Rızāī penned a versified translation of the Tecelliyât (Visions) of his sheikh, Aziz Maḥmūd Hüdāyī. He also translated the Persian poet Sādī (d. 1292)’s Gûlistân. His Risāle-yi Aḥkām-i Sāl-i Türkân is a translation of a work about meteorology entitled Melhame-yi Şemsiye. His translations and explications are without exception dedicated to members of the Khalwati brotherhood. In this capacity, Rızāī’s written output stands as yet another witness to his committed immersion into networks of şulaḥā. From a broader perspective, Rızāī’s oeuvre attests to the centrality of manuscript production and circulation in forming literate works across the Ottoman Empire.

In other words, Rızāī is very keen to underline his place within a network of suleha, and he does so by keeping a full account of all the religious notables who keep him company during his numerous tenures across Anatolia and Syria. The nearly one hundred names included in his account are listed with occupation, Sufi affiliation, and short anecdotes. As such, the Tezkire and the Mahmudiye become precious sources for the study of religious notables, their social profiles, their socialization habits, and how they formed their networks.

---

9 Seyyid Hasan Rızāī, Tezkiretü’s-Sâlikin. İstanbul Atatürk Kitaplığı, Osman Nuri Ergin Yazmaları 41. The work has been transliterated in Mustafa Çağırıcı, Hasan Rızāyî ve Tezkiretü’s-Sâlikin ile Mahmudiyye Adlı Eserlerinin Tahkik ve Değerlendirmesi. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2006. Unless otherwise stated, references to Rızāī’s biographical works in this dissertation will be based on Mustafa Çağırıcı’s work. The biographical information in this section is also based on Çağırıcı’s work, in addition to Rizai’s autobiographical passages in Tezkire and Mahmudiyye.
I.b. Baldızade Mehmed Efendi (d. 1060/1650) and The Heavenly Garden of the Friends of God

The scholar Mehmed Selisi Efendi of Bursa composed a biographical dictionary of the şulaḥā of Bursa, living and past, that covers the period from the first Ottoman settlements in Bursa to the mid-seventeenth century. Mehmed Selisi Efendi, otherwise known by his family name Baldızade, included in his biography the highest level 'ulamā and the wise-fool (dede) type alike. These different şulaḥā types together form an interesting urban history of Bursa from a scholarly perspective, and therefore deserve particular attention.

Derviš Mehmed Baldızade of Bursa was born in Bursa in 1610, to a family of mid-level 'ulamā. His grandfather - Tokath Ali Dede settled in Bursa where his son Mustafa flourished as a preacher. Mustafa began his career as the preacher of the Yıldırım Mosque. Other occupations he held during his lifetime were: imām at the Abdal Mehmed Mosque, imām at the Great Mosque, sheikh of the dârulkurra,10 imām of the Hisar Mosque, and khatib at the Great Mosque. Sheikh Mustafa’s son was Baldızade Mehmed, also known as Selisi Mehmed Efendi. Baldızade had a bright career in the scholarly bureaucracy. His successful career must have been in large part due to being born into circles where he had easy access to contact that helped to initiate him into the world of learning. He then began his career in 1606 as a madrasa professor of the forty-akçe

10 Endowment based institutions where the recitation of the Quran was taught to the general public. See “Darülkurra”, TÜVİA.
Bursa Molla Fenari Madrasa, a post he held together with his post as the court scribe. Selisi Mehmed was promoted to the fifty-akçe Lala Şahin Paşa Madrasa in 1618, continuing at several other Bursa and İstanbul madrasas before his appointment to the Sahn-ı Seman, where he taught for two years. After these two years, he returned to Bursa Sultaniye Madrasa, and then back again in İstanbul, this time as the mudarris of the Üsküdar Valide Sultan Madrasa. After that, he switched his path to judicial posts, where he advanced to the post of the judge of Mecca. Afterwards, he retired and settled in his native Bursa.

In the biographical note he adduces to Ravzatu’l-Evliyâ, Baldırzade emphasizes that even after his retirement, he continued his scientific engagements (‘ilmî fa‘âliyet). These scientific engagements comprised teaching, partaking in scholarly or poetic gatherings, and writing. His autobiographical note in Rawzatu’l-Awliya mentions that his wife was from a sayyid lineage. A probate entry on his wealth suggests that he owned a good number of books, some acquired and some quite possibly inherited from his family. About 36% of his entire wealth was books, most

________________________

11 These institutions were: İstanbul Davud Paşa, Bursa Yıldırım, İstanbul Ayşe Sultan Madrasas.

of which were sold at an auction held at the Great Mosque.\textsuperscript{13} Baldırzade died in 1650 and was buried in the family cemetery in the courtyard of the Abdal Mehmed Mosque.\textsuperscript{14}

To recapitulate, Baldırzade’s is a life story that begins with a grandfather who worked as a preacher across Bursa, apparently well regarded and continuously in demand. His descendants then had access to knowledge in general, definitely to Arabic and Quranic sciences and perhaps to other fields. Moreover, they were born into the networks of knowledge in Bursa, which presumably played a role in their ensuing \textit{ilmiyya} careers. Baldırzade Mehmed’s marriage into a \textit{sayyid} family was also important. The occurrence of the \textit{sayyid} title in the life stories of our up-and-coming middle classes is not coincidental. The importance of these networks will become clear in the story of \textit{Sayyid Hasan Rızâ}, the author of the second major source of this chapter.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{13} Unfortunately, the titles of these books did not interest the court scribe at all, who only noted that one of the books had a Bağdadi-Beneşfe binding. For the details of Baldırzade’s \textit{tereke}, see Saadet Maydaer, “XVII. \textit{Yüzyılda Bursa’da Emekli Bir Kadi: Baldırzade Oğlu Derviş Mehmed Efendi ve Serveti}”, \textit{Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi}, vol 17/2, 2008.


\textsuperscript{15} The relatively more prestigious judge-ships came with their disadvantages, especially in the seventeenth century. The dizzying rate at which rotations were made made life uncertain and difficult for many judges. In contrast, a preaching post made it possible to rely on one’s own immediate network as opposed to the more capricious imperial arrangements of appointment and promotion.
II. The Şulaḥā as an Indigenous Identity Marker: A Social Group of Intermediaries Between the State and Society

Nev’izāde Atāyī (d. 1635) is the author of the authoritative biographical dictionary on the religious scholars and notables of the early seventeenth century. However, despite the collection’s modern standing, Atāyī’s collection had a mixed reception among his contemporaries. A Khalwatī author, Nazmi Efendi (d. 1701), composed his own collection of biographies occasionally criticizing Atāyī’s treatment of the sheikhs of his order.

Even though Şems Efendi is famous among the people, high and low; and even though at the time Atāyī was composing his appendix, Sivāsī Efendi was the preacher of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque and the sheikh of the Yavsī lodge […] even though all the scholars (‘ulema’-ya izām) heard his sermons […], Atāyī wrote ‘Since I do not know much about the biographies of Şems Efendi and Sivāsī Efendi, I did not write about their branch [of the Khalwatī order]. This despite he wrote the well-known and little-known ones among all the orders.17

The anecdote about the two biographical authors, one of which disapproves of the other’s treatment of subjects reveals much about the genre of biographical dictionaries. The choice of subjects, the space dedicated to each one of them, and the detail with which each entry is


17 Nazmi Efendi, Hediyyetü’l-İhvan. Transliterated and published as Osman Türer (Ed.), Osmanlılarda Tasavvuf Hayat: Halvetilik Örneği. İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2005, p 453. Nazmi Efendi suggests that Atāyī neglected the Şemsiye branch purposefully, as a retaliation to Abdülmecid Sivāsī’s sermons targeting the İdrisī branch of the Melāmī order; Atayi was from the İdrisīs of his time. Nazmi Efendi goes on to opine that Sivāsī did indeed go too far in admonishing the İdrisīs.
embellished are political choices.\(^{18}\) This insight is significant in considering the two biographical dictionaries by Rizâi and Baldırzâde, particularly with respect to the question of who each author chooses to include as the “pious men” (sulahâ) of their communities. I argue in this section that both of these authors operate on the basis of a group identity, that is of “sulahâ,” which included all the religious notables of a town without regard to their relationship with the state. In this capacity, their biographical dictionaries differ from the canonized ‘ulamâ biographical dictionaries that aspire to record official career lines, and treat Sufis and preachers as separately and after the state-employed ulamâ. In contrast, the title sulahâ transcends dichotomies such as “‘ulamâ versus lay”, “Sûfî versus non-Sûfî”, or “Sûfî versus salafî”. The creation of biographical dictionaries where the authors underline the title sulahâ at the expense of ‘ulamâ signifies a rising prestige and authority of civic identities at the expense of official titles.

The group of religious notables that fall under the rubric of sulahâ comprised middling ‘ulamâ (madrasa instructors and judges)\(^{19}\), preachers, imâms, müezzins, employees of the pious


\(^{19}\) Some confusion with regard to the usage of “‘ulamâ” exists in Ottoman historical writing. In her study, Madeleine Zilfi underlines that Ottomanists use ‘ulamâ to refer to the scholars employed by the state bureaucracy. See Madeleine Zilfi, “The Kadizadelis: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 45/4 (1986), pp. 251-269. Studies on the ‘ilmiyye bureaucracy tend to use ‘ulamâ in this bureaucratic sense while treating the non-bureaucratized ‘ulamâ as an insignificant sidenote. In Ottoman usage, however, ‘ulamâ could refer to any group of religious notables. Thanks to studies of court registers, Ottomanists are already aware that the state classified these groups together under the category “‘ulamâ” in local population surveys. See Hülya Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town: Aynâb in the Seventeenth Century*. Leiden: Brill, 2007, p 67. In order to prevent confusion, I will follow the historiographical convention of using ‘ulamâ to refer to the members of the ilmiye bureaucracy.
endowments and *sharīʿa* courts. The terō “*ṣulāḥā*,” literally meaning “righteous, virtuous, incorrupt,” 20 was more than merely an adjective. *Ṣulāḥā* denoted a social type, and was an identity marker used widely and consistently by authors of biographical dictionaries, hagiographies, and *sohbetnāmes*-autobiographical notes of social encounters. Despite the importance of the term, it has largely eluded the attention of Ottoman historians and Islamic historians in general, with the exception of Vincent Cornell. 21 Cornell recognizes the importance of the label *suleha* for the medieval Moroccan Sufi communities he analyzes. The usage is based on the Quranic verse, according to which the best Muslims reside “in the company of those whom Allah favored: the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, and the virtuous (*ṣāliḥîn*). What a beautiful fellowship they are!” 22 Cornell describes “*ṣāliḥ*” as a social paradigm, a label attached to a “morally upstanding and socially constructive individual who performs visible acts of piety and works for the betterment (*iṣlāḥ*) of himself and his fellow believers.” 23 In Cornell’s analysis, *ṣāliḥ* is a term that hagiography writers used for Sufi saints to underline, not without some anxiety, that they confirmed to the ‘*ulamā*’s authoritative conception of what piety is. As such, *suleha* unified the ‘*ulamā*’ and sheikhs under a single umbrella, hence fostering a common

---


22 Quran 4: 69.

confusion as to the nature of the relation between the two significant sources of religious authority in Islamic societies.

In its Ottoman usage, too, the word ṣulahā was an umbrella term unifying the influential members of the community who derived their status from religious literacy. The ṣulahā was made up of the lower ranking 'ulamā, being judges and provincial madrasa professors, in addition to Sufi sheikhs, endowment trustees, preachers and other mosque attendants, and descendants of the prophet (sayyids). Most individuals held several of these titles at once. Being a Sufi sheikh was particularly versatile, as one could hold any of the aforementioned posts in addition to being the sheikh of a lodge. State-related posts -such as judgeships or madrasa professorships could also be held simultaneously with a preaching or endowment overseeing post.

If the discursive expression of the connections between the 'ulamā and other religious notables was the epithet sulahā, its physical expression was the endowment system. The 'ulamā and sulahā had particularly close links with the endowment system. A public endowment could be founded by anyone, from the sultan to anyone who owned property. Once established, the property endowed was inalienable and to be disposed strictly in accordance with the stipulations. Therefore, the endowment structure had a civic structure by nature. In addition to offering a protected sphere for the endower and his or her family, the endowments often interacted closely

with the local community. The endowment property system was the main source that supported preachers, other mosque attendants, members of Sufi lodges, teachers and students of madrasas. In many cases, it was the local ‘ulamā or preachers who were appointed as endowment overseers. According to an İstanbul register dated 1546, the preacher of the nearest mosque was appointed as the de-facto manager of many endowments. Moreover, if the founder’s line ended without heir, the manager of the endowment was chosen from the same group of people. The endowment system therefore acted as a social system in which religious notables could be economically independent. Moreover, this social system provided a forum in which the bureaucratcial elite, the ‘ulamā, and the non-elite members of the community interacted regularly.

The study of the connections between the elite and non-elite members of the Ottoman society on a “third space”, that is on an intermediary sphere between the state and the society, is in its infancy. In one of the rare studies that underline the importance of this inquiry, Eunjeong Yi observes that Ottoman elites and non-elites were more closely connected than historical writing might lead us to believe. Based on a market inspection register dated 1681, Yi demonstrates that the shopkeepers of İstanbul were connected to the elite through leases. Moreover, these connected urban actors acted in connection in historical events such as urban rebellions. Yi concludes that the non-elite civilians of Ottoman towns held great political


potential, as manifest in their political, social, and economic connections with members of the elites.  

The tendency to isolate the bureaucratic elite from the rest of the society particularly distorts the study of religious notables in Ottoman cities. Particularly during the sixteenth century, the zenith of Ottoman bureaucratisation, scholars have studied Ottoman scholarly bureaucracy (‘ilmiyye) as the definitive embodiment of Ottoman religious legitimacy and education.  

This approach which equates state involvement with complete control on religious scholarship goes back a long time. In an article on the Ottoman office of chief mufti written in 1972, Richard Bulliet writes:

> There is no question but that the Shaikh al-Islam was Grand Mufti of the Ottoman Empire, and it is hardly surprising that this quickly came to be viewed as his prime function. His greatest historical significance, however, is as head of the Ottoman religious bureaucracy. It is not his functioning as head of the bureaucracy that is significant but rather the fact that by means of him the educational system was brought under state control and thus the bureaucracy came into existence in its perfected form.  

Bulliett’s fascination with the bureaucratic order imposed on the ‘ulamā by the state and what he calls “the complete absorption of the educational system”- is widely shared in historiography. Cornell Fleischer has been the first historian to underline the inadequacy of

27 Eunjeong Yi, “Artisans’ Networks and Revolt in Late-Seventeenth Century İstanbul: An Examination of the Istanbul Artisans’ Rebellion of 1688”, in Eleni Gara et al (Ed.s) Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2011, pp 105-126.  

28 This is the argument of Abdurrahman Atçıl, The Formation of the Ottoman Learned Class and Legal Scholarship (1300-1600). Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation: University of Chicago, 2010. Atçıl recognized the existence of scholars who chose to remain disengaged with the state bureaucracy as an exception to the rule. See Atçıl, The Formation of the Ottoman Learned Class, p 5.  

focusing on the scholarly bureaucracy in isolation with the other religious and intellectual elite.

Analyzing the case of the Ottoman poet Surûri (d. 1562), Fleischer writes:

Sururi was disaffected from the Ottoman system; he had resigned from a teaching post at Rüstem Paşa in order to teach independently in his own small mosque and thus avoid involvement with either government or ilmiye politics. Nevertheless, his scholarship was irreproachable, and his granting of a certification of mastery of a text (icazet) still carried considerable weight. He was also a Nakşbendi dervish and an habitué of the Emir-i Buhari Tekkesi, (...) The fact that (Gelibolulu Mustafa) Ali studied with Stiruri, even though his courses were not an official part of the medrese system, highlights the importance of the personal aspect of Ottoman education. A student's standing was judged not only by the medrese to which he might be formally attached, but also by the diplomas of qualification to teach individual texts and subjects he received from recognized authorities, whatever the status of the latter might be. Finally, the case of Surûri, who rebelled against the control which the Ottoman government was establishing over the learned classes, shows that in the mid-sixteenth century the bureaucratization of the ilmiye as a branch of the ruling establishment was neither complete nor accepted in principle with equanimity. ³⁰

Even though “alienated” individuals such as Surûri appear as early as the sixteenth century, the şulaḥâ networks gain their true vigor as an informal public institution in the seventeenth century. The close connections between religious notables with different titles and occupations within Ottoman cities appear clearly in Rızâi’s and Baldrzâde’s collections of biographies. Baldrzâde’s Heavenly Garden brings together the highest ranking ʿulamā with barely educated popular saints. Most social contacts of Rızâi held a legitimate, formally acknowledged title such as judge, sheikh, or imām. Yet some individuals are included even without the two signifiers that made one significant: his occupation or family information. In

these instances, the reader is assured that the person is nonetheless from among the șulaḫā of the said town. An example would be a certain çelevi of the town of Larende:

Seyyid Mustafa Çelebi is among the șulaḫā of Larende. He enticed my father to build a mosque next to the courthouse in Hama, on a piece of land used as dump. He used to be an ehl-i heva (a bon vivant) who drank wine. One night he falls asleep by the stable of the courthouse, and has a dream where many saints (awliyā) appear. He wakes up screaming, and runs to my father Hacı Abdurrahman Efendi. (The Seyyid Çelebi asks the judge Hacı Abdurrahman to refurbish the location). Thereupon, my late father saw to it personally to have a mosque and minaret built there. He had an imam, a khatib and a müezzin appointed.31

The sulahā becomes a consistently used term as of the seventeenth century. Preachers must be studied as part of this significant civic group that ascends alongside other intermediary social groups. Preaching posts were one of the important paths to upward mobility. Not only were they attached to economic gains through endowments, but brought along social and moral authority. Preachers and other sulahā appear often in court records as representatives of the neighbourhood populations, a phenomenon attesting to their social and moral authority. An example is a court case dated August 1657, where the attending neighbourhood representatives are recorded as “İmam Yusuf Halife bin Derviş Ali, Seyyid Mehmed Çelebi bin Seyyid Abdi, Seyyid Ali Çelebi bin Seyyid, el-Hac Ali bin el-Hac Ömer, Sarac Mustafa, Hamza bin Abdullah and so on.”32 In addition to attending court cases, preachers also settle disputes between

---

31 Rızâ, Tezkiretü’s-sâlikîn, p 82.

inhabitants of a neighborhood. The appearances of imams in court records attests to the prestige they held among their social peers as religious notables.

Alongside the monetary gain from the endowments, the social and moral prestige of a preaching post or a sulaha membership explains why a large number of individuals were interested in keeping this post, sometimes in addition to other posts. Preaching was sometimes held as a side-job by other members of the efendi class who presumably wanted to capitalize on the posts’ potential to access the larger public. Judges and naqibu’l-ashraf (officials responsible for registering the members of the prophet’s family in state records) often preached at mosques. For instance, Rızâi describes a certain Köse Mehmed Efendi of Lârânde as “of those judge-preachers”, a statement suggesting that carrying out both of these functions was a rather common practice. Moreover, mükimme registers record instances of judges insisting on attending to their daily affairs at the mosque instead of at the courthouse, possibly indicating that they saw the mosque as a more significant social center.

To summarize, it is important to see preachers as parts of sulahâ as religious notables of Ottoman cities that transcended the “state bureaucracy versus society” divide. The sulahâ was a term belonging to the intermediate realm between the two. A sulahâ membership, and

33 For examples of court cases where the imam acts as dispute settler, see Boğac Ergene, Local Court, Provincial Society, and Justice in the Ottoman Empire: Legal Practice and Dispute Resolution in Çankiri and Kastamonu (1652-1744). Leiden: Brill, 2003 ,p 178.

34 Rızâi, Tezkiretü’s-Sâlikân, p 182.

35 A petition from Baghdad complains that the judges of the city insist on attending to lawsuits at the mosque, and the ensuing commotion distracts Muslims from their prayers. See Mühimme Defteri 92 (1067-9/1656-8), p 128, Entry No.300.
particularly for the purposes of this study a preaching post carried with it economic advantage in addition to social and moral authority. The next section addresses the question of how preaching posts could be occupied in seventeenth century Ottoman Empire. I show that the distribution of these posts, while officially certified, were in practice determined by the *sulahā* networks. This important fact underlines the importance of *sulahā* networks for upward mobility.

**III. Preachers and Upward Mobility: To Whom Did the Mosques Belong?**

Since the social and political usage of the Ottoman mosques has not been well-studied, there is very little on how this important post was distributed. In a thought-provoking piece entitled “The Ottoman Mosque as an Administrative-Political Institution,” —Nuri Adıyeye suggests that Ottoman mosques were nothing less than administrative apparatuses of the state. Basing his argument on the obligation of preachers to obtain a state certificate, Adıyeye writes:

> Muslim places of worship in the Ottoman Empire were of two main kinds. The first is a simple house of worship found in a village or mahalle, where no *khutba* (a Friday sermon) in the name of the sultan was read. The second is a mosque where a *khutba* was pronounced in the name of the sultan. This second type of mosques were not only houses of worship, but also state institutions. They are established with special official permission, and the *khatib* is appointed by a state certificate (*berat*). 36

Adıyeye’s approach equates state certification with absolute state control. However, in many instances, the state’s issuance of certification was nothing but the performance of a notarial function. The decisions on the distribution of preaching posts was made at the public sphere,

through local networks, Sufi networks, or venality of offices. Only after the decisions were made, the state’s certification was sought.

The significance of patronage and venality for post distribution is clearly visible through an examination of two types of sources. First of all, reading archival documents about the appointments to preaching posts provides much needed detail into the mechanisms by which preaching posts were distributed. Secondly, narrative sources about individuals who have acquired posts underline the significance of patronage. Sayyid Hasan Rızâî’s autobiographical dictionaries prove once again fruitful for these purposes.

To begin with archival documents, it is telling that the early modern Ottoman state did not keep central records of the mosque attendants in an orderly fashion until the nineteenth century, even the imperial capital. Prior to this time, the names of religious personnel appeared only on endowment documents. The other types of documentation for these appointments include the state berat, a certification of appointment, and petitions written to the state in order to obtain these certifications.

One way to approach the question of the state control over public spaces such as mosques and lodges is to take a closer look at state issued certificates for preacher-ship (berââ). Both the archival sources, and narrative sources regarding the appointment of preaching posts suggest that the state documentation was, in more cases than not, an approval of a decision which had already

37 As of the nineteenth century registers entitled “Teveihat Defterleri” (Registers of Appointment) keep records of mosque employees in cities.

been made without involvement of state procedures. In many cases, issuing a *berat*—a deed of appointment—was a financial matter for the state. For instance, when the religious attendees of the Kilidubahr fortress (*Kilidubahr erenleri*) asked for a renewal of their berats, the response was, “their berats shall be renewed in exchange for the necessary fee.”

A closer look at the archives for berats granted to preachers reveals that these berats were granted based on the references provided by the local notables, most prominently from court personnel. Local judges, and the *mufti* in the case of great cities such as Istanbul, were almost always the reference-providers for *imams*-to-be. Archival documents show that it was not only judges and *muftis*, but also court officials, and even members of the *kalemiyye* who could provide references for an individual to become a preacher.

A reference by a local judge was one way of securing a position as a preacher-*imam*. The other main route was to be referred by a former *imam*. Hence in many cases, we see an *imam* who is ready to step down recommending his own replacement, and again, acquiring the berat. This type of post-acquisition is typically called “*ferāgāṭ*, acquittal. In these documents, the former holder of a preaching post names his post and the new preacher, and asks for his berat to

---

39 Mühimme Defteri 73 (1067-9/1656-8), Entry no 167.

40 Examples of reference letters by judges or muftis are: İE Vakif: 2/152, Date:1040, İE Sultan Ahmed I/293 (Date 1014), İE Vakif I/ 47, Date 1011, YB 04 1/20 (judges providing reference letter for imâms); İE Sultan Ahmed I/11 (date 1012) (a *naib* providing reference for a preacher); İE.EV 15/ 1850, Date 1079 (*muftis* providing references for preachers). Hülya Canbakal’s studies also underline the key role of the judge in providing certificates for the askerî status, as well as the importance of connections overall. See Hülya Canbakal, *Society and Politics*, pp 70-76.

41 İE 1/48, Date 1011, Preaching post granted through the intermediacy of the Deputy of the Chief Scribe (*Reisülkütttab kaymakami*) Ali Çelebi.
be renewed in the new appointees’ name. In many of these cases, the intercession of a post-holder was seen as sufficient to bestow a post on certain preacher, underlining that the state involvement was more patronage-based rather than bureaucratical.

How did a judge make his decisions regarding appointments to posts? Two small anecdotes from Rızā’i’s Mahmūdiyye provide some clues. In Lazkiye, Rızā’i meets a Bektāşî dervish named Dervish ‘Ali. The dervish has an impeccable reputation in the locality, being particularly famous for being so pious that he would not sleep at night. Rızā’i decides to employ this dervish at the court for his impressive piety. RızĀí tells a similar story from Khums. He describes Sheikh Najmi, a Sufî from Khums as a knowledgeable man particularly adept at calligraphy. Because the sheikh was very poor, writes Rız, “Ebû Nâfi‘ felt pity for him. Considering his good manners, too, Ebu Nafi gave him a post at the courthouse.”

These anecdotes suggest that while talent and knowledge played some role in attaining a post, it was not the only determinant. Patronage relations and the local reputation of an individual played an important role. Considering the high turnover rate of judge appointments, the judges could not be expected to have deep knowledge of localities and naturally relied on the opinions of the inhabitants of a city. Since local notables and sulaha were part of the networks that the judges would join, it could be expected that the kadi berati, which could simply be dubbed a “state certificate” was indeed to be acquired through local patronage relations.

42 Examples to archival documents where the holder of a preaching berat acquitted in favor of a specified individual are YB 04 1/13; YB 04 1/56; YB 04 1/57; YB 1/55.

43 Hasan Rızā, el-Mahmūdiyye, p 164.

44 Hasan Rızā, el-Mahmūdiyye, p 166.
Narrative sources help provide the background regarding acquittal of one’s post. Sufi hagiographies in particular underline the importance of the sheikh in determining preaching posts. In these sources, sheikhs educate disciples to be sheikhs or preachers in turn. Later, when the owner or manager of an endower asks a sheikh to suggest a competent imān for a post, they suggest one of their disciples. For example, when Tabanıyassı Mehmed Paşa (d. 1637) acts as the governor of Egypt, he asks the Khalwati sheikh Abdülmecid Sivasi (d. 1639) to send a disciple to Egypt, who then establishes a lodge and preaches to the people there. Sheikhs could make or un-make posts in this manner. For instance, a competent Khalwati sheikh Bezcizade wants to preach at one of the Khalwati lodges. However, not being in favor by the other sheikhs of the order, he cannot obtain a post at one of the lodges. Therefore, he has to move to Konya from İstanbul for a preaching post. The story is significant since it demonstrates the allocation of preaching posts as a collective decision making process. The importance of Sufi networks in the distribution of posts therefore must be underlined once again. It is plausible that at least a portion of the stories of the acquittal of one’s post in favor of another designated individual have arrangements decided within one’s local community or Sufi order as their background story.

Another possible backstory to cases where a preacher acquits his position by designating a specific individual is the venality of office. Although the local community or the Sufi network could decide acquittal berâts, there is some evidence that in some cases the post was sold for cash. Such venality is difficult to prove, since sales were not documented unless there was a


conflict. An example of a conflict in the sale of offices is documented by a petition sent from Amasya. The petitioner, a certain İsmail introduces himself as a resident of Amasya who studied at Hagia Sofia for an indefinite period, “about 15-20 years”, yet has no income from anywhere (bir yerden bir a邠ce medar-ı maasım olmadığına binaen). An opportunity presents itself for İsmail when the former mudarris of the Abdullah Paşa madrasa leaves Amasya for İstanbul, and decides to acquit his teaching post (ferâqat) in exchange for 50 aspers. However, even though İsmail is promised the post, he does not get it. The former madrasa professor sells the position to someone else, which is, first of all, breaks the promise. Moreover, the buyer is completely inappropriate for the position. The buyer is a resident of İstanbul, and teaches at the primary level (şibyân). His only motivation in buying a post in Amasya is greed: according to İsmail’s explanation, he plans to sell it to a higher bidder.

The document is interesting in showing that there is a speculative market for buying and selling posts. Noteworthy is how İsmail writes about the transaction as a natural process. There is a complaint-worthy situation, only because the buyer is an absentee and speculates in the market. The number of documents that show the inner workings of venality are far smaller than the “acquittal” documents. However, many of these seemingly voluntary acquittals could have a monetary arrangement that the document does not mention. Therefore, it must be the case that in many instances of appointment to such posts, the involvement of the state is limited to notarization and dispute resolution.

BOA, Cevdet Maarif 6715 (1136/1723).
To recap, judges and sheikhs played a significant role in distributing posts. While in some instances the offices were sold, in others they were attained through local networks or Sufi networks. How were these networks formed? The two main sources of this chapter are perfect sources for such this question. In both Seyyid Rızâ’ı’s and Baldırzâde Mehmed’s accounts, the preachers of mosques are consistent members of these two writers’ networks. Moreover, since Rızâ’ı and Baldırzâde both acted as judges, these accounts provide us with insight into how it was possible for an individual to join the networks of the local ‘ulama. Therefore, it should provide an insight into how the references necessary to acquire a berat could be acquired.

Hasan Rızâ’ı’s account is interesting in that it points to the significance of Sufi ties and the title of sayyid in connecting with local networks. Rızâ’ı’s biographies contain the most explicit anecdotes regarding the importance of Sufi networks in particular, and šulaḫâ networks in general, in upward social mobility. The relationship between upward social mobility and šulaḫâ membership is most apparent in Rızâ’ı’s own trajectory, as he narrates it in detail in The Biographies of Wayfarers and Epistle on Companions (Tezkiretü’s-sâlikîn ve Risâletü’n-nâdimîn). The Biographies of Wayfarers is a biographical dictionary written in Ottoman Turkish dedicated to Cenneti Mehmed Efendi (d. 1664). The work starts with a preface that explains the motivations of the author in writing the work, most of which is dedicated to the circle of Hūdai

48 Mehmed Cenneti, known with his penname Fenayi, was a Khalwati sheikh and fairly renown poet. Coming from a family of scribes, he started off as a scribe, too. He then quit the scribal path upon meeting Hūdai through Cenneti’s brother who was a scribe, and became a disciple of him. After a long period of education, Hūdai sent Cenneti to Simav as a deputy (khalîfa). After Hūdai’s death, he came back to Istanbul and assumed the Celveti sheikh-hood. A disciple of him, Arabzade Mehmed, compiled his sermons under the title “Bihiştiyâ fi ’l- Ma’ārif el- Ilāhiyâ” (MS Süleymaniye Hacı Mahmud 2268).
and his own relationship with the sheikh or the sheikh’s immediate circle. Rızāī names all the 
deputies of the sheikh Hüdayi from whom Rızai received his initiation. Rızāī then describes 
himself as attending the majlis of Mesud Efendi, a niece of the Sheikh Hüdâyî. Rızāī further 
seeks a private meeting with Mesud Efendi, and when the meeting cannot be arranged, he sends 
Mesud Efendi a gift: a certain Gülzär-i Niyāz (The Rose Garden of Plead) of his own 
compilation, which he adds to the Tezkire at this point. The work is then followed by a 
description of the Celveti path. His Mahmūdiyye, which is the Arabic version of Tezkire-i 
Salihin was also written, in his own words:

…to show his allegiance to Aziz [Mahmud Hüdâyî]. I have named the book Mahmudiyye 
(on this account) and sent the book to the sheikh through Mahmud Efendi, his asadar-
baton-bearer. In this book, I have displayed my and my father’s adherence to Hz. Aziz.49

As the account proceeds, it becomes clear that Rızāī’s only aim is to underline his 
allegiance to Hüdâyî Efendi, who helped him obtain his first post and the sayyid title he proudly 
holds. He further wants to underline his place within an empire-wide network of șulaḥā. Surely 
Rızāī resorts to other cultural-intellectual identity markers in describing his fellows. “‘Alim” and 
“‘arif” are the foremost among such titles. Rızāī used these markers for people who hold more 
formal titles as ʿulamā and sheikhs. “Sulaḥā”, on the other hand, is a word that applies to people 
of proper manners who are socially connected to the ʿalim and ʿarif. In this sense, it applies to 
the literate yet not necessarily scholarly members of the urban society, and it is interesting that a

49 Rızāī, Mahmūdiyye, p 108.
term is used consistently to refer to these individuals, showing that they form a self-recognizing group.

Moreover, the very story of how he came to be a judge and a sayyid underlines the significance of Sufi networks in particular, and of urban literate networks in general.

This humble servant has visited Hazret-i Aziz together with my late father el-Hâc Abdurrahman el-Aksarâyî. We have been blessed not only with his prayers and good reception, but also with his worldly benefaction and interception (in favor of us), thank God. (Hazret-i Aziz) sent his baton-bearer Hâdim Osman Dede to the late nakibü’leşrâf Ebu’l-Kasım Ğubârî (the late, heaven-deserving, may God’s mercy be upon him), (with the following message): “The ancestors of these two are known to us. While we were studying at Aksaray, which is close to our hometown Köchisar-Karaman, we got to meet their ancestors and have witnessed many generosities. We stand as witness to their seyyid-hood, and it should be registered by our reference (şehadet).”

The passage sheds light on an interesting phenomenon of the seventeenth century, that of the ever increasing number of people officially registered as the prophet’s descendants and who thus acquired the associated privileges. Rızâî explains in an unconventionally open manner how he and his father came to hold the title.

After (being registered as seyyids), my late father requested the sheikh, the exalted Aziz: “Thanks to your kindness, our family has been invigorated with your kind benefaction and patronage, and our son the humble one has acquired a document of seyyid-hood. However, he has one last request. Our son has been the assistant of Esad Efendi, the current chief mufti (…). He is adequate, and he is ready to be registered for appointment (mülazım).”

---

50 Asâdâr, a title for the advanced disciples of a sheikh who act as his assistants.
51 The state employee whose duty was to register seyyids and sedats, the descendants of the prophet’s family.
52 Rızâî, Tezkiretü’s-Sâlikân, p 53.
53 Canbakal, “Descendants of the Prophet.”
54 Rızâî, Tezkiretü’s-Sâlikân, p 54.
Rızâî’s father adds the following couplet before sending his request through another baton-bearer of the sheikh, Asâdâr Süleyman Vakârî:

No one puts out the benevolent fire / No one disobliges intercession⁵⁵

Rızâî and his father’s next story about the sheikh’s protection and patronage is less straightforward than the first one. The chief mufti Esad Efendi (d. 1625), who is introduced in this text as “of the devotees of his Highness Azîz”:

He respected and admired Hz Azîz to such an extent that, come rain or shine, even in inclement weather when strong storms made it dangerous for boats to launch, he would go to Hz. Azîz’s lodge (in Üsküdar) to be present in his gatherings and to hear his sermons and advice.⁵⁶

Esad Efendi responded that the request that was communicated with the sheikh’s reference could not be met immediately. The chief mufti explained that he had four referenced (mûşeffa’) danişmends who were waiting for urgent appointment. If Hasan Rızai would not be troubled by the misery and ill-wishes of those four, Esad Efendi could register him immediately. If, however, he would not mind waiting, the chief mufti promised to register him two months later, in the Ramadhan of that month. When the asadar passed these words on to Rızai, who was waiting outside as the conversation took place, Rızai said what a good salih would say. He stated that he would wait until the holy month of Ramadhan. Our author Rızai gets what he wants in Ramadhan, however this comes with unexpected news. The Chief Mufti Esad Efendi passes away during Ramadhan. According the rulings of Ottoman ‘ilmîyya, when an ‘ulama passes

⁵⁵ Rızâî, Tezkiretü’s-Sâlikîn, p 54.
⁵⁶ Rızâî, Tezkiretü’s-Sâlikîn, p 54.
away, all his graduate students are “set free”, meaning registered to be employed (mülażım çıkmak). The story therefore ends with a motif common to Sufi narratives: Esad Efendi, who is ehl-i hal as a result of his dedication to Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi, has predicted the time of his own death.

I have been the recipient of Hz Aziz’s patronage/interception and have attained my desire twice in this world. (They say) “If something happens twice, it happens for a third time”. A third interception did not happen on this world, so it has been delayed to the other world. God willing, (I wish to) have his interception, and fulfill my wishes of this worldly and other worldly bliss.57

The term Rızâi uses for “interception” here and elsewhere in his text is “şefaat”. The term is used in a specific sense, in reference to the belief that Prophet Muhammad will intercede on behalf of his community on the Day of Judgment. By extension, şefaat is also used for Sufi sheikhs, since their believers hold that their connection with their sheikh will be reason for God to be forgiving of their sins. It is interesting to note that Rız uses this term not only in the more conventional other worldly sense, but also with reference to his endeavors to acquire titles and positions. In this sense, şefaat becomes a synonym for the modern term “patronage.”

The importance of local networks in attaining positions was not limited to positions as preachers. Court personnel could also be changed by the local community. According to a mühimme entry from Karaman, residents under the leadership of “some meshaikh” interfere in the choice of who would be employed at the court of Karaman. For an unexplained reason, they petition for specified names to be forbidden from employment at the court. The complainees,

57 Rızâi, Tezkiretü’s-Sâlikân, p 56.
however, delete all the relevant correspondences from the court register and continue to occupy the position. Therefore, the meshaikh petition, once again, for the execution of the previous order. Their petition is accepted, and the complainees are not only removed from their seats, but also sent into exile. In addition to such cases, it is possible to encounter petitions for the appointment of given names as madrasa professors, again by local populations.

To sum up, civic networks played a major role in determining appointments of preachers in particular and religious notables in general. This view from the archives and autobiographical accounts differs significantly from the perspective of Adıyéke with which this section began. The shift from the purely state-based perspective to an understanding that grants societal actors agency is significant, and much more in conformity with the nature of state-society relationships in seventeenth century Ottoman Empire.

Scholars have renounced a dichotomous view of state-society relationships where agency is attributed to the state as unrealistic. Particularly as of the seventeenth century, the functioning of the central administration becomes more and more dependent on societal groups mediating between state and society. Hülya Canbakal’s studies have particularly fleshed out the key position of intermediating bodies. She explains the state’s interest in granting posts not as a one-sided act of grant, but as part of a process of negotiation. According to her findings, the state uses its capacity to issue berats (certificates of appointment) to effect the cooperation of

58 BOA Mühimme 73, 1188/544.

59 While the notion of “local notables” (‘ayūn) was previously studied as a phenomenon of the eighteenth century, Charles Wilkins and Hülya Canbakal have pointed to the existence of similar societal groups in Aleppo and ‘Ayntab, respectively, in the seventeenth century. Many administrative functions, such as the collection of taxes, distribution of justice depended on the cooperation of intermediary social groups. See Hülya Canbakal, Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town: Aynab in the Seventeenth Century. Leiden: Brill, 2007; Charles L. Wilkins, Forging Urban Solidarities: Ottoman Aleppo 1640-1700. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
notables. This perspective recognizes the power of the notables, and places them as intermediary societal groups with power and leverage.\(^{60}\)

The power of the state in distributing posts served as an occasion to negotiate power with local elites. The state resorted to this policy more aggressively in the seventeenth century, underlining the rise in significance of the intermediary agents whose cooperation was needed more urgently. Canbakal’s study documents the inflation of sayyid and sharīf titles as a clear indication of this trend.\(^{61}\) One might argue that the increasing occurrence of preachers in historical record as of the seventeenth century, in addition to their rising self-identification of moral authority as studied in this dissertation was the result of the same process where the state’s increasing reliance on intermediating agents granted these societal groups a new social prestige.

To be sure, social prestige was not the only perk of being a preacher in the Ottoman realm. By becoming a preacher, one could transition from re’āyā (subject) status to ‘askerī (elite) status. Therefore, belonging in the sulahā networks was an important means of gaining elite status. In order to better understand the significance of a preaching post in Ottoman society, one must remember that the elite status went beyond a narrow combination of ehl-i ‘örf (military and civil officials), and the ehl-i ‘ilm (legal experts and scholars).\(^ {62}\) A firman first issued in 1606, and renewed on 1628 declared that ‘askerī privileges were to be enjoyed by the following:

\(^{60}\) Hülya Canbakal, “The Ottoman State and Descendants of the Prophet in Anatolia and the Balkans (1500-1700)“, Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 52 (2009), pp. 542-578.

\(^{61}\) ibid. Sayyids and sharifs were descendants of the prophet who enjoyed particular privileges, mainly social prestige and tax advantages. The rapid expansion of the number of sayyids in the seventeenth century attests to the state’s efforts to bestow this title in exchange for creating “Ottomanized” subjects.

a) all those who received stipends (vazîfe) no less than an akçe and a half, including preachers, prayer-leaders, scribes, waqf trustees, revenue collectors (câbi) and overseers (nâzur), sheikhs, people who recited the Quran or read prayers in return for a stipend, and those who disposed of income from waqfs, mezra'as, dervish convents and the like; b) semi-professional auxiliary troops; c) descendants of the Prophet (sâdâr); d) those who provided special services to the government, such as falcon-raisers, mountain pass guards, bridge-keepers, messengers, share-croppers on state land, rice cultivators, salt producers, sheep and cattle dealers, copper miners (bakîrci), deputy judges, and city wardens; and e) those who were exempt (mu 'âf) from royal taxes (tekâlîf-i 'örfiyye). 63

Therefore, the distribution of preaching posts was a significant issue not only because mosques were significant social institutions, but also because becoming a preachers was one of the paths to upward social mobility in early modern Ottoman society. In addition, the increasingly unstable careers of the mid-level ‘ulamâ, as lamented by many authors, including Sayyid Hasan Rızâi, might have made a position as a preacher or mütevelli more attractive to the madrasa graduates or drop-outs than employment as provincial judges or mid-level university teachers. The most important factor appears to be the increasingly high turnover of judges, making tenures shorter and shorter. The average term of tenure fell from 2 years per district in mid-16th century to 20 months in late 17th century. 64

The allure of preaching over an ‘îlmiyye post is highly probable. Of the thirty-five preachers mentioned in Baldrzade’s biographical dictionary, twenty are madrasa graduates. Of these twenty, eight individuals occupied posts as müderrises in Bursa, one is a retired military

63 Canbakal, Society and Politics, p 67. The translation belongs to Hülya Canbakal; the original document was transcribed and published in Uzunçarşılı, Osmanlı Devletinin İlmiye Teşkilâtı, pp 125-126.
64 Uzunçarşılı, İlmiye Teşkilatı, p 94.
judge, one a former judge, while the remaining ten are mentioned simply as graduates of a 40-
akçe or lower level madrasa. This development underlines that preaching was not a position
considered necessarily subordinate to state employment, and could even be more preferable to at
least the middling state posts.

In this section, I have explained the social-political bases of the rise of the sulahā as a
social group. The ascent of the sulahā is part of a larger seventeenth century trend where the state
relies increasingly on the intermediating societal groups for the execution of administrative
functions. The religious notables of Ottoman towns rise in importance, not only since they were
‘askerīs, but also because they played significant roles in the distribution of this elite title. As
such, the sulahā held the key to upward social mobility. One of these paths to upward social
mobility was the preaching post, which was desired not only by the unemployed and the
disconnected, but also many members of the scholarly bureaucratic educational system. The
primacy of public posts over state posts, at least the middling posts, was a socio-political reality
that had a moral counterpart. This moral language that underlines the virtues of not holding a
state post is the subject of the next section.

IV. Public as the Source of Moral Authority: Expressions of Belonging In the
Public Sphere

In this section, I discuss one significant component of the preaching lore that makes it qualify as
public sphere. This is the preachers’ articulation of a group identity as the locus of true moral
authority, as opposed to other religious posts that were part of the state bureaucratic structures.
The discourse of autonomy from the state apparatus consistently appears in narratives of sulaha
leaving the scholarly bureaucracy, the ‘ilmiiyya. In these narratives, the move is described as a move from a materialistic to a pure and pious moral state. It is important to recognize this topos as a language for speaking about the moral authority of public.65

Stories of leaving the ‘ilmiiyya while a student or later, after getting posts, abound in biographical sources. These sources narrate leaving the scholarly bureaucracy and becoming preachers as stories of conversion to true piety, often depicting bureaucratic involvement as markers of materialistic ambitions and nothing more. One such story is recorded in the hagiography of the Khalwati sheikh Şemseddin Sivasî (d. 1597). As a young man, the Khalwati sheikh Şemseddin Sivasî of a very well-established Sûfi family in Sivas moved to İstanbul for his studies. One of his disciple-nephews record him telling him the following story about his time in İstanbul, and a particular encounter that made the sheikh to decide to go back to his town to preach rather than to stay in İstanbul and seek a higher ‘ilmiiyya post.

One day, I went to visit the military-judge. I observed the disgrace of the madrasa professors and judges for the sake of worldly benefits. I left the place (…), I went into the Sultan Mehmed Mosque where I performed prayers (iki rek’at namaz). With purity of heart and fully applying myself, I pleaded “the gate of magnificence” (God’s station) and prayed: “These people would not have been in such degradation and humiliation, had their livelihood not come from this world. Dear God, save me from being with this crowd and place me with the Sufi crowds”. I cried and begged a lot. God accepted my prayers. Shortly thereafter I went on to the pilgrimage. After the pilgrimage I returned to my hometown Zile where the people of the city and the notables of the area showed allegiance and obedience. Thanks to their grace, I began to teach and to preach.66

65 Habermas’ Structural Transformation identifies the rise of the public “as a critical authority, and as a locus of judgement” as a key development in identifying a public sphere that has the potential to circumscribe political authority.

66 Nazmi Efendi, Hediyyetü’l-İhvan, p 320.
Şemseddin Sivâsî’s statement vilifying the scholarly bureaucracy as being opposed to otherworldly salvation is written from the perspective of a Sufi sheikh who chose to stay in an Anatolian town as a preacher. Şemseddin Sivâsî educated many disciples there, many of them from his immediate family, who would choose to remain lodge or mosque preachers despite having the necessary education to enter ‘ilmiyya. Such criticism of the scholarly bureaucracy is not limited to the Şûfi circles. The idea that the state bureaucracy stands for “this world”—i.e. is a matter of career and earnings, in contrast to posts at endowments, mosques, or lodges which are morally pure is shared by many sulahâ. Baldırzade Mehmed Efendi, who held high posts in the ilmiyya career, employs the same language quite often.

The suggestion that a discourse that criticizes state-related ilmiyya jobs as “this-worldly” and ambition oriented, and not related to spiritual or moral authority, finds its full expression in the biographical dictionary of Baldırzade Mehmed Efendi. Baldırzade’s consistent and frequent phrase regarding ‘ilmiyya drop-outs is a perfect example of an anti-establishment language shared by many sulahâ. His biographical dictionary is rich with biographies of judges, or madrasa professors who leave their official career for a public endowment funded preacher post. In these cases, he describes the conversion as “turning to the path of [true] piety”.

Baldırzade uses a specific and consistent phrase for the ‘ilmiyya drop-outs who chose to become preachers. “He turned to the path of piety” (canib-i salaha meyl etti), is his way of phrasing such turns. The phrase not only expresses praise, but does so by reference to the term “salah”—a relative of the term “sulaha”—which he and Rızai use consistently to refer to the religious notables and dignitaries mentioned here. The suggestion that turning to piety is possible through turning one’s back on a state career is a commentary on the true location of religious and
moral legitimacy. An example is the case of a certain Ahmed Çelebi (d.1054): “After his studies (at the madrasa), he turned to the path of piety and preferred preacher-ship and imamhood.”

The case of Ahmed Çelebi is one of the several examples where taking up an endowment based occupation, quite often that of a preacher, is presented as morally superior to an ‘ilmiyya career in biographical sources.

Another important biography illuminating the former judge Baldırzade Mehmed’s value judgments is his entry on Eskici Mehmed Dede (d.1028). Eskici Mehmed Dede is an esteemed sheikh, well regarded and credited with miraculous powers including infecting his detractors with yellow fever (hummâ). Before becoming a sheikh, Eskici Mehmed Dede was a shopkeeper, an occupation which he “let go of” (ferâgât) in favor of preaching at a lodge. Baldırzade narrates the transition without any moral judgement. The consistent language of conversion from state-appointed posts to a sheikh-imâm position does not make any appearance regarding an individual who converts from another, more obviously wealth-oriented post.

Baldırzade embellishes his idea of the corrupt nature of state entanglement with many stories. A preacher Süleyman Efendi b. Davud, who began his career in the ilmiyya path quits for similar reasons as Şemseddin Sivâsî, whose story has been related above. When visiting the military-judge ‘Abduraḥman Efendi in order to become enrolled as an assistant (müläzım), Süleyman Efendi has to wait so long that he misses the noon prayer. He therefore thinks “Even

67 Baldırzâde, Ravza-i Evliyâ, p 24. Some other occurrences of the expression are: examples are: Baldırzâde, Ravza-i Evliyâ, pp 200-201.

visiting with the *kadi’asker* once makes one miss prayers”, and leaves his *ilmiyya* career on that thought. Another similar story appears regarding Hızır Bey b. Müfti Ahmed Paşa of the sixteenth century. A *madrasa* teacher in Bursa, Hızır Bey diverges from the path to the *madrasa*, turning suddenly takes a sudden turn towards the Seyyid Ahmed Buhari lodge. Forcefully brought back by his *mufti* father, Seyyid Ahmed repeats the same behavior once again. The father finally complains about his son to the then sultan Selim I (r. 1512-1520), who responds: “It is tough to stop a man once he has turned to the true path.”

Another individual, this time an endowment overseer, receives praises because he used to advise his children never to accept “a post or a judgeship” (*mansıb u kaza ve tevliyet*). Muhtar Efendi, the preacher of the Kaygan Mosque in Bursa, receives praises because not only does he not accept state posts, but also refuses to receive extra income from sultanic endowments.

Therefore, the former high-level scholar shares with many Şûfis a language of referring to mosque lectureship or lodge sheikhhoods as more prestigious and ethically superior to official posts. This latter tendency explains the high numbers of overlap between madrasa graduates and preachers, or the number of madrasa-graduates who chose to continue their careers at the pulpit or at the lodge. It also explains anecdotes where individuals took preaching posts merely for the prestige associated with them, or where *efendis* chose to preach in addition to their existing occupations. Preaching at certain mosques was such a high honor that preachers would volunteer

---

to be imams at certain mosques without being payed at all (bi-la-vezaif). Such was the case that Üftade Efendi, the sheikh of Aziz Mahmud Hüdai, had built across Bursa.  

Baldırzade’s consistent labeling of the state-versus-public posts is widely shared across the sulaha circles he is writing on and for. The widely shared nature of this discourse is apparent in the way that the stories are told as part of the oral culture, as in the example of the story of Seyyid Ahmed and Selim I above. Moreover, similar topoi appear in other contemporary works, such as the above quotation about Şemseddin Sivasi, or Seyyid Rızâi’s collection of biographies. Seyyid Rızâi writes of similar examples. For instance, a certain Nalıncı Efendi receives particular praise for depending on his craft rather than accepting gifts or appointments:

Nalıçeci (Nalıncı) Efendi is from the ‘ulama of Amasya. He was a scholar who acted on his knowledge, who was steadfast, and pure. He would never accept any gifts from viziers or other official dignitaries. Neither would he accept worldly posts. He preached at the Sultan Bayezid mosque [solely] for the sake of pleasing God, and he taught all sorts of sciences to the students.  

Even though there is a deliberate discrediting of association with the state, neither Baldırzade’s nor Rızai’s accounts exclude state officials from the sulaha networks. To begin with, the former is a retired high-ranking judge, whereas the latter is a provincial judge who boasts of his personal connections with the chief mufti, Sunullah Efendi (d. 1612). Baldırzade writes about a number of judges who had no other public engagement with praise. The

---

73 Baldırzade, Ravza-i Evliyâ, p 18.
74 Rızâi, Mahmudiyye, p 176.
75 For some examples, see Baldırzade, Ravza-i Evliyâ, pp 156-147; pp 208-9; p 252.
discourse of “worldliness of ilmiyya” should therefore be placed within the larger scholarly culture, rather than outside of or against it.

In her study on the biographical dictionary by Nev’izade Atayi (d. 1635), Aslı Niyazioğlu observes that Atayi uses a language of moral exaltation for ‘ilmiyya dropouts that did not exist in the biographical dictionary of Atayi’s sixteenth century predecessor, Ahmed Taşköprizade (d. 1561). In Atayi’s biographies of sheikhs and scholars, Niyazioğlu observes what she calls a “valorization of otherworldliness”, the binary opposite of which was the scholarly bureaucracy (‘ilmiyya), symbolizing material wealth and power. I would like to underline Niyazioğlu’s finding that a consistent moral judgment regarding the “ilmiyya versus public posts” choice exists in one of the most important ‘ilmiyya sources. This finding indicates that the discourse of the moral inferiority of state careers rises not in order to categorically reject ilmiyya careers, but to make the statement that the locus of religious legitimacy does not reside within the state’s domain.

The meaning of the valorization of the otherworldly becomes glaring when similar sources of the prior century are examined. A comparison of Atayi, Baldırzade, and Rızai with the major source of sixteenth century ‘ilmiyya, the biographical dictionary by Taşköprizade, is particularly significant. To provide an example of how drastically Taşköprizade’s take on state posts differs from that of seventeenth century accounts, let us turn to a story from Taşköprizade’s account. A member of the ‘ulamâ bureaucracy seeks the counsel of Muslihudin Tavîl (active

76 Niyazioğlu, Ottoman Sufi Sheikhs Between this World and the Hereafter, p 176.
77 ibid, Chapter IV.
mid-sixteenth century), a Naqshbandī disciple. The scholar tells the sheikh that he would like to abandon the bureaucratic ‘ilmīyya path in order to pursue the Sufi path. The sheikh responds with disapproval: “Can you even find anything better than the path of scholarship (‘ilm)?” Scolding the scholar publicly, the sheikh turns to the members of his gathering and says: “If one applies himself (himmetli olursa), one can travel the Sufi path while one is a madrasa professor or a judge. But if he is not driven enough, he finds himself quitting scholarship. In the end, that person succeeds in neither of these paths.” 78 The story is recorded in the major scholarly biographical dictionary of the sixteenth century. It is not hard to imagine the sense of pride that Taşköprizade, himself a prominent scholar, feels in recording this particular study that puts an official scholarly post above all else.

Taşköprizade’s preference for the “certified” path over all others, with no trace of the judgments of immorality that we consistently see in seventeenth century sources. Another such contrast between state-post and non-official, endowment-based sources appears in another Sufi hagiography written by the Khalwati Sufi Maḥmud Ḥulvī (d. 1654). The story is about a certain Sheikh Tokādi Maḥmūd Efendi, who has a successful scholarly career and advances to being an assistant to the Chief Mufti Sun’ullah Efendi. The scholar’s peaceful state is disturbed when one day he has a dream that nobody can interprete. Then, on his way to Tokat Maḥmūd Efendi stops at a mosque where he meets the Sufi sheikh who can finally interpret his dream, without him even having to tell the dream. The dream, according to the Sufi sheikh, points to Mahmud

Efendi’s true calling, which is to leave the scholarly bureaucracy and become a Sufi: “You are the beneficiary of spiritual rewards. While you have such gift, why do you still occupy yourself with formal and superficial services?”

The vocabulary that the sheikh uses in criticizing the bureaucratic career of Maḥmūd Efendi, formal (ṣawari) has a particular resonance in Sufi literature. Discussions of caliphate, in its broader sense as authority, assumes that there are two types of authority. The worldly or formal authority is “ṣawari” as opposed to spiritual leadership, or “khilafat-i ma’navi.”

Formal authority refers to issues of administration:

If a sheikh appoints a person as the khalīfa of a lodge, with the intention that the khalīfa is to administer (taṣarruf) the lodge, and to keep and manage (ṣabt u basf) the inhabitants of the lodge, and that person has not completed his spiritual training and does not have enough knowledge to spiritually guide others, and not have knowledge of shari’a or ṭarīqa (aḥkām-i şer’îyye ve tarīka), this is called formal khilāfa.

İsmail Ankaravi (d.1631)’s careful preservation of a distinction between a formal caliphate and a true, spiritual caliphate parallels the distinction between state-appointed religious posts and the true piety of public posts. It is of utmost significance to recognize the political potential of this language. The articulation of “religion” and “state” as distinct entities could and did have significant consequences for political life in an early modern state where legitimacy

---


80 My discussion here is based on the Mawlawi sheikh Isma’il Ankaravi’s chapter on Caliphate in his Minhacu’l-Fukara (Guide for the Wayfarers), MS Leiden Cod.Or. 12.033, ff 17-20.

81 İsmail Ankaravi, Minhacu’l-Fukarâ, Leiden Cod.Or. 12.033, f 19b.
depended on religious sanctification. This distinction and its political implications are the subject of the next chapter.

CONCLUSION

This chapter describes one key element of upward mobility and a socially and politically influential public sphere in early modern Ottoman cities: the preachers. The first point of emphasis regarding the social location of preachers is that they must be taken as part of a larger, well-connected, and self-recognizing group of religious notables, the sulaha (“the pious”). The sulahā included madrasa instructors, judges, preachers and other mosque attendants, descendants of the prophet, and Sufis. The networks of sulahā played a major role in the distribution of middle and low-ranking religious posts through practices such as writing references, or venality of office. The influence of networks could be particularly significant in the case of non-establishment posts such as preaching posts. In addition to the potential of distributing posts, the sulahā enjoyed social recognition as local notables. The relatively free space in which to effect the decisions as to the conferral of the ‘askerī titles provided an important source of power to leaders of sulahā and arguably contributed to their group cohesion. The sulahā qualify as an early modern “public” not simply because they formed an intermediate sphere between the state and society with some socio-political power. Moreover, a shared discourse develops in this period that valorized being free of official appointments as the source of moral authority. It is important to recognize the significance of this language as the articulation of a new political consciousness, one that bestows informal associations unforeseen authority and legitimacy.

83
CHAPTER II
THE LAWGIVER AS ADVISEE: SULAHĀ AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF OTTOMAN POLITICAL CULTURE

Introduction

In all their intellectual activity, scholars are accustomed to dealing with matters of the mind and with thoughts. They do not know anything else. Politicians, on the other hand, must pay attention to the facts of the outside world and the conditions attaching to and depending on [politics]…Now, scholars are accustomed to generalizations and analogical conclusions. When they look at politics, they press (their observations) into the mold of their views and their way of making deductions. Thus, they commit many errors, or (at least) they cannot be trusted (not to commit errors). ¹

Such is the verdict of Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406), the renown historian known for a keen eye on social and political theorizing, regarding the political capacity of scholars. The observation appears in a chapter that is very straightforwardly entitled “Scholars are, of all people, those least familiar with the ways of politics.” ² Despite Ibn Khaldun’s propensity to explain human societies with universal laws, the relationship between ‘ulamā and politics, or between dīn (religion) and devlet (political authority), varied across historical eras and polities.

Modern interpretations of the relationship between religion and political authority in the Ottoman Empire fall broadly into two categories. On one hand is the “secularist” reading, which

---


² ibid, pp 308-310.
claims that under the Ottomans religion lost its potential to constrain political power. On the other hand is the position that religious authorities preserved their autonomy and their political potential precisely by underlining the distinction between religion and state (dīn u devlet).

According to this line of argument, scholars of religion strove to keep the distinction in order to reinforce the view that the legitimacy of political power depended on the approval of the scholars.

Seventeenth century scholars and preachers inclined towards the latter point of view. In other words, religious authorities of this period placed political authority as subordinate to religious authority, since without dīn the state’s actions did not qualify as legitimate. A story recorded by the chief mufti Bostanzade Yahya Efendi (d. 1639) encapsulates this sentiment:

One day, the sultan was furious with forty servants at once and ordered all of them to be killed. The poor ones sent for the mufti, Ženbilli Ali Çelebi and asked him to intermediate to save them. The mufti came to the Porte and asked to speak to the sultan. (…)
-Mollah, what do you want?
-May you be on the throne of sultanate forever. As long as the world stands erect, may you live and prosper. My sultan, I have heard that you want your servants to be killed (…). I implore you to forgive them.
-Efendi, you must stand clear of matters of the state (devlet işi)

---


4 Two divergent readings of the Seljukid political writer Abu al-Hasan al-Mawardi (d. 1058) illustrate this difference of interpretation clearly. Halil İnalcık argues that Mawardi’s insistence on preserving the distinction between dīn u devlet has enabled the development of qānun, non-religious law exercised by political authorities. İnalcık argues that this tradition, which emphasized the primacy of sultanic authority over any religious authority, continued from Seljuks to the Ottomans, and was the reason why the secularist tradition stayed strong in the Turkish Republic. See Halil İnalcık, “Şeri’at ve Kanun, Din ve Devlet” in Osmanlı’da Devlet, Hukuk, Adalet, İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 2005, pp 39-46. In contrast, Noah Feldman interprets the same differentiation as an attempt to preserve the scholars’ tactic to preserve their political relevance by keeping the ruler bound by shari’a. See Noah Feldman, The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008, pp 36-40.
-No, my majesty. This is a command of religion (din). My prime duty is to protect this and the other world of the sultan (din ü devlet).\(^5\)

The anecdote about din ü devlet claims that since every action of the sultan must be moral, that action falls under the authority of the men of religion. This claim to moral and consequently political authority resonated not only with the higher ranking muftis but also with religious notables of all ranks, including mosque preachers. In the case of preachers, the claim to moral authority was enhanced by the valorization of the non-governmental public post, as has been studied in the previous chapter. The discursive separation between the moral-religious and the political produced a desacralized language of kingship. The sultan was now an ordinary servant of God who needed the moral guidance of the preacher not only to rule well, but also to save his soul.

The preachers of the seventeenth century produced an unprecedented amount of political writing that hinged on the “servant-king” motif. The “servant-king” figure stands in sharp contrast to the “messiah-king” figure of the sixteenth century. The messiah-king united in his person the zenith of moral purity and political competence.\(^6\) Within this political climate, ‘ulamā writing followed suit. Sixteenth century Ottoman ‘ulamā writing demonstrated a strong


sense of association with the agenda of the court, and did not refer to a distinction between *dîn* and *devlet* in the manner that Bostanzade Yahya and his contemporaries did.

The “servant-king” was the product of a public culture that acted as the moral judge of the sultanate. This perspective has two implications. Firstly, it underlines the influx of the public into the sphere of political writing. In this chapter I describe political writing that is not only coming from preachers, but is directed to a broader public rather than necessarily to the court or to the person of the sultan. Secondly, the emphasis on abiding by the *shari‘a* or the Quran stemmed from a public culture that sought space for political expression, and moral authority was the most widely available venue. Therefore, the moral-political advice writing of the age cannot be reduced to a confessional or fundamentalist/salafi resurgence. Instead, the written and oral engagements of the preachers reflected and constituted a self-identified group who channeled “public opinion.” This approach is important because it provides a new perspective to study the religious culture of the early modern empire that is not limited to the question of “orthodoxy-heterodoxy.”

If moral authority was one major component of the power of preachers, their practical authority among the public was another. The potential of the preacher who could command loyalty and obedience among the larger public gave him significant status as an intermediary between the state and society. Preachers underlined their potential roles as intermediaries in their political treatises. What forms did intermediation take? Firstly, preachers communicated the demands of their communities to the authorities. Sufi hagiographies are replete with such acts of mediation in which the sheikhs used their influence to help their communities, such as in securing posts or tax exemptions. The *sulahā* were also able to give voice to the demands of
people about the government, such as their complaints about public employees.\(^7\) Intermediation could, and did, also work from the other direction, from the state to the public. Owing to their public posts as sheikhs, preachers, and judges, the sulahā could work to ensure loyalty to the state, and ensure public order by inspiring obedience to laws. This potential of the sulahā was a significant component of their political power. Religious notables did not shy away from underlining their political potential in order to carve out more room for themselves in the political arena.

In this chapter, I focus on two Sufi sheikhs who wrote on kingship, specifically in the context of advice-giving. The sheikhs are Abdülmecid Sivasi (d. 1049/1639) of the Khalwati order, who was also a mosque-preacher at the grand sultanic mosques of Istanbul, and İsmail Ankaravi (d. 1631) a Mawlawi sheikh who kept to the lodge instead of preaching at the pulpit. I begin with introducing the works of Sivāsī and Ankaravī, and by discussing how they differ from the better studied administrative nasihatnāmes. Following this discussion, I turn to common themes in the political writing of these authors. These themes include an emphasis on the “servant-king” figure, and the portrayal of the preachers as the Hızır of their ages. Throughout this discussion, I also discuss the audiences of each work, underlining the relevance of the works of counsel for a broader public.

I. SOURCES

I.a. Abdülmecid Sivasi’s Pearls of Doctrine (Dürer-i ‘Aḵād): The Preacher who Whispered to the Sultan

Born in Zile in 1563 to a family of Khalwati sheikhs, Abdülmecid Sivasi began as a student of the Islamic sciences (zāhirī ilimler). At the age of thirty, he is inspired by his uncle, the revered sheikh Şemseddin Sivasi (d. 1597), to move along in the batu ni ilimler, the mystical sciences. A biographer of the family, Receb Sivâsî (d. 1599) would later define him as “the most perfect of all our extended family, the highest (in rank) of all the disciples, and almost a second copy of Şemseddin Sivasi (nişan-i saniye)”. It is not only with respect to Şemseddin’s learning, but also his fame as a popular and charismatic preacher that earns Abdülmecid Sivasi the title “second copy” of his uncle. Both preachers were known to draw great crowds to their sermons.

Abdülmecid followed his uncle Şemseddin Sivasi in terms of the literary pursuits and the preaching post. Abdülmecid, according to hagiographies, “engaged with the exoteric sciences” until age 30. The phrase means that he was not, at least primarily, occupied with Sufism. It also implies that he was rather occupied with formal madrasa sciences. Both of the family-hagiographies, that is hagiographies written by very close members of the Sivasi house


89
emphasize an initial rift between Şemseddin and Abdülmecid. Based on a hagiography written by a family member, Receb Sivasi, Abdülmecid appears as a snob, looking down on the whirling and turning performed by the provincial lodge-goers. Nazmi Efendi portrays a consistent picture whereby Abdülmecid keeps away from conversing or mingling with the fuqara (the “poor”, meaning a spiritual novice) of his uncle’s lodge. After being granted sheikh-hood (icâzet) by his uncle, Abdülmecid Sivasi first starts off as the sheikh of the Khalwati-Sivasi lodge first in Merzifon, then in Zile, guiding the townsmen and the nomads around the area. Following the death of his uncle, he becomes the sheikh of the Sivas lodge, the then headquarters of this particular branch of the Khalwati order.

Abdülmecid Sivasi’s reputation as a well-learned preacher soon reaches İstanbul, whereupon Mehmed III (d. 1603) invites him to preach at the Hagia Sophia Mosque. While the preacher is initially given accommodations near Hagia Sophia, in a short span of time he attracts generous followers. The head scribe (re’isü’l-küttâb) La’li Efendi (d.1600) donates the sheikh a house with a garden in Eyüb. After Hagia Sophia, he held several other preaching posts: Mehmed Ağa lodge in Çarşamba Pazarı, Hüsam Bey Mosque, Şehzade Mosque, Şeyh Yavsi Lodge, Sultan Selim Mosque. Sivasi held more than one of these posts at once, dividing the days of week between his sermons at mosques on one hand, his teaching circles and rituals at his lodge on the other. Of the top-prestigious preaching posts Sivasi held was certainly a post at the

10 Abdülmecid Sivâsi, Bida’atu’l-Vâ’izn, MS Süleymaniye Library Kılıç Ali Paşa 1032/2, f.28b, Quoted in Gündoğdu, Abdülmecid Sivasi, p 73.

11 Şemseddin Sivasi is not immediately followed by Abdülmecid Sivasi. Two other sheikhs, Şemseddin’s son Pir Mehmed and his son-in-law Receb Sivasi held short tenures before Abdülmecid. See Receb Sivâsi, Necmu’l-Hudâ, pp 60-65.
Sultan Ahmed mosque. The hagiographies of the Khalwati order narrate that the post at Sultan Ahmed mosque was first offered to Üsküdari Mahmud Efendi and then to Cerrah Şeyhi İbrahim Efendi. When neither committed to the post, the offer was taken to Sivasi who finally accepted.\footnote{Marginal note in Nazmi Efendi, Hediyyetu’L-Ihvān, MS Süleymaniye Hacı Mahmud 2413. Quoted in Osman Tüner (Ed.), Osmanlılarda Tasavvuf Hayat: Halvetilik Örneği. İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2005, pp 126-127.}

Abdülmecid Sivasi wrote a few works that could be classified as catechism (ilmihal), including The Fortune of Preachers (Biza’atu ’l-Vāzin)\footnote{For a description of this work and a list of manuscript copies in İstanbul libraries, See Gündoğdu, Abdülmecid Sivasi, pp 177-79.} and his commentary on the first chapter of Quran, Fatiha, which he turned into a book of catechisms.\footnote{For a full list of Sivası’s written work, see Gündoğdu, Abdülmecid Sivasi, pp 174-213.} However, it is his book Dürrer-i Akāid where he claims to bring together seventeen books of theology, including the official madrasa handbook of Aqāid (Dogma) by Sa’adaddin Taftazani (d.1390).\footnote{For an English translation of this work, see Sa’ad al-Din Taftazani, A Commentary on the Creed of Islam: Sa’d al-Din Taftazani on the Creed of Najm al-Din Nasafi (Translated with an Introduction by Earl Edgar Elder). New York: Columbia University Press, 1950. On the significance of the work in Ottoman madrasa education, see: Shahab Ahmed and Nenad Filipovic, “The Sultan’s Syllabus: A Curriculum for the Ottoman Imperial Medreses Prescribed in a Fermān of Qānūnī I Süleymān, Dated 973 (1565)”. Studia Islamica, no. 98/99 (2004), pp 183–218.} In the course of his exposition of Islamic doctrine in its Hanafi-Maturidi variation, Sivasi also makes ample reference to the ideal relationship between the sultan and ‘ulama. Like many Sufi or non-Sufi preachers, Sivasi used the word ‘ulamā to refer not only to those scholars connected with ‘ilmīyya, but in the broader sense to include all the learned men of the empire, but especially the preachers.

In the preface, Sivasi mentions that he spent his youth preaching based on these books. Now, in his senior years, observing that the end of the times are coming and the corrupt (bāṭil)
hass replaced with the righteous (hakk) everywhere, he decided to make a potpourri of his readings and adorn them with Quranic verses, fatwas, and Akaid. *Pearls of Doctrine and the Head of all Causes and Motives (Düre-i Akaid ve Gurer-i Kulli Saik ve Ka’id)*. Sivasi’s text is on the basic dogma of Islam, but not only that. Sivasi revamps Düre significantly in order to accommodate questions of his age. Foremost among these are the questions of the legitimacy of the Sufi whirling and pronouncing salutations upon the mentioning of the prophet’s name (salavât). Sivasi’s *Düre* is one of his most popular works, judging by the comparatively larger number of the extant manuscripts. It is difficult to glean the names and positions of the readers of *Düre* from manuscript evidence, since readership notes become a systematized habit of the Ottoman manuscript reader only as of the late eighteenth century. However, it is not difficult to guess that at least some of these copies were read by preachers and sheikhs, for it was one of the main occupations of Sivasi to educate other preachers.

_____________________________

16 According to a copy in Süleymâniye Library (MS Esad Ef 3627/2), Sivâsi wrote *Düre* in 1024/1615, during the reign of Ahmed I.

17 For the disputed nature of these questions, see Katib Çelebi, *Miżânü’l-hakk fi İhtiyari’l-ahakk*. Published as: Mustafa Kara (Ed.), *Miżânü’l-Hak: İslâm’da Tenkid ve Tartışma Usûlü*. İstanbul: Marifet Yayınları, 1990.


19 See Tülün Değirmenci, “Bir Kitabı Kaç Kişi Okur? Osmani’da Okurlar ve Okuma Biçimleri Üzerine Bazı Gözlemler,” *Tarih ve Toplum: Yeni Yaklaşmlar 13* (Fall 2011), pp 7-43. Değirmenci notes a systematized habit of noting where and by whom manuscripts are read. However, all of these manuscripts date from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
The manuscript version that I would like to expound upon is his autograph. The autograph of Dürer is to be found in a miscellany bound together with his exegesis of the first chapter of the Quran (Fatiha), *Miyaru’-Tarik*, his commentary on selected verses of Rumi, and his treatise on Hazarat-ı Hamse (Five mystical stages of Being). The manuscript has numerous authorial notes in the same hand (*minhuvat*, especially frequent in the exegesis of Fatiha) and appears finished. The miscellany appears to be designed as a finished, publishable book. This observation is based on a colophon on 211a, written in red ink. This rubricated colophon follows the already existing colophon of his selections of Rumi entitled *Couplets from the Masnavi* (*Ebyat-ı Mesnevi*). The red-ink colophon refers to the completion of the entire book (*kitab*) as opposed to the epistle (*risala*), the completion of which has already been announced in a separate colophon written in black ink. This rubricated colophon to the book therefore suggests that the miscellany was not an ad-hoc compilation, but was designed as a whole book, as the collection that appears on paper. It is highly likely that Sivasi designed this miscellany to be presented to someone with a high office, possibly higher ‘ulamā or even the sultan. Not only has the author selected parts of his whole work to bring together in a book. But also, he resorts to a certain style and content that has a tone of self-promotion. For example, his short selection of the Masnavi appears nowhere else and is penned for the purposes of this miscellany-book. At the preface of this ninefolio piece, Sivasi writes of how he wrote this treatise without recourse to any book or

---

20 A few letters, which lack the usual formulae of address appear to have been added to the miscellany later, for they are placed after the rubricated colophon. Moreover, the letters are rough drafts, unlike any other piece that comes before the colophon. Therefore, these drafts must be later scribblings on the blank pages of this whole miscellany-book.
notebook, and made his explications without recourse to any dictionaries or books of grammar. By this preface, Sivasi emphasizes that he possesses one of the prime skills of a good ‘alim, and especially a good preacher: strong memory, alongside with good command of his sources. All in all, the miscellany appears to be a collection designed by Sivasi for self promotion, a kind of professional portfolio.

It is no coincidence that Sivasi’s self-promoting portfolio opens with the full copy of Pearls of Doctrine, Dürer-i ‘Akaid. Dürer is singular among Sivasi’s works as containing the most explicit reflections on the ideal ‘ulûmā-ruler relationship. This text is not only an exposition of the Hanafi-Maturidi faith with special emphasis on the questions of the early seventeenth century empire. Like many other theology (kalam) authors before him, Sivasi finds here an opportunity to expound on ideas of (ideal) sultanate. Sivasi’s ideas of sultanate, however, differ drastically from those of his sixteenth century predecessors who expounded on sultanate in theological/sufistic terminology and resorted to notions of khalifa, qutb, imam, and even messiah to describe the sultan, hence placing the ruler atop not only political power but also moral authority.

---

21 Abdülmecid Sivası, Miscellany, MS Süleymaniye Library Mihrisah Sultan 300, f 203a.

22 For a discussion of the valorization of memorization and oral delivery among preachers, see Chapter 4 of this study.


24 For this sixteenth century political tradition see Hüseyin Yılmaz, The Sultan and the Sultanate. For a good introduction to the meaning and place of these terms in Ottoman Sufi thought, see Süleyman Uludağ, “Halife”, TDVİA.
Abdülmecid Sivasi pictured and lectured the sultan as any Muslim who was responsible to God, and who needed the guidance of the ‘ulema in moral and religious matters in order to be able to respond to God in the afterworld. Not only did the sultan need the moral guidance of the ‘ulamā and sulahā, but he needed their cooperation, for it would be the sulahā who could speak the public into obedience. In other words, Dürer articulates the self-identity of the ‘ulamā and sulahā as the source of moral authority. In addition, the text underlines the role of the ‘ulamā and especially the preachers (nāsiḥ, literally advice-givers) as influential upon public opinion, a position that could be used to ensure loyalty to the authorities. Dürer deserves particular attention for very explicitly and directly communicating the potential usefulness, even indispensability of the preacher-kind to a functioning sultanate.

Sivasi’s Dürerü’l-‘Akaid, although possibly meant for self-promotion, also became one of his more commonly read treatises. This fact is a reminder that this successful preacher’s reflections on his position as the mediator between the public and the government resonated with other readers, possibly other preachers or members of the sulahā who saw themselves in a similar position.

I.b. A New Tale for the Masnavi: The Sultan as the Lost Misguided Boy

İsmail Ankaravi b. Ahmed el-Mevlevi starts off as a merchant trading between Ankara and İstanbul, around 1000/1591-2. His father was an imām, a certain Ahmed Efendi. There is no further information about his family or early life. According to Kâtib Çelebi, Ankaravî embarked
upon trade with the capital he inherited from his family, but debunked the enterprise.\textsuperscript{25}

According to the story, this is how Ankaravi woke up to the unreliability of worldly wealth, and chose to invest in the other world instead.

According to a later Mawlawî hagiography, Ankaravi lived in Egypt for seven years, and acquired his ijazah to teach the Masnavî there in 1599. He went back to Ankara in 1606. Yet he suffered from cataract and traveled to Konya in search of healing. This illness would go on all his life, although with brief reliefs—such as the partial healing in celebration of which he wrote \textit{Futuhat-i Ayniyye}, his commentary on the first chapter of the Quran. During his stay in Konya, he became the disciple of the head (çelebi) of the lodge, Bostan Çelebi I. After over four years of service with Bostan Çelebi, the sheikh appointed Ankaravi to Galata Mevlevihanesi as the seventh sheikh of the lodge.

İsmail Ankaravi’s choices of career and engagement differed in significant ways from Abdülmecid Sivasi. While Sivasi preached at the top ranking sultanic mosques of Istanbul, İsmail Ankaravi showed no interest in public preaching at a major or minor mosque. One may suspect that İsmail Ankaravi might have suffered from a lack of sultanic favors because of the rift between the Mawlawi order and Murad IV as expressed in later sources. However, the rift does not appear to hurt Ankaravi’s personal fame for he still took part in important sultanic appearances.\textsuperscript{26}


It must be the case, then, that Ankaravi’s reluctance to step outside his lodge must be due to the nature and content of his teaching. Part of his teaching was unacceptable even to some sheikhs of his own order. This unacceptable part was a seventh volume to the Masnavi, which had theretofore circulated as six volumes. Despite the general acceptance of the *Masnavi* commentary by Ankaravi, one part of the commentary is not unanimously accepted. This is the seventh volume, and the reason many people outright rejected to copy (or later, in the nineteenth century print) this part is simple: this is a volume “found” in the early seventeenth century, about three and a half centuries after Rumi’s death. The original seventh volume is currently hosted at the Konya Mavlana museum, and the copy date is 814/1411. Moreover, no previous Mavlavi source mentions this volume among Rumi’s work.

From Ankaravi’s own statements within the commentary, we infer that the volume was taught at his circles at least during his lifetime. The content of the volume parallels Sivasi’s *Dürer* significantly. However, Ankaravi’s avoidance of a public preaching post means that the discourse of “advising to the sultan” was not a matter of importance only in relation to *sulahā*-sultan relationships and actual political results. This discourse was valuable within the circles of *sulahā* for it was now a matter of *sulahā* identity to be the true guardians of religion and to be engaged with public political life in such capacity.

A comparison of the different versions of Ankaravi’s commentary reveals that the palace was involved, or at least interested in this controversy. A copy of the first volume of Ankaravi’s commentary was sent to the sultan in 1623, right after its completion, which was a common practice that writers resorted to in order to promote themselves. Six years later, in 1629, the sultan asked for another copy of Ankaravi’s commentary, this time in full. Ankaravi makes a
number of corrections before he sends the sultan’s copy. One change that he makes is the following addition to the preface of the first volume:

….The number of the volumes of Masnavi has been considered to be six. However, the reason why it is sometimes said that the Masnavi is seven-volumes, or why it is referred to as ‘seven meanings’ is because the first eighteen couplets are like a volume on their own….⁷

This note is added in 1629, by which point Ankaravi had already decided to humor his opponents, who must have proved strong, by not teaching or reproducing this work openly as Rumi’s. Hence the volume goes underground at this point, with the exception of his closer circle. That does not mean, however, that he has completely given up promoting his/Rumi’s work.

This ‘promotion’ is done through a short epistle entitled ‘Mebde ve Me ‘âd’-literally ‘The Genesis and the Ending”, less literally: “The journey (of the faithful) from the Beginning to the End.” Seen in isolation, the poem is a classical advice poem in vernacular Turkish. The volume is purportedly written for the sultan, and claims to be an encapsulation of the seventh volume, with the added note that the seventh volume is much superior in style and content-and this short treatise is a mere sampler of that book. The treatise summarizes the main allegorical story of the seventh volume (leaving out the numerous side stories in the full volume) in verse form and in a very simple Turkish. The preface (sebeb-i te ‘lif) of the treatise clearly explains that it was meant as shorthand for the main story of the seventh volume, and was written with disciples in mind:

One day, while reading the Book of Masnavi/This subtle idea occured to me
I shall write a book in the vein of Masnavi/I shall polish and refine its verse
It must be a garden and a pillar/It shall be named Mebde-i Me’âd
(…)
Readers of that verse shall benefit of its words/As if they are a thousand pleasant fruits

------

⁷ İsmail Ankaravi, Şerh-i Mesnevî, MS Süleymaniye Library Esad Efendi 1451 f 5a.
The pupil shall eat its many fruits/and say, “here is the true banquet of meanings”
The banquet of meanings, knowledge, and gift/The otherworldly fruit is but a poem freshly said
Hence I have prepared this orchard/And thus have I spoken to the pupil:
Listen to the story I tell you/Understand what it means, and apply its teachings
It is that story that was told by/was put in verse and orated by
The Pole of all the Gnostics/The Exalted King and Pride of Lovers
The best of God’s friends and the Pure Ones/The Joy of the Devout and the Wise
The throne of the secret of the Friends/ Shah Jalâladdîn Rûmî bu’l-‘alâ
Even though this story is not as good/This is a thorn, while that is a rose of meanings
Still, this story carries the scent of that rose/ It too carries the pleasure of that scent to the spirit
Now I tell you that story, listen to me/ I will explain it to you, hear me

The main story of the seventh volume, as summarized in Mebde ve Me’âd, is very simple:
a merchant sends a young boy out on a journey at the open sea, and tells him “that if he earns for him good things before he returns home, then the boy will be rewarded with infinite gifts”. This is clearly an allegory of God sending man to the world and promising him eternal gifts if he behaves well. Then, the boy lands on a country where the people meet him at the coast and crown him immediately. Being a smart one, the boy ponders on the fact that “the crowning was not his own achievement; he has been enthroned with no doing of his own.” On the coast, he is met by a crowd of people who declare him to be the sultan (padişâh and halîfe, used interchangably). The boy, not understanding the reason why he is crowned, asks the vizier. The vizier responds: “My padişâh, this land of ours has a strange custom. We change sultans every year. This is because, there is a padişâh, the greatest and loftiest of all sultans, beyond our land and he is the true lord of this land. We are all his servants. That sultan built two cities in his own

28 İsmail Ankaravî, Mebde ve Meâd, MS Leiden Cod.Or. 942.
29 ibid.
domain. One of them is such a majestic city that there is no equal of it, it is pleasant, noble, beautiful. The other city is the exact opposite of the first city: ugly, painful, excruciating. When a sultan’s year (of ruling) ends, the sultan of the beyond sends an envoy, so that the envoy brings him to the sultan of the beyond as he was sent: naked, without any property or even clothes. They wrap the (one year sultan) in one piece of cloth only, and send him. If this sultan of ours has ruled with oppression (..) he is sent to the ugly and painful city, and if he has ruled with justice, he is sent to the first city of beauty.”

for us, oh young one, every year a new ruler becomes decree-giver whenever that year ends, that ruler is forever cut off from rulership we dethrone him and start looking for a new ruler right away you will be dethroned like them, you will become deceased like those sultans this power, this throne is transient, the real power belongs to those who ponder and deliberate

From here on, the writer addresses the ordinary believer and the ‘sultan’ at the same time, in a style that shifts between religious advice and the “mirror for princes” genres. The moral of the story is essentially a religious one. Worldly power is transitory; the ultimate truth is the other world. Hence the only success that there is is being a religiously and morally sound individual, so that one earns eternal bliss. For people who hold any worldly power (sultans and governors, as the text spells it out), the one and only concern should be to maintain “justice”, or adl, which has a very specific resonance in Ottoman political discourse. The main emphasis of the work is: For a sultan to be able to rule justly, he has to have a Sufi advisor-clearly stated in the text and has to support Sufis in general, including political but also economic support.

30 ibid.
The story of the young boy is all that makes up *Mebde ve Me’veād*, a work that purports to speak to the sultan and even has a dedication to him. It is confusing that this short treatise that speaks explicitly of the seventh volume is dedicated to the sultan, given that there have been efforts to hide this volume from public eyes, especially that of the palace. The logical explanation is that the primary audience of this text is not the sultan, but *ihvan*. In other words, Ismail Ankaravi was preaching the seventh volume of the *Masnavi* to no one but the choir. However, his persistence in teaching this text despite all pressures meant that the text was valuable to the choir. Perhaps not as a guide from non-knowledge to knowledge, but as a significant expression of the choir’s identity.

It should therefore be no surprise that in the incredibly long and truncated version of the story of the helpless boy-ruler that is the seventh volume, Ankaravi devotes much space to two concepts: *khilafa* and *kaimmakam-i resul*, that is the deputy of the prophet. The deputies of the prophet are the *‘ulamā* and *sulahā* in their broader sense, and it is only by exalting them to their deserved position as advisees that the worldly *khilafa* can become permanent.

It is in his insistence of a certain servant-king type that Ankaravi’s text becomes reminiscent of Sivasi’s *Dürer*. Both sheikhs describe a mighty yet morally and philosophically innocent, this-worldly ruler. In other words, the *din* part of *din u devlet* is not inherent in the sultanate, but to be bestowed by guardians of religious knowledge.

II. ADVICE FROM “HIZIR”S OF THE AGE: SULAHĀ AND THE ASSERTION OF MORAL AUTHORITY
The repositories of Ottoman culture own many images that appealed to the sulahā who wanted to assert their moral authority and thus solidify their positions as sole sources of religious knowledge and legitimacy. An interesting tendency in the writings of the seventeenth century sulahā is to refer to the figure of Hızır in their writing, often as an analogy of their position as spiritual saviors in the society. Hızır is a cultural figure widely revered across Islamic cultures – who, according to many believers is mentioned in the Quran, though without a name. The relevant passage is about an unnamed sage and Moses. The Quranic story has Moses and an unnamed boy setting out on a long journey. During the journey, the unnamed boy makes seemingly nonsensical requests. In each case, Moses questions the boy’s requests. The end of the story reveals that the boy was a sage and had access to information that could not be obtained via rational thinking. The moral of the story is that a spiritual guide’s actions and instructions are based on esoteric knowledge. Therefore, even though a spiritual guide might appear to lack sense and even morality on the outside, one must have faith and patience until eventually his esoteric knowledge is revealed.31

The allure of Hızır as a well known cultural figure who symbolized knowing the unknowable and providing ultimate truthful guidance was hard to resist for the increasingly politically involved sheikhs of the seventeenth century. This section explains how, through

31 The Quranic story is found in Chapter 18 (al-Kahf), verses 60-82. The motif has been the source of many debates. While earlier Islamic sources have debated questions such as whether Hızır was an angel, or prophet, or saint (See A.J. Wensick, “Khidr”, EI2), later scholars have debated the connection between the cult of Hızır and similar non-Islamic cults as a case study of cultural exchange and appropriation. For a work on the cult of Hızır within the Anatolian context, see Ahmet Yaşar Oacak, İslam-Türk İnançlarında Hızır yahut Hızır-İlyas Kültü. Ankara: Türk Kültürüünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1999.
identifying with this figure of the eternal wise-man, sheikhs and preachers underlined their indispensability to the polity.

Sivasi’s *Pearls of Doctrine* opens with a lengthy discussion of the very term *nasihat*.32 The term literally means “advice”, and the active participle from the same root (*nāsih*, advice giver) is commonly used as a synonym for preacher (*vā’iz*). The glaring example of this usage must be the name ”Nushi Nasıhi”, the pen-name of a seventeenth century preacher who took it upon himself to write catechisms and a versified advice poem for the ruler.33 Nushi Naşlı̇ emphasiẓ̃es his double role as preacher and advice giver by picking a penname with double *nuṣ̣̃j*. This simplified explanation of *nasiha*̣ṭ and *nāsih* would possibly infuriate Sivasi himself, for he writes about *nasiha*̣ṭ: “Advice is a short and succinct word, but its meanings encompass many things. In all of the Arabic language, there is not a single word that is so rich.”34 After this opening pitch, Sivasi’s discussion of *nasiha*̣ṭ continues with the lexicographical discussion of the term, following which Sivasi refers to a particularly well known prophetic saying: “religion is advice” (*ed-din en-nasiha*). Sivasi then explains that there are four main usages of the term *nasiha*̣ṭ. First, the term refers to commanding the right and forbidding the wrong, the Quranic maxim that refers to enforcing moral norms.35 The second meaning is *nush by the Quran*

---

32 Siväsî, *Dürer*, ff 4a-8a.


34 Siväsî, *Dürer*, f 4a.

35 Siväsî, *Dürer*, f 5a.
(Kur’an’a nush), which means to learn the meaning of Quran and apply its imperatives. The third theme is very similar: nush by the prophet, which means to believe in Muhammad’s prophethood, to learn his hadiths and abide by them.\(^36\)

The fourth meaning of the word nasiha is...to advise the leaders of the Muslim faith, which means to treat them with generosity and grace and pray for the sultan and his deputies, who are the servants of the shari’a of Muhammad. You must help them in their affairs with your hands, your tongue (i.e. speech), as long as the affairs are righteous. If you are not capable (of help), you must help by praying for them.\(^37\)

This fourth sense of nasiha receives the lengthiest treatment in Sivasi’s Pearls.

Moreover, it is against established practices of theological writing to discuss rulership already in the preface. The very placement of this discussion at the beginning of the treatise speaks of the purpose of the author. Sivasi wants to establish from the outset the cooperation between the sultan and the preacher. This cooperation entails the preacher using his influence for ensuring loyalty to the sultan, whereby the preacher’s public influence is so obvious a fact that it does not even need to be established. Therefore, the preacher is not only to pray for the permanence of the dynasty, but also to use his influence to actively ensure the well-being of the state. Two pieces of Sivâsi’s advice to preachers are the following: “You must manipulate people, saying one must

\(^{36}\) Sivâsi, Dürer, f. 6b. Sivasi slips in a discussion of when it is proper to say “salavat”, that is whether one should say the proper praise and prayer every time the prophet’s name is mentioned, or whether once per session is enough. Even though this discussion is a minor one in theological literature in general, and is not really perfectly fit to this place, it was a hot issue at Sivasi’s time (See Mizanu’l-Hakk, pp for the seventeenth century discussions on evoking praise upon the mention of the prophet’s name). Sivasi must have thought that his audience would appreciate a clarification on this issue. The example illustrates Sivasi’s efforts to accommodate questions of his day in his works of theology.

\(^{37}\) Sivâsi, Dürer, f. 5a: “…eimme-i din-i müslimin(e) nush itmekdir, bu oldur ki padişahlara ve vükelasına ki eller seccade-yi şeriat-i muhammediye hadimleridir diyu hulusa ikram ve dua idesin ve hak olan enmlerinde elinle ve dîlinle ve kadir değişsen dua ile avn ve nusret idesin”.
respect and pray for them [the sultans]” \(^{38}\) and “You must strive to make the people lenient and favorable and obedient and subject to the sultans.” \(^{39}\) These statements are very explicit representations of the intermediary role of the ʿulamāʾ, specifically preachers, as intermediaries between the ruling class and the public at large.

Even when the preacher, the guardian of true faith, knows that the sultan is in the wrong, this information must be kept between him and the sultan:

…in case the sultan and some rulers err because they hurry before a matter is complete (fully unreveals itself), and in case they contradict the shariʿa, then you shall gently and generously let them know by saying “this is not the correct path”, or you shall write a letter. This is (true) friendship, and it is (simply) enmity to say “this is none of my business!”, and it destroys the structure of the religion Islam. \(^{40}\)

Therefore, it is the prime duty of the preacher to intervene when he notices wrong practice. If he does not, he is not merely negligent but an enemy of the religion. The method by which the preacher is to give such corrective advice is a delicate issue, which Sivasi addresses attentively:

If a scholar is engaged in a dialogue with the sultans or the viziers, he should speak to them in private and say “Your existence is the spirit of the world, and the guarantee of its security (…). However, in such and such matter the prophet of God asks for your diligence”. If he (the scholar) is writing, he should write: “I like you, and I wish for you to enter the heart of the prophet and the heart of the qutb. However, if there is any negligence in such and such matter, I fear that you place yourself outside the heart of Muhammad and may even cause him to suffer. You will be answerable in the Day of Judgment for your duties to God and to the people (hakk-ı Allah ya hakk-ı ʿabd). Or, in

\(^{38}\) Sivāsī, Dürer, f 7a.

\(^{39}\) Sivāsī, Dürer, f 7b.

\(^{40}\) Sivāsī, Dürer, f 7a.
this world, you will be cursed by the prayers of the oppressed and we fear that no matter how much we pray in your favor, it would not be enough (to counterbalance the curse).  

Sivasi’s preacher never gives up being the defender and spokesperson of the faith. Even when it is the sultan himself who is in the wrong, he will receive nush, or commanding the right and forbidding the wrong. The nasih, however, does this without compromising the public persona of the sultan, for the preacher and the ruler are still partners in guiding the public. Therefore, Sivasi admonishes preachers to “strive for inspiring the public to love, believe, and obey the sultans.” In this capacity, Sivasi disapprovingly writes of two alternative modes of engaging with the sultanate, which he finds useless or even harmful. The first is the use of unconditionally laudatory poems: “You shall not praise the sultans with poems and qasidas that are full of lies, and not drag them into pride and ridiculousness and make them blind to their own faults. These conducts are all enmity to the sultan disguised as friendship.” The other extreme is actively engaging in the criticism of the sultanate. Even though Sivasi does not give much detail about these critics, his wording suggests that he refers to public criticisms of the polity: “You should dispute and discard those who criticize the sultans and who curse at them.”

In advocating censure of the critics of the sultan/ate, Sivasi aims to distinguish himself and the preacher-ethos he refers to from another cultural type: the brave, oppositional preacher. A contemporary of Sivasi conformed well to this type. This contemporary was Emir İştibi. The

________________________

41 Sıvâsi, Dürer, f 7a.
42 Sıvâsi, Dürer, f 7b (“ve halkı selatine muhabbet ve mühlis ve muti’ ve münkad itmeğe çalişasın”).
43 Sıvâsi, Dürer, f 7b.
historian İbrahim Peçevi counts Emir İştibi among the best preachers of the era of Ahmed I, along with Abdülmecid Sivasi and Cerrahpaşa Şeyhi İbrahim:

The great sheikh known as Preacher Emir İştibi was unmatched in knowledge and Quranic explication, and in the arts of oratory and sermon (…). He was very bold in his preaching, (and in) criticizing statesmen. He did not mind being criticized or ostracized. (Therefore) he was sent to exile in his native city a few times. Later on, he was brought back on invitation and treated with high regard. He was a saint as good as the early Muslims, an esteemed sheikh who has made acquaintances with many noble sheikhs and great friends of God.44

The short testimonies in a few sources are all we have about Emir İştibi, the popular and critical sheikh. In contrast to Abdülmecid Sivasi and İsmail Ankaravi’s nearly overwhelming written output, there are no written traces of this sheikh’s preaching or teaching. It is a universally shared tactic of the voice of dissent to remain oral, and not risk being written. Therefore, voices like Emir İştibi’s are heard merely through short and general accounts. However, the fact that Abdülmecid Sivasi needs to address the “publicly critical sheikh” as a type means that there were more critical voices than one is able to glean through the remains of the written culture.

Therefore, Abdülmecid Sivasi’s ideal preacher sides with the sultanate in terms of self-perception. However, he is not merely a subject who carries no influence. Rather, he is the member of the single class of people, the sulaha, who do not err in a fallible world. This logic is nowhere more apparent than the anecdote about Zenbilli quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The anecdote about religion and state (din ü devlet) quoted by Bostanzade Yahya expressed a strong sentiment among the ‘ulāmā of the seventeenth century, not only among the higher

44 İbrahim Peçevi, Tarih-i Peçevi. İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1283 [1866], vol II, p 359.
ranking muftis but all the way down the hierarchy to mosque imāms. This sentiment was expressed clearly by many advice-givers of the age, including preachers and Sufis. Abdülmecid Sivasi makes ample use of this theme in his writing. Through stories about the early iconic caliphs, Sivasi reminds the ruling class of their responsibilities toward their subjects. In reminding the sultan of his responsibilities, Sivasi’s method is the same as Zenbilli Ali Efendi’s. Both Sivasi’s advice and Bostanzade’s story on Zenbilli Ali Efendi portray the sultan as a Muslim believer who needs to save his standing in the other world, therefore pronouncing all actions of the sultan as matters of din, since they all pertain to the sultan’s morality. Therefore, the ‘ulamā could and should opine on any action of the sultan, therefore completing a merger between the realm of the sultanate and that of the scholars, between din u devlet.

The attitudes of Sivasi and Bostanzade Yahya are in sharp contrast to the attitudes of many political writers of the earlier century. For the prominent political writers of the reigns of Selim I and Suleiman I, the ideal sultan is not only the ruler, but also the moral exemplar of the entire humanity. Therefore, an anonymous treatise presented to Suleiman I (Risala fi ma Yalzim ala al-Muluk- Treatise on Matters Pertaining to the Kings) writes that “If the caliph is pious, then he is the one around whom the world revolves.”\(^\text{45}\) Compared to this anonymous writer’s glorification of the ideal sultan as the locus of moral perfection, the attitude of Sivasi (and later in this chapter, Ankaravi) seems uninspired. For them, if the sultan is pious enough, he can save himself from hellfire. This bar is much lower compared to that set for the “messiah-sultan” types

\(^{45}\) Quoted in Hüseyin Yılmaz, The Sultan and the Sultanate, p 153.
described by earlier authors. However, for the *sulaha* of the seventeenth century, this is a sufficiently high goal for the servant-king.

Well known political writers of the sixteenth century express sentiments similar to the anonymous author quoted above. For the likes of Idris Bidlisi (d. 1520) and ‘Alāyī (lived during the reign of Suleiman I), the ideal sultanate was the site of moral perfection and superiority. According to Bidlisi, “the ranks of khilafat and sultani and zīllullah are the most superior among the ranks of humans (*afdal-i maratib-i insani*).”⁴⁶ The rank of rulership is even higher than the ranks of knowledge (*‘ilm* and *hikma*) because the effects of rulership were more general and more comprehensive. Alayi agreed with Bidlisi, too, that the rank of rulership was superior to all possible human ranks: “Despite the general tendency not to question the legitimacy of any ruler, the ideal for the ruler remained not only being the administrator of human affairs but also the ultimate moral guide for humanity.”⁴⁷

The preacher-sheikh authors of the seventeenth century steer clear from such idealizations of the spiritual standing of the ruler. If the mystical-philosophical notion of *khilafa* makes any appearance, it is only to strip the ruler of the spiritual connotations of the word “caliph.” A good example is the writings by İsmail Ankaravi. İsmail Ankaravi’s notion of *khilafa* follows the mystical-philosophical approach put forward by Ibn Arabi. This mystical-philosophical conception makes and maintains a distinction between *ma’nawi* and *suwari*, worldly and spiritual caliphaties. Therefore, regardless of the qualities of the ruler, he cannot be the spiritual authority of his age. In both the seventh volume, and in his other works, Ankaravi

---

⁴⁶ *ibid*, p 166.
⁴⁷ *ibid*, pp 166-169.
makes explicit references to Ibn Arabi.  

During the course of his commentary, Ankaravi refers to this distinction with phrases such as “this (teaching is meant) both for the worldly viziers and governors, and also for the spiritual caliphs of God.” Therefore, even when he does not write elaborate mystical treatises and writes merely as a storyteller, the Mawlawi sheikh reminds his readers (and the listeners) that spiritual and political authority are by their nature two separate entities.

Instead of the idealized, messianic rulers of the sixteenth century, the sulaha authors of the seventeenth century favored stories about “servant-king (kul-sultan).” That is, the sultans of these stories are struggling for mere salvation as opposed to a messianic moral superiority. A shared theme with the better-known Ottoman political writers is an emphasis on the notion of adl, that a good sultanate is one whereby justice prevails. However, even when the moralist writers of the seventeenth century dwell on this key term of political thought, they never refer to the better known administrative frameworks. Instead, they emphasize that justice can only be attained by following the right religious-moral advice.

---


49 İsmail Ankaravi, Yedinci Cild, MS Süleymaniye Darülmesnevi 245, f 285b. “Bunda hem zahirde olan vüzera ve ümeraya hisse vardır hem de batında olan hak tealanın hulefasına hisse vardır.”

50 The pairing as such does not appear in the sources. I have invented it as a shorthand for a particular type of religious-political writing that I show to be commonly practised in the seventeenth century.

51 The best known administrative framework is the theory of “The Circle of Justice (Dâire-i Adalet)”. This theory explained justice as an administrative-financial necessity without which the oppressed, suffering subjects would be either unwilling or unable to pay the taxes necessary to keep the state apparatus functional. For an exposition of this theory see Linda T. Darling, A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East: The circle of Justice from Mesopotamia to Globalization. New York: Routledge, 2013; Fahri Unan, “Osmanlı İdari Felsefesinde...
Following the advice of 'ulema and sulaha is the main theme of the moral advice that the boy-sultan receives from his guide. After lengthy discussions of the need to rule with justice (adl u insaf), Ankaravi reminds his readers: “The (Quranic ordinance to) be just is addressed not singularly to David, but to all rulers and governors (hükema ve ümera).” He quotes, repeatedly, the prophetic saying that the heavens are held up by nothing but justice.

Oh, he who is the ruler and governor, do not leave the circle of justice. The (supporting) arch of the skies is justice. In short, the pillars of religion and state (din u devlet) have found order by justice. (...) It is a well known saying that the world endures unbelief, but not injustice.

The clueless boy of our story knows nothing about ruling with justice. Throughout the story, it is the 'ulama and sulaha who guide the boy both as the ruler, the caliph of God on earth, and as a believer, the caliph over one’s soul: “Every individual is the ruler and judge over the city of his own existence. (...) So, you should also be just over your own being and not be oppressive.” In full submission to his guide, the boy-sultan says: “Oh you are my guide, and I am your subject (...) you are my governor in every sense (...) I have become obedient to you.

---

52 The only exception to such distinction is prophets who are also rulers of their communities, such as Prophet David. David is the paradigmatic caliph in Rumi’s Masnavi and Ankaravi’s many works. This is because the Quranic verse, “and we have placed you as deputies on earth” is addressed to David. The same story continues to dominate many discussions of khilafa in the seventh volume.

53 İsmail Ankaravi, Yedinci Cild, MS Süleymaniye Darülmesnevi 245, f 405b.

54 ibid, f 406a.

55 ibid, f 406a.

56 ibid, 407b.
You be my guide on the correct path and show me the way, and I have reached my desire only by following you.”

III. SULAHAs AS INTERMEDIARIES BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND THE RULER

To achieve their salvation, the servant-kings of the seventeenth century stories are constantly seeking the advice of pious sages. An example can be found in stories about the third caliph Ömer, the exemplary just caliph (‘ādīl). One of these stories portrays Ömer the Just receiving advice from a preacher (vâ‘iz), who reminds the caliph “The public is answerable to you, true, but you too are answerable before God about your treatment of the people.”

The longest story has the Abbasid caliph Mansur Devani as its protagonist. The second Abbasid caliph, Mansur, was a favorite of the moral advice-givers at this period. For posterity, Mansur remains the prototypical just and generous caliph, and is particularly known for managing his own affairs rather than employing trustees. This towering figure of an able caliph appears as receiving lengthy advice, even exhortation, from a mysterious pious figure that he comes across at the Qaba on a pilgrimage. The pious sage reminds Mansur of the Day of Judgment:

57 ibid, 408a.
58 ibid, 8a.
59 Ebû Ca‘fer el-Mansûr Abdullâh b. Muhammed b. Alî el-Hâşimî el-Abbâsî (ö. 158/775). Another example would be Bostanzade Yahya’s works. His Ahlak abounds with stories of Mansur’s moral rule, whereas his universal history, Tarih-i Sâf criticizes problems of the day with reference to the perfect reign of Mansûr.
60 Nahide Bozkurt, “Mansur”, TDVİA.
61 The full story appears on Sivâsî, Dürer, ff 9a-13b.
When he said: “And when the day of Judgment comes and you stand in the presence of God without your crown of caliphate, stripped of the fortunes and embellishments of sultanate, that day- how will you save yourself?.” Immediately, Mansur started weeping, and he started wailing “What will become of me?”

Reminded of the day of judgment, on which he would be no one but an ordinary Muslim, Mansur goes into a state of panic. He complains of his deputies, who have always wronged him and who went against shari’a in their administration, therefore causing the caliph to commit sins. The sage reminds him that there are trustworthy members of his polity:

He said: “Oh commander of Muslims, may God send you the leaders (eimme) of men”. Mansur asked: “Who are they?” He replied: “They are well-intentioned learned men who act in accordance with their knowledge”. Mansur asked: “How shall I employ them? They ran away from me”. He replied: “Yes they ran away. For they were afraid that you would use them in your way, and make them accomplices to your oppression. I vouch for them that if you open the gates of compassion and justice, and if you do away with the gatekeepers (i.e. the caliph’s men who carry out the acts of oppression) and bring justice to the world, they will come back to you. They will help you gracefully and skillfully in your rule.”

The mysterious sage tells the caliph a moral story about an exemplary ruler in China. On his last visit to China, this sage observes a strange practice of the ruler. The ruler (padişah) becomes deaf, and grieves for his loss of hearing, for he cannot hear the cry of the oppressed anymore. Then he thinks, “I am deaf but thank God I still have my sight.” So he proclaims that subjects with a complaint (mazlum ve dâd-hâh, literally the oppressed and those wanting justice), and only them, wear red. He then makes it his habit to mount an elephant every day, to see who is wearing red, and sees to it that their grievances are addressed. At the end of the story, the mysterious sage turns to Mansur and exhorts him: “The generosity of a barbarian upon his

---

62 Sivâsi, Dürer, f 11b.
63 Sivâsi, Dürer, f 12a.
heathen folk far surpasses your generosity upon Muslims, yet you still call yourself Muslim and a cousin of the prophet? How dare you?!”64

In a long diatribe, the mysterious sage tells Mansur the following:

That person said: “Oh the commander of Muslims, if you allow me I should like to inform you of the state of this world (...). While you have been entrusted with governing life and property of Muslims, you neglect the affairs of the Muslims and occupy yourself with (nothing but). You build gates between your office and the people, gates of mud, stone, iron; of exclusion and fury. (Your) associates are worst in tyranny. They would not help if we were to ask for favors. You asked for tyranny, and nothing but that tyranny enters from your gates. If an unfortunate one came to your door, they violently drag him across the field of complaints..You roll in festivities and celebrities...What are we to do when the caliph disappears on matters of religion and state (din ü devlet). 65

The reader is in for a pleasant surprise at the end of the story. The mysterious sage who bravely advises Mansur is no one but Khidr.66 Khidr, or Hızır, is the legendary immortal sage who may appear to any person at any time, often to test the person’s moral conduct or else to provide the person with instructions or help.67 Sivasi inserts a story of Hızır’s moral guidance of a mighty sultan-caliph into his discussion of the ideal preacher-sultan relationship. We can thus infer that he found in this story a model for himself as a spokesman of the eternal truth.

Belief in the existence of Hızır as a spiritual figure was not universal at this time. In fact, Katip Çelebi writes in his Balance of Truth that it was a matter of dispute at this time whether a person could encounter Hızır.68 The rise of such a public discussion suggests that the image and

64 Sivâsi, Dürer, f 11a.
65 Sivâsi, Dürer, ff 9b-10b.
66 Sivâsi, Dürer, f 13a.
myth of Hızır was prominent in the public discourse of the early seventeenth century. According to Katib Çelebi’s account, the question appears to be whether Hızır could be immortal, and even if immortal would he be immortal in flesh or only in soul. Moreover, even if his soul was immortal like the prophet İsa’s, was it acceptable that he meet humans (hemcinsiyle görüşmesi ve konuşması), given that the prophet did not do so? And what about people who claimed to have met Hızır, were they liars? In his treatise, Katip Çelebi chooses to follow the opinion of another Khalwati sheikh, Aziz Mahmud Hüdai. According to Hüdai’s writings on the subject, one can only see Hızır if one has arrived at a high stage of spiritual purification. In such a high state of spiritual purification, one can see and greet the dead souls of anyone, as a matter of fact.

Katip Çelebi’s treatment of the issue hints that Hızır is taken very literally by “certain ignorants”: “Some lying liers and charlatans have attained many benefits by claiming Hızır’s spiritual engagements and encounters do in fact appear in the observable world.”69 He does not clarify what ill purposes the belief in Khidr served. However, we do know that certain people whom Katib did not regard as “ignorant” held that Hızır was immortal in flesh. An example is the Mawlawi sheikh İsmail Ankaravi, who devotes significant space to various opinions about the life of Hızır and one’s chances of meeting with him.

The first topic after the preface of the seventh volume is a lengthy exploration on the person of Hızır and on the scholarly discussions about him. He opens his treatment of Hızır with the following: “Know, my brother, who Hızır is. Learn about the qualities of Hızır first, and then

69 Mizanu’l-Hakk, p 51.
of the deputies of Hızır (Hızır-kadem olanlar).” He then summarizes the discussions on whether he is alive or not, and whether he is a prophet or not. Ankaravi appears to lean towards the idea that Hızır is alive. He narrates a story whereby Hızır was a soldier at the time of Alexander the Great. When Alexander went on a campaign in search of the elixir of immortality (ab-ı hayat), Hızır joined him at the front. He was the first to find ab-ı hayat and drink it, whereas Alexander himself was lost on the way and was unable to drink from his coveted from of immortality. Ankaravi quotes at length Muhammed Parsa, who writes that Hızır was not only immortal in a material sense (his teeth have been renewed seven times since the time of the prophet), but also was a prophet, as was İlyas.  

Irrespective of these discussions, one thing is clear: Hızır has always spoken to the sulaha. “Hızır and İlyas -peace be upon them- become companions with some of the sulaha of this (perceptible) world, and converse with them (sohbet) (...) They approach the sulaha and congregate with them (mukarenet, musahabet).” No matter the discussion, Hızır remains a figure to be identified with for preachers of the public. Therefore he becomes the spokesperson of the rightly guided preacher in Sivasi’s writing. Elsewhere, Sivasi writes that:

The shadow of God, and his vizier, must proceed thus: At nights, they shall sit on their prayer-rug, and turn their face to God, and say “God, I am a needy servant of yours, you know my heart’s wish, may it be (suitable for) your approval.”

70 İsmail Ankaravi, Yedinci Cild, f 24b.

71 ibid, ff 25a-25b.

72 ibid, ff 25b-27 a.

73 Sivāşi, Dürer, f 71b.
This piece of advice that Sivasi addresses to the sultan and his vizier, and the lengthy prayer he suggests them to recite, again spring from Khidr. The passage encapsulates the neutralization of the former political language that portrayed the sultan in messianic terms. In the passage, “The Shadow of God” (zıllullah) it is advised that one pray to God and to entreat his blessing by speaking as a humble servant. The term zıllullah is therefore used, but without any of its connotations of spiritual superiority. The identification of Sivasi with Hızır, or the idealization of Hızır as the ultimate guide of the servant-king (kul-sultan) is obvious in this passage:

This (story) is an admonishment to all the rulers that if they desire permanent wealth, they shall be devoted to that God-fearing taifê-yi aliyye, and they shall obey the mürşid (s) of their own age and shall do as they he ordaind, (only) that way they can attain their desires. (…) The company of any Godly scholar is like the arc of Noah.\(^\text{74}\)

Both the worldly and otherworldly salvation of the boy-sultan are guaranteed with certainty once they accept the guidance of the ’ulema and sulaha. The certainty comes from the fact that these people, represented in the story with a Godly müşir, are nothing less than the deputies of the prophet himself. Therefore, his judgment is nothing but “God’s revelation” (vahyi rabbâniden).\(^\text{75}\) In the same vein, Ankaravi writes: “That müşir was the inheritor and deputy of the prophet. Submitting to him is submitting to the prophet (himself).”\(^\text{76}\) “Scholars (of religion) are the prophets of the prophet.”\(^\text{77}\)

\(^{74}\) Ankaravî, Yedinci Cild, f 341a.

\(^{75}\) ibid, f 364a.

\(^{76}\) ibid, f 365a.

\(^{77}\) ibid, f 320a.
The strong statement that the 'ulema are the prophets of the prophets is not limited to the mystically-philosophically oriented authors of the age. Another advice writer, Hasan Kafi el-Akhisari el-Bosnevi (d. 1616) uses a very similar formula in his advice treatise. Hasan Kafi Akhisari spent his life as madrasa professor and judge in his native Akhisar, while producing treatises on theology, law, history, and political advice.\textsuperscript{78} Akhisari writes:

After that, it is incumbent upon the sultan to indulge 'ulamä and sulahä, and people of praying (in general). He shall appeal to them by being generous and bounteous. He shall benefit from their prayers and their opinions and guidance; trust and accept their words over those of others (…). Because, truly the 'ulama are the inheritors of the prophet, they are the cause of the prosperity of this world and the other world, just like the prophets. That means, that the 'ulamä of every age is like the prophets; they’ve come to reform that age.\textsuperscript{79}

The shared theme of “the prophets of one’s age” was also expressed, once again, with recourse to Hızir. After his lengthy summary and discussion of Islamic beliefs about Hızir, Ankaravi defines a group of people whom he calls “the followers of Hızir (Hızir kadem olanlar).” The followers of Hızir are the sulaha who hear from him, and by extension, from the unseen world: “Then, let us begin to explain the Hızir-kadem. They are the saints who are in the spirit of Hızır, first of all in that they have found ab-ı hayat in this world of material darkness…and found eternal life. (Then) they give life to many people in their own ages by bestowing upon them knowledge and guiding wisdom.”\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{78} For a full list of his works, see Mehmed İpşirli, "Hasan Kâfi el-Akhisâri ve Devlet Düzenine ait Eseri : Usûlû'l-hikem fî nizâmi'l-âlem." Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi 10-11 (January 1981), pp. 239-278.

\textsuperscript{79} ibid, pp 257-8.

\textsuperscript{80} İsmail Ankaravî, Yedinci Cild, f 27a.
For Ankaravi, as for Sivasi, Hızır acts as a prototype to identify with, not only for himself but for his class of *sulahā*. The identification works both in terms of being the advocates of truth, and also guiding the ordinary believer at times when they are lost or prone to be lost. Ankaravi states this idea as the *Hzir-kadem* having “*tasarruf*” over the hearts of people: “The *awliya* are venerated by the created and have the power to effect their hearts. If they wish so, they make something acceptable to the hearts of people. If they wish, they make something disappear from the hearts of people, make them completely forget (about it).”  

Ankaravi’s powerful statement of the influence of *sulaha* on people in any matter alludes to the widely held idea that the Sufis are seers of the heart (*cevāsīs-i kalb*). The idea is expressed not only by Sufis like Ankaravi, who writes that *awliya* not only see people’s hearts but can also change them. “Seers of the heart” is also mentioned in the anti-Sufi literature. The writer of a lengthy addition to Katip Çelebi’s *Balance of Truth*, a certain Ebubekir Tokādī of the early eighteenth century, warns his readers that the Sufis are dangerous because of their grip on people’s hearts. Therefore, one must be wary of being with them in any capacity, since they can inspire people to love boys or drink wine.  

Even though Ankaravi’s own style was more mystical-spiritual, for his audience the intermediary role of *sulaha* was not limited to only spiritual or theological intermediation; it could take a material form. It is interesting that a later reader of one copy of the seventh volume
makes a note on the cover of the manuscript regarding a story about Aziz Mahmud Hüdai’s intermediation. The story is about a very worldly intermediation. A very poor Muslim complains to Sheikh Hüdai about his state of desperate poverty. The sheikh is so saddened by the poor man’s situation that he talks to the sultan, Ahmed I, asking to provide the man with some favors. On behalf of his respect of the sheikh, the sultan showers the poor man with money. Aziz Mahmud Hüdai is known for other worldly intermediations. Moreover, such stories are found in Mawlana Rumi’s biographies. In these stories, Rumi is seen as helping poor villages be relieved of their tax burdens by speaking to the sultans of the time.

Ankaravi, like his contemporary Sivasi, wrote of the relationship between the sulahā and the larger public in terms of the former’s spiritual influence over the latter. He differs from Sivasi, however, in explicitly suggesting that this influence could be used to ensure and reinforce allegiance to the sultan.

**From the Remote Caliph to the Present Sultan: A Plea for Public Engagement**

In advising the sultan a-la-Hızır, Sivasi establishes sulaha as the rightful advice givers. In most of this advice literature, the content of the advice is largely vague and generic, urging the sultan to be just and pious, without describing what constitutes justice or piety. However, Sivasi’s text is explicit about only one aspect of the sultanate: the sultan must be present and informed. This theme of a “seeing and seen” sultan, too, is expressed through admonishments of Hızır.

As quoted above, one of Khidr’s (or, the eternal righteous soul’s) main complaints with rulers is their tendency to “lock themselves behind giant gates made of wood and iron.” In a

---

83 İsmail Ankaravî, *Mesnevi Şerhi*, MS Süleymaniye Library Halet Efendi 32.
section entitled “on the necessity of appointing an imam (fi vucubi nasbi imam).” Sivasi explains that the imam of the community must be zahir, not hidden. While this formulation appears in mainstream theology handbooks, it is employed primarily to disavow the Twelver Shia notion of the “hidden caliph.” That is, it implies that the person of the caliph of the community is known at any given time. However, Sivasi is determined to take the formula further:

(...) and the imam, meaning the sultan of the Muslims, must be apparent and not hidden. He must know about anything in his country, from the littlest dust to a fly to a dog. That is because one cannot protect what one does not know of. Delegating does not save oneself from being questioned and punished in the otherworld. Omar (the third caliph of the prophet) always cried and said: “If a sheep is lost along the banks of the Euphrates, or a merchant’s dog was to disappear, I will have to account for that at the Day of Judgment.”

The ideal of a remote and removed sultan thus becomes one of a sultan who is engaged in the day to day activities of his people, and who could be present anywhere, like a mega-muhtasib (market inspector). His presence is ensured through meşveret, the holding of a large retinue of counselors no longer limited to the highest ranking officials of the divan or to the high bureaucracy in general, but extending to all the sulaha, and especially to the preachers who had access to the public, since they knew what their pains were and could speak back to them, appease them, and guide them:

...Consult with the sulahā that you trust, about the state of things and about remedies. And it is incumbent upon the vizier, too, to avoid doing anything before consulting with the ‘ulamā and the sulahā.

84 Siväsi, Dürer, f 70b.
85 Siväsi, Dürer, ff 70b-71a.
86 ibid, ff 71a-71b.
In a section entitled “On the state of Rulers,” Sivasi once again urges the sultan to make his iron fist felt everywhere, and keep a council of advice while making his power felt:

Must be sane and intelligent, must be sahib-i siyaset, so that one is in control of the entire land—after all, they say, that if (a sultan) was to battle his own people for the sake of religion, he would be a veteran. He shall not rely solely on his own mind or on his viziers, but act in accordance with the Quranic verse “Consult them in your affairs.”

Numerous studies on advice literature have focused on the content of the advice. I shift the emphasis to the context in which the advice is given—that is, examine who is giving the advice, which groups are entitled to advise the sultan, and where the advice-giving takes place, i.e. its spatial dimension.

While there is some literature on the Ottoman nasihatname, the tendency is to approach this genre in a limited manner, in a manner that limits itself to works that write solely of the order of society. This tendency overlooks one important transformation that took place in the seventeenth century: the merger of political and moral advice. The merger was a natural result of the increased political and public involvement of religious scholars. The resulting literature represents a transformation not only in the genre of advice-writing, but in the trajectory of the political space. As opposed to the single-handedly powerful, even messianic ruler of the mid-sixteenth century, the Ottoman sultan was now more of an ordinary-believer who was expected to take advice from the guardians of the moral sphere. Thus, the ruler was no longer the source of kut—the divine blessing which enables one to rule effectively—but was the overseer of the larger ‘ulama wherein the kut resided.

\[87\text{ibid, f 72a.}\]
Various discursive traditions allude to the separation of the moral and political realms (din u devlet). Both Sivasi and Ankaravi (and Bostanzade Yahya, as well) achieve this distinction by completely neglecting an existing and strong theme in Ottoman political writing. This theme is the theme of the ideal sultan as the moral-spiritual authority, or as “the crux around which the world revolves.” Instead of alluding to this framework, all three authors wrote within what I have named the “servant-king” (kul-sultan) logic of writing on the sultanate. Even when there was a reference to a rather transcending notion of the sultan, it was to establish that the worldly sultanate was an altogether different affair than spiritual sultanate.

CONCLUSION

In a review essay on early modern English political and cultural history, Kevin Sharpe laments the deep disconnect between the advances in cultural history and those of political thought. He rightly underlines that the existence of such a disconnect seems particularly bizarre decades after the linguistic turn, that is the wide-scale realization that “paradigmatic shifts in key terms were often the markers of important intellectual changes.” Arguing that the moral languages of passions and virtues were significant sites of political expression in early modern cultures, Sharpe draws particular attention to the potential of devotional writings and sermons. Following Sharpe’s insights regarding the intertwined nature of morality, devotion and politics in an early modern context, I underline the political potential of early modern Ottoman preachers’ texts, if not directly sermon texts.

Men of religion were perfect counselors by definition, being guardians of moral and religious knowledge. However, what makes religious notables into political figures was not merely the program of action they prescribe in their counsel, which admittedly can be very topical and broad. What made devotional counsel political was the particular constellation of political and moral authority that men of religion projected in their writing. With regard to seventeenth century preachers’ texts, there were two noteworthy political manoeuvres. First of all, the counsel provided in these texts placed political authority as subservient to moral authority, in contrast with earlier political writing which sought to present these two forms of authority as inseparable. Secondly, the location from which the counsel came changed as of the early seventeenth century. It was no longer only the highly educated bureaucrats, but also the preachers of the major and minor mosques who pronounced their verdicts on the legitimacy of the state, and on the proper functioning of their society.

The increasing involvement of preachers illuminates the rising pertinence of a political public. The connection of preachers with a broader public suggested that their political engagement had a popular hinterland, as documented in the next chapter. Moreover, the connection of the preachers with the populace was not only a significant social reality, but also formed a part of their political discourse. While the bureaucrat-advisor was authorized by his impeccable education and administrative experience, the preacher-advisor was authorized by his moral-religious credentials and his access to the larger public, which he could mobilize one way or the other.

Shared among the higher and lower religious dignitaries of this period is a notion of “servant-king” in contrast to the earlier political topos of “messiah-king.” The servant-king strain
of political writing by itself encapsulates the new hierarchy of religious authority over political authority. By underlining the presence and prominence of this motif, I question the prevailing view that religious criticism was entirely pacified under the Ottomans as a result of the efficient bureaucratization of the state structure. In order to understand the political nature of this criticism, however, we must closely study the location and the content of moral counsel before simply assuming all religious criticism to be fundamentalist, reactionary, or confessional.
CHAPTER III

SERMON AND SLOGAN: PREACHERS AND THE PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC CRITIQUE

It is presented to the noble presence of the glorious pâdişâh that if it is your wish that the world once again becomes what it used to be, and if you wish peace upon yourself and on all Muslims, there is but one way. Just as there is no cure to the bite of a snake other than theriac, there is no (other) cure to disarray-fitne. That cure is the Quran, worthy of praise and marker of countless meanings.¹

The Khalwati preacher Kadızade Mehmed İlmi Efendi (d. 1646) opens his work of advice dedicated to Sultan Murad IV (d. 1640) with these remarks. His line of advice that links political stability and order (niżām-i ʿālem) with religious steadfastness is all too familiar. In this direction, some scholars underline the relationship between a more consistently observed and enforced Islamic orthodoxy and the political search for stability. According to this line of thinking, religious orthodoxy is a tool of social discipline that is used consistently in the state formation process of the early modern era, hence making the men of religion, including preachers and sheikhs, politically instrumental.

The idea of religious orthodoxy as social discipline finds its expression in the recently growing scholarly literature on “Sunnitization”. According to this thesis, Ottoman Empire partakes in a process that is very similar to the confessionalization in Western Europe as of the

¹ Kadızade İlmî Efendi, Nusḥu ’l-Hükkâm ve Sebeb-i Niżām, MS Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi Aşir Efendi 327, f 53a.
early seventeenth century. Confessional boundaries are drawn more carefully, and the state takes active interest in proselytizing a bookish, hardline, “Sunnitized” version of Islam as an extension of its authority. Even though the application of the terms “Sunnitization” and “confessionalization” to the early modern Ottoman context are couched as recent developments in the scholarly literature, this line of argument has much in common with an earlier generation of Ottoman history writing. Represented most prominently by Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, Halil İnalcık, and Mehmet Öz, this line of thinking equates the official ideology of the Ottoman state with hard-line Sunni orthodoxy, and presents the ‘ulama led religious bureaucracy as mere tools of the state in disciplining the crowds. Particularly Ahmet Yaşar Ocak builds his pioneering work on the idea of the instrumentality of religious obedience and uniformity for the ideological purposes of the early modern state.2

In distinction with the earlier stage of scholarship represented by Ocak that focuses on the learned hierarchy (‘ulamā) as the key to study the connection between early modern politics and religion, the more recent literature on Sunnitization has drawn attention to the role of preachers. Preachers appear in this literature as “in the service of the Ottoman state”, as the title of one study on one preacher indicates.3 The top-down approach of this literature is unwarranted by the state of the literature on preachers in other contexts, in addition to being supported by poor contextual evidence. Preachers have the potential to mold the crowds, and do not shy away from underlining their potential as leaders of men in presenting themselves to the sultan, as seen in


Chapter II of this study. Yet, this potential is only one side of the story. On the other side is the significant realization that preachers do not only shape, but also are shaped by the views and norms of the crowds among whom they operate, and who form their true base of power. In the first part of this chapter, I balance the top-down story of preaching with with a perspective from the bottom-up and underline that preachers are entrenched in the public sphere where their education, socialization, and oration take place. Therefore they are better seen as intermediaries between the public and the ruling elite than as mere instruments of the latter. Once it is established that preachers are intermediaries rather than instruments, it becomes natural to study them as part of a larger political public sphere rather than as exceptional individuals. The second part of this chapter aims to flesh out this political public sphere, by placing vernacular works by preachers within this context of readership and reception.

Should preachers be seen as mediators between the learned and the popular cultures, or as mere tools of institutions of orthodoxy—such as the church, or the state, or the learned bureaucracy? The question has received due attention in the literature on medieval and early modern European preaching. In a review essay on early modern Italian preaching, Corrie Norman devotes a section to the question: “Preaching: Medium of Exchange or Social Control?” In her analysis, Norman summarizes an earlier brand of literature that evaluated preaching as merely extensions of Catholic orthodoxy. Countering this approach that focuses on normative judgments on how preachers should act and speak, she summarizes more recent


5 “The ultimate and unspoken goal of Bernardino’s public mission was the furtherance of the great medieval dream of a total Christian theocracy, that morally and socially homogenous society in which Christian doctrine had the first and final word”, Corrie, “The Social History of Preaching in Italy.”
literature that takes the social dimension of preaching more seriously.\textsuperscript{6} The dream of social hegemony was never realized through preaching because, as a medium of communication, it involved exchange. Therefore, there is enough precedence to conclude that preaching is best treated as a collective phenomenon rather than as a singular, didactic activity.\textsuperscript{7}

In agreement with the recent literature on early modern European literature, I treat preaching as a social event rather than as authoritarian intervention. Another important intervention that follows this line of thinking and is more directly involved with the question of Islamic preaching is Talal Asad’s article on preaching and Islamic public debate.\textsuperscript{8} In his essay, Talal Asad underlines that the Kantian notion of “rational public debate” as a tradition that is distinctly removed from religion is time and space bound. Asad illustrates another type of public debate that reigns in Islamic societies yet fails to be recognized as “critique” by modern standards. In this discursive tradition religion is not only an acceptable party but also the very discursive tool of criticism. The Islamic nasiha, particularly the nasiha as spoken from the pulpit in the form of sermons is the prime example of such public critique. Through a case study


\textsuperscript{7} Larissa Taylor, “Introduction”, in \textit{Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Europe}. Robert Bonfil makes a similar point with regard to preaching in Jewish communities in seventeenth century Italy: “A preacher is expected to mediate between elite culture and popular culture. A synagogue sermon must be noticed and understood by the learned rabbis at the front as well as by the uneducated sitting at the back”. See Bonfil, “Preaching as Mediation.”

analyzing the orations of one Friday preacher, Asad shows how the \textit{nasiha} was used as a discursive tool for criticizing the Saudi government during the Gulf Crisis of 1990. Most significantly, \textit{nasiha} as public criticism, as Asad shows, is open and institutionalized\(^9\).

Talal Asad’s approach to Islamic preaching as public critique strongly resonates with early modern Ottoman preaching. The public nature of preaching refers to, to borrow a term from Paton’s work on late medieval preaching, the two-way “traffic” in culture and ethics.\(^{10}\) The first direction of traffic is from the society to the preacher. Preachers were in daily contact with the urban and rural populations, therefore unable to disregard their practices or beliefs. In this regard, lived religion was made through the interaction of city or rural folk with the relatively educated, bookish preacher. The second direction of traffic is from the preacher to the public. The preacher instructs the public not only in religious doctrine, but also in the political conversation of the day.\(^{11}\)

The transition from the preacher as an individual to preacher as a public figure serves to illuminate not only the political position of the preacher, but also the languages of the early

\(^9\) Asad recognizes that studies on \textit{nasiha} have taken this genre as a tool of social discipline, yet potentially and historically \textit{nasiha} is a genre that enables the speaker to express dissent: “Since the objective of nasiha is the person who has transgressed God’s eternal commands, its normative reason can be regarded as a repressive technique for securing social conformity to divinely ordained norms. But there is also another way of understanding \textit{nasiha}. It reflects the principle that a well-regulated polity depends on its members being virtuous individuals who are partly responsible for one another’s moral condition-and therefore in part on continuous moral criticism.” See Asad, “The Limits of Religious Criticism.”

\(^{10}\) Paton, \textit{Preaching Friars and the Civic Ethos}, p 84. “In general, it can be said that the rhetoric of the friars served to popularise and vernacularise the learned Latin tradition of the \textit{auctores}, while at the same time imbibing aspects of lay and civic culture and incorporating them into their pastoral message”. cf Peter Burke, \textit{Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe} (Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), p 58.

\(^{11}\) Further instructions provided by preachers include popular medicine, languages, formal sciences, poetic composition, Quranic explication. The details of this form of more “learned” instruction are the subjects of Chapters IV and V.
modern public sphere that he speaks, and that speak through him. The communal nature of the political discourse of the seventeenth century is sorely overlooked in scholarship. In this chapter, I aim to underline the rise of a “preacher-advisor” type, a public figure involved in discussing and creating a language to discuss not only religious practice but also political grievances.

The unprecedented public nature of political grievances hints at the rise of a civic culture. A very similar transition from private to public political expression has been studied by David Zaret with respect to seventeenth century England. Zaret’s work focuses on the rise of a civil sphere in this period. An important signifier of the rise of civil society is the relocation of political speech from private to public contexts, achieved by the dissemination of printed petitions. Zaret’s distinction between public and private presentation of grievances is highly relevant for the Ottoman case. The practice of presenting petitions to the imperial center has already been studied in relation to the politicization of the public sphere. Suraiya Faroqhi studies petitions written by the subjects to the sultan about daily affairs. Faroqhi views petitions as signs of the political engagement of Ottoman subjects. She points to a proliferation of these petitions as of the early seventeenth century, which she takes as a sign of increasing political activity.

---


13 Zaret’s study emphasizes the role of printing in England, which does not apply to the Ottoman case.

I. Preaching “According to People’s Capacities”: Popular Culture and Preaching

The preachers as teachers of the public is a widely recognizable, hardly disturbing portrait that sits comfortably with the idea of a learned figure instructing the masses. However, there are other sorts of interaction between the learned and the unlearned. In this section, I present and discuss accounts where the direction of learning is from the community to the preacher. I demonstrate that preachers do not merely impose a readily fabricated orthodoxy. Through interaction and socialization with their congregation, they make “orthodoxy.” Therefore the true locus of making norms is the interaction between the learned and the oral cultures.

The interaction between the oral and literate cultures scarcely appears in the primary sources on and by preachers. The prime reason of this scarcity is that much of the writing by preachers is doctrinal and normative. Doctrinal works acknowledge their connections to a learned genealogy more openly and readily than to social influences. However, biographical sources contain valuable information on how doctrine and practice are made through an interaction between the learned preacher and the urban and rural populations he interacts with.

A story about a preacher learning from his interactions with the simplest of folk is very popular among the Khalwati circles of the seventeenth century. The story is part of the vita of Abdülmecid Sivasi, the top-ranking preacher who preached at Hagia Sophia and Sultan Ahmed and whose work Pearls of Doctrine has already been studied in Chapter III of this study. Two
hagiographical sources written in the seventeenth century fondly recount the sharply learned preacher as going through a conversion in mid-life. The first hagiographical source is written by Receb Sivasi, a close disciple of Abdülmecid Sivası’s uncle, Şemseddin Sivasi, and later a family member by marriage. According to Receb’s description of Abdülmecid, the preacher narrates the early stages of his Sufi membership in the following manner:

After studying formal sciences, I turned my face to the study of mystical sciences. I considered to join the services of my uncle Şems-i Sivasi and his circle. However, his disciples had many states and did many things, such as swinging from side to side, shouting at the top of their voices, tearing their clothes, beating their chests, or collapsing and falling. The snobbery given by knowledge, (in other words) the blackness given by ink, stopped me from conversing with them and being one of them.

Abdülmecid Sivasi thus describes his initial stage as favoring learning—the blackness of the ink over popular rituals, such as the samā‘. One day Abdülmecid dreams about the prophet, the holiest of the dreams that has to carry some meaning. In the dream, the prophet holds a camel by the tether. The camel was dancing and twirling with glee even though burdened with much load, and the prophet was following the camel with apparent joy. When Abdülmecid wakes up, understanding that this is a warning for him to accept the Sufis as they are, he goes by the dervishes of his order. He sees them dancing, some naked, completely in trans, and cannot bring himself to accept them as they are. He still thinks they appear as ehl-i bid’a ve ’d-dalâla.

---

15 Receb Sivâsi (d. 1024/1615-1616) was a disciple of Şemseddin Sivasi, eventually joined the family by marrying Şemseddin’s daughter. He was a public teacher (ders-i ’âlâm) at Sultan Mehmed Mosque in Istanbul before making the decision to move to Sivas to become Şemseddin Sivasi’s disciple, and eventually a sheikh at the lodge. He wrote a short treatise about the history of the Şemseddin Sivasi’s family, life, and disciples. The short hagiographical treatise is entitled Necmî ’l-Hûdâ fi Menâkıb-i Şemseddin Ebi’s-Şenâ (The Rising Star of God, About the Feats of the Sheikh Şemseddin Ebi’s-Şenâ). See Receb Sivası, Necmî ’l-Hûdâ fi Menâkıb-i Şemseddin Ebi’s-Şenâ. Edited and Transliterated by Hüseyin Şemsi Güneren. Istanbul: Seçil Ofset.

16 Ibid, p 61.
Perplexed, Abdülmecid goes to speak to his uncle and sheikh Şemseddin, and says “Üstādım, what is this state of the Sufis? They have turned worship into innovation (bid’at)”. The sheikh responds, furiously: “Has the dream you have had not been sufficient for you to leave aside your denial?” At that moment, denial was removed from my heart entirely and I was left with love (muhabbet), and thank God, I was able to experience the pleasure (of sema).\textsuperscript{17}

The same anecdote appears in another Khalwati hagiography written about half a century later. This latter better known hagiography is entitled \textit{Hediyyetu’l-İhvān} (Gift to the Brothers) by a Khalwati sheikh from İstanbul, Mehmed Nazmi Efendi (d. 1701).\textsuperscript{18} Nazmi Efendi recounts the same story, with direct reference to Recep Sivasi’s \textit{Necmu’l-Hudâ}.\textsuperscript{19} After the story of Abdülmecid Sivasi’s conversion to Sufism, or “the purification of his heart” in native terms, Nazmi Efendi makes the following addition:

His holiness Şems wrote him a certificate (of deputation), saying “You have completely exhausted (my teaching) and have become my delegate”; he made him (Abdülmecid) a deputy to the town of Merzifon, and the cities and towns and to nomads around Merzifon. (Abdülmecid) was so much esteemed and was in such high demand that he was invited to cities, towns, and to the tents of the nomads where sermons and Sufi dances took place. Thousands of men reached the honor of becoming his adherent. Hence, he trained and educated disciples around Merzifon in line with their capacities.\textsuperscript{20}

---

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{ibid}, pp 61-62.


\textsuperscript{19} Nazmi Efendi, \textit{idem}, pp 392-393.

\textsuperscript{20} Nazmi Efendi, \textit{idem}, p 393. “Hz. Şems ‘bizi bi’t-tamām yağmaladım ve nabs-i aynınm oldun’ deyu icâzetnâme yazub, kasaba-i Merzifon’a ve ol etrafäda olan şehirler ve kasabalarla ve ehl-i ahbīye [sic.], yani göçer evlilere halife nabs ve tayin eleyib, ol kadar itibar ve rağbet itmişler ki, şehir-be-şehir, kasaba-be-kasaba ve ehl-i ahbīye hayme-be-hayme davetler idib, vaz ve nasihatler ve devranlar olunub, birkaç bin adam, fayız-i rüthe-i bi’at olub, bu minvâl üzere Merzifon da ve ol etrafäda olan talibleri istidadlarınıca teslik ve terbiyeler iderken .....Zile’de olan hankahlarna sene hanse ve elfde halifê nabs ve tayin kılımlar.”
Receb Siväsî describes Abdülmecid’s merits in reaching a wide variety of people in a similar vein and with praise: “Those who attend his instructive gatherings experience a softening and lightening of the heart, indulgence in the wine of wisdom and sagacity, and are intoxicated and fascinated by the experience. Because this is so, the cityfolk and the countryfolk, even the tribes who live in tents up the mountains fondly love him.”  

Abdülmecid Siväsî’s disdain of practices such as *samã‘* was curbed by his Sufi membership, by a network that extended to the urban and nonurban, to the scholar and to the nomad, to the educated and the completely illiterate. An order that brought together such different social types had to be flexible and sensitive with regard to their interactions with the unlettered folk. Therefore, even though Abdülmecid’s qualities as a master of the formal sciences receives high praise, his judgmental attitude towards the popular practices and the unlettered folk -couched as “the blackness of ink”- had to be erased for him to be a popular sheikh, capable of speaking to the public “in accordance with their capacities.”

The story of the distinctly learned preacher Abdülmecid Sivasi revising his creed through interaction with the rural-nomadic populations strikes a deep chord within the *sulaḥā* cultures of the seventeenth century. The hagiographical sources that relate the story grapple with the question of illiteracy in a variety of ways.  

---


22 The reason, possibly, was that the Khalwâtî order was extremely popular at the time, hence had to deal with wide diversity.
with reference to the term ‘ʻummī. ‘ʻummī refers to an individual who cannot read letters, yet does not have the negative connotations of “illiterate.” ‘ʻummī was a title applied to the prophet, and in his case, his lack of access to the written word stood as proof that his revelations were spiritual. In Sufi circles of later day, too, the term ‘ʻummī applies to a Sufi who is not schooled, yet has access to knowledge through his socialization and more importantly, has claims to spiritual purification. Hence ‘ʻummī applies to an “illiterate” person who is still a respectable individual, while the term ignorant (cāhil) is reserved for individuals who are entirely outside circles of learning.

‘ʻummī was a term hard to avoid in discussing Sufi genealogies, for it was highly common for early Sufis to come from unschooled backgrounds. For the Ḥalwatis, the early tenth century Sufi Şahkubad was one such venerated figure. The towering figure Abdülmecid Shirwani (d.972/1564-1565) writes of his sheikh Şahkubad as being:

…so illiterate that if he was asked to show the letter elf (alpha) in the alphabet, he would not know which one to show. However, he knew matters of observance better than we did. He even recognized the mistakes of some so-called scholars and said: “I am an illiterate (ʻummī) person, but here is what I know about this matter.”

23 ibid, p 286.

Much like his spiritual descendant seven centuries later, Abdülmecid Sivasi, the well-educated Abdülmecid Shirwani treated his sheikh to be with contempt when they first met. “The sheikh they are subject to is illiterate, and many of his pupils are ignorant folk. I would rather be by myself, or hang out with birds and other wildiling than associate myself with these people.”

24 ibid, p 298.

Though he said this, God inspired him to put aside his prejudice and at least try going to the
sheikh’s congregation. This initial visit too ends with a “conversion” to the sheikh’s more vernacular ways and rather unlearned company of disciples. The section ends with a couplet:

I have come to learn the lesson of not knowing at the school of love
I have come to a childlike slate of wisdom, I have come to reside

The story of Shirwani and his illiterate sheikh Shahkubad is but one of the question of illiteracy comes up in hagiographies. The Khalwati hagiographer concludes his story of Shahkubad-Shirwani by remarking that an uneducated sheikh can reach perfection by serving an educated one, yet a genealogy that includes two unlettered sheikhs in a row is unreliable.\(^{26}\) Nazmi’s judgment is lenient compared to Abdülmecid Sivâsi’s judgment on the unlettered. Sivasi does not approve of unlettered sheikhs, writing “A Sufi is better off without a guide than with an unlearned sheikh.”\(^{27}\) Sivasi appears to allow for unlearned congregations and is able to accommodate their practices to an extent, but does not share the idea that an unlearned Muslim can be a sheikh. While the disagreement is important to note, more important perhaps is the idea that the “ümmî” question was a constantly debated one. The constancy of the ümmî question points to the continuous effort to accommodate a larger congregation who are interested in, yet still diverge from, scholarly Islam.

Abdülmecid Sivasi’s story emphasizes the impact of the sheikh’s connection to the nomadic populations of Anatolia on his religious teaching. However, it is not only through

\(^{25}\) ibid, p 298.

\(^{26}\) ibid, p 487.

connection with the nomadic populations, but also connection with urban populations that Sufi orders in particular, and preachers in general, are shaped by oral and popular cultures. Stories about the Mawlawî sheikhs of the period illustrate the connections that sheikhs established with urban populations through coffeehouses and other non-sacred social spaces, and the question of accommodation and inclusion of popular practice.

A story recorded in the middle of the seventeenth century depicts a Mawlawî shaikh in a coffeehouse, in a space that is associated with non-sacred socialization. The sheikh and his pupils appear to be regulars at the coffeehouse where they recruit new members to the order.

It is heard that: In the reign of Sultan Murad Khan –may God bless him- Mevlanazade Bostan Çelebi was one day sitting at the coffeehouse in Konya. He saw a very fine man coming in and sitting. This man then invited all yârân-i safâ for coffee (caba). The Mawlawis showed him Bostan Çelebi. A while later, people went away. The man came forward, kissed Çelebi’s hand, and expressed his desire to become a dervish. Çelebi responded: “Why, this is God’s path, there is no turning away people from his path. If you do not mind me asking, where do you come from and where do you and which tâife do you belong to?” The man responded that he was a hûnkar çavuşu, coming from (...) and bringing the sultan’s horse to his abode.

In response to the sergeant’s wish to become a dervish, Bostan Çelebi explains that there are two ways to do this. If it is merely about donning a dervish hat (külâh) and chanting takbîr,

---

28 Eminegül Karababa et al call coffeehouses the fourth space, while mosques and lodges are third spaces. See Karababa et al, ”Early modern Ottoman coffeehouse culture and the formation of the consumer subject,” Journal of Consumer Research 37, no. 5 (2011), pp 737-760. The story of Bostan Çelebi of Konya is recorded in a manuscript that brings together stories. Some of these stories are about past sultans, such as Chingiz or Sultan Süleiman. These stories are widely known stories, suggesting that the compiler is bringing together stories at circulation. The last four of these stories take place during the reigns of Murad IV and Mehmed IV.

29 Stories, MS Leiden Cod. Or. 1552, f 25b: “Raviyan-i ahbardan rivayet olunur kim Sultan Murad Han r.a. zamanında Konya’da Hz. Mevlanazade Bostan Çelebi hazretleri kahvede otururken anı gördü kim bir mûkellef adem çıkageldi oturdu dahi cümle ol kahvede olan yaran-i safaya caba kahve virdi.”
then when the dervishes come back to the coffeehouse the next day, the sergeant can again buy them *caba* coffees and be pronounced a dervish. However, if he wants to do it through a proper ceremony, there is another way for that. He must buy some rice, honey, and butter, and prepare a few meals for *fuqarā* at a garden in Meram. Then he will be donned with the dervish hat after prayers are chanted. In response, the sergeant produced 30 golden coins from his shirt and gave it to the accountant of the order.

The story of this outing, and its preparations soon become more exciting with a twist: the sergeant happens to be a thief and murderer who wants to become a dervish to save face. A young boy he alienated by not inviting him to the mesire turns him in to the beylerbeyi of Konya, who investigates the sergeant’s room in the *han* to find out that the boy’s allegations are true. In the final scene, the beylerbeyi enters the outing garden and tells the sheikh in secret the truth about the man.30

The story places the sheikh and his pupils in two urban contexts outside the lodge: the coffeehouse and the outing (*mesîre*). This rare story is significant since it points to the religious leaders as being in regular contact with the urban populations not during preaching, but regularly and within daily life. In this sense, the story justifies and complements the story of Abdülmecid Sivasî’s relationship with the Anatolian or nomadic populace, a story of conversion from a learned snob of an ‘ulamā to a popular and acclaimed preacher-sheikh.

30 *Stories*, MS Leiden Cod Or 1552, f 27a. The sheikh then masterfully controls the situation and has the man arrested. In his last lines, the story teller then comments that the man was finally caught owing to the blessings of Mawlâna Rumi: “The trickery of the man was revealed thanks to the spiritual guidance of Mawlana. Some of those bandits (*haramızade*) were killed, some hung. Now, the moral of this story is that one should not (take the saints of God lightly). If that man wanted to wear the dervish hat with a sincere repentance, his secrets would not be revealed in this manner. May God keep every one on the right path. Amen.”
The regular contact between preacher-sheikhs and urban and rural population illustrates the importance of understanding the social structures within which preachers operated. The idea of seeing preachers as authority figures functioning to impose order, be it political order or standardization in religious point, entirely misses the historical facts about their social position. This section has demonstrated certain narratives that suggest that for a preacher to be able to reach his audience, he had to show some form of connection and acceptance towards their world. The idea of a preacher being transformed by his community might be more of a rarity. The logical position must be that he is rather shaped by his community from whom he is distinguished by more learning and a skill at oration yet is still tightly connected to.

The rootedness of the preacher in his urban or rural community reinforces his significance, particularly during the seventeenth century when the public sphere becomes increasingly vocal. The phenomenon of preachers writing political advice becomes particularly widespread in this period. Chapter II has touched upon one aspect of advice-giving, where preachers write advice based on their position as guardians of religion. This chapter complements this picture by adding a second dimension. Preachers were able and willing to give advice because they had a position as the spokesmen of the public. Their political opinions couched as advice circulated publicly, which granted this advice the character of public opinion.

II. An Advice to Memorize: ‘Ômer Fuādī (d. 1636)’s Public Instruction Through Poetry
Particularly in this day and age, reforming the people is only possible through reciting poetry and being lenient (to them).  

The preacher Kadızade İlmî who wrote two works of advice for the sultan Murad IV’s well aware of poetry as the appropriate medium for reaching the masses. İlmî Efendi applies his insight and uses poetry consistently throughout both of his works dedicated to the sultan. In both of these works, he illustrates every point he makes with long vernacular poems on the subject.  

Kadızade İlmî’s poetry achieves significant popularity. While the analysis of the circulation of İlmî’s work will follow in the next section, I prove in this section that Kadızade İlmî’s emphasis on the key position of vernacular poems in public instruction is not exceptional. Many preachers and their pupils used easily understandable and memorizable poems as an important medium to reach the larger public.

Vernacularized poems are readily associated with memorization. The association is not merely a logical extrapolation. Ottoman authors of the period who are in a position to address the public as preachers and sheikhs explicitly articulate this association. One such preacher is Ömer Fuadi (d.1046/1636) of the Khalwati order. Ömer Fuadi begins as an apprentice to the mufti in İstanbul. He states his vocation as müfti müsevvidi, somebody who drafts legal opinions to be issued by the mufti. He finds that his true calling is to be a disciple of the Khalwati sheikh Şaban Efendi (d.1569), and begins to reside in his sheikh’s lodge in Kastamonu. He would then oversee

31 Kadızade İlmî, Mesmû‘âtun‘Nekâîh Mecmû‘âtu’n-Neşâîh. MS Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi Hüsrev Paşa 629, f 14b (Huşûsan bu zamanda fîlcümle iştâh-ı nâs ancak nazm-güylûkda ve hoş huylukdadır).

32 While for Nushu ’l-Hükâm ve Sebeb-i Nîzám the poems are always in simple Turkish, Mesmû‘âtun‘Nekâîh which is more literary occasionally includes Persian poetry, while still not being short on vernacular Turkish.
the building of a tomb for his sheikh, which was not welcomed by the ferocious vizier Nasuh Paşa who executed the architect of the tomb, another Ömer Efendi. The tomb was built eventually, and Ömer Fuadi writes the story of his sheikh and the new Khalwati complex in Türbename (The Book of the Tomb), as a testimony to the holiness of the site and as a response to the offenses put forward against the Khalwatis at the time.33

Ömer Fuadi continues his career as the Friday preacher at the Şaban-ı Veli mosque at the aforementioned complex. In addition to preaching, he teaches Islamic law, tafsir, and hadith at this Khalwatı complex.34 According to the hagiography, he earns fame in law and fatwa, clearly a legacy of his former occupation as a drafter of fatwās. Fuādī wrote profusely about contentious questions of his times, specifically about the attacks on Sufism in general and the Sufi practice of samā‘ (ritual dance) in particular.

Even a casual look at Fuadi’s oeuvre, suffices to reveal that he only rarely writes in scholarly Arabic.35 A great proportion of his writings are in Turkish, often simple Turkish prose. He tends to have a specific taste for the Pendnâme family, a tradition of moral advice associated with the Persianate tradition.

33 A full transcription of the text has been published with an introduction by Nihal Yazar. See Nihal Yazar, Halvetiliğin Şa’ba niyye Kolu, Menâkb-ı Şa bân-i Velî ve Türbena. Ankara: Mas Matbaacılık, 1985.


35 Also has a Risale-yi Zikr, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi Hacı Mahmud 2287.
Fuadi’s interest in writing advice encompasses not only moral, but also political advice. The sheikh’s interest in current events appears clearly in two majmuas that collect solely Fuadi’s work, one possibly from his own time and circles. The majmuas include short couplets on contemporary events and a full-length versified nasihatname. The title of the advice attributed to Fuadi is “A Poem of Advice for a Conversation on These Times.” The phrase “for a conversation (li-hasbihal)” implies that the poem is intended to be employed in conversation. Ömer Fuadi’s poem of advice includes further hints that Fuadi intends his work of advice to be circulated orally, and even to be memorized. In addition to the telling title, Ömer Fuadi writes that he wants parts of his poem to be memorized by his audience.

I came across a quatrain on morality, quite wise
I include it within my advice, so that you memorize

The couplet that Fuadi asks his audience to memorize is a fine statement regarding the codependence between religion and political power (dîn and mülk):

Quatrain of Morality
Religion is the foundation to God’s favor
Establishment is religion’s overseer
Whoever has no overseer, will become desolated

The interconnection between moral and political has been explored with particular reference to the early modern Ottoman context in Gottfried Hagen, “Legitimacy and World Order”, in Hakan Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Ed.s), Legitimizing the Order: Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power. Leiden: Brill, 2005, pp 55-85.

Ömer Fuadi, Kasıde-yi Pendiye Berâ-î Hasbihâl-i in-zaman li-Ömer Fuâlî, MS Milli Kütüphane FB 503, ff 53-56. The advice poem is found among other selections from Fuadi including moral advice, love poetry, and nasihatname.

I do not discard the possibility that this is Pseudo-Fuadi, that is a later attribution to Ömer Fuadi. Even in that case, the poem shows that the performance of political advise poetry is seen as viable for an avid reader of Fuadi, who has bothered to collect his works in his personal majmuu.

ibid, Ahlak içinde gördüm bir kita-yı münasib /pendiye içre yazdüm canla eyle ezer.
Whatever has no foundation, will become devastated

In terms of content, the quatrain summarizes the idea that the legitimization of sultanic power rests on its protection of religion. Although the idea is familiar, Fuadi asks his audience to memorize it in the specific manner it is couched. Ömer Fuadi’s request for a part of his text to be memorized is not exceptional. It is possible to come across such demands particularly in the Turkish versified form, since this form was associated with oral circulation. An example is the Turkish versified translation of Birgivi Mehmed Efendi (d. 1573)’s *Vasiyyetnâme*, perhaps the best known catechism of all Ottoman times.

The translator of *Vasiyyetnâme*, Bahti, is a former madrasa student who translates and versifies the work in 1052/1642. Bahti explains that he is the pupil of a certain unnamed sheikh who is fond of teaching the *Vasiyyetnâme*. The identity of the sheikh is not provided, but it is possible to suggest that he is a dersi(mm) (a public instructor) since the sheikh teaches catechism to children. Primary education that entails basic religious principles is associated with the dersi(mm), although such education could as well be given by the preacher of the neighborhood mosque or the sheikh of the nearest lodge. Bahti’s preface explains his motives for versifying the catechism of Birgivi are as follows:

40 ibid, Kita-ı ahlak: din esas-ı rıza-ı yezdandır/ mülk ana haris ve negehbandır/şol ki bi-haris ola zayi’ olur/ol ki yokdur esasi virandır.


42 Mehmet İpşirli, “Dersiâm”, *TDVIA*.
Teaching the treatise of Birgivi
He would spread the words of that friend of God
He would make all the children memorize it
And asked them to know it by heart
But since that treatise was in prose
The children found it hard to memorize
He understood this fine point, that noble one
He stopped asking them to memorize the prose
So this humble one was inspired to think
This idea, which suddenly appeared to me
I shall put it in verses as well as I can
I shall work towards this very hard
Then the brothers will read it more keenly
Since it will be easier to commit it to memory
This is the motivation in writing the treatise
This is the consideration in writing this piece
The prose text shall be put in verses
Without deforming the meaning of the late author
I did my best to achieve this goal
I worked hard towards conforming to this 43

Baḥṭī’s sole aim is to re-create Vasiyyetnâme in a memorizable poem, hence he versifies the work. After explaining his motivation, Baḥṭī asks his audience to memorize the translation in its entirety to understand and guide their piety. The demand makes sense within the context of the dominantly oral culture of seventeenth century İstanbul. Preachers are located at the border of the written and the oral, and instruct a congregation who might or might not have access to written culture, but have access to texts through their vernacularized, preferably versified forms.

43 Sezer Özyaşamış Şakar, Birgivi Muhammed Efendi’nin Manzum Vasiyyet-nâmesi., pp 139-140.
Ömer Fuadi and Baḥṭī therefore partake in a similar venture by using vernacular poetry to reach their audience in a more accessible and permanent way. On the other hand, Fuădı’s wish for his advice to be memorized differs from Baḥṭī’s in character. Fuădı’s couplet is hardly as instructive as Mehmed Birgivi’s catechism. The preacher-advisor appears here in his capacity to provide the medium, the language in which to speak about the issues of his day for an audience listening to him, reading him, and memorizing his words to perhaps employ in similar discussions.

The preacher-advisor type therefore provides epigrammatic statements on the issues of his day, providing the language of daily public discourse. Another example of the preacher as slogan-provider is the case of Kadızade Mehmed. The historian Na‘īmā writes that the followers of Kadızade Mehmed are fervent in their criticisms of the Sufi practice of employing music and dance in rituals (samā‘). According to Na‘īmā, the Kadızadeli group derisively refer to the Sufis as “those who kick the floor, those who blow whistles.”\(^{44}\) The derogatory phrase appears in a manuscript, as a marginalia to an anti-samā‘ treatise wrongly attributed to Mehmed Birgivi.\(^{45}\) The marginalia parades a full poem with the epithet Naımā quotes as its repeating line, and attributes the poem to Kadızade Mehmed:

By the *molla* Kadızade Efendi  
You ignorant you vile man / What good do you see in kicking the floor?  
You are a brute, an animal a mule/ What good do you see in kicking the floor?

---


\(^{45}\) I thank my colleague Ahmed Kaylı for bringing this manuscript to my attention.
Listen to this word with shame and disgrace/You kick the floors with your Sufis
The sharia does not allow that act/ Stop it already, kicking the floor!36

The catchy phrase attributed to Kadızade Mehmed becomes so emblematic of contemporary discussions that the chronicle of Naîmâ refers to the phrase in his decription of the public discussions. Preachers are therefore credited with, or actually pen slogans of their day which give readily recognizable and revocable form to the matters of the day.

Ömer Fuâdî engages in a similar project to that of Kadızade Mehmed; he employs vernacular poetry to contribute to the discussion on the legitimacy of samâ’. In a versified Turkish work entitled Book of Nightingale (Bülbüliyye), Ömer Fuâdî uses the classical theme of the nightingale’s love for the rose as a foil for the sama’ discussions of his day. Fuâdî’s Book of Nightingale achieves two tasks. First of all, he invents a popular language for discussing a religio-legal question. In this capacity, Fuâdî’s Bülbüliyye should be considered in conjunction with the Kadızade poem on samâ’ above. Hence the story becomes one among the various vessels in which a public debate on the samâ’ takes place, alongside poems and slogans. The second function of the story is to provide references to listeners so that they can conjure up the names of prestigious legists who allow samâ’. The preacher’s role to provide references for public debate once again fits the theme of providing the medium of public discussion. In this

46 Miscellany, MS Süleymaniye Library Reşid Efendi 582 (Li-Mevlânâ Kadızâde Efendî/ Ey şaḥṣ-i câhîl ey şaḥṣ-i bâṭîl/Bundan ne ḥâṣîl taḥta depersîn/ Pâtrpatrîsîn câmîş-i ḵâṭîrîsîn/ Bu nûlvarsî yâ ?tersîn? taḥta depersîn/ Bu sîzî diûlî iḥṣâmîla tañlî/Sûfîlerînîle taḥta depersîn/ Bu fi’le ṭuḥṣat virmez şerî’at /Eyle fêrâgat taḥta depersîn).
section, I briefly analyze Fuâdî’s *Book of Nightingale* in order to demonstrate how preachers exploit popular forms to provide a public language for typically scholarly discussions.

Fuâdî’s *Book of Nightingale* is one of several works inspired by the Persian mystic Feriduddin Attar (d. 618/1221)’s *Bûlbûl-name*. The storyline is as follows: the birds at the forest unite against the nightingale, the symbol of the lover who sings nothing but his love. The birds complain precisely about his never-ending singing and chanting, and take their grievances to Solomon the prophet. The villain of the story is the parrot, who stirs all the unrest and incites the other birds to gossip and complain. At the court of Solomon, here is how the evil parrot complains about the nightingale:

He said the nightingale dances and turns/Reciting couplets and quatrains
Recites though no verse in the prayer/ Playfully recites poetry

The parrot’s description is an allusion to mystics, who practice ritual dance and employ poetry extensively in their gatherings. Therefore the parrot, the evil figure in the story, is a surrogate for the anti-Sufi preachers of the age. Elsewhere the love-driven nightingales are described once again in very similar ways as the Sûfis:

Many singers gather at the rose garden/They dance and whirl and they sing
....
They are known among people to be pious/ Whereas all they do is to be noisemakers
They scream as if at a funfair/ They mingle with young boys in rituals
This is how they bond with the people!/ They are hypocrites, hypocrites, hypocrites!

---

47 Cemal Kurnaz, “Bûlbûl”, *TDVÍA*.

48 Yazar, Ömer Fuadi: Hayatı, Eserleri ve Bûlbülüye’sinin Metni, p 64.

49 For a seventeenth century criticism of Sufis as replacing Persian poetry with proper ritual, see Aslıhan Gürbüz, “Reading Circles of the Mathnawi in Seventeenth Century Istanbul”, Unpublished talk at the *Research Center for Anatolian Studies*, Istanbul, March 2013.

50 İlyas Yazar, Ömer Fuadi: Hayatı, Eserleri ve Bûlbülüye’sinin Metni, p 96.
After a long exposition of the parrot-puritan’s harangue of the nightingale-mystic, the preacher and storyteller Ömer Fuâdî enters the conversation with his own voice. He first explains that stories act as representations of truth:

The aim of stories is to represent truth/ Those who understand are men of truth
Whoever observes actions of people/ And reaches an understanding of them
Finds out about the state of people/ And hears them depicted in stories\(^{51}\)

Fuâdî hereby explicitly acknowledges that his story is metaphorical, and points to more than the classic nightingale-rose story. In the spirit of the obvious nature of his allegorical story, he includes passages that are directly on the question of Sûfî dance. The most interesting passages that speak of the question of \(\text{samâ}^*\) directly are passages where the preacher-sheikh conjures the names of legal authorities in his support:

Cemâlî Khalwatî from Akşaray/He learned all one could in science of God
Lifting the veil from his beautiful face/He wrote (favorably) on \(\text{sama}^*\)
The \textit{mufti} ‘Ali the virtuous and erudite/He was the chief mufti of this realm
He wrote a \textit{fâtwâ} permitting \(\text{sama}^*\)/ That is the (definitive) answer to this question

More: İbrahim, the Crimean sheikh/The scholar of his age virtuous and knowledgable
In his book \textit{Medaric} perfectly/explains how dancing is acceptable\(^{52}\)

The couplets list the names of the esteemed legists or theologians who argued for the permissibility of \(\text{samâ}^*\): The way their opinions are listed does not aim to explain the inherent

\(^{51}\) \textit{ibid,} p 85.
\(^{52}\) \textit{ibid,} pp 88-89.
logic in any sophisticated manner. These passages are designed solely to provide a list of names that the audience could potentially use as references in any debate. In this manner, Fuādī incorporates references to Ghazzālī (d. 1111), Shihābuddin Suhrāwardī’s *Awarif*, 53 the former chief *mufti* Zenbilli Ali Efendi (d. 1526), and finally three Ottoman Khalwatī sheikhs: Sünbül Sinan Efendi (d. 1529), Aksarayī Cemālī Efendi (d. 1494) and İbrahim Kırimi (d. 1593). 54 The last sheikh, who is a prominent Khalwatī and is a near contemporary of Fuādī receives more in depth treatment. In a short passage that aims to summarize Kırimi’s theological work, Fuādī incorporates the opinions of the founders of the four legal schools. In a few short couplets he summarizes that *samā’* is allowed in the Shāfi‘ī, Mālikī, and Hanafī schools of law. 55

Ömer Fuādī has written another, more straightforward treatise defending the Sufi *samā’*, *The Epistle on Litany* (*Risāle-i Virdîyye*). In this epistle, too, the preacher-sheikh intends to prepare his brothers who would have to face accusations regarding their Sufi membership, or merely occasional attendance in Sufi ceremonies. Therefore, Fuādī prepares them to potential

53 *ibid*, p 89.

54 İbrahim Kırimi was a pupil of Nureddinzade who was the Khalwati sheikh of the Küçük Ayasofya lodge, in addition to preaching at mosques. Kırimi appears to be one of the favored sheikhs of Murad III. Among other works, he has written a Book of Dreams (*Tabirname*) in line with the zeitgeist; Murad III was known for his fondness on recording and discussing dreams. The work survives partially at Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih 5381. It is also reported that Murad III asks him to write a commentary on the Sura-i Nur. This work survives in quite a few copies some of which are: Bağdatlı Vehbi 699, Musalla Medrese 2004, Reisülküttab 1135, Bursa Hüseyin Çelebi 531.

55 Interestingly enough, he does not say anything about Imam Hanbal despite he sets out to show that sama’ is allowed in all the legal schools.
discussions by providing them with which sources they should refer to, and even where exactly they can acquire such books if necessary.\textsuperscript{56}

\section*{III. Who Read a Versified \textit{Nasihatn\={a}me}? An Inquiry into the Reception of Political Advice}

While it is promising to see preachers’ advice as part of a larger public forum, it is equally difficult to trace the circulation of such material that is heavily orally circulated. As has been underlined in the previous section, versified Turkish advice- be it political advice or religious advice, catechism- is meant to be orally circulated and at times memorized. The eminence of orality does not mean that popular works of advice have never been committed to writing. In an increasingly literate public culture, readers often committed their favorite poems, including advice, to writing as part of miscellania (\textit{majmú} ‘ā). Personal collections of this type are very commonly found in manuscript collections from the seventeenth century. The material is interesting though difficult to sift through for two main reasons. First, orally circulated material is particularly prone to confusions of authorship. The uncertain authorship information, at times confused or at times entirely missing, makes following a particular work of advice through catalogs highly difficult. Secondly, and on a related note, since many versified advice works are

\textsuperscript{56} It is in this context of learning how to defend one’s practice that in addition to scholarly treatises, simplified treatises are written where the author pens the summary of relevant treatises. A case in point is the summary-treatise by a certain Ali Cemal, who writes at the preface of his short treatise that due to the abundance of treatises on the subject, he decided to compile a selection that brings together the information that is necessary for the pupils (\textit{Miscellany}. MS Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Tercüman 362, f 3a). Even though Ali Cemal does not disclose his identity, his treatise is a sum of the opinions of early seventeenth-century Khalwati sheikhs, specifically of the Shamsiyya branch. His choice to limit himself to a few Khalwati sheikhs suggests that he himself might be a pupil of the brotherhood. Cases like Ali Cemal’s, where a writer sets out to explain the content of a religio-legal discussion in simpler and more concise terms, are no rarity.
not authored by major writers of their age, they do not receive much attention in manuscript catalogs. In many cases, these pieces appear merely as “nasihat” or “Turkish poem” in catalogs. As a result, following one work of advice has particular difficulties.

Given the relatively neglected place of the vernacular advice within the manuscript culture, an advice with three known copies from the same century as it was written deserves to be dubbed a popular/successful piece. This piece of advice is the subject matter of this section. Since the piece has no title, I will refer to it by its repeating phrase, which is “bilmiş ol”/you take heed. First I briefly summarize the content of the advice that aims to show its close connection with the conventional motifs of this genre. Following this summary, I touch upon the question of authorship. I argue in this discussion that the confusion around authorship points to a particular phenomenon of the period: that of the rise of a “preacher-advisor” type. In the last section, I study the reception of the advice based on a detailed description of two majmu ‘âs in which the text is recorded. I illustrate that advice poems circulate together with hymns, songs, stories, and other materials of oral culture. Moreover, I demonstrate that readers show interest in producing similar pieces, an aspect that contributes further to the conception of political advice as public critique.


The author of this poem, whoever he was, was a bold man; we seem to be listening to some ancient Hebrew prophet rebuking a degenerate king of Israel rather than to an Ottoman poet inditing a qasida to the padishah.\(^57\)

The historian of Ottoman poetry E.J.W. Gibb is remarkably astounded by the tone of one vernacular advice poem. Typically for much vernacular poetry, the poem is attributed to various authors in different copies, one of the attributions being to the famous preacher of the seventeenth century, Kadızâde Mehmed Efendi (d. 1636). The bold tone of the advice is no exception in the vernacular advice poetry of the age. This section focuses on yet another example, an advice with the rhyme “Bilmiş Ol” written in the early seventeenth century and attributed to two different individuals, one a preacher and the other potentially a preacher.

The once widely favored academic question of inter-textuality has gone out of vogue too soon for Ottoman studies, at least for the study of nasihatnâmes. Some studies do compare different political advice works and underline the similarities between works by different authors. However, these studies do not further question why and how such close thematic connections come about. In this section, I study the shared themes, the authorship confusion, and the reception histories of a single work of political advice, Bilmiş Ol. Through a close study of one vernacular advice, I show that the nasihatnâmes are products of a shared public political


This political parlance is not divorced from topics or genres associated with preachers. On the contrary, advice often circulates together with hymns, religious debates or catechisms. Moreover, many works of advice are attributed to famous preachers, suggesting that the “preacher-advisor” is a broadly known and acknowledged figure in the literate culture of the seventeenth century.

In terms of content, the main themes of *Bilmiş Ol* are very similar to the better known examples of the genre, which points out that the authors of vernacular advice are well acquainted with a larger world of political advice. The poem draws on themes that overlap with the standard themes of the decline literature of the late sixteenth century. To begin with, the poem complains about social mobility that many “decline authors” characterize as a disordered state that results in social chaos. *Bilmiş Ol* complains about peasants leaving their land (çiftbozan), who threaten the order not only by leaving their land, but also by acquiring official posts. The appointment to posts as a judge, soldier, even shopkeeper is haphazard and unfair. The term ecnebî (alien) is used for new comers to such posts, once again following the established convention of decline literature:

Now any absentee peasant who owns five thousand aspers
Becomes a judge or a soldier, of the flight of the Turcomans you take heed

Noone dares to take a man to the court of shar`
He turns out to be a sipahi or mirimiran you take heed

Any Turk who rebels against his father becomes janissary
Even the çorbacıs are out of line, they have left the barracks you take heed

The rich elite have become shopowners
They disregard the narh, the balance is off you take heed

There used to be a system to receive an appointment
Outsiders come and go now, the sytem is broke you take heed

The sons of the landed soldiers are unemployed
Georgians and gypsies have taken their place you take heed61

The Bilmiş Ol poem complains about a related issue, the practice of bribery and the sale of offices. In this respect, too, the author follows in the footsteps of the better-known declinists such as the historian Selânikî Muştafa Efendi (d.1599). 62

Bribery has destroyed all the system of you(r land)
Distribute posts without venality, you take heed63

Another favorite theme of the declinists is women’s transgression of their assigned social role. Mustafa Ali and Selaniki consider this theme within the context of the court. Therefore, they both write about the intervention of the women of the sultan’s harem in daily affairs of the

61 “Bilmiş Ol”, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1096.
63 “Bilmiş Ol”, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1096: Rüşvet almakla bozuldu cümle äyiniñ seniñ/Açcesiz vir manşbi ehline.sulţan bilmış ol.
In the case of *Bilmiş Ol*, women bring havoc to the state by appearing in public spaces. This theme, too appears often in decline literature, starting as early as Yazıcıoğlu in the fifteenth century:

All men of rank have become slaves to women  
Women have taken up many innovations you take heed

As you go to the mosque, see how many people are out  
Young boys and women are all unleashed you take heed

Another shared theme across declinists is the moral deterioration of the ‘ulamā. The moral degradation applies to muftis, judges, and also lower level ‘ulamā such as the preachers. Since the guardians of shari‘a have become corrupted, the declinists lament the corruption of the justice system. Moreover, since preachers are uneducated, undeserving simpletons they are unable to teach the right practice. As a result, proper “commanding right and forbidding wrong,” a significant Islamic concept that refers to moral enforcement is in decline.

Many a deceivers and liers have become preachers  
They disperse lies and slanders on the pulpit you take heed

Judges do not act by their knowledge, preachers do not understand  
I am afraid the Quran will escape to the skies you take heed

If this tyranny goes on for another couple of years  
God will stop sending down rain you take heed

---

64 Sariyannis, “Ottoman Critics.”

65 ibid.

66 “Bilmiş Ol”, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1096.

67 “Bilmiş Ol”, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1096.
The *Bilmiş Ol* treatise therefore draws broadly and comfortably on the many topoi of decline literature. In addition to the foregoing themes that continue as of the late sixteenth century, the poem touches upon specific seventeenth century concerns, such as smoking and the proliferation of coffeehouses.

    Although it harms mind and body, people insist
    Old and young they smoke together you take heed

    They eat hashish, though poison-like
    The land is full of coffeehouses you take heed

As will be discussed in greater in the following section, *Bilmiş Ol* particularly focuses on the desertion of agricultural land. Furthermore, the poem takes a provincial tone and briefs the sultan, unaware of the difficulties of the countryfolk, on the situation of his abode:

    The former settlements now do not have a single house
    Everyone fled to the mountains, it is all dust now, you take heed!
    The peasant has not the heart to sow his seeds
    Soon all orchards will dry up, you take heed!

    The people of İstanbul live in decadence everywhere
    The provinces our full of cries and wails, you take heed!

In terms of content, then, the *Bilmiş Ol* treatise parallels the broadly shared themes of the “decline literature”, and adds a particular provincial twist. One last, but not least, distinctive aspect of this *nasihatname* is its insistence that the sultan consults with the right group of people.

    Celâlî banditry started with your begs oh sultan
    They were all left unoccupied when dismissed, you take heed!
    Your pashas cannot hold on to a beglerbegi post for five years

68 “Bilmiş Ol”, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1096.

69 “Bilmiş Ol”, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1096.

70 “Bilmiş Ol”, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1096.
Losing posts quick, they turn fierce, you take heed!

That is why your begs do not follow your orders
People of posts and property rebel, you take heed! 71

If you try and find a truthful sage in this world
The entire order would not dissolve, you take heed!

This well-wisher of yours writes the truth for the sake of God
He does not ask for a post, nor fame among people, you take heed! 72

III.b. The “Preacher-Advisor” as the Author of Popular Advice

The advice piece in the foregoing section has many commonalities with advice works in general, and in fact has very few distinguishing features. The topos-laden nature of political advice has been a riddle for many historians. While historians have rightly called for a context-specific approach to nasihatname in order to read their fine distinctions, this particular approach has not produced much new reading 73. In order to propose a new approach to this prominent political genre, I suggest following the act of writing and reciting advice, rather than an approach limited to the text. That is, I suggest we pay closer attention to the persons of advice-givers, and advice-takers. In this section, I discuss the question of the authorship of the Bilmiş Ol poem with an eye on the question of authorship. I underline that this text is authored not by an individual but by an “author-function”, which is the “preacher-advisor.”

71 “Bilmiş Ol”, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1096.

72 “Bilmiş Ol”, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1096.

73 Douglas Howard, “Genre and Myth”.

158
The historical study of authorship offers many potentials to the cultural-intellectual historian. The old school question of which individual has authored a particular work has long ceased to be the only, or the more interesting authorship question. The genealogy of misattributions of authorship reveal a lot about any particular literate culture. In order to capture notions of collective authorship, historians long refer to the term “author-function”, a term coined first by Michel Foucault in his classic essay “What is an Author?”

The only instance of a nuanced study on collective authorship in the Ottoman context is an MA Thesis by Ahmet Kaylı. Kaylı traces manuscripts attributed to the influential scholar Mehmed Birgivi (d. 1573) in İstanbul libraries and studies the authenticity of the works, concluding that many manuscripts are wrongly attributed to Birgivi. Some misattributions clearly cannot belong to Mehmed Birgivi, either because they belong to a later period, or because the work mentions another author at the preface or within the course of the text. Ahmet Kaylı explains his findings with reference to the concept of author-function. He convincingly argues that the name of the prominent scholar Birgivi functioned as a label that marks works that have a puritan-salafi leaning.

If the star-salafi of the sixteenth century was Mehmed Birgivi, it was his disciple Kadızade Mehməd (d. 1635) in the seventeenth century. The name of this latter preacher becomes a label, an author-function, following the fate of his predecessor. Many majmū’as note poems attributed to him that may or may not have been recited by him, but the audience thinks

---


“must have been” written by him. Instead of circulating the poem with a lesser-known authorial name or none at all, the name of Kadızade is attached to the texts. These texts are highly likely to circulate by Kadızade’s name orally, and therefore many readers genuinely believe the poem to be said by them. The best example is the poem on *samāʿ* quoted above, which becomes so popular that the historian Naʿīmā quotes it as a popular motto. Another example is a manuscript of questions asked to a preacher, which is given the title “Epistle by Kadızade” by the copyist, yet not written by Kadızade himself.\(^{76}\) A poem against smoking, a recent practice in the seventeenth century that the *salafī* preachers oppose, is also attributed to Kadızade. In addition to poems and treatises on religious questions, Kadızade is attributed an advice work. This advice work appears in a *majmuʿ* as “advice by Kadızade”, even though the same advice circulates with the authorship of a certain Üveysī in other copies.\(^{77}\)

In the seventeenth century public culture of the Ottoman Empire, Kadızade Mehmed was not merely a mortal preacher, but the prototype of a socially-involved preacher type. Therefore, what we talk about when we talk about Kadızade is not a person, but an entire milieu. This milieu is one heavily, yet not entirely, run by preachers and their followers. Moreover, the Kadızade-preacher milieu speaks not only in a scholarly-educated vein, but is comfortable spreading its views through the oral, popularizable vernacular. This milieu is socially involved, actively producing everyday discourse on social matters.

\(^{76}\) For an analysis of this treatise, see Chapter V.


160
A lesser known Kadızade, Kadızade İlmî Mehmed Efendi (Feyzi Efendi) (d. 1631-2) who is also a mosque preacher also fits into this “preacher-advisor” typology. The Khalwâtî preacher ‘İlmî Efendi is credited with the authorship of the Bîlmiş Ol poem that is studied in this chapter. Kadızade ‘İlmî Efendi’s name appears in one of the manuscripts in a prose note that precedes the section:

This is the poem about the state of the world that was presented by the late Kadızade Şeyh Mehmed Efendi, known as ‘İlmî, to Sultan Murad IV who trusted the sheikh greatly. The distinguished poem was presented in the year 1040/1630-1631 and accepted by the aforementioned ruler.79

This version declares the piece to be authored by Kadızade ‘İlmî Mehmed Efendi (Feyzi Efendi) (d. 1631-2), a Khalwâtî preacher from Mostar. Kadızade ‘İlmî Efendi is known for his fondness on the advice genre. He writes two works of advice, Nushu’l-Hükkam (Advice to the Rulers)80 and Mesmuatu’n-nekâh (Information for the Convalescent) and dedicates them to Murad IV. According to the preface of Advice to the Rulers, the chief mufti of the time Esad

78 Attended Sokullu Mehmed Paşa zaviye where he was the student of the preacher Emir Efendi. He took over his sheikh’s post at the lodge when Emir Efendi died in 1606-7, and finally was appointed as the Friday preacher to Ayasofya in 1623-4, a post he kept until his death in 1631-2. For his biography, see Terzioglu, Derin. “Bir Tercüme ve bir İntihal Vakası: ya da Ibn Teymiyye’nin Siyasetü’ş-şer’iyye’sini Osmanlıcaya Kim(ler), Nasıl Aktardı?” Journal of Turkish Studies XXXI/2 (2007), pp. 247-275.

79 This version appears in a manuscript held by Ali Emiri Efendi (d. 1924). “Sultan Murad-i râbi’ hażretlerininîn gâyet mu’tekid oldukları fu‘adalâ-yi meşâyiîden “‘İlmî” mahlaş Kadızade Şeyh Mehmed Efendi merhûm tarafîndan 1040 lûdûnnda aîvâl-i ‘ilem haşkında taştîm idîlen ve haşkân-i müşârûn iîey haşretleri cânîbînden telaîkî-i bîl-kaâbûl buyurulan târîh-i kaşide-i haîmiyyet-pîrâdîr”. The MS skips the parts about Aydın-Saruhan. A fuller study of this version is unfortunately not viable, since the copy is in a private collection and the publication does not include a facsimile. For the publication, see Ali Emiri Efendi, “Risale-i Kadızade”, Osmanlı Tarih ve Edebiyatı Mecmuası vol 14/2 (1919), pp 278-282.

80 Kadızade İlmî Efendi, Nushu’l-Hükkâm, MS Süleymaniye Library Aşir Efendi 327, ff 36a-b, according to which the chief mufti Esad Efendi encouraged the preacher to put his advice in writing after hearing him preach.
Efendi attends Kadızade’s sermon at Hagia Sophia. Enamored by the oration of the preacher, the chief mufti suggests that he write an advice for the sultan. The anecdote sheds light on the relationship between public oration and advice writing, or the preacher as the politically involved advice-giver.

It is not only the personality of Kadızade ‘İlmi Efendi as a preacher, but also the style of his two works of advice that suggests the possibility that the works are products of an oral “cultural hinterland”. ‘İlmi Efendi often embellishes his prose with simple Turkish versified stories or advice. Some of these versified Turkish texts particularly connote oral circulation, since they are composed with repeating couplets. An example is the two-page long poem with which îlmi Efendi ends his shorter work of advice. This poem is simple in not only using very simple vocabulary, but also being repetitive. Every third couplet is the same repeating couplet, much like the chorus of a song.

Therefore it is understandable for an easily memorizable generic work of advice such as Bilmiş Ol to be attributed to Kadızade îlmi Efendi. However, the attribution appears only in one copy, while two other copies at hand circulate without îlmi Efendi’s name. In the Leiden copy, for instance, a prose note precedes the poem. This note differs from the previously quoted note:

This is an agreeable pom that includes much advice to the sultan, and (explains) the decline of the state of the world and the means to order and control. If (the sultan) reads and applies this poem, God permitting the world will be filled with safety, security, blessings, and wealth; and the world would rejoice again.82


82 MS Leiden Cod. Or. 1096, f 3a. The MS İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı Library 46-50 version has the same prose note, with a total of three minor differentiations in word choice.
This note denotes neither an authorial name nor the reigning sultan’s name. The text of
*Bilmiş Ol* in the Leiden copy itself, too, differs from the previous version. Most notably, the text
includes a couplet on the state of the Aydın province:

Brutes have burnt down Aydın and Saruhan districts
Many are left without a living soul, you take heed!

That butcherly Mehmed Bey acquired loads of money
Seeing this, all who take his place oppress people, you take heed!83

In cataloging this work, Jan Schmidt draws particular attention to this part which suggests
that the poem originated in Western Anatolia. “The poem was probably composed c.1630: it
mentions the plundering of Saruhan and Aydın by Kınalu Meḥmed Bey,” also known as Kınalı-
oğlu.84 Schmidt further calls the work “Advice by Sādīki”, even though the title does not appear
anywhere in the *majmuʿ*ā. Schmidt’s title is understandable, since the poem insistently the word
“sādīk” (loyal, honest) repeatedly, particularly in the closing couplets of the work which
customarily allude to the author’s name:

Had you chosen as company the honest (Şādīk) sage
Then Loqman would have helped you in all affairs, you take heed

The honest (Şādīk) man is he who dies rather than lie
The wise ones appreciate the honest ones (Şādīk), you take heed

Both honest (Şādīk) and pious, that is one in a thousand

83.“Bilmiş Ol”, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1096.

In any land the wise ones are rarer than rare, you take heed 
... 
Had you tried and found an honest sage in this world 
The world would not have been in such disarray, you take heed

The name “Sādīkī” appears in the manuscript culture of the early seventeenth century in connection with similar genres one would see under the name “Kadızade” or “İlmī Efendi”. A poem against smoking dated 1025, for instance, is attributed to Sādīkī Efendi. A notebook that is solely occupied with matters of faith brings together vernacular poetry by Sādīkī. Admittedly, there is not enough evidence in any of these works to argue one way or the other about whether all these Sādīkīs are one and the same. However, none of these manuscripts diverge from the type of author-function that Kadızade or İlmī Efendi execute.

The question of who actually authored Bilmüş Ol is impossible to answer given the complexity of its circulation. However that uncertainty does not mean that orally circulated vernacular poetry cannot and should not be studied. The real question is: What does the richness of attribution histories tell us about the political culture of seventeenth century? The moral economies of the rising public sphere are buried in manuscripts that were written in connection with oral performances. The first implication therefore is that there is a non-scholarly, extra-

85 “Bilmüş Ol”, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1096.
86 MS Süleymaniye Library Çelebi Abdullah 396, ff 89a-90b (Ey duhana mübtela olan nas ile rical/Hürmetinde şekk idüben eyleyen cenk ü cidal çok yüzüyla sana isbat idem ben hürmetin / tövbe idüb can u dilden olma min ehl-i dalal) This miscellany is a large compilation of religious content, including short quotations attributed to the famous puritans of the age such as Mehmed Birgivi (d. 1573) and Ali el-Kâri (d. 1605).
87 MS İstanbul Üniversitesi Türkçe Yazmalar 7174 and MS Süleymaniye Library Mihrişah Sultan 319 contain similar poems under the title “Mev’îza-ı Sâdikî(Sermons by Sâdikî).”
institutional literatures of the public sphere where piety and politics figure as regular topics of discussion. The genres of religious advice and political advice are tightly intertwined. Readers group these works together, or attribute authorship of one genre to names associated with the other.

**III.c. One Advice, Two Readers**

In terms of content, the Kadızâde ʻÎlmî-Sâdîkî advice *Bilmiş Ol* is eclectic, uniting staple themes of the nasihat-decline literature of the times. In conformity with other advice by preachers of the age, the poem heavily emphasizes the significance of hearing out a “lokman-i ḥekîm”, a wise sage. This aspect of the poem points to a common theme of the nasihatnames: the author’s or reciter’s demand to comment upon and be heard in matters political. The demand to have a voice in political matters as expressed by a preacher-advisor type illustrates increased political participation in Ottoman public sphere. The author’s persona as a preacher already implies contact with a broader audience. Moreover, the circulation of the versified advice suggests that the work was consumed within an oral culture, as read out or quoted in public.

In this section, I describe two miscellanies in which the poem is circulated. By focusing on the circulation of the poem in the written collections of the age, I posit political advice as a genre consistently connected with other genres of the oral lore, as opposed to being an isolated genre. The reception evidence suggests that advice poems belonged to the oral culture of their day, hence had a complex circulation history. Moreover, many readers of advice used poems to compose their own work in the same genre, showing that political advice was a medium of conversation in the politicized public sphere of the seventeenth century.
Leiden Cod.Or 1096: A Reader of Songs, Hymns, and Nasihat

A small oblong notebook in the Levinus Warner Collection that has been transferred to Leiden between 1669 and 1673 brings together various pieces of oral culture in as small a space as twenty-one written pages. The miscellany contains two handwritings. One hand writes in a neat and consistent naskh script and writes the majority of the text at hand. Another reader leaves short scribblings in some empty pages or in the space left behind from the first reader. This second reader also notes his name as Katib Şirâlîoğlu Ali Ağa, or Derviş Ali. His date of writing in this miscellany is 1068/1658. Therefore we have a text with two layers: an initial reader (Reader I) and Şirâlîoğlu Derviş Ali as Reader II.

Reader I is interested in verse compositions of a certain Hûdayî,\(^88\) which are hymns in simple Turkish. The hymns are about the theme of not minding about this world, and desiring nothing but God. Followed by these hymns is another Turkish poem. Instead of a title, the scribe writes “nevâ” at the top of the page, indicating that the poem is meant to be sung in this particular maqâm. The themes of the nevâ song are again religious, with a mystical twist:

The ocean of love has risen, it overflows with blood **hey vay**
Let the desperate lovers dive in regardless **hey vay**\(^89\)

\(^{88}\) Given that some works of this Hûdayî are hymns, it is plausible to suggest that this Hûdayî is Aziz Mahmud Hûdayî, who has also composed hymns. However, the identification is not definite since there are no biographical clues in the work.

\(^{89}\) “Bilmiş Ol”, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1096 (‘Aşık deryâşi cuşa geldi ḫan aţkar hey vay’/ ‘Aşık (sic) biçare dalsun noliser hey vay’).
Reader I notes down the lyrics of a similar song, this one meant to be sung in the nevruz-i ‘acem maqām and again attributed to Hüdayi. The themes are very similar to the previous song:

Farhad revived the love of Shirin, Qays cries for Layla
The troubled lovers long for you, you are the highest desire\(^90\)

This song is followed by another, which is about the supremacy of love over shari ‘a.

People of shari’a reach the destination, but very slowly
I know the language of birds, Solomon speaks to me

Yunus, the route of the righteous is flawed
Dervish-ness lights my way, calls me with craze\(^91\)

In addition to songs, Reader I shows interest in divination. Therefore, he uses one of the empty pages of the notebook to draw a talismanic diagram. Talismans appear frequently in miscellanies of a personal type. The diagram comprises five columns and fifteen lines filled with various arrangements of fruit and flower names, preceded by an initial line of numbers.\(^92\) It is hard to figure out exactly what this device refers to. Given that flower names could refer to divinatory couplets,\(^93\) the same possibly applied to fruit names. The table could then be a device for fortune telling. On another blank page, Reader I writes the name “Ali” three times and circles them in halos.\(^94\)

\(^90\) ibid.

\(^91\) ibid.

\(^92\) “Bilmiş Ol”, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1096, f 3a.


\(^94\) Leiden Cod.Or.1096, f 1a.
The last piece in the miscellany is once again in the hand of Reader I. This piece is a curious composition addressing a sultan and celebrating him for his latest conquest. The composer underlines that the sultan has two resources granted by God (iki dest-i ฎudret), by virtue of which he can conquer India, China, and Isfahan if he so wishes. One of these resources is the grand vizier, while the other is the chief muftī. The curious bit is that the author writes a full page of panegyric without specifying the name of the sultan, the vizier, or the grand mufti, or the name of the city that has been conquered. One name is familiar however, in the second to last couplet, the author alludes to his “Sadakat”, honesty:

I speak honestly sultan, you know; but should you wish to test me
Should you want a proof in my favor, this marker of conquest must suffice

The absence of any particular personal or place names suggests that this text might be an exercise for a possible dedication to the sultan by Sadıki. Reader I is therefore interested to note a generic formula for a well known genre, ready to be reproduced and adapted to future specific situations. This feature is significant to note, since Leiden majmu ‘ā’s importance lies in showing that readers of vernacular poetry are interested in not only reading, but also reproducing this genre.

As a result, with Reader I we have an interesting reader whose favorite authors are a certain Hüdayi and Yunus Emre for love hymns, and Sadıki for matters related to the sultanate. The juxtaposition of songs and political advice suggests that there was room for nasihat in the oral culture of the era. Moreover, Reader I is interested in what has elsewhere been termed

95 “Bilmiş Ol”, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1096 (Sözümde şândıkm şahâ bilirsin niçe ger ğod sen ettin imtihân/ Eğer da‘vâma burhân ıstenürse yeter bu feth-i gazâni nişâni ).
“sunna minded” advise as well as a certain Sufi poetry the theme of which is a disregard for shari’a’s way as inferior to love’s ways, a theme that wouldn’t sit comfortably with salafi circles. Reader I’s compilation is therefore a reminder that a call for reform with an emphasis on renewed religious rigor is not the preserve of any designed social group. Rather, it must be regarded as a plea for more political participation for people who could qualify to speak in the name of true religion. This demand finds echoes not only among the preacher and sulaha class, but a broader audience as attested by the entanglement of Kadızade-Sadık’s nasihat with the oral culture of his day.

Reader I’s range of interests must have appealed to Kâtip Şiraloğlu Ali,96 as indicated by the latter’s ownership of the miscellany. Şiraloğlu Ali uses broken divânî script in his longer notes, the signature caligraphic style of the scribal (kâtib) class of which he is a member. These longer notes are a sum total of three poems in vernacular Turkish. The first two poems follow the traditional themes of classical poetry, such as the perfidy of beautiful beloveds. Then begins another poem in which Şiraloğlu experiments with the “decline” topoi.

In a space of half a small page, Şiraloğlu lists some of the ills of his age, quite familiar to the reader by now. These ills include tyranny, the corruption of judges and muftis, and a general incompetence of people who hold state posts. It is highly probable that Şiraloğlu is experimenting here with coming up with his own poem of complaints. The impression of an experimental draft is strong, for at one place Şiraloğlu writes only one half of a couplet. A few

96 I do not discard the possibility that Reader I and Reader II could be the same person experimenting in two different handwriting styles, and using two different inks. However, not only is this a weaker possibility, but also it does not change my main argument here about the coexistence of nasihat, poetry, and religious works.
lines down, he actually decides to use half of this line ("melâlet var") to complete another couplet.\textsuperscript{97}

The opening couplet of Şıralıoğlu is similar to Kadızade-Sadıki’s nasihat not only in theme, but also in wording:

Observe this world and see the many kinds of misconduct
Shari’a has withdrawn to the skies, there are signs to the doomsday\textsuperscript{98}

There is a strong possibility, then, that we have here a reader who is exposed to one political advice and is attempting to develop his own version of nasihat inspired by the version at hand.

Derviş Ali says, my troubles are much, and many are even worse off
The literates don’t act upon knowledge, nor is anyone found in praying\textsuperscript{99}

Another possibility is that the phrases we have in both cases, such as “shari’a flying off to the skies”, or “the literate not applying their knowledge” have become building blocks of a widely spread public discourse.

All in all, the Leiden miscellany demonstrates the close ties between nasihatname and oral cultures of song and poetry, as well as readers’ general interest in composing political poems.

\textbf{Konyalı 46-50: An Anthology of Legal Opinion, Prophetic Sayings, and Nasihat}

A miscellany from the third quarter of the seventeenth century houses the Bilmiş Ol advice. This miscellany is in a single hand,\textsuperscript{100} written in a clear naskh script with no ornamentation and only

\textsuperscript{97} ibid.

\textsuperscript{98} ibid.

\textsuperscript{99} ibid.

\textsuperscript{100}
occasional rubrication. The compiler of the miscellany is interested in political and religious advice, the question of smoking, and a versified story about current events that will be examined in detail below. The compiler names himself as Hüseyn Mustafa el-müteferrikanı Sultani at the end of one nasihatname.\textsuperscript{101}

Hüseyn Mustafa’s miscellany is mostly in Turkish, except for a few prophetic sayings and a Quranic verse interspersed among other texts. These Arabic quotations are then explained in simple Turkish. The only unexplained Arabic text remains a short quotation on the harms of smoking of unknown provenance.\textsuperscript{102} The religious advice Hüseyn Mustafa includes is of a more sober nature than those included in the Leiden miscellany. The themes of these advice poems are obedience to God, being vigilant about prayers, the need to abstain from vanity, cleanliness, not breaking hearts, not spending much time with womankind and so on.\textsuperscript{103}

In addition to religious-moral advice, Hüseyn Muştafa has a special interest in the question of smoking. Therefore, he copies the legal opinion of Vâni Mehmed Efendi against smoking. Vani’s short text is the most popular among anti-smoking fatwas. In addition to this legal opinion, Hüseyn Muştafa copies two full poems against smoking. One of these poems is part of a debate between a certain Sheikh Sinan who is against smoking, and the famous

\textsuperscript{100} The exception to this rule is the final two pages. While it is not clear that this part is added by a second reader, based on the handwriting it is a high probability. Therefore, I will keep these pages out of the analysis here.

\textsuperscript{101} The possibility remains that there is another compiler who simply copies Hüseyn Mustafa’s treatise and name from another source. There is no textual evidence to favor one view over the other, therefore I choose to treat the compilation for the sake of narrative clarity.

\textsuperscript{102} One of these texts is a short excerpt from Mehmed Antaki, a famous heresiologist of the seventeenth century. The other text is a short selection of prophetic sayings with a few lines of accompanying commentary.

\textsuperscript{103} “Pend-i Nasihat-i Abdullah”, MS İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı Library 46-50, ff 2a-5a.
Egyptian preacher Mehmed Altıparmak (d.1624) who is pro-smoking. Another long poem is on
the harms of tobacco, with the repeating phrase “Would anyone of a sound mind ever smoke?”
In addition to full poems, he scribbles short couplets as scattered throughout the miscellany. One
of these short catchy pieces is:

Two things have destroyed the world
Coffee from the Yemen, tobacco from Europe

As the couplet illustrates, the simple denunciation of coffee and cigarettes is often times
linked with a general sense of “decline.” According to this line of poems, coffeehouses and
smoking promote idle waste of time and money. Therefore, the rapid popularization of smoking
is but one of the many signs of decline, a general state of unruly conduct that causes the
detoration of the society. Anti-smoking poems abound in this period. As many other issues
related to the puritan versus Sufi debates of this period, anti-smoking poems are often attributed
to preachers, the puritan leader Kadızade Mehmed being no exception. Kadızade himself is not
known to produce any treatise on smoking, but by the mid-century he is credited with vernacular
poems against smoking. One of these poems is found in a miscellany that brings together
treatises by two other preachers and fatwas, alongside the poem entitled “The Treatise that the
Late Kadızade Presented to the Sultan.” After a short introduction in which Kadızade praises

104 “Aklı olan hiç duhan içer mi?”, MS İbrahim Hakkı Konya Library 46-50, ff 9a-10a.
105 MS Ibrahim Hakkı Konya Library 46-50, f 10a (İki nesne harab etti cihan/Yemen’in Kahvesi Frenk’in duham).
106 MS Leiden Cod. Or. 12.043. The other two preachers are İbrahim Efendi, the preacher of Cerrahpaşa mosque, and
Ahmed Rumi Akhisari, a preacher from Akhisar whose fame reaches Istanbul. For a modern edition of Akhisari’s
the sultan, he advises him to take a disguise and inspect people closely. The disguised sultan must particularly be aware of the coffehouses and an innovation he will surely see there, an innovation that is described as the “true ruler” of the world.

(Tobacco) has decried sovereignty from east to the west
The remedy to this vice is the dynasty of Süleymân

Though your vizier bans it about once a month
Come, be vengeant and let me spill blood for you

....
With this vice going on, how are you to conquer Baghdad?
One ounce costs three (aspers), one needs a separate treasury for it
During campaigns one ounce went up to ten, at times

That barbarian discovery, it came from the English
And immediately it plagued the community of Muhammad

The fierce, prohibitive, and bold tone of the foregoing poem attributed to Kadızade is shared by other poems attributed to him, including one of advice that Hüseyn Mustafa does includes in his personal miscellany. Hüseyn Mustafa copies a Turkish versified poem entitled Advice by Kadızade Efendi (Pendnâme-i Kağızdâ Efendi). The poem has a strong apocalyptic tone, and begins with:

Oh people of İstanbul, listen and open your eyes!
The rage of God will soon strike you in this state of vice!

The doomsday is near, yet you are too insatiable to let go of the world

---

107 MS Leiden Cod. Or. 12.043 (Arifin biri dimiş kurda niçün boynun uzun/Eşe dosta inanmazım demiş ey kahramân/ han Murâdum gâhî 'ayyâr olur çikub taşra güzün/Kul donuna giregelmis uğurluğçün cümle hân). The same theme has previously been mentioned in regards to Sivasi’s Dürer. See Chapter II.

108 MS Leiden Cod. Or. 12.043.

109 MS İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı Library 46-50, f 16a.
It is time, the Messiah is to arrive and the Spirit of God is in descent

You do not heed God’s law, nor the sultan’s law
You’ve corrupted the world with all (unwelcome) innovations.  

After this introduction, the preacher-advisor lists the ills of his age. Taken as a list, the content is hardly distinguishable from many other similar works, particularly the Bilmiş Ol piece. Therefore, Pendnâme-i Kadızâde complains about tyranny and oppression, people’s infatuation with women and young boys, the corruption of all state officials. The judges, particularly, are unreliable and dishonest, turning courthouses into houses of deception (dâr-i tezvîr). Pendnâme-i Kadızâde demonstrates many similarities with Bilmiş Ol not only in content, but also in terms of authorship.

The poem that Hüseyn Mustafa reads, hears, and copies as Kadızade’ appears in two private collections, in both cases attributed to an otherwise unknown Üveysi. The owner of the first miscellany, the famous scholar of Ottoman poetry, unfortunately does not explicate the character of the majmu‘ā. However, an early nineteenth century German publication of the same work refers to the poem as appearing in a collection of songs, thereby showing a similar pattern as the circulation of Bilmiş Ol. The content of the poem makes it clear that the poet is from Konya, and is a Sufi who mentions his sheikh Muḥîtî with much praise. The poem strikes Gibb, otherwise interested rather exclusively in classical and Persianized poetry, as having an

110 MS İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı Library 46-50.
exceptional social-political tone: “In this work for the first time in Turkish poetry we get an absolutely truthful picture of society as it actually was; the gloss of conventionality and lying flattery is away.”¹¹³

Hüseyin Mustafa’s version that attributes the poem to Kadızade “forgets” the last eighteen couplets that appear in the other available versions. In these autobiographical sections the poet boasts of his homeland Konya, which is also the homeland of Rûmi. It is understandable for a reader who thinks the poem’s author to be Kadızade to omit the autobiographical section. However, the provincial tone of this section is significant in pointing out to yet another important feature of vernacular political poetry of this period. These poems assume a tone of briefing the sultan on matters he might otherwise be unaware of. In their orally circulated versions, this tone of briefing serves to inform the listeners about the state of the various provinces of the land, thereby serving to broadcast news.

Hüseyin Mustafa’s compilation alone is a good example of vernacular advice functioning as news from different regions. Not only does he copy Bilmis Ol that brings news from Aydın, he further copies a poem solely on the effects of the Celâli uprisings on the İnegöl region. This odd interesting piece is a Turkish versified work by a certain judge, who writes with the pen-name Salâhi. The judge begins with a page long, generic eulogy that is very similar to the generic, no-specifics poem of eulogy at the Leiden copy. The author then introduces himself, Mehmed, as once a judge in İnegöl. He writes about the flight of the folk (türkân) from the region and finally

the bandits’ attack on his own house and their plunder of his food supplies. The poem is singular in being a story-telling piece that does not fit in the rest of the miscellany, which is otherwise full of political or religious advice.

The compiler of the miscellany, Hüseyn Mustafa, is interested not only in copying better known pieces of advice, but also in composing his own nasīḥa. In addition to standard themes of decline to be found in other works, Hüseyn Mustafa’s advice includes an interesting theme, that of the corruption of judges. The theme is that even though Sultan Murad has many armies (military power), he has noone in his kingdom who tells him the truth of religion. The madrasa professors and overseers, judges, and müftis are equally corrupt and should not be benefiting from endowments. The advice-giver urges the sultan to fix the state of ehl-i ilm:

If the sultan does not act with justice and caution
Farewell to you, you are no more people of religion!

Hüseyn Mustafa thus records poems that are widely circulated in his age, though in slightly different forms and with different authorial attributions. He then notes down another advice poem and adds his own authorial signature at the end. It is highly likely that, just like the Reader II of the aforementioned Leiden miscellany, Hüseyn Mustafa is acquainting himself with the tropes and concepts of the decline-advice literature in order to produce his own version of this predominant political discourse.

114 The author complains about his state of poverty after having been in the service of the state and that he piously recites the Quran even in difficult times. He then asks for the judgeship of a province, Bolu, from the sultan as an act of generosity.

115 MS İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı Library 46-50.
The two available copies of one widely known vernacular advice, *Bilmiş Ol*, appear in two miscellanies that demonstrate important commonalities. In both of the miscellanies, the poem circulates together with other vernacular literature, including songs and hymns. Therefore, the vernacular poems of political advice appear as parts of the oral culture of their day. Moreover, both miscellanies attest to their compilers’ interest in not only consuming, but also producing vernacular *nası́ha*. This interesting aspect suggests that vernacular advice is a good indicator of public discussions of the day, as opposed to being singular opinions of particular authors.

**CONCLUSION**

The social location of preachers is a significant question that has so far not been addressed sufficiently. The close connection of many preachers with the establishment, be it the scholarly cadres (*ʿulamā*) or the court, has led scholars to study preachers as yet another tool of state centralization and court-led social discipline. A closer look at the social practice reveals that the exchange of information between preachers and the larger public is by no means one-sided. Descriptions of preachers often contain the preacher’s ability to connect with the larger public “in accordance with their capacity” is a consistent item of praise in hagiographies. Furthermore, hagiographical sources record stories of preachers’ conversions from a more bookishly orthodox understanding of Islam to embracing popular practice. The impact of a preacher’s connection plays a significant role in his overall outlook and therefore the content of his sermons and scholarly production. This impact is large not only in the presumably more peripheral areas of
the empire that are far from the sight of the center. This chapter has provided the example of Abdülmecid Sivâsî, the preacher at the Hagia Sophia and Sultan Ahmed mosques- the top prestigious mosques that are closest to the palace. Sivâsî’s conversion to a more lenient form of Islam that embraces music and dance as part of ritual attests to the significant impact of being structurally connected to the public sphere.

The opinions and works of preachers therefore are strongly entrenched in the public sphere. The seventeenth century that has witnessed the increasing politicization of the public sphere sees the rise of a new cultural type, the “preacher-advisor” type. Many works of social and political content are either actually written by preachers, or are attributed to them. These works draw on a shared vocabulary and conceptual world. The entanglement of a widely recognized political language and the figure of preachers suggests that the preachers are able to draw on the well known nasîḥa genre and popularize this genre.

Evidence of the circulation of nasîḥa suggests that the genre circulates among other works of oral culture, including but not limited to songs. Preachers appear in written record as asking their audience to memorize their advise, or as providing slogans that historical sources record to be used in public debates. The circulation evidence suggests that preachers justifiably acted as early modern media, in providing a popular language to discussions on current politics or doctrinal matters.

The significance of the connection of preachers with the oral and popular cultures of their day deserves to be emphasized once again. The by and large inaccessible nature of oral cultures can potentially be balanced by studying the lore of preachers who draw on and cater to the oral culture of their day. In doing so, they popularized better known genres and debates, and even
scholarly references. This aspect underlines preachers’ role as intermediaries between the written and the oral cultures.
CHAPTER IV

PREACHERS, INFORMAL LEARNING, and THE VERNACULARIZATION of FORMAL SCIENCES

Introduction

“The unlettered (ūmmī) sheikh can reach [qualification] by studying under a literate sheikh, however [a chain of] unlettered-unlettered-unlettered is sure to be devoid of wisdom.”¹

The foregoing verdict is from a biographical dictionary of the Khalwati order. Sufi orders often had to address the question of how learned their leaders were, since many members received little or no formal training. Therefore, the question of the learnedness of the members, particularly the sheikhs is often addressed in biographical dictionaries. These instances often take the form of narrating stories in which a sheikh who receives no formal education solves a riddle that “forty college professors could not solve,”² or the chief mufti was perplexed by.³ The

² Nazmi Efendi, Hediyyetü’l-Ihvan, pp 286-288.
³ For a hagiographical study depicting the Gülşenî sheikh İbrâhîm Gülşenî guiding the chief mufti Îbn Kemâl through a theological riddle, see Ömer Fuâdî, “Türbenâme”, in Nihal Yazar, Halvetiliğin Şâ'bâniyye Kolu, Menâkib-i Şâ'bân-i Veli ve Türbenâme. Ankara: Mas Matbaacılık, 1985, p 64.
constant presence of this motif in hagiographical works is a strong indicator of an important feature of Sufi circles, and preaching circles in general. The social circles of preachers accommodated individuals with a wide range of backgrounds with regard to literacy, and formed an important forum that brought together the highly literate, the completely unlettered, and everyone in between.

Preachers provided a venue for cultural education that formed an intersectional space between the learned and the unlearned populations. This chapter investigates practices of literacy within the mosque and lodge circles, underlining the intermediary role preachers played between the learned and the unlearned circles. Particular emphasis is placed on the vernacular contexts of formal sciences. The vernacularization of formal sciences is a seventeenth century phenomenon that illustrates the emergence of a non-scholarly public readership.

Formal sciences associated with madrasa education find a new public life as of the early seventeenth century. This chapter investigates the informal, non-institutional circles of learning with special emphasis on the role of preachers in providing informal education. Preachers and sheikhs acted as “teachers of the public,” providing a form of “public” education that remained outside the purview of the formal, madrasa education. Studies on Ottoman education tend to focus on madrasa system as the only formally established educational institution. However, two recent works on literacy in the Ottoman Empire have challenged the long standing tradition of focusing on formal, institutional learning and literacy. In a study on Cairo’s middle class in the

---

eighteenth century, Nelly Hanna defines a ‘middling class’ that includes a category of people who were educated without necessarily being scholarly. Focusing on court records and probate inventories, Hanna identifies a group of middle class individuals who received some religious education but did not end up as scholars. The culture, and particularly the literate practices of this middle class, differed from that of the ‘ulamā due to an interest in non-religious, matter of fact topics. In her study on eighteenth century Damascus, Dana Sajdi defines and illustrates “nouveau literacy,” a new form of literacy that is not defined by the traditional concerns of the ‘ulemā. In her study that focuses on the chronicles of a barber in eighteenth century Damascus, Sajdi identifies a break in chronicle writing that displaces the chronicle from what used to be its traditional home, the realm of the ‘ulamā. Thus, she writes, “Nouveau literacy is about the arrival of authors of unusual backgrounds into the space that had historically been arrogated to the ‘ulama, literally- “the people who know.”

While the rise of new forms of literacy is certainly noteworthy for the eighteenth century, literacy did not remain completely within the purview of the ‘ulamā prior to the eighteenth century. This chapter demonstrates that the learning of not only religious, but also linguistic and literary sciences took place on a regular basis at the public arena, outside an institutionally established program of study.


Learning at the mosque, the lodge or even the courthouse was a long-established practice. However, there are two main developments that broadened the scope and increased the allure of such public learning. First of all, learning at the mosque became officially rewarding in the early seventeenth century, and formed a significant path of upward mobility. A public preaching post became a way of earning the elite ('askerî) title as of the early seventeenth century. Moreover, an endowment based post such as preaching was preferable to lower rank ‘ilmiyya posts such as judgeship, as the latter became more and more difficult to secure and the tenures became shorter and shorter.\(^8\) The acquisition of a preaching post was necessarily linked with literacy. A preacher or sheikh had to be familiar with Arabic, Quran, and the prophetic traditions as minimum requirements. Since not all preachers were madrasa graduates, some being dropouts and some never attending a madrasa, an aspiring preacher-sheikh could, and did, rely on informal circles of education. Therefore, the upward mobility provided by the increasing importance of the preaching post provided a new incentive for public education and literacy.

Secondly, the new socialization practices of the seventeenth century, such as coffeehouses, changed practices of literacy and cultural exchange. The more open and inclusive nature of the coffeehouse socialization diffused into literary gatherings. The Ottoman coffeehouse, much like its European counterpart,\(^9\) created a new sociability and public discourses accompanying this sociability. In its public nature, the coffeehouse differs from prior public spaces such as the mosque and lodge in being comparatively free of a framework of authority or

\(^8\) For a discussion of the preaching post as an important path for upward mobility, see Chapter I of this study.

hierarchy, as for instance the mosque would be. The differences between the “old social” and the “new social” might not be as dramatic as assumed. There is evidence that the mosque-lodge socialization was more open than oppositional to the coffeehouse socialization. The story about the Mevlevi sheikh regularly socializing at a particular coffeehouse in Konya is one example. Dervishes in general appear as famed performers of coffeehouse arts, storytelling (meddâhlık) and joke-telling (muкаллидîlık, literally the art of making impressions). An example to the latter is a Mawlawî dervish of İstanbul, named Şengül Çelebi, whose most popular performance was the impression of a Janissary colonel (çorbacı) patrolling the city at night with privates (acemi oğlanlari) under his command. Evliya Çelebi writes about Şengül Çelebi’s act with praise, giving details of the storyline and commenting the dervish’s distinguished skill at mocking each private’s particular accent, presumably because each janissary was originally from different parts of the empire. Evliya Çelebi describes the dervish-joke teller as “He was very funny, yet also a very [observant] Muslim.”

Therefore, the coffeehouse and the lodge were connected rather than necessarily oppositional. Similar continuities appear between the mosque and the coffeehouse, though in

10 Many studies consider the perceived difference between the coffeehouse and prior forms of social spaces to be self evident; hence do not even address the relationship between the old social and the new social. For instance, an article on the relationship between coffeehouse and the newly emerging coffeehouse classifies coffeehouses as the “fourth place”, since the “third place” is reserved for the mosque and the lodge, and these two forms of socialization are entirely incomparable. See: Eminêgül Karababa and Güliz Ger, “Early Modern Ottoman Coffeehouse Culture and the Formation of the Consumer Subject”, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 37/5 (February 2011), pp. 737-760.

11 See Chapter III for the details of this story.


13 Evliya Çelebi, Seyahatname, p 1024: “Bir mudhik cân idi ammâ gâyet müsemân idi.”
more complicated ways. Chronicles narrate that when the coffeehouses first appeared, preachers and some Sufis opposed to and preached against this new space since “Everyone has become regulars of coffeehouses; no one comes to the mosques any more.”

The coffeehouse was criticized by many preachers because it encouraged a lax form of socialization, without regard to social boundaries. However, the historian Peçevi notes, when it was finally understood that coffeehouses were there to stay, preachers and muftis accepted they could not be abolished. Therefore, they even changed their legal opinion as to the legal status of the coffee, from abominable to permissible.

Peçevi suggests that the initially reactional preachers finally reconciliated with the coffeehouse. Many narrative anecdotes write about the coffeehouse and the mosque without implication of opposition. For instance Evliya Çelebi describes the many coffeehouses of Bursa as intertwined with the mosques as indispensable parts of the social life of the city:

There are a total of seventy five coffeehouses (…), each coffeehouse can seat a thousand men. (…) All coffeehouses are full of coffeehouse regulars, and talented masters of arts (such as storytelling). Among them is the Emir coffeehouse by the Grand Mosque of Bursa; it is so well adorned and embellished, and a place for the best [people], and has beloved dancers (mahbûb-ı cihân rakkâslar). (…) Since this coffeehouse is by the Grand Mosque, as soon as [the call to the prayer nears its end] everyone goes to the mosque; not a single person remains at the coffeehouse.

---


15 Cerrah Şeyhi, *Risâle fi Hâkî Hurmeti’d-Duḥān al-Ḥabîth* criticizes coffeehouses, among other things, as being places where people laughed uncontrollably, without regard to anyone. See *ibidem*, MS Süleymaniye, Atıf Efendi 841.


Evliya’s account insinuates continuity between the mosque and the coffeehouse as the twin hubs of urban social life. A similar anecdote circulates regarding the popularity of the famous preacher of Süleymaniye, Emir Efendi İştibi. İştibi was a preacher who gained renown for his sharp tongue. He was bold enough to issue bitter criticisms against court officials at the pulpit, for which he was sent on exile twice. His blunt style earned him a position not only as a respectable, but also as a stimulating and even entertaining preacher.

People all around communicated epistles to him, inquiring about thorny matters. In this way, questions about bizarre issues spurred strange and colorful answers. [The matter] developed into a state where the response to the briefs became the talk of the day; townmen (zürefâ) would wait at the coffeehouses of Süleymaniye for the completion of the sermon [after which began] the responses to the written questions.

The new urban scene that allowed a diverse group of people to socialize and to discuss matters of their day allowed preachers to reach beyond their immediate congregations, as seen through the chronicles of the age. The word of the preacher reached a reading public through short epistolary communications that were copied widely and read collectively. The seventeenth century sulaha author dedicated his translations to his fellow Sufi brother, collected the letters of his sheikh to the city’s preachers and showed them to peers at social gatherings, and showed an interest in composing letters to his peers. The new public readership was both the result, and the

18 For more information on Emir İştibi, see “Introduction.”
reason driving the move towards vernacularization of classical genres. The vernacularized mirrors for genres of the previous chapter, and the vernacularized medical works of the next chapter, serve as illustrations of the vernacular public literacy of the seventeenth century.

This chapter studies public literacy with special reference to vernacularization. The first section discusses preachers’ role in public education based on biographical dictionaries. The second section discusses the vernacularization of rhetorical sciences, a body of knowledge associated with formal madrasa training. The vernacularization of rhetorical sciences applies to two knowledge fields. Firstly, rhetorical theory was vernacularized in the seventeenth century through abridged Turkish commentaries. Secondly, epistolary theory was also vernacularized. The vernacularization of epistolary theory reflects the needs of a reading community that resorted to epistolary form not only as a form of communication and network formation, but also a tool of learning and education.

I. Learning at the Mosque and Lodge: The Education of a Preacher

The mosques, lodges, and connected social settings provided informal public education for three main types of audience. The first audience is young children, for whom primary education was provided by mosque preachers, sheikhs, or lower rank ulama. The second category is the pupils of preachers, who received systematic training in order to become future preachers. The third category is the broader category of “general public.” This last category brings together a wide range of people, from townspeople such as janissaries and shopkeepers who partake in cultural
literacy more casually, to litterateurs and scribes who offered their services within these informal circles.

Primary education in Ottoman cities is a poorly studied topic. A study of the endowment deeds of madrasas shows that many madrasa complexes appointed sheikhs to teach sıbyân (young kids). In addition to teaching young children, these sheikhs were required to be able to as preach at the mosque that was adjacent to the teaching institution. This stipulation suggests a close relationship between preachers and primary education. Moreover, in terms of content, too, the endowed primary schools provided education in the same subjects that were taught to younger children at mosques, namely Quran, hadith, and catechism. As an example, the mosque-madrasa complexes of Mehmed II in İstanbul and Bayezid II in Edirne offered primary teaching in the subjects of Quran and catechism. Historical evidence suggests that memorization of Quran and catechism was the main goal of primary education, and writing was not part of primary education until the mid-eighteenth century. While the extent of the Quran education is not known, the teaching of catechism was often carried out through versified Turkish versions of catechism taught by preachers. In addition to preachers, lower level ‘ulama such as provincial


22 Nebi Bozkurt, “Mektep”, DİA.

23 Nebi Bozkurt notes that the first occurrence of writing (haft) as part of the curriculum appears in 1740, at the time of Mahmud I. ibid, “Mektep”, DİA.

24 See Chapter IV of this study for the teaching of Birgivi’s catechism in a versified format at the mosque, specifically for young children.
judges provided primary education. A provincial judge in Ereğli near Konya, for instance, was highly praised for offering instruction to children at the courthouse free of charge.25

In addition to primary education, the mosque and lodges provided education to future sheikhs and preachers. Many esteemed preachers of the age have no connection with the formal educational institutions, receiving their education at the informal circles. The preacher Kadızade ‘İlmi Mehem Efendi whose works of advice to the sultan have been mentioned in Chapter III, for instance, becomes a prominent preacher of the capital thanks to his studies with another preacher. His teacher was Vaiz Emir Efendi of the Mehem Paşa lodge. When Emir Efendi died in 1025/1616, ‘İlmi Mehem Efendi inherited the pulpit, and so began his preaching career that would lead him to the pulpit of the Hagia Sophia and to counseling the sultan.26 One of the famous sheikhs of the early seventeenth century, whose treatises against smoking and the Sufi dance resounded strongly according to chronicles, Cerrahpaşa Seyhi, similarly received his education in Quran and the hadith in informal circles.27

Learning at the mosque or lodge was not restricted to the full-time pupils (mürûd) of a sheikh. The cultural gatherings at the mosque and the lodge attracted people from a variety of backgrounds. The gatherings -or in Ottoman parlor the majîses- held at mosques, lodges, or private houses of sheikhs were the cultural events of the day that were open to the people of the


189
city. Descriptions of majlises often include allusions to individuals who do not possess an ‘ulama affiliation, but attend cultural-instructional gatherings regularly alongside scholars. Evidence to this effect comes from biographies and hagiographies. For instance, Hasan Rızai describes a gathering in Niğde where the attendants are as follows: Halil Efendi, the preacher of the Great Mosque of Niğde; Süleyman Efendi and Ahmed Efendi, two judges; Ömer Efendi el-Mevlevi, a Sufi who taught Persian and the Mathnawī. In addition to these usual suspects, a certain Murad Agha attends the gathering. Murad Agha, Rızai informs, “was first a fiefholder, then a provincial financial officer, and then the governor of Akşehir.” In addition to Murad Agha as a representative of the military elite, two janissaries attend the session: Es-seyyid Hacı Hamza and his son Halil Çelebi. In addition to this last çelebi, another majlis attendee with the title çelebi is noted: Selami Çelebi. Selami Çelebi’s occupation is not specified; he attends the majlis by virtue of being an “expert of languages and possessor of knowledge.”

The informal circles in which preachers were educated often included individuals with the title “çelebi/chalabi”. Çelebi was a title given to self-educated litterateurs, a type that became increasingly prominent during the seventeenth century. While the self-educated litterateur type becomes an interesting presence in the intellectual life of Ottoman cities as of the seventeenth century, only the most distinguished individuals among this group have received attention. Katip Çelebi (d. 1657) is the famous encyclopedist of the period, known particularly for his works on

28 Rızai Mahmüdiyye, f 186b.
geography, history, and bibliography.\textsuperscript{30} Hezarfen Hüseyin Çelebi (d. 1691) shared similar interests in history and geography in addition to languages, and made extensive use of European sources in his works through connections he made with travellers, statesmen, and translators.\textsuperscript{31}

Finally, Evliya Çelebi (d. 1684) authored the most comprehensive Ottoman travel book (\textit{Seyahatname}) which also reads like an encyclopedia of languages, customs, and cultures of the many countries and cities that the travelogue describes.\textsuperscript{32}

While these names are towering figures of Ottoman intellectual life, they were not the only self-educated litterateurs who shared the title çelebi. Baldrızade’s biographical dictionary, for instance, mentions three çelbis, two of who were self-educated in medicine.\textsuperscript{33} The first of these, İbrahim Çelebi (d. 1045/1636) was the son of a bozaci, without any ‘ilmiye or other formal educational background. Having contracted certain illnesses, İbrahim Çelebi took up the study of medicine, and advanced in this science fairly quickly.\textsuperscript{34} This case shows that for a towndweller of no significant institutional affiliation, it was possible to pursue a science of one’s interest in early seventeenth century Bursa.

The existence of a çelebi type, denoting individuals who attended cultural gatherings without specified social ranks but by virtue of cultural and specifically linguistic literacy, is


\textsuperscript{34} Baldrızade, \textit{RVZa}, p 125: “Bazi emraza mübtelâ olmağla ilm-i tibba çalişup zaman-i kalilde tahsil etmiş idi.”
noteworthy.\textsuperscript{35} In another town, Larende, Rızai attends a gathering of mainly the ‘ulama of the town. Yet, another çelebi figure attends these gatherings, a certain Mustafa Çelebi, who is a meddâh, a professional storyteller who often performed at coffeehouses. The storyteller-çelebi is described as “an expert of languages and memorization.”\textsuperscript{36} The storytellers of the town were, as mentioned in the introduction, often associated with Sufi orders. It must be as a result of this new merger between Sufi orders and coffeehouses that versified vernacular versions of classical literary tales make appearances in the seventeenth century. An example is a Turkish versified work by a certain Sâdîkî, otherwise unknown.\textsuperscript{37} Sâdîkî makes a compilation of the better known Mathnawî tales, and rewrites them in very simple vernacular Turkish, dotting the work with his own stories. Sadîkî’s version foregrounds the storylines and characters, dispensing with any theological, doctrinal, or literary diversions in the original. Moreover, it is versified, suggesting that Sadîkî meant to produce a publicly recitable version of the Mathnawî, much like the Sufi-meddahs of Evliya Çelebi.\textsuperscript{38}

Therefore, narrative sources speak of the mosque-lodge learning circles as inclusive of individuals who did not necessarily hold religious or scholarly posts, albeit occasionally in an


\textsuperscript{36} Rızai, \textit{Mahmudiyye}, f 189a.

\textsuperscript{37} Many manuscripts with the authorial name Sadîkî are to be found in libraries. However, it is difficult to ascertain the dates and the places of origin in each case, hence difficult to understand if any of these Sadîkis are the same authors. A religious-mystical collection of Turkish verse among these resembles the Mathnawi translator Sadîkî’s voice. See: \textit{Mecmuá}, MS İÜ TY 7174.

\textsuperscript{38} On this versified Mathnawi translation, see Sadık Yazar. “XVII. Yüzyıl Şairi Sadîkî’nin Mesnevi’den Seçme Hikayeler Tercümesi”. \textit{Turkish Studies} 4/7 (Fall 2009), pp 893-927.
uneasy tone. Among these people were the meddāhs, chalabis whose social status was not
known, or members of the military groups. Some members of the military even make it as
preachers themselves, presumably owing to the learning of religious sciences they informally
acquired. The attendance of the members of the military elite at these gatherings occasionally
was treated as an anomaly that needed to be explained to the reader. An example is a majlis held
by nakībul-eşrāf Mehmed Efendi in İstanbul that Rızai attends. A subaşı (the city security
superintendent) and a kethudâ (warden) attend this majlis. After noting the attendees of the
gathering, Rızai notes: “Even if they appear to be lay people through and through (‘avām’-fī
şūreti ‘avām), we found them to be among the religious (sāliht).” The statement marks the
necessity to justify the existence of non-scholarly individuals in cultural gatherings, signifying
the novelty of the wider public nature of these gatherings.

The “public” nature of cultural-intellectual gatherings is relatively novel in the
seventeenth century, as evidenced by the uneasiness at the mention of non-scholarly individuals
as well as through a comparison with the earlier century. The “opening up” of the mosque-
lodge public spaces in this manner was a development influenced by the new socialization habits

39 Evliya Çelebi mentions two janissaries, one as the preacher the other as the muezzin (official reciting the call to
prayer), as attending the Lala Mustafa Paşa Mosque in Erzurum. See Evliya Çelebi, Seyahatnâme, 1928.
40 The state official who was responsible for registering members of the prophet’s family in Ottoman towns and
attending to their tax privileges.
41 Rızai, Mahmudiyye, p 147.
42 ibid, p 147.
43 For sixteenth century scholarly gatherings, see Helen Pfeifer, “Encounter After the Conquest: Scholarly
Gatherings in 16th Century Ottoman Damascus”. International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies 47 (2015), pp
219-239.
of the seventeenth century, notably by the larger social integration affected by the coffeehouse. This relatively recent shift explains the uneasy inclusion of the “lay” people in biographical dictionaries, which primarily aspire to register “the pious and the learned” of the community. Therefore, even if a wider participation in informal learning circles was a reality, certain individuals would not be inscribed in biographical dictionaries unless they converted to “piety” in its socially defined sense. A good example to this case is the Khalwati Sufi Mahmud Ḥulvī (d. 1654). Ḥulvī’s journey from being a dessertmaker to a preacher via horsemanship owes much to the learning circles at mosques, yet his story would not have been committed to writing had he not ended up as a Sufi preacher.

A short autobiographical piece by Maḥmūd Ḥulvī opens with the remark that the author began his life as a layperson (‘avām), in a gesture very similar to Rızai. The “lay” occupation Ḥulvī held was dessertmaking (helvaci), which was also his father’s occupation. He then decides to join the military rank, being talented at horsemanship and archery. In a successful change of career, Ḥulvī becomes a sergeant of the bodyguard of the sultan (çavuş-ı divan-ı şâhi). The position is not only prestigious, but also lucrative; Sultan Murad III bestows the sergeant a large fief. Ḥulvī writes that even though he worked for the court for a while, his heart was not in it; he enjoyed to attend the gatherings (sohbet) of dervishes after completing his service. Finally, he quits military service altogether in 1010/1601-1602. His education after this point is carried out mainly by the Khalwati Sufi sheikh Necmeddin Hasan Efendi. Two other communities appear as

significant in Ḥulvi’s conversion to a Sufi-preacher from a soldier. The first is the Mawlawi lodge in Yenikapi, which Ḥulvi is careful to note to have been built by a janissary scribe. The other circle is the Mathnawi lectures of a certain Sheikh Budak (d. 1017/1609, also known as Can Alim Efendi) that was held regularly at the Süleymaniye mosque. Ḥulvi’s Sufi connections not only provide him with the necessary cultural literacy, but also the connections through which he became the preacher of the Davud Paşa, Sultanahmet, and Şehzade mosques.

Maḥmūd Ḥulvi’s vita demonstrates the mosque-lodge learning circles as open to a larger public of urban dwellers. This larger public could participate in learning in an amateur way, as Ḥulvi did early on; or decide to take on a public preaching post. As such, the mosque-lodge circles provided a venue for social mobility. Numerous individuals who learned writing in these circles and continued to make a living as scribes benefited from this venue of informal learning. For instance, Ali el-Kārī (d. 1605) was a prominent writer from Mecca, who wrote profusely on religious issues and was widely read. He held no official post, and instead made a living as a freelance scribe who copied the Quran alongside marginal exegesis and explanations.

The informal circles of learning provided not only the necessary skills, but also the necessary connections to acquire a literacy based post, be it a preaching or a scribal post. For instance, when the judge Hasan Rızai arrives at Denizli, he is introduced to the Bektâşi dervish

---


48 Ahmet Özel, “Ali el-Kārī”, DİA.
Derviş Ali, who was known to keep vigil every night. Impressed by the dervish introduced as so distinctly pious, Rızai hires him as his scribe at the courthouse. Rızai describes a similar dervish-scribe in Ḥoms:

Şeyh Derviş (…) was Shâfi‘i in madhhab and Ḥâdîth in taṣrîqa. He was pious, generous, and knowledgeable; and was skilled at calligraphy. He was in fact my instructor in calligraphy. He wrote fast; he wrote half a section (cüz’) from the exegesis of Ebussuud Efendi and from Dürer and Gürer50 every day. He also wrote documents and court records. Since he was poor [and known to be pious (ḥāl ehli)], Ebu Nâfî gave him a post at the courthouse.51

To sum up, the mosque-lodge complex was a space for educational purposes. In addition to providing primary education for younger children, the mosque and the lodge housed education for languages, writing, and religious sciences. Studying poetics, or medicine was also among the possibilities of informal learning, particularly in the larger cities of the Ottoman realm. The availability of educational in the public spaces contributed to social mobility, since becoming a preacher could lead to a formally acknowledged ‘askerî status as of the seventeenth century. The informal circles at the mosque and lodge provided not only the education, but also the social connections one needed to climb the social ladder.

II. Partial Literacies

In her article entitled “Literacy and the ‘Great Divide’ in the Islamic World, 1300–1800,” Nelly Hanna calls for a more complex study of early modern literacies, one that takes into account the

49 Rızai, Mahmudiyye, p 167.

50 Reference is made to Düreru’l-Hükkam and Gureru’l-Ahkam, legal handbooks by the Ottoman judge Molla Husrev (d. 1480).

51 Rızai, Mahmudiyye, p 169.
many degrees, shapes, and contexts of early modern literacies. Discussing the state of the field in Islamic education and literacy, Hanna shows that the field almost exclusively focuses on madrasa education, and adds:

This approach to the study of literacy poses a number of problems. It implies a dichotomous model or a ‘great divide’ between highly educated scholars, on one side, and everyone else, on the other; or an equally ‘great divide’ between the scholarly world of writing and the oral culture of those who could not read or write. Between these two lay a deep vacuum.52

In other words, Hanna’s is a warning against reducing literacy to the the institutionally acknowledged and rewarded education of the scholars and bureaucrats. There is a larger world of individuals who received education, even familiarity with the learning material of the madrasa, without pursuing the full curriculum or seeking a scholarly career. I would like to denote this non-scholarly learning as “partial literacy.” Partially literate individuals were literate members of the society who knew languages and the basic sciences through informal education, yet to a less scholarly degree than the formally educated ‘ulama. The end goal of these “partial” studies is not to join the scholarly bureaucracy; hence these studies intersected with but were not limited to madrasa curricula. Most significantly, partial literacies pertain to vernacular contexts of learning where the discussion of formal sciences in vernacular tongues and at simpler levels takes place.

“Partial literacy” creates a spectrum in which to situate literate practices and communities that do not fit into the “educated-popular” dichotomy. In other words, these circles study scholarly texts for non-scholarly purposes and in vernacular contexts. This section traces a vernacular tradition in linguistic and rhetorical sciences that exemplifies the vernacular contexts of knowledge production and circulation. The first section describes the connection between

III. Languages and Rhetoric in Practice: Sufis, Preachers, and Poets

Linguistic sciences were of utmost importance for the literate cultures of the learning circles convening around preachers. Being a master of languages (ehl-i lisan), is an important qualification for the çelebis, the storytellers, as well as preachers or scholars. The languages of the religious and literary sciences, namely Arabic and Persian, were taught informally alongside the theory of poetic composition (also called balâgha). Particularly with regard to the teaching of Arabic, it is possible to observe that this language was “partially taught”, that is taught as it pertained to the classical sources. This tendency once again illustrates a literate culture that developed familiarity with scholarly learning while remaining primarily in the vernacular.

The first requisite of knowledge, for religious sciences or for a potential madrasa enrollment was learning Arabic. Rızai reminds by way of a quote from Şeyh Safiyuddîn (d. 1334) that the first subjects for any student of knowledge had to be morphology, semantics, and grammar (lugha, šarf, naḏw). Preachers often provided the instruction of Arabic. For

53 Rızai, Tezkire, p 104.
instance, Baldrızade Mehmed Efendi writes that he studied Arabic grammar and semantics (ṣarf ve naḥv) with a mosque preacher. These circles could provide advanced language instruction, since many high ʿulamā received their language education in informal circles. However, they also provided a “partial” language literacy whereby terminology and foundational texts were taught and discussed in Turkish and Persian. This tendency towards a partial literacy is easily observed by following personal miscellanea of Sufi pupils.

Miscellanea by two Sufi pupils of İsmail Ankaravi (d. 1631), whose learning efforts in rhetoric is the topic of the next section, illustrates the vernacular teaching and discussion of legal discussions. In a compilation of selections from his sheikh İsmail Ankaravi, the Sufi pupil Mehmed Şeydā often uses the marginalia in order to explain Arabic words and structures via Turkish or Persian notes. Mehmed Şeyda must have acquired Arabic to a partial degree, namely to the degree necessary to understand doctrinal discussions, yet still working on improving his knowledge of the language. In other words, the Sufi pupil is familiar with religious terminology as it appears in the Quran and the prophetic sayings, yet he is still learning the more mundane Arabic vocabulary and idioms. This stage of learning explains why he


55 Baldrızade, Ravza, p 204.

56 Leiden, Cod. Or. 942. The pupil studies the irregular forms of Arabic plurals with respect to rather common words (ʿārif- ʿavārif; nāhiye-nevāhi; gabi-gâbiyâ) on 28b and 66b; explains Arabic words with Persian and Turkish equivalents (with respect to ḡhabt-shivering) on 108a; or explains archaic Persian words with contemporary Perso-Turkic words (mustawfâ explained as defterdâr or hazinedâr) on 55b. Similar examples appear on 53b, 73b, 111a. An example would be the pupil’s explanatory footnote for dekenk, a large stick on 53b. Similar marginalia do not appear on quotations from the Quran and the hadith.
copies the Turkish translation of his sheikh’s *Treatise on Sama’* at the marginalia of the original Arabic version. The miscellany is a study piece in this sense, showing that the treatise was read not only for a doctrinal debate, but could also be utilized as educational material for pupils.

Another treatise has as its copyist Derviş Ganem Efendi. Derviş Ganem was Ankaravi’s favorite pupil and copied many of his treatises. Derviş Ganem’s version of the *Treatise on Sama’* combines the Turkish and Arabic versions, yet in a different manner. In this version, Derviş Ganem uses rubrication to write “text” and “translation,” and alters between small snippets of the original Arabic followed by Turkish translation. Given the copyist’s proximity to the sheikh, the Ganem version may be the original translation work. This original translation work is copied as it is in certain other versions. One such copy is by Derviş Mehmed, which could refer to Derviş Mehmed Şeyda or Derviş Mehmed Sadık, another one of Ankaravi’s favorite scribes. In any case, Derviş Mehmed copies the original translation but gets rid of the repetitive injections “text”, and “translation.” In some cases, he merely marks the Arabic snippets with red inked overlining. Yet other versions separate the Arabic and Turkish

58 Leiden, Cod. Or. 942.
59 Ganem Efendi copies one of the earliest complete copies of İsmail Ankaravi’s commentary on the Mathnawi. See: MS Süleymaniye Pertev Paşa 306-307. The pupils at a lodge were often ordered to copy a work in order to learn it well. For instance, a seventeenth century Khalwati sheikh Ömer Fani Efendi prescribes his students to copy out a given work in Arabic and Turkish. See Ömer Fani Efendi, *Samsamu’l-Hisam*, Ed.Ferzende İdiz. İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2011. In short, the practice of copying a work serves the double purpose of educating the pupil and providing for the distribution of the work.
60 MS Süleymaniye Pertev Paşa 255/2.
61 Derviş Mehmed’s version is dated 1033. See MS Süleymaniye Yazma Bağıslar 7761. An eighteenth century copy based on this version copies the text and the colophon as it is: MS Süleymaniye Lala İsmail 133M.
versions and copy only one of the languages. The complicated circulation history of multiple language treatises demonstrates that treatises and other literary production at Sufi lodges were not copied or circulated merely for their content. Furthermore, they were used as educational material.

IV. The Vernacularization of Rhetorical Sciences

An interesting seventeenth century movement is the vernacularization of certain knowledge fields. Preachers were key in this vernacularization movement. This section investigates how preachers contributed to the vernacularization of formal sciences focusing on the example of rhetorical sciences. Firstly, I would like to summarize the practical uses of rhetoric for preachers, in order to better understand the preachers’ interest in studying and teaching rhetoric. Secondly, I would like to focus on the main source of this section, which is the Turkish textbook on the science of rhetoric by İsmail Ankaravi al-Mawlawi (d. 1631). I discuss the two main motivations behind the study of rhetoric outside the madrasa: Quranic exegesis and literary composition.

Oratory and the profession of the preacher are closely connected in many classical contexts. As for the Ottoman preacher, the application of the oratory sciences at the public

---

62 MS Süleymaniye Ali Emiri 924 is a Turkish translation, while MS Beyazıt Velîyüddin 1811 is completely in Arabic.

sermon is difficult to study since there was no established practice of writing the actual sermon. However, the central place of rhetorical sciences in the intellectual life of the preacher is still clearly visible from the sources. There are three main venues in which preachers employed rhetoric: composing poetry, studying exegesis, and writing letters.

In addition to languages, composition of poetry, also considered a rhetorical science, could be learned at the mosque or lodge. Baldırzade’s biographical dictionary is replete with individuals who are included for knowing poetic composition, clearly treated as a “science.” For example, a certain Ali Çelebi is included because he knew how to “recite Turkish poetry.”

A madrasa professor, Celal Efendi (d.1020), was known for his competence in composing Arabic poetry and in medicine. Baldırzade records a certain Hacı Ahmed (d. 1008), a Naqshbandi dervish who received his training at the lodge. Owing to his training in the Sufi way, Hacı Ahmed gained renown in the Persian language and literatures while also keeping a post as a preacher at the Nakkaş Ali Mescidi.

The connection between the profession of the preacher-Sufi and Qur'anic exegesis, as well as letter composition is the topic of the next section.

IV.a. Rhetoric in the Vernacular

64 Baldırzade, Ravza, p 210.
65 ibid, pp 140-141.
66 ibid, p 148.
In the first and to this day only comprehensive study on rhetoric in Ottoman education, Christopher Ferrard observes that seventeenth century was the period when the number of commentaries on rhetoric exceeded any other time century, from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Something changed in this period regarding not only the number, but also the style of rhetorical works where a move towards simpler Turkish commentaries takes place. Two contemporary authors produce two vernacular commentaries on rhetoric at this time: the mosque preacher Mehmed Altiparmak (d. 1623) and the Mawlawí sheikh Ismail Ankaravî (d.1631). In this section, I discuss the rhetorical commentary of the latter author, entitled The Pool of Eloquence. In speaking of “rhetorical sciences” within the Islamicate context, there are two main scholarly traditions. The first tradition is the Arabic science of rhetoric that is often associated with scholastic studies at the madrasa. The second tradition is the Persianate science of epistolary composition (‘ilm al-insha) associated with the scribal bureaucracy. İsmail Ankaravî brings these two distinct traditions together, and introduces a vernacular commentary that targets an audience that is not the scholarly or the scribal bureaucracy. İsmail Ankaravî’s audience is his Sufi pupils, who aspire to become either ‘ulama, or preachers or sheikhs.

The first part of İsmail Ankaravî’s The Pool of Eloquence is a selective translation of and commentary on Khatib Dimashq al-Qazwini (d. 1325)’s Talkhîş al-Miftah (An Abridgement of the Key). Talkhîş was the standard textbook for rhetoric at the Ottoman madrasas. In the

rhetorical tradition in which Talkhīṣ was situated, rhetoric (balāğha) was considered a transmitted science (ʿilm al-naql). Transmitted sciences were the binary opposite of rational sciences—such as logic, theology—in the Islamicate madrasa curricula. Under the rubric of transmitted sciences were Quranic exegesis, Arabic grammar (naḥw) and syntax (ṣarf), and Islamic law. Therefore, in the madrasa textbook tradition, the science of rhetoric was a science that was based predominantly on explication, and was discussed as an exegetical tool in discussions of the Quran, and Islamic law.

The connection between exegetical sciences and rhetoric, therefore, must be an important reason for the vernacular interest in rhetorical sciences. This motivation is explicitly stated not only by İsmail Ankaravî, but also his contemporary Mehmed Altiparmak (d. 1033/1623) who also authored a Turkish commentary on Talkhīṣ. Originally from Skopje, Altiparmak writes that he was a mosque preacher for twelve years in İstanbul, and then forty years in Cairo. Nothing is known of his earlier education, except that he was a member of the

---

68 For a full genealogy of these key rhetorical text and the significance of each reiteration, see William Smyth, “The Making of a Textbook”. Studia Islamica 78 (1993), pp. 99-115. Khatib Dimashq al-Qazwini (d. 1325)’s Talkhīṣ al-Miftah (An Abridgement of the Key) is the textbook that markedly focuses on adab or belle letteristic sense, as opposed to logical semantics or Quranic exegesis. Talkhīṣ is the abridgement of a former rhetorical text, that of Miftah al-ʿUlûm (Key to the Sciences) by Muhammad al-Sakkaki (d. 1229). Smyth underlines that within a long tradition of rhetorical studies, Qazwini’s text was distinguished by its emphasis on literary analysis rather than Quranic or semantic analysis. This emphasis might be one reason why İsmail Ankaravi chooses Talkhīṣ for a commentary.

69 For a study on the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal madrasa curricula that specifically investigates the various adoptions of this dichotomy, see Francis Robinson, "Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals: Shared knowledge and connective systems." Journal of Islamic Studies 8.2 (1997), pp 151-184.

Bayrami order back when in Skopje.\textsuperscript{71} His command of Arabic and Persian was very strong, as exemplified by his well-received translation of \textit{Nigaristan}, a sixteenth century Persian work on Islamic history by \\textit{Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ghaффārī} (d. 975/1567-68). He also produces commentaries on the Quran. His commentary on the Surah Yusuf dedicated to Sultan Mustafa II (r. 1617-1618, 1622-23) appears to strike a deep chord with the dynasty by underlining the parallel between the rivalry between Yusuf and his brothers and the much bloodier rivalry within the dynastic family.\textsuperscript{72}

Mehmed Altıparmak’s interest in exegesis went beyond courting the sultan, to teaching exegesis at mosques, as noted by his biographers. He authored a partial translation and commentary on the Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ, entitled \textit{The Revealer of Sciences and the Discloser of Knowledge (Kāşifü’l-ulûm ve Fâtihu’l-fûnûn)}.\textsuperscript{73} Altıparmak’s statements in this work attest that he taught other sciences that are instrumental in exegetical sciences, such as \textit{sarf}, \textit{naḥw}, and \textit{balāğha}. In the introduction, Altıparmak writes about his previous projects of a similar nature:

\begin{quote}
Some dear and loyal friends said to me: “The Turkish commentaries on Kāfiye and Şafiye made studying these texts easy for students. It would be appropriate to have a (similar) Turkish commentary on the science of semantics (\textit{ma’ānî}), it would have been greatly beneficial. Because, comprehension of the Quran is Impossible but through studying the science of semantics.\textsuperscript{74}
\end{quote}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Bayramis} The Bayramis are a group of Malamis particularly strong in the Ottoman Balkans and Western Anatolia. See Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, \textit{Melamiler ve Melamılık}. Beşiktaş: Gri Yayın, 1992.
\bibitem{Commentary on Yusuf} “Commentary on Yusuf”, MS Millet Kütüphanesi, Ali Emiri Saray 20.
\bibitem{Altıparmak} While it has been claimed that this commentary is nothing but a free translation of an unidentified commentary, no close study has been carried out to prove this point. See Joseph Schacht. "Altı Parmak." \textit{Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition}. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Brill Online, 2016. \textbf{Reference}. Harvard University. 2 February 2016.
\bibitem{Altıparmak Text} Altıparmak, \textit{Kāşifü’l-ulûm ve Fâtihu’l-fûnûn}, MS Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi Fatih 4354, f 2a.
\end{thebibliography}
Ismail Ankaravî shares the same stated motivation with Altıparmak in writing a vernacular commentary on rhetoric: the connection between the study of Quran and the study of rhetoric. In the preface, Ankaravî explains his motivation as understanding the Quran, in addition to the “inner meaning of Quran (mağz-i Kuran),” a common eponym for the Mathnavî of Rumi.

One of its many benefits is that it is a means by which to know the art of poetry and a way to understand the craft of prose. Particularly: lifting the veil from the many meanings of the book of Mathnavî and lifting the cover of its fine content is predicated upon knowing this science. Moreover, understanding the eloquence of prophetic sayings and the bewildering elocution (i’câz) of the divine speech; being able to lift the veils covering the many secrets of the noble composition is only possible through being competent in this science.75

The preface continues with the virtues of studying rhetoric for the sake of understanding the Quran and the prophetic sayings.76 Producing treatises on religious practices or writing commentaries on the Quran or the Mathnavî assumed some degree of familiarity with the terminology of rhetoric. Some Mathnavî commentators, such as Südi Efendi (d.1599), even explicitly state their purpose in writing a commentary as “teaching the fine points of the Persian

75 İsmail Ankaravî, Mişţału’l-Belâğa, Undated MS, Atatürk Kitaplığı Osman Ergin Yazmaları 1178, ff 40a-b: “Cümle fevâidinden biri şanâyi’-i şi’irîyenî bîlîmesine vesîle ve bedâyi’-î i♥sâîyyâtînî fehm ve iz’ân kîlîmasına bir hoş zerîadır. Bâ-♥uşûş ki kitâb-î Mesnevi’nîn vucûh-i meanisinden râfi’-î nikâb olmak ruhsâra nikât ü mehâvisinden ref’î hicâb kılmak bu ‘îlmi bîlîmêge merhûn ve menbût belki ehdîs-î nebevînîn nice bîlîg olduğunu bilmek ve kelâm-î âlâhînî nê mertebe mu’cîz olduğuna ‘îlim olmak ve nazm-î şerîfi nîfâz-î belîgasî içinde mevzû’a olan eşrîrî vucûhundan keşf-i estâr kılmak bu fende mîhîr olmağa mevkûf ve merbûtîr”. In this miscellany, Miştâh is bound together with Ankaravî’s Fatihî-’l-Ebyât (Commentary on the First Chapter of the Quran) and a few pages of Persian poetry, all in a single hand. Even though there are no copyist marks, it is probable that this miscellany was owned by one Mawlawî pupil.

76 Ankaravî, Miştâh, MS, Atatürk Kitaplığı Osman Ergin Yazmaları 1178, f 40b.
language and poetry.” İsmail Ankaravi’s works on Quran and the Mathnawī often resort to
terminology of rhetoric. Explanations about meanings of particular words (lugha) and
grammatical structures are part and parcel of the exegetical work. Therefore, Talkhīṣ and the
madrasa textbook tradition in which it is situated are tightly connected with exegesis.

IV.b. A Letter Manual for Sufis and Preachers: İsmail Ankaravî’s Incursion into
Epistolography

While exegesis is certainly an important venue in which rhetorical sciences were employed,
İsmail Ankaravi’s commentary on the Talkhīṣ is distinct in placing at least as much, if not more,
emphasis on composition. The emphasis on composition relates to two modes: poetic and
epistolographic. İsmail Ankaravî brings together the Arabicate balāgha tradition with the
Persianate inshā tradition in order to instruct his readers on literary composition. This particular
merger “Ottomanizes” the rhetorical tradition, otherwise considered “to have been an abstract
subject without much relevance to actual Turkish composition, being based on Arabic models.”

77 Ozan Yılmaz, 16. Yüzyıl Sarıhişerinden Süfi-i Bosnevî ve Serh-i Gûlîştan’î (İnceleme-Tenkitli Metin).

78 I thank Avigail Noy and Lidia Gocherova for a discussion at a workshop at Harvard in December 2015, during
which they have brought to my attention the exceptional nature of this emphasis on composition, particularly when
compared to earlier commentaries written in the “classical-scholastic” vein.

79 Linda Darling, “Ottoman Turkish: Written Language and Scribal Practice, 13th to 20th Centuries”, in Brian
Spooner and William L. Hanaway (Ed.s) Literacy in the Persianate World. Philadelphia: University of
The preface to İsmail Ankaravî’s commentary on the Talkhîş signifies that the Sufi sheikh aimed to situate the madrasa text in a literary setting. In the preface, Ankaravî explains that his two pupils - who have been mentioned in the previous section as Ankaravî’s scribe-pupils- Derviș Ganem and Meḥmed Şâdîk wanted to study the Talkhîş:

When the most pious of the lot of my followers and the pupils, Derviș Ganem and Meḥmed Sadîk Çelebi –may God help them in literary sciences- wanted to [learn] the art of poetry and the craft of prose, they took up the science of [rhetoric] and started to study the text of Talkhîş which is among the most challenging texts by Khaṭîb al-Qazwînî, with this humble Mawlawî Şeyh İsmâ’îl Ankaravî. However, since they were novices in the science [of rhetoric], they found it difficult to comprehend the fine points of that eloquent book; and despaired about learning that science.  

The Sufi pupils, therefore, are interested in the madrasa textbook Talkhîş for literary reasons. The commentary exemplifies more than it discusses each rhetorical term. While the poetry Ankaravî cites in order to illustrate rhetorical terminology can be from classical Persian or Arabic authors, such as İbn Fârîdh and Rûmî, he also includes vernacular Turkish poetry. Most of the vernacular poems are by Ankaravî, mentioning his penname Rusûhî at the end. The Turkish poems are not always on classical themes. In fact, a few of them are on “unholy” subjects, reinforcing the connection between Ankaravî’s rhetorical guide and vernacular literate


81 İsmail Ankaravî, Miṣṭâh, (Edited and Transcribed by Abdülkadir Sumak, Unpublished MA Thesis, Harran Üniversitesi Şanlıurfa, 1999), p 106: a Turkish ghazal is a poem by Rusûhî; p 111, a Turkish mathnawî, which is a verbatim quotation from his work Mebde ve Me ‘ād that has been studied in Chapter II.
culture. One striking example is a quatrain of word play, where each line first deceives the reader into believing he is receiving a compliment, and then quickly turns into an insult.\textsuperscript{82}

Ankaravî’s commentary “vernacularizes” rhetorical sciences not merely by translating the scholarly textbook into the Turkish tongue. He also reorients the study of rhetoric towards Ottoman literature, in a broad sense that encompasses not only fine but also rather common poetry and prose. Ankaravî completes the orientation towards “literary composition” by integrating the Persiane \textit{inshâ} tradition, a tradition that has been associated with letter writing. İsmail Ankaravî’s section on letter writing clarifies without doubt that the rhetorical sciences are intended in this instance for a “reading public” that mainly consists of preachers, Sufis, and their social companions.

The Persianate science of rhetoric (\textit{inshâ}), refers to prose composition,\textsuperscript{83} and more specifically to the composition of letters, official correspondence, or state documents.\textsuperscript{84} As such,

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Ibidem}, p 133, Section on “Lampoon Disguised as Praise”: “A Turkish example would be: “\textit{Fa\'hr-i ʿālemsin velākin fāʾsi yoku / Gevher-i kānsin velākin rāʾsi yoku / Dilerim Ḥakdan bunu rūz-i şeb / Saña bir merkeb virelim bâʾsi yoku}”.
\textsuperscript{83} Christine Woodhead underlines two main usages for ‘\textit{inshâ}’. First, \textit{inshâ} in its original meaning as in earlier Persian masters such as Kāshīfi meant literary rhetorical prose. This artistic prose style was represented most prominently by seventeenth century authors such as Nergisî (d. 1635) and Veysî (d. 1628). Woodhead underlines the importance of these scribal figures to remind the readers that Ottoman literate culture is not limited to the ‘ulamā. The second, and the predominant sense in which the Ottomans use “\textit{inshâ}” is as an equivalent of epistolography. See Christine Woodhead, “Ottoman İnşâ and the Art of Letter Writing: Influences Upon the Career of the Nişancı and Prose Stylist Okçuzađe (d. 1630)”, \textit{The Journal of Ottoman Studies} 7-8 (1988), pp 143-159.
\end{flushleft}
the study of *inshā* manuals has historically been associated with the scribal class. More recently, however, Christine Woodhead’s studies underline the “promotion and recognition of a private epistology in the seventeenth century.” Woodhead’s studies bring to light Ottoman letter miscellanies (*majmuʿ ā*), underlining that a particularly large number of letter collections date back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Woodhead’s studies underline, rightly, the untapped potential of letter collections for social and cultural history. She shows that the large number of manuscript letter collections provide valuable sources to study how networks among the educated members of the society were formed and maintained.

İsmail Ankaravi’s vernacular commentary on rhetoric illustrates the increasing importance of letter writing among a non-courtly and non-bureaucratic public. In his *Pool of Eloquence*, İsmail Ankaravi includes a final chapter where he discusses prose composition

---


86 Christine Woodhead, “Ottoman *Inshā* and the Art of Letter-Writing.”


88 Woodhead underlines the significance of letter collections for studies on friendship and patronage. Woodhead’s letter writers write to *'ulamā* contemporaries or statesmen, as well as lesser figures such as a calligrapher and a judge. She works on a letter collection presented to the chief mufti Zekeriyyazade Yahya Efendi (d. 1644) in which the letter-writers consisted of: the scholars Azmizade Mustafa Haleti (d. 1631) and Akhisarlı Abdulkerim Efendi (d. 1629), Nergisi (d. 1635) and Veysi (d. 1628) – two renowned prose stylists who however careerwise did no go further than provincial judgeship, and two members of the scribal bureaucracy: Okçuzade Şah Mehmed Efendi (d. 1630) and Ganizade Nadiri (d. 1628). Christine Woodhead, “Ottoman Circles of Correspondence”.

210
briefly, and provides examples of letter correspondences mainly among Sufis and preachers. This collection and the short chapter on prose composition that precedes the sample letters comprise the first letter writing manual that addresses a non-courtly and non-bureaucratic audience. İsmail Ankaravî’s commentary on rhetoric places fine prose writing and particularly letter writing in an entirely new context. The new audience of İsmail Ankaravî’s letter manual signals a new interest in letter exchange among a literate community. This literate community consists of preachers and their pupils, and other religious notables of the age with whom preachers were socially connected.

Ankaravî’s last chapter on inshâ explains the art of prose writing as pertaining to two main areas: public addresses and letters. The section on letter-writing thus begins with an enumeration of various types of letter exchange. This section classifies letters into three main categories: letters where the letter writer is subordinate to the recipient (a petition, ‘ardh), where the writer and the recipient are equals (letters proper, mektûb), and where the writer is superior to the recipient. This latter category has many sub-categories depending on the context, such as firmân, fetiılmâne as issued from a sultan, or mithâl, a communication by a vizier.

---

89 This final section is based on a fifteenth century Persian manual of inshâ, the Menâzir al-Inshâ by Hâce-i Cihan (d.1481). İsmail Ankaravi does not explicitly state his source in any part of the work. Hâce-i Cihan’s work has not received a scholarly treatment yet. For a modern edition of Menâzir al-Inshâ, see Ma’dûd Gâwân, Menâzir al-Inshâ. Tehran: Farhangistan-i Zaban ve Adab-i Farsi, 2002.

90 The former, khutab, is defined as “speech the audience of which … is whoever has the ability to hear the speech”, Ankaravi, Miftâh, pp 181-182. The latter, resâil, is specifically described as written (…bir kimse bir kağıda yazı yazsa…), ibid, p 190.

91 ibid, pp 190-191.
However, *menşûr* and *fetihname* and *‘ahidname* and *fermân* and *mişāl* are matters related to administrators; hence the rules [of writing] these [document] types are explained in books on *inshâ* and they are known and studied by the scribes of the imperial court. Therefore, it is not our practice to mention [those document types] in this brief exposition. Instead, we shall write examples of [letters that] are necessary to the people and are [widely] circulated, briefly yet containing the useful expressions.\(^2\)

Therefore, İsmail Ankaravî’s aim is specifically to provide instructions on writing letters that “are necessary to the people and are [widely] circulated.” The instruction is provided by way of seven exemplary letters.\(^3\) Some of the letters are prefaced by short instructions, such as on how to address other social superiors. However, most of the instruction is carried out through providing actual letters. Ankaravi’s letters illustrate aspects of the life of preachers and Sufis, while also underlining the written nature of most of these letters. The first three letters are specific in nature: a *khilafetname* – a diploma denoting competency in the Sufi way, a *tehniyetname* – a letter of celebration to a superior who has had a son, and a *tâziyenâme* – a letter of condolence. An actual reference letter (*şefa ʻatnäme*) that the sheikh wrote suggesting his cousin ʻAbdullah for the service of the military-judge, ‘Azmizade Efendi, suggests that reference letters were important written documents for Sufi circles. Finally, the sheikh-disciple relationship, too, utilizes written practices of *inshâ*. In addition to a generic sheikh-disciple correspondence, İsmail Ankaravî records an actual correspondence with one of his former

\(^2\)*ibid*, pp 191-192: *Pes menşûr ve fetihname ve ʻahidname ve fermân ve mişāl ki ulu’l-emre lâzım olan şeylerdir ki bu aksâm-ı mezkiüreniñ kâvâ’îdi inşâya mûte’allîk olan kütübdede mествоr ve münişiyân-ı divân-ı pâdişâhi olanların katlarda ma’ruf ve meşhûrdur ki bu muhtâsarda onların ırâd olumması de’bimizden dûrûdur ammâ bunda mütedâvil olanı ve nása lâzım gelen mu’ciz ve müfîd ibârât üzere her nev’den bir mikdar taḥrîr eyleyelim.*

\(^3\)*ibid*, pp 192-216.
disciples who became a mosque preacher- Khatib Aḥmed Çelebi. The correspondence is spurred on by the sheikh’s healing from cataracts, a condition he suffered from for an extended period. In addition to this main issue, the correspondence also touches upon the sheikh’s works. The preacher praises one of Ankaravi’s works, the sheikh responds by introducing a new work that he intends to write.

A letter writing manual that addresses the general public and uses as models correspondence between sheikhs and preachers a novelty, yet not a freestanding one. The letters written by preachers, either in the form of correspondence or as disputational ‘epistles,’ had a public nature. They were not only widely copied by interested readers, but also read out orally at public gatherings and discussed broadly enough that they were mentioned in chronicles. Narrative accounts therefore often write about informal gatherings where “hearing” a particular letter, even both sides of a particular correspondence, takes place.

Members of the Khalwati Sufi order ‘hear’ a correspondence between two sheikhs, both of whom were disciples of Aziz Maḥmūd Hüdāi (d. 1628). According to the account of Rızai, the correspondence took place when the sheikh Mehmed Efendi was resident at Emed and Firdevsî Mustafa Efendi was resident at Denizlî.94 In terms of content, the exchange is a versified wordplay on the themes of “holy spirit” (rūḥ-i kuds) and life/breath (dem). Rızai thus writes about a correspondence between a sheikh and his pupil, who was dispatched to a lodge in a province in accordance with usual Sufi practice, as a public work as opposed to a private matter.

94 Rızāī, Tezkiretü’s-sâlikîn, p 100.
Not only does Rızāī report about the oral transmission and discussion of correspondence. He also copies another correspondence in a personal miscellany, providing a good example to this wider practice. The personal miscellany in question is eclectic in nature, yet there is a heavy emphasis on the works by Rızāī’s sheikh Hüdāi, or Rızāī’s dedications to his sheikh.\textsuperscript{95} Rızāī copies a letter by sheikh Hüdāi in this personal notebook, a letter that he had noted about seeing in his autobiographical dictionary.\textsuperscript{96} The letter is prefaced with the following note:

\begin{quote}
This is a copy of the honorable letter (\textit{risāle}) that its writer, Üsküdārī Mahmud Efendi known as Hüdāi, sent to the preacher from Belgrad, Münīr Efendi. It has been copied from a copy [held] by Müstedām Efendi, [the sheikh’s] delegate (khalīfa) to Koçhisarı.\textsuperscript{97} Rızāī writes a lengthy marginalia by this letter, which is a response to questions on theological doctrine by the Belgradian preacher on which his sheikh provides short instruction. The marginalia tells the life story of Müstedām Efendi based on the latter’s own account. Rızāī finishes by noting that the sheikh visited Aksaray once and stayed at Rızāī’s place.
\end{quote}

Similar sheikh-preacher correspondences, so fondly featured in İsmail Ankaravi’s letter writing manual, circulate in many personal miscellanies. Some readers copy letters to the marginalia of works. An unknown reader uses the extra space of his copy of \textit{Esrārnāme} by Feridūddin Attar (d. 1221), a widely read mystical poem, to copy two letters.\textsuperscript{98} The anonymous reader is a disciple of sheikh Hüseyin Lāmekānī (d. 1624), as evident from a page-long poem of

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{95} For a detailed description of the personal miscellany, see Chapter 5 of this study.
\item \textsuperscript{96} Rızāī, \textit{Miscellany}, MS Süleymaniye Library Hacı Mahmud Efendi 3347, ff 17b-18a.
\item \textsuperscript{97} Rızāī, \textit{Miscellany}, MS Süleymaniye Library Hacı Mahmud Efendi 3347, f 17b.
\item \textsuperscript{98} Miscellany, MS Milli Kütüphane A 5278.
\end{itemize}

214
praise and prayer (na’at) about Lâmekânî that he copies on the last page of his manuscript. The wide marginalia of this short personal notebook features a copy of a correspondence between Lâmekânî and a certain Sheikh İbrahim of Belgrad (Aşağıhisar). The last page dates the manuscript to 1023/1641. Throughout, Lâmekânî informs Sheikh İbrahim about fine points of some Sufi doctrines, such as the stages of man’s spiritual advancement, or the relation between muḥabbet and shari‘at. In addition, Sheikh İbrahim expresses solidarity with Hüseyin Lâmekânî Efendi in the face of unspecified rumors about his order. In one piece of correspondence, the sheikh sends his regards to the brothers on the other side of the correspondence.

Letter exchanges among sheikhs and preachers were widespread practices with a public dimension. The doctrinal discussions of the early seventeenth century were mostly carried out by epistles between the two sides of sheikhs, which circulated in written and oral form among the congregations of each preacher. A letter correspondence between Hüseyin Lâmekânî of İstanbul and Münirî Efendi of Belgrade, for instance, on the legality of Sufi dancing, appears in numerous personal miscellanies of the age. It is also possible to come across miscellanies that gather

---

99 Miscellany, MS Milli Kütüphane A 5278, f 22.
100 Miscellany, MS Milli Kütüphane A 5278, f 5a.
101 Miscellany, MS Milli Kütüphane A 5278, f 5a.
102 Hacı Mahmud Efendi 2848. The letter is copied right after another letter written around the same time to the same Münirî Efendi again on the question of sama’, this time by the Malami sheikh Hüseyin Lamekani. Konya Bölge Yazma Eserler Ktp., 198 (vr. 147 a - 162 b), Konya Bölge Yazma Eserler Ktp., 198 (vr. 173 b - 188 a), Konya Bölge Yazma Eserler Kütüphânésinde 198 (vr. 216 b - 219 a).
these debates in simplified language, suggesting that the notes are taken from an oral
transmission rather than a written version.103

The epistles that were written within the context of the doctrinal debates of the early
seventeenth century carried a public nature. Notes to the written and oral transmission of these
treatises appear in personal miscellanies where these epistles are copied. An example is İsmail
Ankaravi’s treatise in favor of Sufi dance, written against a mosque preacher- Cerrah Şeyhi (d.
1042/ 1633). İsmail Ankaravi wrote one treatise in response to Cerrah Şeyhi Ibrahim Efendi,
which was not only sent to the preacher of the Cerrah Paşa mosque, but also circulated among
his circle of pupils and muhibs. The original treatise in Arabic went through two reworkings in
Turkish. It is highly probable that at least one of the translations was undertaken by one of
Ankaravi’s close disciples, who also acted as his scribe.104 This same scribe gathers two different
versions of the epistle. His occasional short notes indicate that he was interested in the treatise
not only as a doctrinal piece, but also as an evidence of a current debate.

The pupil-scribe makes the following marginal note on the first version of the debate,
which was based on an earlier work by Ahmed Gazali, a twelfth century Sufi author:

The author of this treatise is the brother of Imam Ghazali. It is a major book. This is an
abridgement of that book in a few pages, written as a response to Cerrah Şeyhi and the
preacher Kafzade and sent to them. Another treatise in addition to this one has been
written and sent to Cerrah Şeyhi; he never returned it. God willing, we will take it back
whether the preacher likes it or not.105

103 Miscellany, MS Süleymaniye Library Tercüman 362.

104 Mehmed Şeydâ, Miscellany, MS Leiden University, Cod Or 942.

105 Mehmed Şeydâ, Miscellany, MS Leiden University, Cod Or 942, f 28.
On the marginalia of another epistle on the same issue, entitled *Hüccetu’s-Semā’,* the pupil writes the following note about the occasion that led İsmail Ankaravī to write an epistle:

When Esad Efendi was the chief mufti under Sultan Ahmed\textsuperscript{106}, he voiced some criticisms against the Yenikapı [Mawlawī] Lodge. Therefore, Şeyh İsmail Efendi composed this epistle based on esteemed books; he wrote this epistle as a response [to the chief mufti]. And later, he translated the epistle into Turkish. I have abridged [the translation] and copied it in the marginalia.\textsuperscript{107}

The epistles were circulated with the names and specific conditions in which they arose partly because they comprised the “news” of their day. The foregoing debate between İsmail Ankaravī and Cerrah Şeyhi, for instance, appear in the chronicles of their day. Katib Çelebi records Cerrah Paşa’s debate with İsmail Ankaravī, in addition to another series of debates he engaged in with Kadižade Mehmed, another preacher.\textsuperscript{108}

To conclude, I have focused today on the circulation patterns of vernacular manuscripts in the Ottoman MS culture. There are three main developments in the cultural world of the seventeenth century that signal the emergence of a new textual community as an alternative to the courtly-bureaucratic scholarly circles. First of all, the appropriation of the classical rhetorical sciences and letter writing manuals in the vernacular attests to a new audience that adopts the literary practices of correspondence systematically. Secondly, many vernacular tracts on current politics or doctrinal debates circulate across larger networks thanks to the extension of epistolary

\textsuperscript{106} Esad Efendi’s tenure as chief mufti corresponds to the years 1615-1622.

\textsuperscript{107} Mehmed Şeydâ, *Miscellany*, MS Leiden University, Cod Or 942, f.35a.

\textsuperscript{108} Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*, pp 837-838.
practice. Finally, longer and more elaborate manuscripts too often were produced and circulated within a similar gift economy, indicating that there was now a larger reading public to which authors aspired to insert their names. The communal character of not only the production, but also the circulation in written and oral form therefore implies the creation of a reading public similar to that created by the pamphlet in early modern Europe, only within a very different technological context, the technologies of the manuscript culture.

IV.c. Vernacular Rhetorics: A Scrapbook Evidence

This chapter has focused on informal, public learning and the related vernacularization of sciences in the seventeenth century, with a specific emphasis on the linguistic and rhetorical sciences. A learned culture took shape around the informal learning circles at mosques and lodges where consistent teaching of linguistic and rhetorical sciences took place. Rhetorical sciences, heretofore considered to be a subject of “formal” education for the ‘ulama or the scribal bureaucracy, assumed a central role in these informal learning circles, as a result of which they gained vernacular circulation.

Rhetorical sciences were connected to Quranic exegesis and literary composition, and were taught and studied in this capacity. In other words, it is possible to observe a certain brand of informal adab (humanitas) curriculum taught by the Sufis and preachers that was composed of literature, rhetoric, poetics, and the study of the Quran. Monographical studies of commentaries
on literary works\textsuperscript{109} and exegetical works\textsuperscript{110} have already underlined the connection of each of these literary fields with rhetorical sciences. Evidence to the wider relevance of rhetorical sciences to individual readers come from private collections (\textit{macmu \textacutes}) of readers.

An interesting piece of evidence is two scrapbooks by an anonymous reader who keeps two notebooks for his personal studies. The notebooks demonstrate three main interests: Quranic exegesis, grammatical-rhetorical terminology, and poetry. The last one, poetry, appears in these scrapbooks as a subject for rhetorical analysis, once again emphasizing the primacy of rhetorical sciences in \textit{adab} discussions. Hence the scrapbooks that I discuss in this section are exceptional in that they demonstrate an individual reader’s personal educational efforts, at an identifiable time.

The two scrapbooks appear among the collection of the Dutch consul and collector Levinus Warner (d. 1665). The scrapbooks are by the same hand and are dated between 1035/1626 and 1044/1634. Unfortunately, the owner does not note his name or occupation. He does, however, mention some of his social peers. We learn that he has a sheikh he consults on personal matters. In a short note, the writer describes a conversation in which he consults his sheikh (\textit{pir}) about how to deal with poverty and the large sum of debt he owes.\textsuperscript{111} On another page, we learn that the debt is indeed a large sum: 100,000 \textit{akçe} to be paid to Hüseyn Beg.

\textsuperscript{109} For a study that underlines the importance of grammatical and rhetorical analysis in the commentaries by Sûdî-i Bosnevi (d. 1599), see Ozan Yılmaz, \textit{16. Yüzyıl Şarihlerinden Sûdî-i Bosnevi ve Şerh-i Gülistan’s \textparens{Inceleme-Tenkitli Metin}}, Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Marmara Üniversitesi, 2008.

\textsuperscript{110} Shuruq Naguib underlines the primacy of rhetorical analysis in the work of \textit{tafsûr} by the esteemed chief mufti Ebu’s-su’ûd Efendi (d. 1574), “Guiding the Sound Mind: Ebu’s-su’ûd’s \textit{Tafsîr} and Rhetorical Interpretation of the Qur’an in the Post-Classic Period”, \textit{The Journal of Ottoman Studies} \textbf{42} (2013), pp. 1-52.

\textsuperscript{111} \textit{Miscellany}, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1155, f 11b. In response, the sheikh recommends the author to turn to God.
The large sum, and the mention of a ‘Beg’, signifying some important military authority, is perplexing given the writer’s otherwise modest social peers. Another one of these peers, for instance, is a sheikh in Eyüb with whom the reader exchanges a fragment of a Quranical exegesis.

Even though the Leiden Reader leaves only scant evidence about his social station, he provides interesting remarks about his intellectual circles. The most interesting of these remarks is regarding his meetings with Südi-i Bosnevî (d. 1007/1599) A well travelled independent scholar with no known Sufi connections, Südi acquired his knowledge of Persian literature through his encounters with scholars and poets in Diyarbakîr, Damascus, Baghdad, Kufa, and Najaf. Südi refers to these travels and scholarly encounters often in his commentaries, particularly his commentaries on the \textit{Gulistan} of Sâdî-i Shirâzî (d. 1292) and on the \textit{Diwan} of Hâfiz (d. 1390). The references to these discussions in his commentaries are always either grammatical or rhetorical. Südi, therefore, positions himself as a scholar of languages,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Miscellany}, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1143, f 14b. The note is on a rough page crammed with personal notes, usually in the form of \textit{Pensées}, such as on the loneliness of mankind on earth.
  \item \textit{Miscellany}, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1143.1155, f 1a.
  \item Ozan Yılmaz, \textit{Sudi Efendi}, p 33, fn 141 mentions a discussion between Mevlana Halimi-i Shirwani, Mawlânâ Muslihuddin Lârî, and Mevlânâ Sabuhi-i Bedahşanî on the classification of a noun construcy (\textit{idhâfu}). For similar examples, see \textit{ibid}, p 37 and pp 239-241.
\end{itemize}
particularly Persian but also Arabic. The commentary writer explicitly notes that he aims his work to be a guidebook for learning Persian.

The Leiden Reader describes personal discussions with Sūdī, all of which are about regarding fine points of the Persian language. The discussion is on the Persian present conjugation and whether it should be considered irregular (semā’ī) like older authorities did, or regular (ḵiyāsī) as the sixteenth century chief mufti and scholar Kemalpaşazade (d. 1534) suggested in one of his several works on Persian language (Deḵāyiku ‘l-Ḥakāḵ). Sūdī decides to agree with the Ottoman chief mufti’s theory after discussing the issue with the scholars of Persia, as he tells the Leiden Reader during their conversation. The conversation takes places in 1005/ 1596, as the Reader notes, a year prior to the death of Sūdī.

The Leiden Reader, whom we see as a student of Persian, Arabic, and Turkish rhetorics relies on conversations with Sūdī for his study of rhetoric. Furthermore, he reads commentaries by this sheikh, further reminding us of the significance of literary commentaries for language education. Elsewhere, he notes a particular point of disagreement with Sūdī on the translation of one couplet, criticizing the commentator for “laxly interpreting the words.” The scrapbooks are dotted with remarks about Sūdī’s verdicts on Persian language and rhetorics, either in

115 Ozan Yılmaz, Sudi Efendi, p 40 notes that Sūdī wrote two commentaries on the Kāfiye and Şāfiye.

116 Ozan Yılmaz, Sudi Efendi, p 307. Yılmaz interpretes Sūdī’s remark about the purpose of his commentary being teaching Persian as a sign that “Sūdī was read at the madrasa”, even though Sūdī makes no specific allusion to the madrasa nor is known to have held an official post.

117 Miscellany, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1143.1143, ff 4b-5a.

118 Miscellany, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1143, f 15b, “lakin kendü kolayına mana virir”.
conversation or based on the written commentary. Some of these remarks are notes of terms learned from Südî, others of disagreement based on other authorities. The important point is to emphasize that the discussions are never about content or doctrine, but rather about linguistic features.

It is important to emphasize that the Leiden Reader is a student of rhetorical sciences, and not languages in their basic sense. This point is most clear through his discussions of Turkish grammatical terms. When the Leiden Reader notes his personal thoughts and memories, such as a discourse on the loneliness of man on earth or his conversations with his sheikh, he uses Turkish, therefore his native language is Turkish. However, we see him as making notes about the conjugation of verbs or the case endings in Turkish. It makes sense, therefore, to infer that in these cases he is studying the grammatical and rhetorical terminology in which to discuss the language. An example is the verb conjugation table regarding “to do/işlemek.” In this conjugation table, it makes more sense to think that the Leiden Reader is studying the grammatical terms in which to refer to the conjugations.

If the Leiden Reader’s notes demonstrate the ubiquity of rhetorical sciences through Persianate commentaries on one hand, on the other hand the scrapbooks underline the same point once again through the Arabicate exegetical tradition. Throughout his study notes, the reader copies passages from the well-known commentaries. These commentaries are Baydhawī (d. 1286), al-Jalālayn (early sixteenth century), Şeyhzâde (d. 1543) and most prominently the

119 *Miscellany*, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1143, f 17b, f 20a.

120 Other examples are pronouns and their conjugations on *Miscellany*, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1143, f 19a.
The prominence of Ebussuud’s exegesis in the scrapbooks is interesting, for the chief mufti’s exegesis is known for a particularly heavy emphasis on rhetorical analysis. Occasionally accompanying the excerpts from the commentaries are entries from Arabic dictionaries noted on the marginalia. Most of the second scrapbook “Leiden Cod. Or. 1155” consists of studies on Quranic commentaries, once again interspersed with notes on rhetoric. Hence, there are pages where the author discusses the standard definitions of, and kinds of, rhetorical terms such as metaphor, an allusive metaphor, and analogy.

CONCLUSION

Informal educational circles played a significant role for early modern Ottoman cultural-intellectual history. Recent studies on the circles of learning outside the madrasa have focused on distinguished Ottoman intellectuals such as Kâtib Çelebi and Hezarfen Hüseyin. The engagement of these distinguished intellectuals in sciences such as medicine, geography, and alchemy underline the significance of an extra-institutional educational life for the cultural history of the empire. The religious sciences were often taught and produced at informal learning circles as well, and this informal transmission of knowledge was significant in terms of the social history of knowledge. More importantly, the broad and indistinct term “religious sciences” encompassed not only Quran and hadith, but also linguistic and logical sciences. The latter, often

---

121 See Shuruq Naguib “Guiding the Sound Mind”.

122 Leiden Cod.Or. 1155, f 5b, f 8a.
considered scholastic topics strictly, were therefore relevant at the mosque and the lodge and were taught in extra-institutional learning circles.

The study of rhetorical sciences in particular assumed an increasingly public nature in the seventeenth century. Vernacular commentaries were composed on madrasa textbooks of rhetoric beginning in the early seventeenth century. The vernacularization of rhetorical sciences was directly connected to the increasing prestige of preaching posts, which provided an incentive to join learning circles at the mosque and the lodge. For the would-be preacher, rhetorical sciences were indispensable as a field of knowledge related to oratory, exegesis, and literary composition.

Informal circles of learning provided not only the necessary skills, but also the necessary connections to acquire a literacy based post, such a preaching or an endowment post. Upward mobility in this manner was an important incentive for extra-insitutional education, but not the only one. A general interest in reading, copying, and hearing epistles signals the existence of a broader reading audience. The literary compositions of preachers and the debates between them reached public audiences beyond their immediate congregations to such an extent that these debates made the highlights of the day and were recorded by chroniclers. While the inclusion of anecdotes about preachers of the city in chronicles is the tip of the iceberg, personal miscellanies point to a larger number of readers who copied or heard the epistles of preachers and the stories about the epistles. The epistles thus constituted the news of their day, and also were used as educational material, particularly for studying languages. The engagement of preachers with a public readership as teachers of the public place them as the connecting and mediating circle between the learned and the unlearned of the Ottoman society.
CHAPTER V
KNOWLEDGE AND AUTHORITY: PREACHERS AND THE TRANSMISSION OF MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Yaḥyā Efendi of Beṣiktaş (…) was in the habit of presenting his visitors with at least a month’s rent, or extending [pocket money for] the expense of coffee (kahve bahası) for the dervishes. In addition, he had the noble custom of providing reference letters (ṣefā’atnâme) to whomever needed them; he turned no one down. Those who visited him benefited from his generosity and munificence, from his words of wisdom, from the medical remedies [he provided], from (…) his scholarly and ethical discourse, his spiritual guidance, his training and intercession. Not a single soul returned from visiting him with disappointment.¹

The above quotation lists the many virtues of Yahya Efendi (d. 1571) of Beṣiktaş, a renowned İstanbulite Sufi of the later sixteenth century. The passage highlights a component of the authority of Sufi sheikhs and preachers that often escapes the attention of the modern reader. The more “secular” dealings of a religious notable often escape attention because “religion” is a fairly circumscribed space in modern parlance. However, the above mentioned “noble habits” of Yahya Efendi that include paying the monthly rent or the coffee expenses of dervishes, writing reference letters, and providing medical remedies are as significant for his biographer Nev‘izāde Atāī as his engagement in teaching and spiritual guidance. The social functions of a Sufi sheikh or mosque preacher that go beyond his authority as a man of religion constitute his pragmatic

authority. This chapter discusses the pragmatic authority of preachers as a product of their intermediary position between the learned and the unlearned populations.

The term “pragmatic authority” is coined by Claudia Rapp in her study on the authority of holy bishops in late antiquity. Rapp identifies three components to the authority of bishops, while carefully noting that the breakdown is an artificial analytical tool that did not exist in the minds of the late antique populations. The three components are spiritual authority, ascetic authority, and pragmatic authority. Spiritual authority, in her analysis, refers to the God-given gift of piety expressed as *pneuma* in Rapp’s sources. Ascetic authority refers to Weber’s definition of charismatic authority. Finally, pragmatic authority refers to the actions of the individual that are “directed not toward the shaping of the self, but to the benefit of others”.

Emphasizing and expanding on pragmatic authority, Rapp writes:

> Just as imperial authority was intricately linked to the divine, the religious authority of holy men had overtones of secular power. The appreciation by his contemporaries of an individual as a holy man depended to a large extent on his ability to bestow on them benefactions of a very concrete, worldly kind: healing from illness, relief of famine, and restoration of social order.

Rapp’s definition of pragmatic authority as a significant component of religious authority is fundamental to the analysis in this chapter. The chapter focuses on the practical implications of

---


4 Rapp, *The Nature of Christian Leadership*, pp 6-7: Bishops were actively engaged in the defense of their cities, acted as judges in civil cases, amassed great wealth, became important building patrons, and on more than one occasion usurped or challenged civil authorities.

the preachers’ positions as intermediaries between the learned and unlearned populations, the implications of which have been studied in the educational context in the previous chapter. The access of preachers to knowledge, by virtue of being literate members of a society that was limitedly literate, was an important part of their authority in their communities. Asking questions to a preacher was a widespread practice that appears even in chronicles in anecdotal mode.\textsuperscript{6} These questions are assumed to be, since the respondent was a man of religion, of a religious nature. Manuscript evidence regarding questions and answers to preachers indicate that preachers responded to questions that were not only about religious practice, but also aspects of daily life, such as medical questions.

Healing was an important component of the “pragmatic authority” of Sufi sheikhs and mosque preachers. Their key role as “healers” took two forms. First, there was the practice of healing by ritual or prayer often associated with Sufi preachers, but in fact reached beyond Sufi orders. Ritual-healing was a debated practice. Some mosque preachers condemned the practice of going to Sufi saints for medical problems. However, these debates notwithstanding, ritual-healing was part and parcel of daily life at mosques in addition to lodges. The second type of medical practice was by providing medical advice. Acting as medical advisors was widespread even among preachers who were opposed to ritual-healing.

An important feature of Islamic medical culture that enabled medical knowledge to become part of the terrain of the preacher was the tangled/integrated nature of the medical and the moral. The tangled nature of the moral and the medical is most obvious in “prophetic

\textsuperscript{6} See the introduction of this study for anecdotes about the practice of presenting preachers with written legal questions.
medicine.” The term refers to medical knowledge attributed to the prophet and circulated as part of his ethical-practical wisdom. An earlier strand of literature considered prophetic medicine to be an exclusively religious tradition that excluded the ‘rational-scientific’ tradition. More recently, however, scholars have shown that the moral-medical corpus of knowledge makes no such distinction, and easily and flexibly integrates new medical knowledge.\(^7\) The ease is a natural result of the particular social-intellectual conditions of the transmission of knowledge, where no sharp distinction existed between the social-educational world of religion and science.

This chapter explores the intermediacy of preachers between the literate and illiterate circles with special focus on the transmission of medical knowledge. In addition to chronicles and biographical dictionaries, the chapter utilizes two main sources. The first source is by Seyyid Hasan Rızai, an important author for this study as a whole. Hasan Rızai’s personal miscellany includes a piece on medicine. The provincial judge dedicates this vernacular work on medicine to his sheikh Aziz Mahmud Hüdai of the Khalwati order, many members of which are famed healers. The second source is a manuscript that brings together the answers a preacher gave to a large number of questions on diverse topics. I dub the preacher “Pseudo-Kadızade”, since a later reader misattributed the treatise to “Kadızade”, the authorial label for the prototypical anti-Sufi preacher by the 1630s. The question-answer manuscript is important for it is one of the two known examples of its kind, and sheds light on the daily conversations at the mosque.

I. Vernacular Medical Works and the Transmission of Experience

Sayyid Hasan Rızai’s exhaustive recording of every aspect of the daily life of the șulaḥā (the religious notables) sheds light on an aspect of the authority of the sulaha that has received little attention. The șulaḥā, and particularly the Sufi sheikhs and preachers had access to medical knowledge. They ‘mediated’ this medical knowledge to the broader public who often sought medical advice from the mosque or the lodge preacher. Therefore, practical medical advice in the form of medication or other therapeutic treatments circulated regularly in the circle of preachers.

Not only was medicine valuable as a practical science. Moreover, reference to basic humoral theory in speaking about human nature was a common literary trope in Sufi circles. A treatise by Rizai in a personal miscellany illuminates the allure and the circulation of vernacular medical works with regard to both practical and theoretical medical discourse.

Rizai’s interest in medical sciences as a member of “șulaḥa” -religious notables- points out to the extent of the informal educational networks beyond literary, linguistic, and religious sciences. The personal miscellany of Rızai brings together poems that bring to life his life as a Sufi, as opposed to his career as a judge. These poems, as the study of Rızai’s dedications and gift-giving practices has already made clear, are both products and means of his socialization and cultural exchange within the informal șulaḥa circles. The significance of Rızai’s miscellany and its inclusion of the treatise on medicine is two-fold. First, the transmission of medical knowledge was an integral part of Sufi socialization. This connection is physically apparent in the
manuscript miscellany in which Rızai inscribes his version of Treatise on Medicine. 8 Secondly, the casual insertion of the medicinal work within a miscellany of Sufi poetry, autobiography, and current events speaks to the “adabization of medicine”9, a development whereby basic medical knowledge becomes part of public discourse as opposed to specialized knowledge.

The Miscellany

Rızai’s untitled piece on medicine, hereafter mentioned as Treatise on Medicine,10 appears as part of a personal miscellany that is an autograph.11 In the autograph miscellany, Rızai brings together quotations from the work of his sheikh Aziz Mahmud Hüdai, his translations of Hüdai’s work, and his own poetical compositions. According to a note on the cover, the miscellany was initially intended as a collection of Hüdai’s works and Rızai’s translations of his sheikh’s works. The note on the cover, dated 1030 (1620-21), reads “This is the treasure of the secrets of Hüdai, gathered by his disciple Rızai”. 1621 must be the date at which Rızai begins to write the miscellany. Under this note, Rızai writes a couplet on the death of Hüdai, dated 1038 (1628). The

_________________________

8 The treatise has many versions. To complicate the matters even further, there are many different treatises with the title “treatise on medicine”. For an overview of the complicated circulation history, see the papers in Ahmet Hulusi Köker (Ed.) Hekimbaşı Kaysunizade Mehmed Efendi (1512-1569), Ankara’lı Şair Hekim Nidai (1502-1570). Kayseri: Erciyes Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1990.

9 I owe this term to Sara Nur Yıldız’s work. Sara Nur Yıldız, “Traveling Pharmaceutical Knowledge: Abridgements and Translations of Ibn al-Baytar’s Compendium of Simples (14th-17th Centuries)”. Paper Presented at the annual meeting of MESA (Middle East Studies Association), Denver CO, November 24.

10 Rızai does not mark the treatise with a title, yet begins the treatise with three rubricated phrases, one of which mentions Kaysunizâde by name (“Bunu telif idüb Kaysunizâde/ Komuşdur hoş eser dâru’ş-şifâdan / Marâha hak virür cümle şifâyî / Sebeb virmuş kerîm Allah devâyî / Olur her derdiî elbette devâyî / Rızâî bula gufrân-i ‘abd-i ‘âşî. Rızâî, Miscellany, MS Süleymaniye Library Hacı Mahmud Efendi 3347, f 162b).

11 The Treatise on Healing, Rızâî, Miscellany, MS Süleymaniye Library Hacı Mahmud Efendi 3347, ff 162b-203b.
latest date in the miscellany is 1072 (1661-2), suggesting that the personal notebook was kept over a span of approximately forty years.

The quotations from Hüdai are mostly copies of his written work. The first part of the miscellany features copies of the Sufi works Cem ‘u Tefrîk, Na’t en-Nebi, Vaştyyetu’l-‘Ulamâ, alongside the copy of a letter to a disciple. This first part therefore intends to be an anthology of Hüdai’s oeuvre. Within this section, there are passages that are not featured in lists of Hüdai’s work, therefore could be notes of oral communication. The existence of a sermon suggests even more strongly that Rızai notes down not only written and published work, but also oral lectures of his sheikh. In the case of this particular miscellany, these lectures are on the lives of past Sufis, such as Geylânî, Şeyh Safiyüddin, and Bayezid-i Bistâmî.

Rızai’s miscellany is a personal collection, yet most pieces have a conversational tone or some strong gesture towards the Sufi community that appears as the audience of Rızai. Even at the earlier part of the miscellany that purports to be an anthology of Hüdai, Rızai occasionally intervenes to add couplets of his own. Overall, Rızai’s interjections are intended to enhance his authorship, his connection with Aziz Mahmud Hüdai, or his expectations from (or rather disappointments at) his patrons. One of these poems that address a patron, in this case the sultan, shows that the composition still had a public audience in mind.

12 The only exception is a single marginal noted dated 1080, which could be written later than the original text.

13 For information regarding these works on Sufi ethics and metaphysics, see Ziver Tezeren, Seyyid Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi. İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1994. vol I, pp 69-85.

14 Rızâi, Miscellany, f 3a.
The single mention of the sultan in the entire miscellany exemplifies the orientation of Rızai’s compositions towards a public audience. The passage is written during the Ottoman army’s lengthy siege of Crete that continued from 1645 to 1669. Rızai describes the weariness of not only the soldiers, but also the general public due to this long and resource-consuming siege.

May the sultan be released from this campaign
A campaign that is more destructive than the fire of hell

God, it is your help that is expected
All our soldiers have long been wearied

Rızai then praises and prays for the sultan of the time, Mehmed IV (d. 1687). An odd interjection complains about the judge’s disappointment at the lack of a position.

He is the server of Mecca and Medina
Mehmed Han, sultan son of a sultan
(…)
Praying for the sultan befalls us/ I, who do not have a stipend
I am but a servant, a judge / The sultan is the crown of the earth

Is the text, then, penned with the intention to ask for a position from the sultan? Even if an independent, epistolary version was intended for the sultan, the miscellany makes clear that Rızai’s work was also circulated among his social peers. The rest of the very same poem addresses the ‘ikhwān’, or the Sufi brothers of Rızai.

God, do not let your people be sad / But bestow on them endless conquests
The brothers shall recite the Quran for this wish / May [God] the Conqueror and Bounteous be generous on us

15 Rızāi, Miscellany, f 45a.
16 Rızāi, Miscellany, ff 44b-45a.
17 Rızāi, Miscellany, f 45a.
“The Treatise on Medicine”: Personal Experience, Communal Authorship

Rızai’s personal miscellany contributes to the cultural exchange in his circles, which as shown in Chapter I consists of Sufis, preachers, mosque and endowment attendees, court personnel, the lower and upper level ‘ulamā, and the occasional shopkeeper or soldier. He composes religious and literary poems for his brethren (ikhwān). In addition, Rızai’s poems include a vernacular work on medicine that he intends to be beneficial to his brethren.

The vernacularization of medicinal works date to much earlier than the vernacularization of many other knowledge fields, such as rhetoric or logic. This earlier vernacularization is noteworthy, for it suggests that the study of medicine took place outside madrasa circles from early on. Self-study of medicine was one of the main vessels of the transmission of health sciences from early on. The vernacular world of Ottoman medical sciences has however been little studied.

This section focuses on a vernacular medical work that Sayyid Hasan Rızai composed and recorded in a personal miscellany (mecmu’â). The work is “vernacular” not only because its language is simple Turkish. The author aspires to less than writing a scholarly treatise that relies


19 Sara Nur Yıldız underlines that self study, either through larger scholarly commentaries or vernacular works, was an eminent way of gaining medical expertise in fifteenth century Anatolia and Egypt. See Yıldız, “From Cairo to Ayasuluk.”

20 By “vernacular” I do not mean only “works in Turkish”, but rather “works discussed outside the scholarly cultures and within the literary-daily culture.”
on expert knowledge of the field of medicine. Rather, he authors a practical guide for his “brothers”, based not only on the oral and written sources he has access to, but also on the personal experiences of himself and his social circle. The emphasis on experience, as will be shown, is distinctly strong and distinguishes Rızai’s work from a scholarly work of medicine, and positions the manuscript as a communal-conversational piece in the manner described in Chapter IV.

The Treatise on Medicine found in Rızai’s miscellany is a heavily reworked version of a popular medical work by a Sufi-physician, Mehmed Nidâî al-Mawlawî (d. after 1567). Nidâî’s early years until his travel to Konya are rather vague. In Konya, Nidâî meets Selim II and becomes the physician of the then prince. Nidâî al-Mawlawî’s written product focuses extensively on versified vernacular treatises on medicine, presumably as a result of his immersion in poetry and dervish circles. Among these works are translations of scholarly works in medicine originally written in Arabic or Persian; treatises on specific diseases such as black death or cholera, and works in which medical and moral advice are interwoven. A well-known versified work by Nidâî is Pearls of Verse (Dûrr-i Manzûm), an abridged medicinal work in


22 For instance, Menâfi’u’n-Nâs is his translation and versification of an Arabic work by the famous chief physician Kaysunizade Bedreddin (d. 1568). See Nidâî, Menâfi’u’n-nâs, MS Süleymaniye Library Hacı Selim Ağa 885, ff 4b-5a.

23 For more detailed information on Nidâî’s ouevre, see Sadettin Özçelik, “Nidâî” TDVİA.
Turkish verse. Even though Rızai does not refer to this better known title, his Treatise on Medicine is a variation on Pearls of Verse.

Rızai’s copy of Pearls of Verse does not intend to be a reproduction of the original work by Nidai. Rızai does not mind keeping original couplets by Nidai, some of which are of a personal nature such as the dedication of the work to Selim II. However, he frequently interjects his own stories, contributions, and poetic compositions. Rızai marks his own interventions carefully, by titling his sections “by the compiler-li muṣānnifîhi” in a miniscule hand, yet with rubrication.

Since Rızai retains most of the original work, Nidâî’s original date and dedication are preserved as they are:

I have written this for Sultan Selim / I have presented it to him after writing
His father is Sultan Süleiman / May his soul find deliverance

Two couplets mark the original date of the compilation as 975/1567-8. The original compiler, Nidâî, explains that his treatise is based on his experience as a medical practitioner. Moreover, he intends the treatise to be a self-help guide for the reader:

The experiences that I’ve confirmed [again and again] / They are sharp as a sword, work fine each time
The remedies I have written / Cure all diseases— if God bestows wellness
My sultan, there are many books of medicine / But there is none that is so full of riches
Whoever has this precious book / Will not need doctors anymore
In fact, many doctors of this world / Do not know enough about medication

---


25 Rızâî, Miscellany, ff 162b-163a.

26 This is the set date for the composition of Dürr-i Manzûm in other copies. See Özçelik, “Nidâî”.
Most of them are greedy for gold and silver. Many sick people regret [seeing them] since after paying them many aspers the sick still do not find any relief. Whereas this book costs nothing, one takes away as much as one can.27

Rızai does not discard the original “preface” of Nidai where he explains the merits of acquiring medical knowledge for oneself. However, he adduces a section where he explains his own motivations for seeking medical knowledge. Rızai explains that he suffers from old age at the time of writing, which is the year 1076 (1665-6).28 In a familiar storyline, Rızai seeks medical information for himself after falling ill, and discovering that the doctors he consulted for medication proved inconsistent and unreliable:

Their opinions contradicted one another. All they really cared about was gold and silver. Therefore I found this book and copied it so that the tormented may find relief.29

The treatise on medicine, per se, might be the copy of a version intended to be dedicated to the chief mufti of the time, Minkarizade Yahya Efendi (d.1678).

My appointment at Akyazı was terminated. They registered me in Kastamonu instead. Our master the chief mufti therefore gave us a name. They have left for Edirne with grace. May he return in good health. His acts are sagacious. We hope him to be gracious to us.30

27 Rız, Miscellany, ff 165a-b (Virir anlara bir nice malı / Eyü olmaz yine ann ḥāli Bu kitabım içinde ücret yok/ Kendi alur ne ise az ile çok Sarf ıder eli ile kendi tamām / Diler ise ola bu ḫavlime rām Bana levī itmesūn İdūb bunu / Bi‘-avadh yazdı bunu Kaysūnī).

28 Rız, Miscellany, f 166a (Oldu bin yetsīšaltu tarihi (1665-6) / Sinn ü sālim benim biline daḥ / 1007 Ramazanı Mevliddim / Kōcalıgm beyānı maşūdum).

29 Rız, Miscellany, ff 165b-166a. The idea that an author sought medical knowledge to cure his own diseases appear so often that it could be an established trope in the medical advice genre.

30 Rız, Miscellany, f 166a. Minkarizade used to accompany Mehmed IV frequently on the sultan’s trips to the Edirne palace.
The treatise could have been presented to the chief mufti for patronage in one rendition. However, the work was also circulated among Rızai’s peers. Not only does Rızai emphasize the importance of reading this medical work for one’s own health, he mentions medical conversations within his Sufi circles, as shown below. Moreover, Rızai writes about memorizing the couplets:

Experiences have been collected in mass / Anyone is capable of knowing this science The talented doctor (hekîm) who memorizes this/ He is reliable he is no liar

Even though it is hard to imagine the entire miscellany, at around seven-hundred couplets, to be memorized, it is highly likely that there is some oral component to the circulation of the chapter on remedies to given diseases. The comparison of different versions of the treatise attests to the significance of oral transmission. Rızai and other copyists did not merely transmit, but also transform Nidai’s original. For instance, some couplets are re-written to adapt the text into a different localism of Turkish. In some instances, Rızai leaves out Nidai’s recipes and in others he inserts recipes of medication he personally tried. Therefore, Rızai’s compilation of recipes is intended for a general public and not limited to his potential patron, the chief mufti.

The treatise consists of four main chapters. The first chapter is on the benefits of medical knowledge. This chapter differs from the remaining three chapters that essentially consist of long lists of recipes for given conditions or for targeted benefits. In contrast, the first chapter begins with quoting and commenting upon prophetic sayings on the virtues of learning medicine, and

31 Rızâi, Miscellany, f 193a.

32 For instance, the line “Sümüklü böceği algıl” in Nidâi’s version becomes “Sümüklü böceği al sen” in Rızâi’s version. Compare Çankaya, “Hekim Nidâi” and Rızâı, Miscellany, f 175a.
continues with a basic outline of the theory of four humors (‘Anâşîr-ı Erba’a). This chapter also occasionally diverts into Rizai’s praises of his own sheikh, Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi, suggesting that Rizai’s intended audience could be his Sufi brethren.

By the Copyist
He is named Hüdai / Üsküdari Efendi
He is known by the name Mahmud Efendi/ He possesses all graces in full
That sheikh said: Friends of God are perfect / Even before their mothers are born
This humble Rizai is his slave / I mention his name here for blessing
I hope [this writing] resurrects in heaven/ It has been written at an auspicious hour
For today is the day pilgrims reach Mecca/ Now the sun shines on all of them
At this moment they circumambulate the Qaba/ Purified, pure, and with innocent hearts

In addition to mentioning Hüdai, Rizai refers to his second sheikh, Şerefüddin Efendi.

Rizai’s devotion is to two sheikhs / [First] he descends from Qâdirîs
By the certification of Şerefüddin Efendi / While I was a judge in Hama city

Rizai’s references to his Sufi credentials, the auspicious time of his writing, places his discourse on medicine within a moral-medical sphere as described by scholars of medieval Islamic medicine. The moral-medical constitution of the discursive space made vernacular works on medicine suitable pieces for socialization and public circulation.

Rizai/Nidai’s vernacular work establishes medicine as part of adab, the cultural canon that every Muslim must know about. The adabization of medicine rests on pronouncements on

33 Rizâi, Miscellany, f 183a.

34 Rizâi, Miscellany, f 188a (İki sultana vadîr intisâbi / Alubdur Kadirlerden livâyı / Şerefuddin Efendi virdi izni / Hamâ şehrinde eylerken kazayı/ Livâyı Humdîn altunda gide ol / Sever cân ile cümle evliyâyi/ Kimi sevse kişi anıla koyar / Getürür hatra rûz-i cezâyi/ Hüdâ birdir ‘avûlim-i cümle mahluk / Hüdâdır halk iden arz ve semayî/ Anndir lutf ve ihsan derd u hieran / Sebeb-i zahirde kodu hukemayi).

the virtues of medicine, partly attributed to the prophet. An example to the prophetic sayings on the virtues of medical knowledge is “There are two kinds of knowledge ("al-ʿilm ʿilmān"): health sciences and religious sciences". Rızai even goes one step further and writes that health sciences come before, since without good health one could not study religious sciences:

The prophet mentioned health sciences first/ Let us realize there is a reason to this
If one is not healthy how can he/ Learn religious or any other science
That is the reason why the prophet of God/ Praised the doctors of God

The prophetic saying, “al-ʿilm ʿilmān” has received attention in other scholarly contexts. Most notably, Linda Northrup points out to the prominence of the saying within the context of the foundation of the Mansuri hospital founded by the Mamluk sultan al-Manṣūr Sayf ad-Dīn Qalāwūn in late thirteenth century Cairo. Northrup argues that the saying “al-ʿilm ʿilmān” perfectly reflected an important goal of its founder, which is the “Islamization of medicine:"

It allows the sultan to compare himself with his predecessors (probably his immediate predecessors) who had focused exclusively on ʿilm al-adyān to the exclusion of ʿilm al-abdān, and thus to distinguish himself from them and legitimize his sultanate on that basis; he would live up to the alleged Prophetic hadith and support both categories of knowledge, thus perhaps proving himself a better Muslim than his predecessors.

Northrup’s emphasis on the “Islamization” of medicine as a relatively new process at the Mamluk period hardly applies to the early modern context. However, her insight is still valuable

37 Rızâ, Miscellany, f 167a.
38 Northrup, “The Interface Between Medicine, Politics and Culture”.

239
for it points to the positioning of medicinal sciences as part of a larger cultural canon. The integration of medical sciences into a canon, or a body of “adab”, where medicine holds equal standing with religious sciences is noteworthy. The adabization of medicine in this manner is intertwined with the public circulation of vernacular medical works, a process in which Sufi networks played a significant role.

To be sure, some tension regarding the materialist potential of medical sciences appears to have survived into the Ottoman centuries. In one passage, for instance, Rızai brings forth and criticizes a statement attributed to “physicians”. The statement is that life is the result of “blood”, that is the material existence of the body. Rızai/Nidai corrects the equation of life with blood with quotations from the Quran that explain life with God’s creation of the soul.

In the first place, both the body and matter / Are created by God, read it in the Quran
Now listen to the substance of the science of body/ And why God created this body
Listen to the secrets of its existence/ Listen to the secrets of body and life
Doctors said life is blood, God forbid/ God said “We have breathed” [life into the world]39

Rızai/Nidai quickly resolves this odd objection to certain unspecified physicians. The rest of the first chapter is on two main themes that illustrate the above mentioned saying “al-‘ilm ilmân”. The first main theme is the perfection of man’s creation as a composition of the four humors.

The essence of the body is the humors/ Know the potential of those substances
Humans are comprised of the humors/ Here we explain this thesis40

39 Rızǟ, Miscellany, ff 167b-168a.
40 Rızǟ, Miscellany, f 165a.
The second theme is the significance of medical knowledge for one’s piety. According to this topos, one can only worship God if one is in good health. Therefore, learning the medical sciences and the workings of one’s body helps each person to serve God better. Moreover, by understanding his own nature man can understand his privileged place in God’s universe. These two themes serve as the bridge between medical and moral discourse within the work. *Treatise on Medicine* moves back and forth between humoral theory and moral advice via this bridge.

*About the Nature of Man*
The essence of the body is the humors/ Know the potential of those substances
These four components are at your service/ Your body is a castle and your soul the sultan
(…) You contain everything that the world contains / You contain all the secrets that God intends [to be discovered] 41

Purge your soul from impurities/ Embark on the Sufi path with love
Strive and enter the rose garden of Truth/ Reap the roses of gnosis 42

In a few sections, Rizai emphasizes another moral-religious theme. He reminds his readers, following Nidai, even though the doctors practice medicine, they are not the source of healing; God is.

*By the Humble Copyist*
Gives remedies and relief through a pretext / The one real doctor, who is God
If all the world’s doctors were summoned / And they employed all their medications
Yet the Ultimate-Healer’s grace were missing/ The sick would not find relief from their conditions 43

---

Therefore, the “theoretical” prelude to the *Treatise on Medicine* is a broad introduction to the benefits of learning medicine. The treatise compiles well-known sayings on medicine, a number of which are attributed to the prophet. The sayings pose medicine as part of a general cultural literacy (*adab*) that ties the knowledge of the body with the knowledge of religious and literary sciences. The topos that “one has to be able to care for his body in order to be able to execute his religious duties” is employed to connect medical knowledge and moral advice to one another. In this “*adabized*” version, medical theory is very limited and consists of a broad outline of the humoral theory.

The Sufi-conversational tone of the *Treatise on Medicine* continues into the following three chapters on “practical” medical recipes. The practical component of the treatise consists of three chapters. The first of these chapters is entitled “Chapter II: About the Identification of Diseases and the Treatment of Bodies.” The chapter consists of short sections, each dedicated to either a disease or to a bodily part and the potential ailments related to it. Therefore, some of the titles are: “Treatment for the Brain,” “Medicine for Hayfever,” “The Cure to Headaches,” “Cure for the Eyes”. Each treatment is either a simple concoction made with common foodstuffs, such as olive oil or herbs and spices; or some other easy treatment such as going to the bathhouse.  

The next chapter is about “Beneficial Formulae” or, in modern terms, medical supplements. This section explains how to make drinks from flowers, or herbal oil, or healthy confectionary or

---

44 A possible parallel is the genre “Medicine for the Poor”, an Islamic medical genre that aimed to provide recipes for the destitute who could not afford costly ingredients. However, this genre often targeted extremely poor people, refraining from even the basic foodstuffs such as olive oil. See Gerrit Boss, “Ibn al-Jazzār on Medicine for the Poor and Destitute”. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118.3 (1998), pp 365–375.
pastes. The fourth and the last chapter focuses on “theriac”, the panacea of pre-modern medical cultures.

The chapters of Treatise on Medicine continue to pursue the conversational tone of the first chapter that poses medicine as “adab”. Not only does Rızai intersperse the text with mentioning his sheikhs or travels. He further changes the very substance of the original treatise by adding recipes based on the experiences of himself and his peers. In this manner, experience becomes one of the main sources of the treatise. Moreover, the fluid nature of the treatise where copyists re-shape received medical wisdom based on the available information in their own circles places the vernacular medical tradition in an informal public sphere as opposed to a scholarly milieu.

Experience comprises a salient source of medical information within the Treatise on Medicine. Second only to experience is the evocation of well known medical authorities. Foremost among these authorities are Galen and Plato. While apparently these two authoritative sources are the only two names that Nidai’s original treatise evokes, Rızai complements Nidai through the medical information he selects from other sources and notes on the marginalia. One marginal note, for instance, features the Ottoman chief physician Zeynel Efendi (d. 1647). Rızai notes a recipe endorsed by Zeynel Efendi that “fattens a man, making him strong and sexually potent”. Another footnote quotes a work by Zeynel Efendi, dates the

45 Rızâ, Miscellany, f 189a refers to both Galen and Plato.

work to 1037 and the time of Murad IV, and “cites” Zeynel’s original work that is based on “the books of the Prophet İdris” (Hermes).\(^{47}\) An additional sourcebook that Rızaı uses to complement Nidai’s treatise is \textit{Khawāṣṣ al-Ḳur ‘ān} by Ebû Muhammed Abdullah b. Es‘ad el-Yâfiî.\(^{48}\) \textit{Khawāṣṣ al-Ḳur ‘ān} was a general medical genre that was based on drawing prognostical remedies from the Quran for given diseases.\(^{49}\) The quotes from \textit{Khawāṣṣ al-Ḳur ‘ān} stands as the sole instance of a ritual-based treatment in the \textit{Treatise on Medicine.}

While reference to the various authorities from the Prophet Idris to Galen are only occasional, reference to ‘experience’ is consistent and frequent both in Nidai’s original work and Rizai’s re-working of the work. Nidāi’s original work writes of the physician-derervish’s experience with given recipes. For instance, the section on the treatment for syphilis mentions his successful treatment of many patients: “With this medicine many a man/ Found relief in our hands”\(^{50}\).

Similarly, Nidai’s treatment of jaundice has been tried and proven on many patients before:

\begin{quote}
Here is my remedy to jaundice/ That I have used again and again
It is proven, never disappoints/ It is well known thanks to practice\(^{51}\)
\end{quote}

\(^{47}\) Rızâî, \textit{Miscellany}, f 199b. Earlier sources associated İdris with Hermes and claimed that he knew and taught medicine. The reference to “the books of İdris/Enoch” shows that this tradition continued to the Ottoman times. See “İdris”, \textit{TDVIA}.

\(^{48}\) Ebû Muhammed Abdullah b. Es‘ad el-Yâfiî is a rather obscure figure who remains largely unknown except for this particular work. See “Havassu’l-Kur’ân”, \textit{TDVIA}.


\(^{50}\) Rızâî, \textit{Miscellany}, f 181a.

\(^{51}\) Rızâî, \textit{Miscellany}, f 184a (\textit{Devâ-yi Yerekan}). Other instances of reference to experience are: \textit{ibid}, f 181a (\textit{Buna melûc yağû dir hukumâ / Bu mücerrebdir odur derde devâ}), \textit{ibid}, f 182a (\textit{Nice kez bunu imtiân itdim / Hiç haţâsını görmedim gitdim/ Mücerrebdir delil-i şûd u şâfâ / Var ‘amem eyle şûbhe yok ɬakkâ}).
Nidāi’s original references to his medical experience as “Kaysunizade” surely constitute a major component of the credibility of the Treatise on Medicine for Rızai and other readers and copyists like Rızai. Moreover, the salience of experience allows vernacular works on medicine to be flexible and communal. It is through the authority granted to personal experience and the experience overheard from one’s peers that non-expert authors can intervene in medical works.

In Rızai’s version of the Treatise on Medicine, the reader reads about his endorsement of certain recipes based on the experience of him or his sheikh, Şerefüddin Efendi of Hama. These experiences are on less serious cases, usually digestive disorders. Therefore, in a section on constipation, Rızai refers to his utilization of the given formula on pilgrimage to Mecca:

This information is certain like a fine sword/ You will see its strength and say “Amen!”
On the way to the Qaba, this humble one / Found relief thanks to it for one full year

A sub-section in the chapter on medical supplements endorses a given purgative that Rızai’s sheikh in Hama, Şerefüddin Efendi tried and recommended:

*Purgative Concoction*
When a medical concoction is needed/ And one intends to drink it
You must prescribe according to his humor/ Then he will thank you and your master
This is from the experience of Şerefüddin / I have tried it many times
(…)
He used this concoction for fifty years/ He found it to be perfect in all ways

52 While the work belongs to Nidāi, there is no indication that Rızāi is aware of Nidāî’s authorship. His reference to “Kaysunizade” in the title suggests that the treatise could be circulating as the treatise by Kaysunizade Bedreddin (d. 1568), the chief physician of Selim II. Such authorship confusions are frequent in the early modern Ottoman manuscript culture.

53 Rızāi, Miscellany, f 197a.

54 Rızāi, Miscellany, f 197b (Şarâb-ı Mûshîl).
Rızai’s introduction to the second chapter on treatments evokes the positive experience of his sheikh with the given formulae. The comprehensive statement at the beginning of the chapter on Şerefüddin’s attestation to the effectiveness of the recipes hints at the possibility that it was the Qadiri sheikh of Hama who introduced Rızai to Treatise on Medicine in the first place.

About the relief to each sickness / About ailments for all conditions
By the experience of my sheikh / And by his perfection in work
I have uncovered all about health/ No need for anything else, I have explained it all55

In conclusion, Rızai’s take on Nidai’s Treatise on Medicine attests not only to the transmission, but also the making of popular medical knowledge. Within this milieu of vernacular medical works, Sufi sheikhs played an important part in the transmission of medical knowledge. The component of experience provided an important point of entry for non-scholarly yet literate individuals to test out, select, and reconfigure received medical knowledge. Another significant implication of the emphasis on experience in vernacular treatises is the practice of medicine in Sufi circles. The practice of medicine in Sufi circles in the form of providing counsel or even preparing medications is the subject of the next section.

II. Healing Practices at the Mosque and the Lodge: Medical Knowledge in Practice

One of Rızai’s two sheikhs, Şerefüddin Efendi of Hama, appears as the provider of recipes and transmitting a medical work. The intermediate position of preachers between the learned and the unlearned population placed them at a suitable position to “mediate” written medical knowledge.

55 Rızāī, Miscellany, f 183b.
The mediation took place either in the form of versified recipes, or actual concoctions as in the case of Yahya Efendi quoted at the beginning of the chapter.\(^{56}\)

Providing medical advice was one of the two ways in which Sufi sheikhs partook in healing practices. The other healing practice commonly associated with Sufi sheikhs—and not the non-Sufi preachers—was ritual healing. Ritual healing was the deployment of talismans, Quranic verses, or holy relics to provide relief for the sick. For instance, the sheikh of Rizai’s sheikh, Şeyh Üftade of Bursa (d. 1580), was consulted by the people for epilepsy.\(^{57}\) Healing was expected of not only living sheikhs, but also of their relics. An example is İshak Efendi (d. 1591), a Sufi mosque preacher of Bursa. İshak Efendi was a scholar of Quranic and hadith sciences who also taught these topics at the İbrahim Pasha mosque near the Bursa courthouse. Writing in mid-seventeenth century, Baldırzade Efendi states that the stone that the preacher used to step on while doing his ablutions was kept at the Başıç Mosque, and believed to heal the sick.\(^{58}\)

Many Ottoman authors write about practices of spiritual healing in an approving tone. Spatially, too, healing practices occupied the center rather than the periphery. The case of the Hagia Sophia is a striking example. According to Evliya Çelebi’s account, certain parts of the Hagia Sophia mosque had a reputation for healing given ailments.

\(^{56}\) For similar examples of sheikhs healing or providing medical advice, see Reşat Öngören. “Osmanlı’da Sûfîlerin Farklı Toplum Kesimleriyle İlişki Tarzları”, İslâm Araştırmaları Dergisi 3, 1999, pp 9-22.


\(^{58}\) Baldırzâde writes about a Sufi of the Naqshbandi order, Bali Efendi of Bursa, healing an imam who was at his death bed. See Baldırzâde Selisi Şeyh Mehmed, Ravza-i Evliyâ (Ed. Mefail Hızlı, Murat Yurtsever). Bursa: Arasta Yayınları, 2000, p 19. Similarly, the tomb of a certain Zeytun Dede of Bursa’s Balabancık Karye was specifically visited by patients suffering from humma, in search of healing. See, ibid, 170.
A sub-section of Seyahatname’s volume on İstanbul is entitled “On the holy sites and visitation places (makâm and ziyâret) of Hagia Sophia.” Evliya’s account shows that it was a common practice to go to certain parts of Hagia Sophia to seek relief from ailments such as headache, amnesia, or palpitation (possibly referring to anxiety). He writes: “When a man is afflicted with palpitation or exasperation, God willing he will find relief by coming to Ayasofya three [consecutive] Saturdays and drinking from the well inside the mosque.”

For many authors, the difference between healing by spiritual practice or healing by providing medical recipes was insignificant. For instance, Seyyid Hasan Rızai who appeared in the foregoing section as the copyist of the Treatise on Medicine juxtaposes “the science of khawâss” - the practice of attributing healing power to Quran - with medical recipes he knows and trusts. In his autobiographical dictionary Mahmudîyye, too, he recounts stories of healing at the mosque that are reminiscent of Evliya’s account. For example, Rızai describes a mosque preacher practicing healing after the Friday prayer in front of a congregation of which Rızai was a part.

[In Hama] I performed the Friday prayer at the old mosque. After the prayer, people gathered for the ritual dhîkr. [...] Three people joined them [...] all were women. [After the dhîkr] the sheikh approached them. He held the hand of one of them, and realized that her hands were paralyzed. He gathered her fingers inside his palm, and said three times: “Open, open, open!”, she could not open them. Then he bit her fingers, and her hand opened up. [...] Then the preacher went to the next [woman], and saw that her feet were paralyzed. He said to her: “Bring your feet together”, and he stroked her feet three times. Then he lightly touched her feet and said “Go now”. So she walked away. Later we

60 Evliya Çelebi, Seyahatnâme, vol I, p 61.
heard that all three of them were healed of their ailments, and that the third one was afflicted with epilepsy.\textsuperscript{61}

The difference between healing by ritual and healing by medical advice, however, was significant to some preachers. Some preachers condemned the practice of attributing healing powers to pious men of the community. The interesting point about these preachers is that while they condemned ritual healing, they still partook in medical practice by way of providing counsel. In this section, I would like to focus on a manuscript that compiles answers that a preacher provided to questions. The treatise objects to the attribution of healing power to Sufi sheikhs, within a general framework of opposing to the authority of Sufis and other sources of authority other than the \textit{shari‘a}. However, the preacher exercises similar power by providing counsel on questions of not only religious, but also medical nature. The position of the preacher as provider of simple medical counsel is a natural result of his intermediary position between the literate culture and the unlearned populace.

\textbf{Questions to the Preacher: Pseudo-Kadizade’s Miscellany of Questions and Answers}

A long list of question-answers entitled “Questions of the People of \textit{Sunna} and Community Authored by the Late Kadızade Mehmed Efendi”\textsuperscript{62} kept in a miscellany with other preaching


\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Mesail-i Ehl-i Sünnet ve ’l-Cemaat li-Kadızade Mehmed Efendi}, MS Süleymaniye Library Yazma Bağışlar 5570, ff 149b-233a. The \textit{Questions} is attributed to Kadızade Mehmed Efendi. There is no clue which Kadızade this is, the more famous Kadızade who was the leader of the Kadzadeli movement or Kadızade the Younger. For the two
texts shed light on the daily life of the mosque-goers. The manuscript, hereafter briefly referred to as *Questions* (*Mesâl*), is an important source since it is the closest approximation to the actual conversation at mosques. While other sources on sermons do exist and have been utilized in this study, these sources are often in the form of templates that preachers wrote as reminders to themselves. Hence, while many *macmuâs* contain sections entitled “*khufba*”, these sections are very brief excerpts in Arabic. Since the sermons were in fact delivered in Turkish, the excerpts must be only remotely connected to the actual sermon. The *Questions*, on the other hand, is one of the two known manuscripts which are notes of the actual conversation taking place at the mosque. Hence, it is an important source for understanding the role of preachers in the daily life of city and town dwellers. In what follows, I first briefly discuss the authorship of the *Questions*. Secondly, I provide a general description of the contents of the *Questions*. In discussing the content, I particularly focus on the mediation of the preacher on medical information. I underline that while practices that emphasized the sheikh’s spiritual power was condemned by some preachers, even these latter preachers practiced intermediating medical knowledge.

*The Questions of People of the Prophetic Path and Community* is written in the form of answers to a long list of questions, as the title suggests. However, the questions are left out in the

“*Kadızade*”s of the early seventeenth century who were both preachers see Derin Terzioğlu, “Bir Tercüme ve bir Intihal Vakas: ya da Ibn Teymiyye’nin Siyasetü’ş-şer’iyeye’sini Osmanlcaya Kim(ler), Nasıl Aktardı?” *Journal of Turkish Studies* XXXI/2 (2007), pp. 247-275. The treatise is part of a miscellany written in a single hand. The first treatise of the miscellany is the “*Vasiyetname-i Resul*, The Will of the Prophet. In addition to this, there are two other lengthy treatises of an anti-Sufi quality, one of them by the preacher Nushi Nasihi, the Khalwâni preacher that Derin Terzioğlu discusses in “Sunna-minded Sufi Preachers in Service of the Ottoman State: The Nasihatname of Hasan Addressed to Murad IV,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 27 (2010), pp 243-259. The miscellany is thus a collection of pietist texts that selects anti-Sufi authors.
manuscript, presumably in order to keep the work relatively concise. There is no authorial preface or conclusion. The contents of the treatise suggest that the work dates to the 1630s.\(^6^3\)

While the copyist attributes the manuscript to Kadızade Efendi, there is good reason to suspect this attribution. First of all, “Kadızade” had become a generic authorial label for religious works of an anti-Sufi nature by the mid seventeenth century.\(^6^4\) The content of *Questions* is strongly anti-Sufi and specifically anti-Mawlawī. Kadızade Mehmed, however, was not the only preacher with anti-Sufi ideas, apart from the detail that his criticisms were rather towards the Khalwatīs. Moreover, the manuscript’s simple colloquial language that verges on the vulgar, combined with the consistent spelling peculiarities, diverge significantly from the educated prose of Kadızade Mehmed. Therefore, it is safe to call this particular preacher “Pseudo-Kadızade”.

The manuscript is a compilation of questions asked to Pseudo-Kadızade and his answers, sometimes very brief sometimes as lengthy as mini-sermons. The answers were most likely recorded by a pupil in his circle, for it was a known practice for pupils of a preacher to write down the master’s teachings in order to study them, or to distribute them among other devotees.\(^6^5\) All in all, the *Questions* constitutes an ad-hoc collection of questions asked to a preacher put together as they were posed, perhaps by a pupil.

\(^{6^3}\) There is very little mention of the specifics of the time period which would help date the treatise, with the exception of one question: “Question: The Qa’ba of God was demolished and rebuilt ten times. The eleventh (rebuilding) was (the blessed share) of Sultan Murad, they built it in 1040”. The passage does not refer to Sultan Murad IV with the usual “merhûm”, the deceased, as is almost indispensable referring to a late member of the community. It is therefore likely that the treatise was penned during the lifetime of Sultan Murad IV (d. 1049/1640) and after 1040/1631.

\(^{6^4}\) For a detailed discussion of orality and authorial epithets, see Chapter III of this study.

\(^{6^5}\) An example is the lectures by another preacher, Mehmed Üstüvani (d. 1661), compiled by a disciple. Üstüvani Mehmed, *Kitāb-i Üstûvâni*, MS Beyazid 2962. The work has twenty one copies in Turkish libraries and two copies
The bulk of *Questions* is about the specifics of the ritual requirements of Islam. Ablutions, prayers, fasting, and sacrifice make frequent appearances. In addition, there are many questions on the specifics of marriage. With the exception of a single passage, the author gives no references to any books or legal authorities other than Abū Hanīfa. In certain instances, the preacher disagrees with “the common legal opinion” without digressing into any proof, yet firmly. The preacher’s capacity to dictate daily practices without being bound to the commonly accepted legal opinion, and his position as the broker of information constitutes an important part of the pragmatic authority of the preachers. This section is a general description of the contents of the *Questions*, and the preacher’s daily dealings with his congregation. The next section will focus specifically on how Pseudo-Kadızade deals with questions about healing.

**The Content of Pseudo-Kadızade’s Teaching**

The idea of respecting and abiding by the Quran is, by sheer volume, the most significant theme in the *Questions*. However, there are no specifics regarding which interpretation of the Quran to follow in any part of the work, or any list of practices that illustrate what the preacher means by “abiding by the Quran”. Rather, abiding by the Quran stands as the binary opposite of two other sources of authority that Pseudo-Kadızade recognizes and criticizes in his society. These two other sources are custom (‘urf), which was a legal category, and the authority of the Sufi saints. The objection of Pseudo-Kadızade to healing practices by holy figures is part of his larger debate with the veneration of Sufis. In this section, I provide an overall description of Pseudo-
Kadızade’s teaching with particular emphasis on his objection to the multiplicity of authorities in his society, Sufi sheikhs being the most detested.

Many sections of the *Questions* feature lengthy moral stories, illustrating the connection between preaching and storytelling. While storytelling and preaching have been studied as two forms of public oratory, they have been viewed as contradictory practices where the former is the domain of the uneducated and the latter that of the scholarly. In his work on the preachers of Mamluk Cairo, Berkey poses storytellers and preachers as two conflicting social types. Berkey underlines that scholars in Mamluk Cairo differentiated between storytellers (*quṣṣāṣ*) and preachers (*nāṣīḥ*), where the former were described as uneducated folk with poor morality. Legal scholars in particular argued that storytellers lacked the necessary credentials to instruct the public in religion, hence should not be allowed to preach at the pulpit. While the debate that Berkey describes sheds light on the normative expectations from preachers in medieval Cairo, it is highly likely that the storytellers and preachers were to be much more easily differentiated discursively rather than actually. The teaching of the *Mathnawī* at mosques, in addition to the connection between coffeehouse storytellers (*meddāḥ*) and Sufis proves the tangled nature of these two cultural forms.

The *Questions* proves that storytelling and sermon were tightly connected not only in Sufi circles, but also in anti-Sufi circles. Many of the longer “answers” in the compilation, which


67 For details of this connection, see Chapter IV of this study.

253
could be freestanding sermons, are didactic stories inspired by Quranic stories or stories about Ottoman sultans. An example is a story that features Selim I (d. 1520). The story reminds the audience that the Quran is the key to good rule, a major theme explored in Chapter II. The story about Selim I opens with the sultan worrying whether he can safely leave Istanbul behind while setting out on his campaign on Iran. When he talks to his vizier about his worries, the wise vizier takes the sultan to the imperial kitchen, where a lamb hangs down from the ceiling. The vizier orders the sheep to be put down. Immediately dogs invade the kitchen to have their shares from the meat. When the lamb is hung up again, the dogs disappear. The vizier explains: “My sultan, this lamb is like Islam. As long as you keep Islam high, no enemy will be encouraged to rebel. If you put the Holy Quran down, the enemies come invading from all sides.”

Looking at the Quran is a form of worship, just as it is a worship to look at the Qaba or the ‘ulama. The prophet said to Fatima, his own daughter,: “If you do not abide by the Quran, nothing saves you, even me”. When Azrail comes to someone to take his life, he smells the person’s head and entire body. If the entire body smells of the Quran, Azrail says to him: “Come

68 The stories are only vaguely tied to the Quranic narrative. They belong more to the domain of popular culture than that of Quranic exegesis. For instance, in one of the many stories about the devil, the devil ends up on Noah’s ark. When at the time of the flood Noah embarked upon the ship, he saw an old man sitting on the ship. God informed Noah that this old man was the devil himself. Noah ordered the devil: “Get off the ship!” The devil replied: “Oh Noah, let me on the ship. In return, I will teach you five things that will help you be immune to me. These are the five things by which I lead these people astray. I will teach you three of them, but I will not disclose the other two”. God said to Noah: “Make him reveal those two first”. Noah said “Tell me those two things or get off the ship”. Left without any choice, the devil had to tell. With a story, the preacher builds up the curiosity of his audience, at the end of which the two greatest tricks of devil are revealed: jealousy and ambition (hased ve hırs). The story continues with a long discourse of devil on his two favorite traits. It is not only these stories, of which plenty are found, that distinguishes our preacher from the more doctrinaire catechism-writers. Pseudo-Kadızade has a very direct style speaking to his audience: “My dear, let us intend to keep wrong deeds away from our hearts, let alone do them. Who knows, what would we do if (God) does not forgive us (for our intentions)?”. See Mesăı̇l, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, ff 212a-b.

69 Mesăı̇l, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 151 a.
you believer, come to your Lord”. He takes the person’s life with great respect and reverence. When he is put into the grave, the Quran comes to him in a beautiful guise, and says “I am the Quran that you’ve read and have abided by on earth. I saved you from all useless occupations. Now I came to you, and I will never leave you alone”. When the angels question the person, the Quran cues him: “the answer is this, the answer is that”. The story goes on until the Quran delivers its reader right into heaven.

**Objections to Saintly Authority and Healing Practices**

Pseudo-Kadızade’s lengthy stories, similes, and orations on the importance of abiding by the Quran serve as a criticism of his age as the preacher sees it. According to the preacher, the people of the age shortchange the word of the Quran for the customs and fashions on one hand, and the authority of Sufi sheikhs on the other. Occasionally, he defines “people of the Quran” in opposition to these two practices. For instance, he chastises people who claim to be religious but adapt to the modern customs all too easily. “They are not those who claim to know the Quran, yet sit at coffeehouses playing backgammon or chess,” he adds. He defines these alternative sources of authority as blasphemous. He writes: “Blasphemy by association (ṣirk-i


71 Mesail, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 164b.

72 Şirk, referring to attributing deity to anyone or anything other than God, is considered to be the greatest sin. The salafi preacher of Mesail is deeply troubled that certain forms of authority are attributed the same standing as that of the Quran, the word of God.
ta'ṣrīḥ), is having faith in dedes and sheikhs. Blasphemy by imitation (ṣīrk-i ta'klīd), is to do something (just because) others do it.”

Why does imitating others in one’s society constitute a major problem? In the case of seventeenth century Ottoman society, this is the question of whether customs, ‘urf, are a legitimate source of law. More precisely, are they as good as the shari’a, or should one take custom and Islamic law not as complimentary, but as rival forces. In his article on urban revolts of the seventeenth century, Cemal Kafadar emphasizes that the Kadızadeli movement, a general criticism of religious practice considered foreign by a group of mosque preachers, was “a sharia-minded reaction to the new urban reality.” This new social reality, he explains, is a new, “urf-laden configuration of the public sphere which seemed too ready to recognize innovations as acceptable custom.” Pseudo-Kadızadeli explains the dangers of clinging to custom as a legitimate rule of conduct by a story, in his usual style.

Following the (customs of the) public, saying “everybody does this”, is like the following story. Many voyagers embark on a ship. During the voyage, the ship topples on one side. All the voyagers hug each other, one pulling the other, the other one pulling another. When all of them are about to drown and die, one of them finds a barrel. That person can now save himself by clinging to the barrel. Yet he does not. He says “I will leave this barrel aside and cling and snuggle with the people” (…..) Now, my dear, do not do as the rest of the people do. Do not let the barrel that is the Quran go off your hands. It will take you safely by the coast of the heaven.

73 Mesâil, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 186a.
74 Kafadar, “Janissaries and Other Riffraff.”
75 Mesâil, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 150a.
In another passage, the preacher condemns a very popular saying. The saying is “If the times do not comply with you, then you comply with the times”. According to him, whoever pronounces these words is to be excommunicated (takfīr). Closely connected with acting in reference to ‘urf was avoiding the sharia court in favor of solving issues within one’s community. Pseudo Kadızade writes in this matter that one of the signs of a münāfık - a person who appears to be Muslim but in fact is an unbeliever- is that when someone invites them to (solve an issue at the) court, he rejects.78

76 Mesāilik, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, YB 5550, f 150b (“Gördük zamanı sana uymadı sen uy zamane”). In general, the treatise calls for a life that is consistently frugal and serious. Times of festivities, too, must be observed with austerity. Yet Mesail’s admonishments give away that the social practice was far from austere. See, for short descriptions of public festivities, Mesāilik, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 149a, 168b, 179a.

77 Mesāilik, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 150b.

78 Mesāilik, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 193a. The problem of the multiplicity of authorities appears in fatwa collections, too. Questions from members of the society shed light on the precarious authority of the shari’a court, which had too many alternatives. These alternatives were often preferred, presumably, because they were more effective than the judge’s verdict. Hence the chief mufti had to respond to queries regarding statements of disrespect for the shari‘ and the shari’a court. These questions were presumably brought to him by individuals who wanted to use the legal opinions to force their rivals to the shari‘i court. Hence the following Muslim individual must be severely punished: Question: When Zeyd has a case with ‘Amr, he tells ‘Amr: “Let us go to shari‘, let us go to the qadi and call for a case”. ‘Amr responds: “These words of your sicken me. Wait up, I am going to be sick and fart (yestehleyeyim), and then we can go” (Fetavây-yî Yahyâ Efendî, MS Leiden Cod. Or. 6803, f 96a). If the court is not the go-to place for two litigants, and is even repulsive for at least one of them, how did people settle their cases? Where would they go? Alternative sources of dispute settlement were present, and two come to the fore in the fatwas of Yahya Efendi: Janissary aghas, and guild leaders. In one case regarding the guild of shoe-sewers, Yahya recognizes that guilds operate within a legal-normative sphere that is not consumed merely by shari‘a. Question: Of the shoe-makers guild, Zeyd has a case with ‘Amr and asks him to go to the court with him. Bekir and Beşir of the same guild (intervene and) say: “Our matters have (heretofore) been settled not by shari‘a , we settle our issues within ourselves”. What should be done about Bekir and Beşir? Answer: If that matter is not a matter of shari‘, and if that is what they mean by our matter, nesne gerekmez (Fetavây-yî Yahyâ Efendî, MS Leiden Cod. Or. 6803, f 95a). The fatwa is unusual. Even if the existence of extra-shari‘i procedures was well established, the mufti, by definition, was expected to argue for the primacy and comprehensiveness of the shari‘. The conflict between the established practice and shari‘-legalist discourse must be why Yahya Efendi was not consistent regarding the question of dispute settlement within guilds: Question: Zeyd and Amr of ehl-i khorfet have a case. Zeyd invites Amr to the court, Amr replies “shari‘ does not interfere with our matters, we have our customs – ‘adet-“, and refuses to come. What should be done about Amr? Answer: tecdid-i iman ve nikah (Fetavây-yî Yahyâ Efendî, MS Leiden Cod. Or. 6803, f 71b). The difference between the two questions appear to be a matter of degree. That is, it is acceptable to remind one’s fellow craft practitioner that their ilk has recourse to a system of law in addition to shari‘ is nothing but a statement

257
The other major threat to the authority of the Quran, according to Pseudo-Kadızade, is Sufi sheikhs. The authority of the saintly figure spanned worldly and spiritual activities, as demonstrated by the quotation about Yahya Efendi that opens this chapter. The sheikhly authority that Sufism makes doctrinally possible has historically been one of the main reasons why Sufis were confronted across Islamic cultures. Pseudo-Kadızade refers to these authority figures as either walî (friends of God) or dede, baba (Turkish words for grandfather and father, respectively, that also referred to the leaders of Sufi communities). He opposes the conferral of the title walî to anyone but the legal scholars, particularly disparaging the wise-fool types who were often considered holy men in their societies.

Question: Those who know the meaning of the Quran are the standard bearers of Islam. Just as the enemies attack the standard bearers during war, the heretics (Rafîzîs) attack the scholars of religion in the city. When God wants to have someone as a “friend of God” (walî), he makes him a jurist, gives him knowledge and piety; that is a “friend of God”. An ignorant, inauspicious man who puts on airs of “the friend of God”, that person is no friend of God. That person is mad. However, the people today cannot differentiate between the two; they take madmen to be holy men.

of the fact. However, that craftsmen operate without any recourse to any shari’a is discursively unacceptable. As for the authority of Janissary aghas, there is no complication. Their judgments backed by their swords are severely detrimental to shar’. This particular fatwa collection has three instances whereby suers apply, deliberately, not to the qadi court but to the Janissary agha. Question: Zeyd invites some people to the court to settle a debate he has with them. In response, he hears: “We do not go to shar’, we have nothing to do with shar’. We (only) go to the Janissary agha. What should be done about them? A: tecdid-i iman ve nikah (“Biz şer’a varmazız, şer’le alakamız yokdur. Biz yeniçeri zabiti olan ağaya varız”, Fetavâ-yi Yahyâ Efendi, MS Leiden Cod. Or. 6803, f 96b) Question: Amr is the zabît of Zeyd, who is ‘askeri. Amr tells Zeyd: “There is a case against you (davacın var), I will incarcerate you”. Zeyd responds: “If someone has a case against me, it is to be settled by the noble shari’a”. In response ‘Amr says: “I do not know about shari’a, (if you do not follow my orders), I will shoot you!” In a similar case, one Zeyd tells a suer: “I do not know about shar’. If someone has a case against me, I will only go to ağa kapısı with them” (Fetavâ-yi Yahyâ Efendi, MS Leiden Cod. Or. 6803, f 98a).


80 Mesâîl, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 156b.
In certain passages, Pseudo-Kadızade targets more specific social groups. Most frequently appearing is the Mawlawi dervishes. For instance, he writes: “Do not condemn censuring the Mawlawis and other whirling dervishes (...) as defamation; it is but serving God.”

III. Pragmatic Authority at the Mosque

The bulk of the sermons of Pseudo-Kadızade foreground the primacy of Quran as a form of strongly criticizing the authority of customs and of Sufi sheikhs. The preacher censures consulting Sufi sheikhs for relief from sickness within this general framework. His censure is directed against the practices of “spiritual healing,” that is the relief expected from a Sufi sheikh due to his perceived ascetic authority. However, taking part in healing practices by transmitting medical information does not receive a similar criticism. On the contrary, the anti-Sufi preacher exercises a very similar form of pragmatic authority by acting as the intermediary between the literate and illiterate populations.

The preacher objects to the ascetic authority of sheikhs, which is the belief that the holy man possesses powers as a result of his intensive investment in piety. The exercise of such power was expected of both the living and the dead holy men. Pseudo-Kadızade forbids both: “To believe that sacrificing animals or money for a sheikh (dede) brings about one’s wishes, that is blasphemy;” “If one were to summon [the intercession of] the dead for help, that is

81 Mesâil, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 153a. Some other instances of criticism towards Sufi practices such as singing and whirling are ibid f 155a; f 176 a; f 185b.
Spiritual intercession was expected for the ailment of ills, which was also banned by the preacher: “If a woman were to say ‘My boy fell ill, I shall take him to such and such dede’, she becomes a blasphemer. Her marriage is annulled, too, she must renew her vow.”

Similar condemnations appear in other preacher miscellanies, such as a similar compilation by a pupil of the preacher Üstüvani Mehmed Efendi (d. 1661). Üstüvani writes about similar practices of spiritual healing with disapproval, though he attributes them to preachers in general rather than limiting such practices to sheikhs or dedes. He bans, for instance, a practice whereby “(...) a preacher ascends the pulpit, and recites prayers and exhales onto a string and gives it to people afflicted with malaria [with the purpose of healing] (...).” According to Üstüvani, “... if the preacher who ties the string and the person who receives it both believe this practice to be effective” they have committed a sin (ḥarām).

The practices of spiritual healing therefore were controversial on theological grounds. However, even preachers such as Pseudo-Kadızade who opposed spiritual healing responded to questions about medical questions, therefore still partaking in some form of medical discourse. The intermediary position of the preachers between the learned and the unlearned cultures positioned them as the consultants not for medical knowledge, as it did for a variety of topics related to the written culture.

The preacher as the cultural intermediary received and answered questions in a wide range of topics, as exemplified by the particular case of Pseudo-Kadızade. Some questions

---

82 Mesāl, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 224b.

83 Mesāl, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 155a.

84 Mesāl, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 74a.
Pseudo-Kadızade received are about mythical narratives that center on religious figures. One such question, for instance, is about the exact measures of the flying carpet that belonged to Solomon.\textsuperscript{85} In addition, the preacher answers questions about daily, practical matters. For instance, he opines on whether it is better to chain a prisoner on the neck or on the feet (latter), or how to proceed with commerce if there are no weights available (use barley to measure weights).\textsuperscript{86} The preacher also elucidates the proper way to purify contaminated butter, or to clean stained carpets in some detail.\textsuperscript{87}

Languages, which figured widely with regard to the informal education that preachers received, was an important area in which preachers acted as consultants. A passage in which Pseudo-Kadızade condemns teaching Arabic within the mosque suggests that in practice, Arabic was taught at mosques.\textsuperscript{88} Even though the daily communication at the mosque did not always take the form of full fledged lessons, many questions inquire about Arabic vocabulary. The vocabulary in question consists of specialized words employed in religious discussions, but not used in daily language.\textsuperscript{89}

\textsuperscript{85} Mesâil, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 158 a.
\textsuperscript{86} Mesâil, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 167b.
\textsuperscript{87} Mesâil, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 228b.
\textsuperscript{88} Mesâil, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 201b (Mescid içinde Arabiyyet dersi vermek caiz değildir, mekruhdur). The preacher probably forbids teaching in exchange for money, since he issues similar opinions only when a monetary exchange accompanies learning. In a similar opinion, he forbids copying manuscripts in order to sell them within the mosque. However, copying manuscripts for spiritual edification is permissible. \textit{ibid}, 201b (Mescid içinde satmak için yazı yazmak caiz değildir. İtikaf niyetiyle yazı yazmak, ve derzilik itmek ve doğme urmak yağçe işlese caizdir).
\textsuperscript{89} Mesâil, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 178a (Huşyet bir büyük ademden korkmağa dirler, havf yılandan ve akrebden korkmağa dinir). Other instances of explicating Arabic words are: \textit{ibid} 183a; 230b; 187b; 189a.
Although Pseudo-Kadızade objected to practices whereby religious figures were involved in healing, he had no problem giving medical advice in his sermons, when the questions were posed. In such questions, the preacher evokes the authority of the prophet. Thus, he writes:

The prophet-peace be upon him- says: Cupping on the crown of the head heals seven types of ailments. Mania, leprosy, leprosy [sic.], tootache, headache, blurry vision, and pleurisy. And another hadith states that cupping enhances intelligence, helps memory. However, do not cup on the nape for it causes forgetfulness. It is written in Bostanu’l-Ärifi that eating salty after drawing blood causes itchiness and irritation, and if eating a combination of fish and eggs causes tootache.91

The preacher refers to a body of hadith and Bostanu’l-Ärifi, a book of ethics by Abu’l-Layth Samarkandi (d. 983) in answering questions about cupping.92 The authorities that Pseudo-Kadızade cites evoke the medical-moral discourse that many popular medical works share. In addition to prophetic sayings, the preacher refers to Admonishment for the Unaware (Tanbih al-Ghafilin), a tenth century catechism on individual, societal, and family ethics, alongside advice on diet and a chapter on common diseases.93 Not only the sources, but also the advice that Pseudo-Kadızade provides his congregation are medical-moral in nature. For instance, Pseudo-Kadızade preaches on the virtues of eating very little, supporting his admonishment with stories about early Muslims (sahebe). In another sermon he criticizes people who do not visit the sick

90 Two words for leprosy, cüzüm and baras, are listed consecutively.

91 Mesâil, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f’227a.


fearing contagion, reminding one’s moral duty to one’s fellow Muslims.94 The spiritual and the medical interfuse even more with a question the preacher receives on how to distinguish between epilepsy and demonic possession.95

Some men have seizures. If during the seizures they have mouth foaming, then they are possessed by demons. If they do foam at the mouth then the seizure is not because of possession, but because of the epilepsy disease. Epilepsy is caused by [excessive] black bile. 96

The preacher continues by mentioning that if the afflicted person is epileptic, he must use medication. If he is possessed, he must perform certain ritual prayers. Pseudo-Kadızade’s incursions into medicine are less ambitious than Rızai’s, and he shows no interest in an overarching theoretical framework. However, he demonstrates a general awareness of the medical theory of humors. Moreover, the significance of the inclusion of medical advice within Pseudo-Kadızade’s miscellany is that his congregation considered him as a source of medical knowledge, and asked him questions about widely known diseases or practices. The positioning of the preacher as the consultant in medical matters is a natural result of his position as the intermediary between written knowledge and oral culture.

94 Mesâil, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, f 152a.
95 This question occupied medical writers in other contexts, too. See Ahmed Ragab, “The prophets of medicine and the medicine of the prophet.”
96 Mesâil, MS Yazma Bağışlar 5570, ff 208a-b.
CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most intriguing feature of early modern medicine for a modern reader is the intertwined nature of the medical and moral realms. The integration of the medical and the moral went beyond the theoretical premise that glorified man’s full knowledge of himself, both as body and soul. The theoretical premise had a socio-intellectual incarnation whereby religious authorities were often attributed medical authority. Apart from practices whereby the men of religion were believed to have healing powers as a result of ascetic and spiritual purity, their medical authority had a pragmatic basis. The pragmatic basis was the position of preachers and Sufi sheikhs as the intermediaries between the learned and the unlearned, between the written and the oral.

Medical knowledge was not only practically useful, but also constituted part of a larger cultural canon (adab). Therefore, medical treatments and recipes were transmitted publicly via vernacular works, most notably within Sufi circles. Moreover, the significant place dedicated to personal experience in medical miscellanies allowed readers and copyists to intervene, turning vernacular medical works into conversational-communal works rather than scholarly treatises. The public nature of medicine went beyond the transmission and transformation of vernacular medical works. Miscellanies show that mosque-goers turned to preachers in order to ask questions about medical issues. The access of preachers and Sufis to written medical knowledge provided an important aspect of their communication with the larger public. Whether by
assuming the role of healers, or preparing medications, or providing medical information, the
Sufis and preachers played the role of intermediaries of the medical culture to the public at large.
CONCLUSION

Scholarly explorations of the early Ottoman public have tended to focus on public “events” on the grand scale. However, there exists another public, one centered around and expressed by religious and political discourse. The language of this public – and the evolution of the notion of early modern “public opinion” – centers around the speaking and writing of Ottoman preachers. The language of speaking about the public as the site of political legitimacy was a key element in Ottoman political life and thought. Furthermore, these languages of expressing the legitimacy and significance of public political opinion had large vernacular and popular circulation.

The unlikely key to a political discourse that had large public relevance, and was the equivalent to early modern “public opinion” was the many preachers of the empire. “Unlikely”, since preachers have, exceptions aside, been only seen as local actors effecting noone but their immediate community: the neighborhood at which their mosque is, or the lodge which hosts only members of a certain branch of a certain brotherhood. Preachers stood at the core of a very significant group of religious notables and dignitaries who acted as intermediaries between the state and the society, effectively forming the public sphere of the early modern Ottoman cities. In this dissertation, I study the sense of identity and cohesion expressed by this intermediary group of religious notables, who referred to themselves as sulaha. I study preachers as part of this empire-wide network of religious notables, the sulaha, therefore as a social type, whose influence and cultural-educational community went far beyond their immediate communities.
Modest as their posts were, preachers and their \textit{sulaha} peers had ambitious claims regarding religious and moral authority. First and foremost, the \textit{sulaha} written culture consistently placed moral purity and religious perfection in the extra-institutional — the public — sphere. This discourse had radical implications; it implied that the moral-religious and the political authority of the state were separable, and indeed separate. As a corollary, many political or theological writings produced in the circles of preaching portrayed the authority of the sultanate in a remarkably circumscribed way. In these writings, the preachers underlined the position of the \textit{sulaha} as the guardians of true morality. In such capacity, they were not only teachers of the public, but also the advisors of the sultan. The act of advising was laden with a particular political meaning, where the preacher emphasized not only his role as the true moral guide, but also his potential as the mediator between the state and society. This new discourse, in which the preachers emphasized their intermediary position in society and the \textit{sulaha}’s monopoly on moral authority, finds its expression in a new form of writing about the sultanate, a view of the sultanate that I have called the servant-king (\textit{kul-sultan}).

Preachers became increasingly engaged in the political life of the empire, and in the production of works of political counsel (\textit{nasihatname}). Not only did preachers author counsel, but they circulated these works orally. Preachers composed versified vernacular counsel, at times instructing their followers to memorize parts of such counsel, hence effectively producing not only sermons but also slogans. Hence, in the seventeenth century the genre of political counsel took on a vernacular life and became an integral part of the public sphere.

The intermediation of preachers between the written and the oral cultures was not limited to the genre of political counsel. The increasing prestige of preaching made it one of the coveted
paths to upward mobility. As a result, various fields of study, particularly theological and linguistic subjects, gained appeal outside the madrasa. For example, the study of rhetoric was now pursued in informal circles, as evidenced by the production of the first vernacular commentaries on the madrasa handbooks on rhetoric during the first quarter of the seventeenth century. The vernacularization of formal sciences attested to the emergence of informal education as an end in itself, rather than as an auxiliary to madrasa education. The increasing popularization of informal education and public literacy is also evidenced in the high circulation rate of short works such as treatises and letters, which were used not only to express opinions but provided education material for madrasa pupils.

The vernacular transmission of knowledge formed not only the cultural capital of preachers, but the basis of their practical authority in their communities. The connection between knowledge and authority is particularly manifest in the role of preachers in transmitting medical knowledge. In many narrative accounts, mosques appear as healing places and Sufi sheikhs appear as healers. Even preachers who were squarely against practices of healing, however, consistently provided medical advice to their congregations. The position of the preacher as the medical consultant was the natural result of his access to written culture in a society in which literacy rates were very low. A close reading of these texts of medical advice reveals that preachers did not merely transmit medical knowledge. Early modern medical writing provided space for experience as a source of knowledge, of which preachers made use. Therefore, vernacular works on medicine were highly malleable, every copyist adding their personal experience or that of their peers. In this way, the text became yet another site for the expression of sulaha identity.
I. REFERENCE WORKS


Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (TDVİA), İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988-


II. PRIMARY SOURCES

a. Archival Sources

BOA 73 No.lu Mühimme Defteri (1003-1004/1594-1595).

BOA 92 No.lu Mühimme Defteri (1067-1069/1656-1658).

BOA, Cevdet Maarif 6715.

BOA, İE Ahmed I, No 293.

BOA, İE Vakıf, No.s 1, 2, 15.

BOA, YB No.s 01, 04.

b. Manuscripts


———. Miscellany. MS Süleymanîye Library, Mihrîşah Sultan 300.


İbrâhîm Efendi (Cerrahpaşa Şeyhi). Kitâb-ı Aḫkâm-ı Cenâiz. MS Leiden University Library Cod. Or. 12.043/2.

———. Risâle fi Haḳḳî Duhân el-Habîs. MS Süleymaniye Library Atif Efendi 841.

İsmâ‘il ‘Ankaravî. Hüccetü’s Semâ, MS Süleymaniye Pervet Paşa 255/2; MS Süleymaniye Yazma Bağışlar 7761; MS Süleymaniye Lala İsmail 133M; MS Süleymaniye Ali Emiri 924; MS Beyazid Veliyüddin 1811.


———. Mesnevi Şerhi, Süleymaniye Library Halet Efendi 32.


Şerh-i Mesnevî, Cild-i Sâbi’. MS University of California Los Angeles Library, Collection 896 Box 42 MS 138.

Miîhâhu’l-Balâgha, MS, Atatürk Kitaplığı Osman Ergin Yazmaları 1178.

Minhâcu’l-Fukarâ. MS Leiden University Library Cod. Or. 12.033.

Kadızade ‘İlmi Efendi, Nushu’l-Hükkâm ve Sebeb-i Nizâm, MS Süleymaniye Library Aşir Efendi 327.


Kâtib Çelebi, Mîzânî’l-Hakk, MS Süleymaniye Library Bağdadlı Vehbi 760.

Mehmed Altiparmak, Commentary on Sûrat Yûsuf. MS Millet Library, Ali Emiri Saray 20.

Kâşifü’l-‘ulûm ve Fâtiîu’l-fûnûn, MS Süleymaniye Library Fatih 4354.

Mehmed Şeydâ el-Derviş, Miscellany, MS Leiden University, Cod Or 942.


Miscellany, Süleymaniye Library Hacı Mahmud Efendi 2287.

Sayyid Hasan Rızaî, Miscellany, MS Süleymaniye Library Hacı Mahmud Efendi 3347.

Seyyid Hasan Rızaî, Tezkîretü’s-Sâlikin. İstanbul Atatürk Kitaplığı, Osman Nuri Ergin Yazmaları 41.


Zekeriyâzâde Yahyâ Efendi. Fetavâ-yî Yahyâ Efendi, MS Leiden Cod. Or. 6803. Stories, MS Leiden Cod Or 1552.
Manuscripts of Mixed or Unknown Authorship


*Miscellany*, MS İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı Library 46-50.

*Miscellany*, MS İstanbul Üniversitesi Türkçe Yazmalar 7174.

*Miscellany*, MS Leiden Cod.Or. 1096.

*Miscellany*, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1143.

*Miscellany*, MS Leiden Cod.Or.1155.

*Miscellany*, MS Milli Kütüphane A 5278.

*Miscellany*, MS Süleymaniye Library Çelebi Abdullah 396.

*Miscellany*, MS Süleymaniye Library Reşid Efendi 582.

*Miscellany*, MS Süleymaniye Library Tercüman 362.

c. Published Primary Sources


İbrahim Peçevi. *Tarih-i Peçevi*. İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1283 [1866].


### III. SECONDARY SOURCES


Coldiron, A.E.B. “Public Sphere/Contact Zone: Habermas, Early Print, and Verse Translation” *Criticism*, 46/2, Special Issue: When Is a Public Sphere? (Spring 2004), pp.207-222


280


———. *Coping with the State: Political Conflict and Crime in the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1720*. İstanbul: Isis, 1995.


———. “The Lawgiver as Messiah: the Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleyman,” in Gilles Veinstein(Ed.), *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps, Actes du colloque de*


Flemming, Barbara. “Public Opinion under Sultan Süleyman”. in Halil İnalcık and Cemal Kafadar (Ed.s), Süleyman the Second and His Time. İstanbul: Isis Press, 1993, pp 49-56.


Fraser, Nancy. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy", in Craig Calhoun (Ed.) Habermas and the Public Sphere, Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992, pp. 109–142.


Gara, Eleni, Erdem Kabadayi, Christoph Neumann (Ed.s), Popular Protest and Political Participation in the Ottoman Empire. Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2011.


———. "The Public Sphere and Civil Society in the Ottoman Empire." in Miriam Hoexter, Shmuel Eisenstadt and Nehemia Levzioni (Ed.s), The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies. New York: State University of New York, 2002, pp 65-82.


———. Mevlana’dan Sonra Mevlevilik. İstanbul : İnkılap ve Aka Kitabevleri, 1983.


——. “İstanbul: An Islamic City”. Journal of Islamic Studies I (1990), pp 1-23.


LeGall, Dina. “Recent Thinking on Sufis and Saints in the Lives of Muslim Societies, Past and Present”. IJMES 42 (2010).


Peirce, Leslie. “Changing Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire: The Early Centuries”. Mediterranean Historical Review 19/1 (June 2004), pp 6-28


Quataert, Donald. “Ottoman History Writing and Changing Attitudes Towards the Notion of “Decline”.” *History Compass* 1/1 (2003).


https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/4726204/Prophets%20of%20medicine%20and%20medicine%20of%20the%20prophet.pdf?sequence=1


———. “Ottoman Critics of Society and State, Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries: Towards a Corpus for the Study of Ottoman Political Thought” *Archivium Ottomanicum* 25 (2008), pp 127-150.

———. “Ruler and State, State and Society in Ottoman Political Thought”, *Turkish Historical Review* 4, 2013, pp 92-126.


———. “Puff and Patronage: Ottoman Takrīz-Writing and Literary Recommendation in the Seventeenth Century”. In Çiğdem Balım-Harding, Colin Imber (Ed.s), *The Balance of Truth: Essays in Honour of Professor Geoffrey Lewis*, İstanbul: İsis Yayıncılık, 2000, pp. 395-406


Yazar, Sadık. “XVII. Yüzyıl Şairi Sadıki’nin Mesnevi’den Seçme Hikayeler Tercümesi”. *Turkish Studies 4/7* (Fall 2009), pp 893-927.


------------

"Traveling Pharmaceutical Knowledge: Abridgements and Translations of Ibn al Baytar’s Compendium of Simples (14th-17th Centuries)". *Paper Presented at the annual meeting of MESA (Middle East Studies Association)*, Denver CO, November 24.


