



Marinos Sariyannis

with a chapter by Ekin Tuşalp Atiyas

**OTTOMAN POLITICAL THOUGHT
UP TO THE TANZIMAT:
A CONCISE HISTORY**



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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
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Note on this publication

This volume is to be used as a supplement to the online database of the OTTPOL research project. For summaries of most of the works discussed below the reader may look up the list in the following link: <http://ottpol.ims.forth.gr/?q=authors>

A much more extended version, containing elaborate analyses of all works, historical timelines, more extended introduction and conclusion sections (including a detailed thematic study of some central notions of the Ottoman political vocabulary), large extracts from representative works, and indices, is to be published by E. I. J. Brill editions within 2016 (in the series: Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section I: The Near and Middle East). The reader is strongly advised to consider the printed edition as definitive and to have recourse to it for further reference.

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¹ See also the project website: <http://ottpol.ims.forth.gr/>

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Note on transliteration and citations

Transliteration of Ottoman names and texts is always a thorny problem. For a book relying heavily on literary sources, the problem was even more difficult to solve, since its subject required the transliteration not only of Ottoman Turkish, but also of Arabic and Persian phrases and titles of works, some of which were not composed in an Ottoman environment. For reasons of consistency, we chose to use the Turkish alphabet and the generally accepted modern Turkish orthography (with as less diacritical marks as possible); for the same reasons we simplified published transliterations as well. As usual, terms that are now established in English, such as pasha for *paşa*, vizier for *vezir* or Sharia for *şeriat*, remained in the common form. Names of Arab or Persian authors are transliterated using the system established by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES)* (<http://ijmes.chass.ncsu.edu/docs/TransChart.pdf>). Titles of treatises in Arabic are given following the *IJMES* system as well, when the works are in Arabic or Persian, and following Ottoman vocalization and transliteration, when they are in Ottoman Turkish.

Introduction

Works on the history of Ottoman political thought have never so far attained the length and scope of a monograph. True, some of the most important texts were translated to modern languages from quite early: in the mid-nineteenth century, Walter Friedrich Adolf Behrnauer published three German translations, namely Kâtib Çelebi's *Düsturü'l-amel*, Koçi Bey's first (whose French translation by François Pétis de la Croix was already published in 1725; a French translation of İbrahim Müteferrika's *Usûlü'l-hikem* had also appeared by 1769) and second *Risale*;² Rudolph Tschudi published Lütfi Pasha's *Asafname* in 1910, while Hasan Kâfi Akhisari's *Usûlü'l-hikem* was translated into German one year later.³ However, efforts for a composition were to appear quite late: in his still authoritative 1958 book on Islamic political thought, Erwin I. J. Rosenthal used only Behrnauer's translations to form his appendix on "some Turkish views on politics", which was the first comprehensive discussion of the subject in any non-Turkish language.⁴ One year earlier, M. Tayyib Gökbilgin had published a pioneering article on the reform treatises up to Kâtib Çelebi; and a little later, in 1962, came Bernard Lewis's influential "Ottoman observers of Ottoman decline".⁵ All these were mainly enumerations of the most important authors and summaries of their works, usually with emphasis on the information they offered for the social and military situation of their era, rather than their ideas on society, state and politics. An exception was Niyazi Berkes' and Şerif Mardin's efforts in the 1960s, but those efforts (apart from having their own agendas, now somehow outdated) were focusing on sociopolitical developments rather than political thought *per se*.⁶

² Kâtib Çelebi – Behrnauer 1857; Koçi Bey – Behrnauer 1861; Koçi Bey – Behrnauer 1864 (Behrnauer published Koçi Bey's second treatise as an "anonymous book of advice").

³ Lütfi Pasha – Tschudi 1910; Akhisari – Karácson 1911. Cf. Howard 2007, 142-143 on the European interest in the Ottoman *nasihatname* literature.

⁴ Rosenthal 1958, 224-233.

⁵ Gökbilgin 1991; Lewis 1962. One should add the enumeration of political manuscripts by Levend 1962.

⁶ Berkes 1964; Mardin 1969a.

While the emphasis on economic history had made history of ideas somehow obsolete in the 1970s (Lewis Thomas' book on Na'ima's work and ideas, in 1972, was but an edition of his much earlier dissertation),⁷ a second wave of interest came with the 1980s. Articles like Hans Georg Majer's on critiques against ulemas (1980) or Ahmet Yaşar Ocak's on Ottoman political ideology (1988) were accompanied by more comprehensive attempts, such as an influential 1986 article by Pál Fodor.⁸ Hitherto unknown or underestimated works were discovered, published and/or analyzed: Andreas Tietze and Cornell H. Fleischer made Mustafa Ali's work a must-read for Ottomanists, Rhoads Murphey and Douglas Howard worked on the early seventeenth-century reform treatises, while Virginia Aksan and Kemal Beydilli made some of the late-eighteenth century authors known.⁹ Almost simultaneously, Rifaat Ali Abou-El-Haj's controversial 1991 book on the Ottoman "early modern state" made clear that these texts should not be read at face value but rather in the light of their authors' relative position in the struggle between various strata of the ruling elite.¹⁰

The new millennium brought a new thrust to the study of Ottoman political literature: Original texts are constantly discovered and published, while new approaches and methods of analysis are being applied and scholars have been trying to put forth an agenda for the study of the topic.¹¹ In addition to the recent dissertations by Hüseyin Yılmaz and Heather L. Ferguson,¹² older scholars as well are turning their attention to this subject, which will arguably be one of the dominant themes of Ottoman studies in the years to come. An emphasis in the legitimization of power has somewhat prepared this trend,¹³ while Ottoman economic thought, arguably a part of political theories and ideas, forms the subject of a very recent book.¹⁴ Significantly, the Turkish journal *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* (Bilim ve Sanat Vakfı, 2003) dedicated an issue to "Turkish political history", with

⁷ Thomas 1972.

⁸ Sivers 1971; Majer 1980; Fodor 1986; Ocak 1988.

⁹ Tietze 1982; Fleischer 1983; Fleischer 1986a; Murphey 2009a; Murphey 2009b; Murphey 1981; Howard 1988; Howard 1996; Aksan 1993; Beydilli 1984; Beydilli 1999b.

¹⁰ Abou-El-Haj 2005 (in this second edition, the author has added an Afterword). See the detailed and commented overview of the relevant literature in Yılmaz 2003b, 236-251.

¹¹ Kafadar 2001; Ergene 2001; Yılmaz 2003a; Yılmaz 2003b; Howard 2007; Darling 2008; İnan 2009; Ferguson 2010.

¹² Yılmaz 2005; Ferguson 2009.

¹³ See Karateke – Reinkowski 2005.

¹⁴ Ermiş 2014 (there was also the early attempt of Uğur 1995).

special emphasis on political treatises (among the articles contained, one should note the one written by Hüseyin Yılmaz, which is a superb survey of the state-of-the-art of the history of Ottoman political thought, its methodological problems and the agenda for future research).¹⁵ One has to stress here that M.A. and Ph.D. theses completed in Turkish universities (and often unduly overlooked by non-Turkish scholars) contain a remarkable wealth of material, not only editing and transcribing sources but also with thematic studies.

Still, the state of the art is deplorably poor. Suffice it to say that the most comprehensive survey of Ottoman political thought so far is to be found in the work of a non-Ottomanist, namely Anthony Black, which contains short sections on Ottoman political thought in its general framework (45 out of 352 pages), based on second-hand sources (translations and secondary literature) and with a somehow weak assessment of Ottoman ideas; on the other hand, the most recent effort for a synthesis by an Ottomanist, Linda T. Darling's 2013 book, focuses only on the concept of justice, following it from Ancient Mesopotamia to the modern times (out of 212 pages, no more than 40 concern the Ottoman Empire).¹⁶

Older overviews, until perhaps the beginnings of the 2000s, share two common disadvantages. The first is that they restrain themselves to the major thinkers, the way historians of European early modern political thought used to focus only on innovative or imposing thinkers such as Aquinas, Thomas More or Macchiavelli, ignoring the numerous others who made the background against which innovation was evident, or, on the contrary, the basement upon which innovation was built. As in the famous simile originally introduced by Niccolò Machiavelli,¹⁷ they described only the top mountains ignoring the valleys, giving thus a distorted view of the political landscape. As a matter of fact, the canon of Ottoman political thought established by most of the overviews contains almost exclusively works that have been published; furthermore, very few studies even mention the ethicopolitical

¹⁵ Yılmaz 2003b. The complete reference of the issue is *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, 1/2 (2003): *Türk Siyaset Tarihi – Tanzimat'a kadar*.

¹⁶ Black 2011; Darling 2013c. Uğur 2001 (cf. also Uğur 1995) is a monograph, but as a matter of fact it contains little more than Levend 1962; cf. Douglas Howard's review in *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 13/2 (1989), 124-25.

¹⁷ Machiavelli's quote ("those who make maps of countries place themselves low down in the plains to study the character of mountains and elevated lands, and place themselves high up on the mountains to get a better view of the plains") concerns the understanding of princes and people: Machiavelli – Thomson 1910, 5-6.

treatises of the *ahlak* (*akhlâk*) tradition or the Sunna-minded authors of the seventeenth century, while the eighteenth century is usually absent (with the exception of specialized studies).

The second disadvantage might be attributed to a sort of “local Orientalism”: Oriental studies of the first half of the twentieth century emphasized the innovative and philosophical merits of the great medieval thinkers of the Near East, such as al-Farabi, al-Ghazali or Ibn Khaldun. When Arabists like Bernard Lewis or Erwin I. J. Rosenthal turned their attention to the Ottoman political authors, they tended to see either a sterile imitation of their great Arabian and Persian prototypes, or a senseless series of concrete advice on military and administrative matters, with no merit for political theory as such; all the more so, since the Islamic philosophers who were translated or imitated were mostly those considered as minor ones (with the exception of Nasireddin Tusi, whose influence was long overlooked). The worth of Ottoman political works was usually measured against the degree of innovative spirit in comparison to medieval predecessors, rather than the way they responded to actual problems of the Ottoman realities; or, in the words of Hüseyin Yılmaz, what was sought for was the “worth”, not the “meaning” of Ottoman political theories.¹⁸ The traditional image of the “decline” of the Empire after the mid-sixteenth century, virtually unchallenged until the early 1990s, played no small a role in this view.

Scope and aims: the quest for innovation

Contrary to the dominant image of the Ottoman Empire, innovation and reform seem to have been a constant feature of Ottoman administration. Some authors did realize the need for reform and advocated for it, such as Na’ima in the early eighteenth century; others, such as Mustafa Ali in the late sixteenth century, perceived changes as a challenge for the traditional order and suggested a return to what was considered the “Golden Age” of the Empire, that is, the first half of the sixteenth century. The process of transformation culminated, one can say, in the first half of the nineteenth century, when a huge program of reforms was implemented, the well-known *Tanzimat*. The traditional view of this change puts emphasis on its Westernizing aspects and attributes it to the influence of Western Europe. However, recent studies emphasize the internal dynamics of early modern Ottoman society and

¹⁸ Yılmaz 2003b, 285.

administration rather than external factors, treating the developments of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century as a course toward modernity; these views have also been described as biased in their turn, since they should be studied in the context of the long discussion on the relation of the Ottoman Empire with the West.¹⁹ The book at hand will seek to give answers, or at least to set the framework for questions such as: did Ottoman political thinkers precede administrators in proposing reform, or did political writers feel surpassed by developments with which they did not agree? What was the relation of religion-oriented ideological currents, such as the Kadızadeli movement in the mid-seventeenth century, with like-minded reforms in the tax and landholding systems, and how did traditionalist political thinkers react to those? Was there an observable conscience of an urgent need for change in Ottoman political thinking of the eighteenth century, or were reforms such as the “New Army” (*nizam-ı cedid*) of Selim III in the 1790s or the massacre of janissaries by Mahmud II in 1826, initiatives of strong rulers and of a limited circle of advisors? What was the relation between European (and/or Iranian) thought and Ottoman political developments, through immigrants and renegades? Was there an internal dynamics, such as innovative political thinking in the second half of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, which led (or at least contributed, since one cannot deny the European influences) to the radical reforms of the Tanzimat period?

Thus, the approach to Ottoman political thought that this book proposes differs from earlier (Ottomanist) approaches in three major aspects. First, it seeks to encompass more than the classical major political thinkers, in order to establish contexts and currents, to locate innovation, “secondary” trends, and so forth. Studies focusing only on major authors, such as Kınalızade Ali Çelebi, Koçi Bey or Na’ima, have the disadvantage of showing the history of political theory as a series of great minds that either recapitulated the ideas of their predecessors, be they fellow Ottomans or Persian, or departed from them. On the contrary, a research encompassing also as many minor writers as possible would show the general trends of each period, and consequently the degree to which a “major” thinker used more common mental tools or innovative ideas; besides, it would track ideas that were

¹⁹ See, for instance, the overview by Quataert 2000, 64ff. and 141-46; cf. the early thoughts by Berkes 1964, 26ff. and the more recent views by Abou-El-Haj 2005, 81ff.; Yılmaz 2008; Tezcan 2010a; Yılmaz 2015.

current among lesser-known authors, but maybe were not propagated by the major ones. Innovation, as well as tradition, can also be a collective effort, according to the dynamics of a society and the political and ideological climate of an era, and this can be shown only by extending the field of research to a vast scope of authors and works, rather than a few geniuses.²⁰

Secondly, along with traditional political treatises, other kinds of sources that might contain pieces of political theory or advice are also added to the corpus used for this work. Such sources include moralist treatises, historiographical works, copybooks of protocol and official correspondence, administration manuals, literary works, treatises on theology and *kalam*, collections of legal opinions (*fetvas*), encyclopaedic works, and so forth.²¹ This will help to locate political thoughts and ideas which circulated within a broader context of both theory and practice, as well as to extend the field of political ideas to a wider range of intellectual and administrative groups of the ruling elite.

Thirdly, a history of Ottoman political thought cannot be limited to a simple enumeration of works and ideas. A collateral task must be the objective to explore some recurrent themes and their development throughout the period under study. Some scholars have, for instance, investigated the development and transformation of notions such as justice, world order or state.²² It is necessary to proceed to a study of themes and notions, such as: the virtues demanded from the ruler; the place of the Sultan with regard to the state apparatus; the ideal structure of society; the views towards social mobility; the views about old laws (*kanun-ı kadim*) vs. innovation (*bid'at*); the place of religion; the shifting equilibrium with Western Europe; and so forth. In this way, we may explore the political vocabulary of the Ottoman theorists and state and conduct a comparative study of the political treatises, heretofore limited to short periods or only a few authors.²³ This systematic study of Ottoman political

²⁰ For lists of Ottoman political works see Levend 1962; Çolak 2003. The list gets even bigger if we consider that political thought is also contained in moral treatises (see the exhaustive list by Levend 1963).

²¹ Cf. the notes by Yılmaz 2003b: 253-258. For other efforts to incorporate such sources into the study of Ottoman political thought, see e.g. Tezcan 2001; Neumann 2000; Murphey 2005; Sariyannis 2008; Riedlmayer 2008; Yılmaz 2006: 165ff.; Howard 2008; Holbrook 1999; Fazlıoğlu 2003; Al-Tikriti 2005.

²² Ergene 2001; Hagen 2005; Sigalas 2007; cf. also Sariyannis 2011a.

²³ A similar, but incomplete, attempt for comprehensive treating is Lewis 1988; for the Tanzimat period, Doganalp-Votzi – Römer 2008.

texts ultimately seeks to put these texts together in some identifiable ideological currents, with a view to linking them with socio-political developments.

Chapter I

From emirate to Empire

Born as a small emirate in what used to be the Seljuk borderlands, the Ottomans had a huge advantage over the other emirates which filled the power vacuum created after the Mongol invasion of 1243: theirs was situated on the frontier line with the land of the infidels, Byzantium, and thus offered splendid perspectives for a life of plundering, on the one hand, and religious fervor, on the other. In fact, it is exactly the equilibrium between those two factors that forms the center of the scholarly debate on the origins of the Ottomans. This debate, initiated by Fuad Köprülü (who, in his turn, was answering the claims of Gibbons on the strong Byzantine character of the early Ottomans) and his face-value acceptance of the tribal origin of Osman's people from a branch of the Oğuz tribes, produced Paul Wittek's famous "*gazi* thesis". Wittek surmised that Osman's tribal nucleus gathered together a bunch of warriors of varied origin, all motivated by the spirit of *gaza* or "the Holy War", i.e. the prospect of war against the Byzantine neighbours. The ensuing debate might have been based on a misunderstanding, as if Wittek meant a kind of Muslim Crusaders:¹ most critics focused on the absence of religious zeal in the entourage of the first Sultans and maintained instead that the early Ottoman emirate had mostly tribal or syncretistic connotations. On the other hand, scholars closer to Wittek's thesis stressed that, for the nomadic or semi-nomadic warriors that formed the core of Osman and Orhan's armies, *gaza* had a meaning closer to plunder than to "Holy War" as the latter was meant in the centuries to come.² An Anatolian text on *gaza*, probably originated in the Karasi emirate, was recently used to show that the frontier understanding of the term differentiated it from the "more tolerant" *cihad* (*jihad*) of

¹ I believe that Rudi P. Lindner, for instance, oversimplifies when he claims that Wittek's "extraordinary solution" can be reduced to "single-minded devotion to the holy war as a powerful engine of Ottoman history" (Lindner 2007, 10). In a way, the modern debate on "Wittek's thesis" has moved the subject from whether the unifying factor of the early Ottomans was their tribal unity or war opportunities, to whether *gaza* meant religious fervor or just plundering the enemy. Wittek, however, never insisted on the religious character of the early Ottoman *gaza* (or, at any rate, never made this character his central argument). I find, for instance, that Heath Lowry's definition of Ottoman *gaza* (Lowry 2003, 45ff) is not as far from Kafadar's or even Wittek's as he considers it to be.

² On the debate see the recent works of Kafadar 1995; Lowry 2003; Lindner 1983 and 2007; Imber 2011, 201ff.; Darling 2011.

the ulema, making it more fit for the early fourteenth-century freebooters; Colin Imber, however, analyzed the same text and showed that in fact it only recapitulated “the standard Hanafi rules of Holy War”, and that *gaza* had never any difference from *cihad*, being always one of the obligations imposed on the Muslim community.³ However, Imber’s interpretation may enforce this alternative understanding of the *gazi*-thesis (one may call it the *akıncı*-thesis, since it stresses the role of raiders rather than holy warriors): the ulema were quick to try to embrace the heterogeneous freebooters of the Anatolian emirates, and tried to instill the notion of *gaza* in order to enforce the religious cover of their plundering the infidel.

Indeed, the nature of the emergence of the Ottoman state produced some peculiarities in the creation of an intellectual elite that could articulate a full-fledged political ideology. The very presence, let alone influence, of educated ulema or other individuals among the warrior entourage of the first decades of the fourteenth century is an object of scholarly debate;⁴ and the same goes, with even more uncertainty, as for the ideas motivating the warriors themselves. As we saw above, it has been supposed that their *Weltanschauung* was structured along the notion of Holy War or *gaza*; it has been argued, in sharp contrast, that the concepts of Holy War and of the *gazi* warrior were imposed much later on a group of tribal soldiery with syncretistic mentality; it has been advanced that the notion of *gaza* had more connotations of plunder than of religion. For sure, settled economy, state-like administration and a layer of educated scholars who offered their services in a competition with heterodox dervishes had emerged by Orhan’s reign; among these scholars, Byzantine sources even record Jewish or Christian renegades competent to engage in conversations on the superiority of the Muslim faith.⁵ One may argue that a conflict between old warriors trying to defend their interests, on the one hand, and incoming scholars seeking to impose the imperial visions of the Persian and Seljuk traditions, on the other, is the ideological representation of this political and social conflict between the *gazi* (or *akıncı*, if one prefers this term) military environment and the growing imperial hierarchy which was more and more prevailing in the Ottoman infrastructure.

³ Tekin 1989; Imber 2011, 59ff and 201ff. On the other hand, Kate Fleet showed that *gazi* was not the *par excellence* title of early Ottoman Sultans, as stipulated by Wittek and his followers (Fleet 2002).

⁴ Kafadar 1995, 109ff; Lindner 2009, 120; Imber 2009, 212-214; Tuşalp Atiyas 2013, 43ff.

⁵ Vryonis 1971, 426ff; Zachariadou 1992; Balivet 1993.

Accordingly, the first section of this chapter will seek to detect the political ideas of the former in a somewhat reversed way: by tracing the opposition to Mehmed II's imperial plans after the capture of Constantinople. Indeed, the wave of general histories composed during his successor Bayezid II's reign bear almost in their entirety the mark of this Sultan's "reactionary" policy (the term belongs to Halil İnalcık): although none of them speaks bad of Mehmed II, they tend to obliquely criticize his imperial policy and what they perceive as "greediness", meaning his seizure of private and *vakf* (*waqf*) lands and their transformation into "state" land (*miri*).⁶ These measures, as we will see in the next chapter, harmed both the old warlords and dervishes, i.e. exactly the groups emerged in the first period of the emirate and struggling to keep a pace with the establishment of an administrative and ulema hierarchy.

The opposition to imperial policies as an indicator of *gazi* political ideas

Now, apart from some Byzantine authors, there are no contemporary sources for the first formative years of the Ottoman emirate, a lacuna that led scholars such as Colin Imber to speak of "a black hole" concerning early Ottoman history.⁷ With the exception of some anonymous chronicles (*takvim*), the oldest extant narrative of Ottoman history must be the account by Yahşi Fakih, son of Osman's imam; it deals with events up to the time of Bayazid I (1389-1402) and was incorporated into Aşıkpaşazade's Ottoman history, composed toward the end of the fifteenth century. Aşıkpaşazade incorporated Yahşi Fakih's chronicle (he had been a guest in his house in Geyve during an illness in 1413) and supplemented it with a continuation up to 1478, while at about the same time Uruc Bey (as well as an anonymous "History of the House of Osman) seems to have used a summary of it along with other sources (mainly folk narratives centered around specific *gazis* or saints) in order to compose his own chronicle. Aşıkpaşazade and Uruc's additions, which cover the largest part of the fifteenth century, seem to stem from different sets of sources, with the former relying more on his personal experiences. On the other hand, Halil İnalcık showed

⁶ İnalcık 1962, 164-65 (but cf. the cautionary remarks by Mengüç 2013). On this transformation see Özel 1999 (recapitulating the older literature), who argues that the reform had a fiscal rather than land character. Özel also maintains, based in a register of the Amasya region, that the scope of the reform was much smaller than usually thought, but admits (243) that the image may be altered as far as it concerns the Western Anatolian and Balkan lands.

⁷ Imber 1993.

that the second earlier extant source, Ahmedi's *İskendernâme* (composed between 1403 and 1410), used another, now lost, narrative, on which also relied other mid- or late-fifteenth-century authors such as Şükrullah, Rûhî or Neşrî.⁸

Yahşi Fakih and Aşıkpaşazade

Thus, our first written sources for the ideas circulating during the early phase of the Ottoman emirate are Yahşi Fakih's chronicle (as far as we can discern it in Aşıkpaşazade's history), on the one hand, and Ahmedi's poetical history, on the other, both composed soon after the defeat in Ankara. These sources are very different in both the milieu that originated them and their expected audience. The first is a product of the old generation of *gazi* fighters, aiming to praise their own role in the formation of the Ottoman emirate and to foster their place in the structure of the empire in the making, while the second is a product of a former courtier of another emirate (the Germiyan) wishing to secure his position in the turbulent times that followed the defeat at Ankara, where he seems to have chosen one of the wrong sides (that of prince Süleyman Çelebi). Moreover, as Yahşi Fakih's chronicle was incorporated in Aşıkpaşazade's Ottoman history, one cannot be very sure about which part of the sociopolitical critique belonged to him and which part to his copyist. Nevertheless, the various layers of narratives and ideas superimposed (or coexisting, as in Kafadar's metaphor of a "garlic-like" rather than "onion-like" structure of early Ottoman historiography)⁹ on Yahşi Fakih's text may be said to enrich rather than conceal the original spirit of the first warriors: both Yahşi Fakih and Aşıkpaşazade came from the same environment and do not seem to have been influenced by the Persian traditions on government circulating in the neighbouring emirates, as other writers (such as Ahmedi or Şeyhoğlu) did. As it will be seen below, although one may detect ideas peculiar to Yahşi Fakih or Aşıkpaşazade, the pieces of political advice or evaluation expressed by both belong to the same set of ideas and emanate from the same milieu, enabling us to examine the text as a whole in this aspect and to consider it a representative mirror of the *gazi* mentality. Thus, it might be appropriate to begin (somehow paradoxically) with Aşıkpaşazade's work, although it is not the earliest

⁸ On early Ottoman historiography see the detailed accounts by İnalçık 1962, Ménage 1962 and Ménage 1964.

⁹ Kafadar 1995, 102: "...'garlic' is a more apt metaphor for certain aspects of early Ottoman historiography than 'onion' because it recognizes a plurality of voices without assigning any of them, even the earliest, the monopoly over a 'core reality'".

specimen of Ottoman thought and although, in the long run, it came to represent an opposition to, rather than a description of, the imperial paradigm.

A descendant of the great early Ottoman mystic, Aşık Pasha, Aşıkpaşazade Derviş Ahmed was born around 1400 near Amasya. He took part in numerous campaigns and battles in Rumeli during the reign of Murad II and the beginnings of that of Mehmed II and, after 1453, settled in Istanbul, where he set to write his chronicle. He seems to have died, almost a centenarian, in the last years of the fifteenth century (according to a tradition, in 1481). His chronicle (*Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, “Stories of the House of Osman”) reaches 1478, while additions up to 1502 contained in some manuscripts may have been made by a copyist belonging to the circle of Korkud, Bayezid II’s son.¹⁰

Yahşi Fakih’s chronicle, as detected within Aşıkpaşazade’s text,¹¹ contains some interesting insights on early Ottoman political practice and the way *gazi* milieus conceived it. An interesting feature is the constant use of the third plural to denote collective decisions. A survey of other early chronicles, such as Mehmed Neşri or Kemalpaşazade, corroborates the conclusion that the succession of both Ertoğrul by Osman, around 1299, and Osman by Orhan in 1324, were more of a tribal procedure of election than a mere hereditary succession from father to son; in contrast, authors closer to Mehmed II’s imperial policies (such as Karamanlı Nişancı Mehmed Pasha) or later historians simply state that Osman and Orhan took the place of their fathers.¹² What is important for our aims here is not the tribal character of the first Ottomans, but the fact that records of it remained valid throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; i.e., the *gazi* worldview of a “society of warriors” with a ruler being a *primus inter pares* was still alive (admittedly, in its swan song) even when Sultans such as Bayezid I or Mehmed II worked hard to impose an imperial model of sultanic will.

¹⁰ Aşıkpaşazade – Atsız 1949, 82. Two different versions have been published, the second incorporating the first: Aşıkpaşazade – Giese 1929 and Aşıkpaşazade – Atsız 1949. On Aşıkpaşazade see Kafadar 1995, 96ff and *passim*; İnalçık 1962 and 1994; Ménage 1962; Zachariadou 1995; Özdemir 2013. İnalçık 1994b, 139-143, considers the final part of the chronicle as original, as he argues that Aşıkpaşazade lived from 1392/3 to 1502.

¹¹ On the parts attributed to him see Zachariadou 1995 and cf. Kafadar 1995, 99ff.

¹² Cf. Lindner 1983, 21-23, for a description of tribal procedures of election as reflected in the early chronicles; and Sariyannis (forthcoming), for a more detailed analysis of such expressions in Ottoman historiography.

There are instances in which one cannot be sure whether a story or a judgment belongs to Yahşi Fakih or to Aşıkpaşazade. For instance, the famous passage relating the installation of a judge and the organization of the market in the newly conquered Karacahisar contains a story on the man from Germiyan who asked to buy the market toll and the indignant reaction by Osman. When the community (*bu kavım*) insists, on the grounds that market tolls are an old and established custom, the Sultan condescends, but stresses that whenever a person is given a timar, this cannot be taken from him without a good reason, and that upon this person's death the timar must be given to his son. Even if the story as a whole belongs to Yahşi Fakih, the reference to the inalienable of timars must be Aşıkpaşazade's addition, as it is an almost direct critique of Mehmed II's confiscating policies.¹³ The same goes for the description of Osman's meager property as registered upon his death.

Bayezid I's defeat in Ankara, the one and only major defeat Ottoman chroniclers had to account for in this period, is the locus *par excellence* of the political critique they express.¹⁴ The typical criticism to Bayezid focuses on his alleged greediness: i.e., an attitude similar to that attributed to Mehmed II by his critics, namely the allocation of revenues to the state rather than to the old military aristocracy. Indeed, one may say that the core of Aşıkpaşazade's political advice lies in the refutation of Mehmed II's imperial policy. His side is clearly that of the old military aristocracy, of the free *gazi* warriors who found themselves marginalized by the imperial policies and the growing role of the janissary standing army.¹⁵ He clearly tries to underestimate the janissaries' alleged relationship with the revered Hacı Bektaş, while he emphasizes the generosity of the first Sultans, both to the poor and to dervishes, as well as their activity in charitable works and *vakfs*. This emphasis to the virtue of generosity and the underlying disapproval of centralizing tendencies of the state is to be found in a wide range of Ottoman thinkers, as we are going to see below.¹⁶ More direct criticism to Mehmed's policies can also be found, although

¹³ Lindner considers this story a "salutary legend" and a posterior addition to the chronicle; true, it shows an ulema influence incompatible in his view with the tribal realities of Osman's time, but the very fact that Karacahisar belonged to the Germiyan emirate before may reinforce the authenticity of the story: see Kafadar 1995, 103-4 and cf. Lindner 2007, 79. On the Karacahisar incident cf. also Imber 2011, 187-188.

¹⁴ On the legitimization problems posed by the Ottoman defeat, see Kastritsis 2007, 195ff.

¹⁵ See e.g. İnalçık 1994b, 144-147.

¹⁶ Cf. on this Sariyannis 2011a.

always with a careful allotment of the responsibility to bad counselors. However, the ultimate responsibility lies with the Sultan: speaking of public kitchens and other charitable works, Aşıkpaşazade observes in the same vein that the purpose of such works is a benefit for the other world (*ahret*), not this one (*vilayet*); in this respect, the intent of viziers follows that of the Sultan (*niyyetleri padişah niyyetine tâbi olur*).¹⁷

The introduction of imperial ideals

It was not only tribal warriors that filled the ranks of the first Ottomans throughout the fourteenth century. Statesmen and ulema from the neighbouring emirates, which (being closer, both geographically and culturally, to the old Seljuk sultanate) had a higher degree of town culture and closer ties to the Persian political traditions,¹⁸ soon begun to settle in or around the Ottoman court, exerting their influence in the ongoing process of the transformation of a tribal emirate to a kingdom and an empire-to-be. A surviving document from 1324 and Ibn Battuta's description of 1331 indicates that Orhan's entourage already included scholars competent in Persian and Arabic.¹⁹ The antagonistic nature of this influx can be seen in the frequent accusations against the "corrupt ulema" in the texts representing the earlier military aristocracy, as we saw before. A series of such scholars, educated in thriving cities such as Kütahya, Amasya or even Cairo, were quite early in writing works of political advice, direct or indirect, in an effort to establish their own position in the newly born Ottoman apparatus; one of the first was Ahmed bin Hüsameddin Amasi, whose work we are going to examine in the next chapter as it inaugurates a tradition of translating Nâsir al-Dîn Tûsî's systematic moral and political theory. Most of the rest, however, turned to the more practical *adab* or "mirror for princes" literature: a tradition of advice with moral grounds which sought to give concrete counsel for what is now called governance, based in the old Persian concept of justice.²⁰

Ahmedi

¹⁷ For other texts expressing anti-imperial opposition during the late fifteenth century see Sariyannis 2008, 128-132.

¹⁸ On the intellectual life of the Anatolian cities under the Seljuks and the successor emirates, see Vryonis 1971, 351ff.; Ocak 2009, 376ff and esp. 394ff, 406-421.

¹⁹ Kafadar 1995, 139; Lindner 2009, 120; Tuşalp Atiyas 2013, 43ff.

²⁰ The literature on Islamic *adab* works ("mirrors for princes") is vast: see for instance Lambton 1971; Leder 1999; Dakhliia 2002; Aigle 2007; Marlow 2009; Black 2011, 91ff. and 111ff.; Darling 2013b; Yavari 2014.

The most famous of these “invaders” is undoubtedly Taceddin İbrahim b. Hızır Ahmedi (ca. 1334/5-1412), due to the use of his work in the endless debate on Paul Wittek’s *gazi* thesis. A native of Anatolia, Ahmedi went to Cairo to study and then entered the service of the Beg of Germiyan, Süleyman Şah. In some unspecified time he entered the Ottoman court and, after the battle of Ankara, served under Süleyman Çelebi (d. 1411). Among his various poetical and moral works, the most important and well-known is his *İskendernâme* (“Book of Alexander”), since it includes a world history, the last part of which is the *Tevârih-i Mülûk-i âl-i ‘Osmân* (“History of the kings of the House of Osman”), covering the period from Ertoğrul up to Süleyman Çelebi; the latter is named a “martyr”, which means the work was perhaps completed after his death. Although Ahmedi eventually had chosen the losing side in the Ottoman *interregnum*, his work was abundantly copied throughout the fifteenth century, but strongly criticized during the next century as to its poetical merits.²¹

It has been suggested that Ahmedi’s work is more a “mirror for princes” than a historical epic.²² At any rate, his political views can be seen scattered in his work, especially in the eulogies of the various Sultans; they are influenced by the Persian tradition insofar they stress the importance of personal virtues of the Sultan, and especially of justice. Ahmedi notes, for instance, that kings previous to the Ottomans were infidels or showed cruelty; Ottomans came in the end, just like God bestowed man with power, life and intelligence (*kudret ü ‘akl u hayat*), with the latter coming last as the most important of all three. We may discern the emphasis to the ulema, as opposed to their demonization by the more *gazi*-oriented authors, as well as the almost total absence of critique against Bayezid I (a *topos* of the opposition).²³ Ahmedi’s stress on justice can be interpreted as an affirmation of the role of the Sultan: the king is the dispenser of justice and it is his personal charisma that maintains the power of the dynasty. Unlike the infidel kings doomed to fall, as described for instance by Yazıcıoğlu, Ahmedi’s world admits the possibility of infidel

²¹ Ahmedi – Silay 2004, xiv. We use here Silay’s edition; other transcriptions or facsimiles include Ahmedi – Atsız 1949 and Ahmedi – Ünver 1983. On Ahmedi’s work see İnalcık 1962, 159-162; Ménage 1962, 169-170; Fodor 1984 and 1986, 221; Silay 1992; Sawyer 1997; Kastritsis 2007, 34-37; Turna 2009.

²² Fodor 1984.

²³ It has been put forth that Bayezid’s reaction upon the Mamluk Sultan’s death (he thought that Egypt would now be his instead of reflecting on death) is in a way conceived as a *hubris* resulting in his defeat on the hands of Timur (Sawyer 1997, 92-93; Ahmedi – Silay 2004, 21 [v. 280-282]).

or cruel kingship; all the more, his treatment of the Mongol kings and of Timur implies that when justice is absent, only the utmost cruelty may keep a dynasty in power, especially when it is presented in the form of law (as in the Mongol case).²⁴ It was Timur's oppressive and devastating policy that outpowered Bayezid's piety and justice, not the latter one's greediness or neglect. On the other hand, one should note Heath Lowry's suggestion, i.e. that Ahmedi wished the young prince Süleyman to avoid doing the mistakes his father did, and so was implying that Bayezid's mistake was that he turned against the Muslim rulers of Anatolia. Lowry points out, for instance, that the Anatolian conquests of Murad I are systematically downplayed, while Ahmedi stresses the religious zeal of the first glorious rulers to show that their success was linked to their struggle against the infidel.²⁵

Şeyhoğlu Mustafa (and Fadlullah)

But if Ahmedi's work contains only scattered pieces of what we may reconstitute as his world vision, there were other contemporaries of his who tried to transfer wholesale the Iranian "mirrors of princes" tradition to the Ottoman culture. For one thing, translations of such texts in Anatolian Turkish started quite early to appear: the most striking example is Kay Kâ'ûs (Keykavus) b. İskender's *Kâbüsnâme*, a famous book of moral advice composed in Persian in western Iran in the late eleventh century.²⁶ *Kabusname* was first translated as early as the mid-fourteenth century, while other translations date in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries:²⁷ a total of no less than five translations had been made by 1432. It is interesting to note that the first translation, or rather adaptation, was made by a pious person who did not always agree with the sometimes libertine ideas of the original. Whereas, for instance, Kay Ka'us' advice is to divide one's wealth into three equal parts for household expenses, saving and adornments or other luxury, the translator replaces the last category with charity (*ahiret yoluna*); similarly, he is "somewhat more negative to merchants" than the original.²⁸ Other popular works of this kind

²⁴ On early Ottoman attitudes against the Mongols cf. Tezcan 2013; see also below, Chapter III.

²⁵ Lowry 2003, 15ff. and cf. Kastritsis 2007, 36-37 and 197.

²⁶ On Kay Ka'us' work see Rosenthal 1958, 78-81; Fouchécour 1986, 179ff.; Black 2011, 131-132.

²⁷ Kay Kaus – Birnbaum 1981, 4-7; Yılmaz 2005, 34-35. On the dating of the first translation see Kay Kaus – Birnbaum 1981, 9-30. The manuscript published by Birnbaum can be dated somewhere in the 1370s or early 1380s, but as it is not an autograph the translation must have been made one or two decades earlier.

²⁸ Kay Kaus – Birnbaum 1981, 31.

include Najm al-Din Râzî (known as Dâya; d. 1256)'s thirteenth-century *Mirsâd al-ibâd*, translated several times throughout the fifteenth century.²⁹ Both were also translated by Şeyhoğlu Mustafa, another courtier of Germiyan who changed sides (even earlier than Ahmedî) and brought with him all his knowledge of the Persian political tradition, which had as it seems started to appeal to Bayezid I.

Şeyhoğlu seems to have been born in 1340 in the Germiyan emirate; he must have been a high official in the Germiyan court before his moving to the Ottoman emirate after the death of Germiyanoglu Süleyman Şah (1387). His works include Turkish translations of Persian ethical works (*Kabus-nâme*, *Marzuban-nâme*) and original works (*Hurşid-nâme* [1389], *Kenzü'l-kübera*), all concerning moral and political advice. It is this latter work (*Kenzü'l-küberâ ve mehekkü'l-ulemâ*, “Treasure of the great and touchstone of the learned”), completed in 1401 for some further unspecified “Paşa Ağa bin Hoca Paşa”, which may arguably be termed as the first political treatise *stricto sensu* that was originally composed in Ottoman Turkish (Amasi's work, with which we will deal later, was to follow by half a decade). Of course, the term “originally composed” must be taken *cum grano salis*, since the work is essentially a partial translation of Razi's *Mirsâd al-ibâd* (1230/1), with additions by the author;³⁰ as a matter of fact, from Razi's mostly Sufi treatment on soul and spirit Şeyhoğlu adapted only the fifth and last part, concerning “the wayfaring of different classes of men” (and he omitted its last chapters, i.e. those concerning merchants, farmers etc., concentrating thus in the government apparatus and the ulema).³¹ A particular feature in Şeyhoğlu's work, a large part of which consists of poetry and hadiths, is divided in four chapters, is the reference to the three “situations” or “states” (*hâlet*) of the Sultan, namely in relation with his own self, with his subjects and with God. Şeyhoğlu analyzes the duties each situation imposes, stressing the need for generosity and justice. The same happens with viziers, who also have three “situations”, in relation to God, to their king, and to the people and army,

²⁹ Razi – Algar 1982; Yılmaz 2005, 35ff.; on Razi cf. Lambton 1956a, 138-139; Lambton 1962, 110-115; Black 2011, 136-137.

³⁰ Razi – Algar 1982, 394ff. Razi's work was also translated into Ottoman Turkish in 1421/2 by Mevlana Kasım b. Mahmud Karahisari as *Kitâbu irşâdi'l-mürîd ile'l-murâd min-tercümeti kitâbi Mirsâdi'l-ibâd*.

³¹ Şeyhoğlu – Yavuz 1991. Very few scholars have studied Seyhoğlu's work from the point of view of political thought: Unan 2004, 313-352; Yılmaz 2005, 36; Darling 2013b, 238. I was not able to check Varlık 1979.

and who in all these situations must display the four virtues (justice, honesty, courage and wisdom). Şeyhoğlu also speaks of the ulema, *müftis*, judges and preachers, dividing them into three categories: those who know the external truth, i.e. the knowledge emanating from the Prophet's words and deeds, those who know the interior one, i.e. knowledge emanating straightforwardly to the soul, and those who are acquainted with both.

Şeyhoğlu's work, formulaic and commonplace as it may seem, represents a tradition of political thought that must have prevailed in the ulema circles throughout the fifteenth century. One will see many of his ideas reiterated in other works of advice even in the sixteenth century; on the other hand, his political vocabulary is interesting, since some of the standard terms of Islamic ethicopolitical terminology were translated into Ottoman Turkish for the first time. Before leaving the Germiyan court, Şeyhoğlu had translated into Turkish (through a Persian translation by Sa'd al-Din al-Varâvinî) another work of this kind, Marzuban b. Rustam's *Marzuban-name* (late tenth century).³² The lasting popularity of such texts is shown by the fact that Şeyhoğlu's translation was adopted more than a century later under the title *Düstûrû'l-mülk vezîrû'l-melik bera-yı Sultan Süleyman Han* ("Rules of sovereignty, i.e. the vizier of the king, for Sultan Süleyman"), by a certain Fadlullah, judge in Tebriz.³³ The only available information about the author is given in the title of the work, where he is described as *Fadlullah el-kadî bi't-Tebriz fi'l-Madî*, i.e. Fadlullah, judge in Tebriz. Since Tebriz was briefly taken by the Ottomans twice in this period, i.e. for less than ten days in 1514 and for some months in 1534-35,³⁴ he must have been some kind of temporary judge in the second period. However, we cannot exclude the possibility of a Safavi judge deserting to the Ottomans. Kadı Fadlullah's essay is a collection of stories (containing several sub-stories each), mostly with animals and mainly of Iranian origin on morality, avoidance of unnecessary expenses, the rights of brothers, the importance of the peasants being content with their ruler, the value of friendship, the importance of thought and knowledge, justice and so on.

³² Kadı Fadlullah – Altay 2008, 108-110. The edition of Şeyhoğlu's translation by Zeynep Korkmaz (Şeyhoğlu – Korkmaz 1973) was not accessible to me.

³³ Kadı Fadlullah – Altay 2008.

³⁴ Mid-July to spring: Uzunçarşılı 1949, 2: 338-340. The ms. is dated in 23 Muharem 946 (June 10, 1539); however, the author states that it was composed during the vizierate of Lütü Pasha, which started in Safer 946 (beg. in June 18; Uzunçarşılı, op.cit., 537).

Sinan Pasha

It might be fit to finish this chapter with Sinaneddîn or Sinan Yusuf Pasha (also known as Hoca Pasha), an interesting and important personality who played an important role in Ottoman intellectual life toward the end of the fifteenth century. In the trend we are describing, Sinan Pasha is clearly a follower of the moralistic, a bit commonplace, “mirror for princes”-styled Persian tradition. His inclusion of political advice into an ethical system brings him near the Tusian thinkers (with whom we will deal in the next chapter); his peculiar position in the Mehmed II vs. Bayezid II “conflict” (as well as his Sufi connections) creates a link to the military and dervish-styled opposition to the former, as seen in Aşıkpaşazade or Yazıcıoğlu’s works; but overall, he seems closer to the imperial model than to the “military democracy” dreamt of by these contemporary authors. All the more, his descendancy from two prominent early Ottoman ulema families (his father was the first judge of Istanbul) has him closer to this scholarly milieu than to the older warlords.

Born probably ca. 1440 in Bursa, Sinan Pasha was appointed as teacher in various *medreses* in Edirne and later in Mehmed II’s *sahn-i semaniye*, together with the post of the Sultan’s *hoca*. In 1470 he became vizier and in 1476 Grand Vizier. Within a year he was dismissed and put to prison; after a collective protest by ulema (who allegedly threatened of burning their books and leave the realm), Mehmed II released him and sent him as a judge and teacher to Sivrihisar, where he stayed till the Sultan’s death. Bayezid II restored him as vizier and as a teacher in Edirne; he died in 1486. Sinan Pasha is the author of legal and mathematical treatises, a voluminous work on *tasavvuf* (*Tazarru’-nâme*) and a collection of saints’ biographies; the work that interests us here, *Maârif-nâme* (“Book of Knowledge”; also known as *Nasîhat-nâme*, “Book of advice”), was completed during Bayezid’s reign, i.e. after 1481, and is impregnated by his bitterness and his complaint of fate and of the transitory nature of all things worldly.³⁵

Written in the mixture of prose, verse and rhymed prose which was to be perfected in the late sixteenth century, the *Maârif-nâme*—written for “the

³⁵ *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. “Sinan Paşa, Hoca” (H. Mazıoğlu); Yılmaz 2005, 38-40; Darling 2013c, 131. His *Maârif-nâme* was published in facsimile (Sinan Paşa – Ertaylan 1961) and recently in transcription and modern Turkish translation (Sinan Paşa – Tulum 2013).

commoners” who read Turkish—is a voluminous compendium of moral advice, one of the first in a long series of Ottoman ethical works. Sinan Pasha embarks on the usual complain of the present world and then begins a full-fledged set of advice, emphasizing the transitory and deceptive nature of this world; a *leitmotiv* obviously linked to both his Sufi affiliation and his bitter experience under Mehmed II’s whims.³⁶ The Sultan is urged to practice justice, to respect the Holy Law and the ulema, to protect the wealth of his subjects, and so forth. It will be seen, in the next chapter, that Sinan Pasha’s work stands somewhere in between the more “naïve” and moralistic “mirror for princes” tradition, on the one hand, and the systematic exposition of a moral system based on a theory on human soul, on the other. He cannot be termed a precursor of this second trend, as there had been other exponents before him (Amasi) or contemporary with him (Tursun Beg); but he stands in a point of transition, just like his era was an era of transition toward the claims for universal dominion put forth by Selim I and his successor, Süleyman the Magnificent.

Shifting ways of legitimization

Simplistic as it may surely be, the distinction we made between the older generation of frontier warriors and the scholars coming from the neighbouring emirates seems to follow the Ottoman history of ideas well into the fifteenth century. The images of Ottoman dynasty created by these two traditions may be discerned in the different ways of legitimization offered by the various authors of the period.³⁷ Earlier chronicles, such as Aşıkpaşazâde’s or various anonymous texts that express the culture of the early raiders, give emphasis to the religious spirit of the first *gazis*, even though they tend to forget the inclusion of Christian warriors and notables in their ranks. Such texts abound in legendary feats of saints and dervishes, stressing their high status in the entourage of the first Sultans;³⁸ Oruç and other late fifteenth-century historians, more learned in Islamic traditions, even link Osman’s genealogy with Ebu Muslim, the Abbasid champion and hero of an epic set in Horasan. But as the Ottoman dynasty became more and more settled and institutionalized, developing a more regular army than the now obsolete free warlords and raiders, the meaning of

³⁶ In a remark clearly addressed against Mehmed, he stresses the transitory nature of the world as follows: “every village that you considered yours, is now either a private property or a *vakıf*” (Sinan Paşa – Tulum 2013, 530: *her köy ki benim diye gezersin, geh mülk ü geh vakıf olup durur*).

³⁷ All that follows is based on the analytical study by Imber 1987; cf. also Imber 1995, 139-146.

³⁸ See e.g. Vryonis 1971, 392-396; Ocak 1993a; Ocak 1993b.

gaza was more and more taking the proper Islamic content of Holy War, instead of loot and plundering which seems to have been its understanding by the early Ottomans. Ahmedi's emphasis on the *gazi* as an adamant enemy of infidelity (an emphasis much discussed in the context of the Wittek thesis debate) falls into this reformulation of Sultanic legitimacy: in later texts as well, the Sultan becomes more and more the champion of orthodox faith. The emphasis goes now to his personal charisma, rather than to the individual warriors and dervishes, and of course to the faith in general rather than to the loot from the *gaza* raids.³⁹ Stories of dreams, where a saint or the Prophet himself invests the leader of the dynasty with divine grace, can also be put in this tradition. On the other hand, an emphasis to the personal charisma (*devlet*) of the Sultan was very much used during the civil strife after the battle of Ankara.⁴⁰

Apart from religious justification, however, there had to be a dynastical one as well. Different accounts of how the Seljuk sultan Alaüddin had granted the region of Söğüt to Osman's father, Ertoğrul, were systematized by Neşri, who polished away time discrepancies and even put forth the suggestion that the Seljuk ruler had somehow bestowed his inheritance to Osman. Again Aşıkpaşazade's *gazi*-oriented version has Osman defy Alaüddin and proclaim himself independent, but Neşri's "legalist" version prevailed in the long run to the point that Feridun Bey's celebrated collection of chancery documents, issued in 1575, contains the alleged patents sent by Alaüddin to Osman.⁴¹ In the same vein, mythical genealogies celebrating the origin of Osman were created, beginning with Yazıcıoğlu Ali's (not to be confused with Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican) adoption of Ibn Bibi's history of the Seljuks in ca. 1425.⁴² These genealogies, in various forms, traced Ertoğrul's ancestors back to Oğuz (and himself back to Noah); again the version favored by Neşri became definitive, as it provided both a grandfather with a king's name (Süleymanşah) for Osman and a lineage coming from the senior branch of the Oğuz family.⁴³ Moreover, in Bayati's version, composed for Bayezid II's brother Cem in 1481, several ancestors (including

³⁹ Cf. Neşri – Unat – Köymen 1987, I: 287; Flemming 1994, esp. 66-67.

⁴⁰ Kastritsis 2007, 206-207. On this notion cf. Sigalas 2007; Sariyannis 2013, 87-92.

⁴¹ Imber 1987, 15; on Aşıkpaşazade's version cf. İnalçık 1994b, 152; on Feridun cf. Vatin 2010; Kastritsis 2013 and see below, Chapter III.

⁴² On the importance of genealogical trees for political legitimacy and the science of genealogy before the Ottomans see Binbaş 2011.

⁴³ Neşri – Unat – Köymen 1987, I, 55-57.

Oğuz) are linked to prominent Prophets of Islamic theology, combining thus legitimacy by descent and by Islam; and indeed, it was this emphasis to true and orthodox Islam that would prevail as a tool of legitimization from the sixteenth century onwards.⁴⁴ On the other hand, different groups invented different stories; two texts of *kapıkulu* origin, namely the *Historia Turchesca* and Constantine Mihailović's memories, preserve a tradition having either Osman or his father peasants. Colin Imber notes insightfully that "it is conceivable that [this tradition] arose from the direct experience of the *devşirme* men who served in the *kapıkulu* corps".⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Bayatlı – Kırzioğlu 1949, 380-394 (he cites all Osman's ancestors beginning not from Noah but from Adam); cf. Imber 1987, 19-20. A detailed discussion of these genealogies was made by Wittek 1925. On the afterlife of imperial genealogies in the sixteenth century see Flemming 1988.

⁴⁵ Imber 1994, 128, 136. The same tradition is also preserved in the chronicle of Oruç. On the presence of such legitimizing legends in Byzantine and post-Byzantine Greek chronicles see Moustakas 2011 and especially 2012.

Chapter II

Ahlak literature and the *falasifa* tradition

It probably is not a coincidence that the rise of the Ottomans as a universal empire called for an ideology more elaborate than the “mirrors for princes” or *adab*-styled eulogy of justice and piety (although translations or adaptations of Najm al-Din Razi or al-Ghazali by no means ceased to appear during the sixteenth century).¹ An imperial project enframing Constantinople, the promised land of Islam, and the Holy Cities of the Prophet, would need something more: a comprehensive theory which would encompass the whole human society, raising the moral virtues demanded of a ruler to a universal system explaining both the individual and the society at large. The Ottomans did not have to invent such a system: they had only to revert to an existing Persian tradition, drawing in its turn from the Aristotelian concept of man, society and state.² This was provided mainly by the thirteenth-century work of Nasir al-Din Tusi (*Akhlâq-e Nâsirî*, or “the Nasirean ethics”) and, in a later stage, his late fifteenth-century continuator Jalal al-Din Davvani (*Akhlâq-e Jalâlî*, or “the Jalalean ethics”); both used al-Farabi’s tenth-century synthesis of Aristotelian and neo-Platonic ethics and politics (together with Ibn Sina and al-Miskawayh’s views on economics and morals, respectively).³ This kind of *ahlak* literature claimed a comprehensive view of the world as a unity, as it was developed in three escalating levels (individual, family, society) applying the same analytical tools (namely, the division of entities to components) in all three: i.e., speaking in turn of human ethics and the faculties of the soul, of household arrangements and more generally of economy, and of the components of society and methods of governance.

¹ Yılmaz 2005, 24-25, notes two such translations by Ebu’l-Fazl Münşi and Kemal b. Hacı İlyas.

² On the itineraries of Aristotle’s political ideas in the Medieval Mediterranean and Middle East see the studies collected in Syros 2011.

³ On Tusi see Lambton 1956a, 141-142; Donaldson 1963, 169-182; Madelung 1985; Fakhry 1994, 131-141; Black 2011, 149-157; on Davvani see Lambton 1956a, 146; Donaldson 1963, 182-184; Rosenthal 1958, 210-223; Anay 1994; Fakhry 1994, 143ff.; Black 2011, 188-189. On al-Farabi, see Rosenthal 1958, 113-142; al-Farabi – Walzer 1985; Fakhry 1994, 78-85; Fakhry 2000, 38-47; Black 2011, 57-74. Ibn Sina’s economics were in their turn influenced by the Arabic translation of the work of a neo-Platonist author, Bryson: see the detailed edition and study by Swain 2013. On al-Miskawayh’s moral theory, see Donaldson 1963, 121-133.

In some way, this turn corresponds to a higher level of institutionalized education which permitted the acquaintance of Ottoman authors with these elaborate moral systems (after all, it was Mehmed II who established the religious teaching institutions in Istanbul and organized the ulema hierarchy); on the other hand, just as it had happened with the earlier introduction of the “mirror for princes” (*adab*) tradition, among the first to introduce these ideas were people educated nearer the old centers of Islamic scholarship and who were migrating toward the new power. After all, Tusi’s other and in a sense more important works (concerning astronomy, mathematics and so on) were also translated and widely read in the Ottoman medreses from almost the beginning of the fifteenth century, while some of them remained in use throughout the next three centuries as well.⁴

A precursor of ethico-political philosophy: Ahmed Amasi

Ottoman literature needed not to wait until the conquest of Istanbul for someone to introduce the Persian moral and political systems. We already mentioned Ahmed bin Hüsameddin Amasi, a contemporary of Ahmedi and Şeyhoğlu Mustafa’s but whose work inaugurates a much more “philosophical” tradition. Amasi, as revealed by his name, was a native of Amasya and came from a local family of scholars, Sufis and officials, the Gümüşlüzade. Information on his life is very scarce; it seems that he was taken as hostage to Shirvan by Timur, together with his uncle Pir İlyas Sücaeddin, the mufti of the city, and that they returned to Amasya after Timur’s death in 1405.⁵ It is not clear whether he is the same person as Şemseddin Ahmed Pasha from the same family, *nişancı* and later (1421) vizier. His work, *Kitab-ı mir’atü’l-mülûk* (“Book of a mirror for kings”),⁶ was most probably submitted to Mehmet I in 1406, when the latter was re-establishing his base in Amasya.

Amasi used (or, indeed, translated—although he makes no references in his text) two famous sources of Persian political philosophy: the first was Tusi’s *Akhlâq-e Nâsirî*, the outstanding systematization of Aristotelian and post-Aristotelian ethics; the second, al-Ghazali’s *Nasîha al-mulûk*, the prototype of Sufi-oriented political thought, a reflection of which we saw before in Şeyhoğlu Mustafa’s work. Amasi

⁴ See Aydüz 2011.

⁵ Amasi – Yılmaz 1998, 1-3; cf. Kastritsis 2007, 72-73.

⁶ Amasi – Yılmaz 1998. Little has been written on Amasi’s work: Fleischer 1983, 218 fn9 and 1990, 69fn.; Yılmaz 2005, 23-33; Darling 2013b, 238; Darling 2013c, 131.

omitted or shortened the parts on theological, social or moral topics of both his sources in order to concentrate in the political theory part; thus, it is clear that he intended to enlighten the young ruler as to the virtues demanded of a prince, rather than give a full description of Persian ethical theory.

Amasi's work is divided into two parts of unequal length, following his two sources, Tusi in the first and al-Ghazali in the second. The first part, designated as a systematic treatise on morals consists of three chapters, dealing with the first principles (*mebâdî*), the purposes (*makasid*) and the practical courses or measures (*tedbir*) of ethics. Amasi enumerates the three faculties of the human soul (of reason, appetite and passion), and explains that happiness (*sa'adet*) is composed of four parts, called also virtues, namely wisdom, courage, honesty and justice (*hikmet, şeca'at, 'iffet, adalet*). These are the cardinal virtues and they are based on the three faculties of the human soul when used with moderation (*i'tidal*). Amasi then proceeds in establishing the need of mankind for mutual help in order to survive; some have to serve others, and some have to give to others in order for justice and equality to exist. Three things are required for the preservation of justice, namely the law of God, a human ruler (*hâkim-i insani*) and money. Amasi then examines the need for humanity to be organized into families, studies economics as a source of sustenance, and sets to demonstrate the need of mankind for settlement (*temeddün*). He explains that a person has to be put higher than the others by Godly inspiration; this person was called by the ancient sages *namus* (Greek νόμος, "law") and his orders *nâmûs-ı ilahî*; respectively law-giver (*şari'*) and Sharia by the Muslim ones. Similarly, in the field of issuing orders (*takrir-ı ahkam*) a person has to be exalted also with God's confirmation (*te'yid-i ilahiyle*); the ancient called him "absolute king" (*melik-i ale'l-ıtlak*) and the Muslims *imam*. Amasi makes distinction between the "virtuous government" (*siyaset-i fazıla*), called also *imamate*, where the *imam* sees the subjects as friends and treats them with justice, and the "imperfect" one (*siyaset-i nakısa*), called also *tyranny* (*tagallüb*), where a tyrant, himself a slave of his appetites, turns the subjects into his servants and slaves. Justice, thus, is the sole element of differentiation among the various kinds of government. Amasi introduces the idea of the nature equilibrium between the four elements (water, fire, air, earth) which correspond to the four classes or categories of people. In this simile, the men of the pen, i.e. ulema, judges, scribes,

engineers, astrologers, doctors, poets etc., correspond to water; the men of the weapons (Amasi describes them as warriors of the Holy War, men of courage and assistants of the dynasty, who guard the world order), are likened to fire; the men of transactions (*ehl-i mu'amele*), merchants and craftsmen correspond to air; and finally, the farmers, without whose assistance no sustenance can be held, are likened to earth. As for the second part of Amasi's work, based on al-Ghazali, it is programmatically devoted to "advice and stories" and thus belongs to the *adab* tradition, rather than to the *ahlak* as is the rest of his work.⁷

The classic formulation of the ethical theory

There are three ideas which enter Ottoman political thought with Amasi's work and which were to be repeated by many authors to come, even if they did not adhere to the general "Tusian" trend we are describing in this chapter: firstly, the quartet of the cardinal virtues, which was to play a central part in moral and political theory throughout the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁸ The theory of the virtues, coming from a combination of Aristotle's and Plato's ethics, had been elaborated (together with the theory of the threefold partition of the soul) in an Islamic context by al-Kindî in the ninth century, Ibn Sina in the tenth and al-Miskawayh in the early eleventh century; it played also a major role in the European late Middle Ages and Renaissance, as it was central to the definition of the ideal ruler till the reconsideration of *virtù* by Macchiavelli.⁹ Secondly (and together with the preponderance of justice among the four virtues), the idea of the "circle of justice", a recurrent theme of Persian and Ottoman political ideology of which we are going to see several formulations, differing in some points of each other.¹⁰ Thirdly, the division of society to four classes and their simile with the four elements, with the

⁷ In fact, some of them illustrate points in al-Ghazali's text which Amasi omits; see Amasi – Yılmaz 1998, 78. On al-Ghazali's ideas see Lambton 1954; Rosenthal 1958, 38-43; Donaldson 1963, 134-165; Laoust 1970 and esp. (on the part used by Amasi) 148-152; Lambton 1981, 107-129; Fakhry 1994, 193ff.; Black 2011, 97-110. On the authorship of *Nasihât al-muluk* see Khismatulin 2015.

⁸ On the cardinal virtues see Sariyannis 2011a; on the evolution of the idea in Islamic philosophy, see R. Walzer's detailed article in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (s.v. "akhlak").

⁹ See Skinner 1978, 1: 69ff. and esp. 128ff.; Bejczy – Nederman 2007. Cf. also the quite different perspective of Central Asia as represented in the four major characters in *Kutadgu Bilig*, namely justice, fortune, intellect/wisdom, and ascetic illumination (Yusuf Khass Hajib – Dankoff 1983, 3 and passim). On al-Kindi's adaption of Aristotle's metaphysics see Fakhry 1994, 67-70; Fakhry 2000, 22-29; on Ibn Sina's enumeration of the virtues, Donaldson 1963, 108; on Miskawayh, Donaldson 1963, 121-133; Fakhry 1994, 107-130.

¹⁰ This notion comes from a very old Iranian and Middle Eastern tradition (Darling 2008; Darling 2013c); it is also to be found in the Central Asian *Kutadgu Bilig* (İnalçık 1967, 263).

underlying idea that the equilibrium among them is a prerequisite for the world order.¹¹ Although Plato's philosophy and Galenic medicine had put forth the need for equilibrium in human society, the tripartite division of society in Western political thought did not offer itself to a one-to-one simile; Iranian tradition, on the other hand, had developed the notion of a four-fold division. It seems that the traditional division to warriors, priests, artisans and farmers appeared first in Firdawsi's early-eleventh-century epic; this allowed Tusi to add the idea of a one-to-one correspondence of these classes with the four elements.¹² Moreover, it was Tusi who first included merchants as well to the "artisan" class.

Amasi's work seems to have passed relatively unnoticed, both in the Ottoman times (only two manuscripts are known) and in the study of Ottoman ideas. This is why most scholars consider Tursun Beg's introduction to his history of Mehmed II the first instance of Persian political-*cum*-moral theory in Ottoman letters. A member of an important family of the military class, Tursun Beg was born after 1426. Apparently he had *medrese* education, and was one of the initiators of Ottoman *münşi* or scribal literature;¹³ he was a *protégé* of Grand Vizier Mahmud Pasha Angelović, probably entering his service in the mid-1450s. He served in various posts of the financial branch for about forty years, finally becoming a *defterdar*. Tursun Beg retired to Bursa some time in the early 1480s, and he probably died there some time after 1488. This is the date he embarked on his *Târih-i Ebu'l-Feth* ("History of the Conqueror"), a historical work covering the period 1451-1488.¹⁴ This work is preceded by a long introduction on the theory of state and rulership (MI5a-25a, T10-30, B12-41), which is fundamentally a synopsis of Tusi's ideas as we saw them before in Amasi's treatise.¹⁵ Interestingly, Tursun chooses to avoid discussing most of the "political" aspects of Tusi's theory; he prefers instead to focus on the theory of the princely virtues, emphasizing as we shall see mildness (not a cardinal virtue in its own

¹¹ On the pre-Ottoman genealogy of this idea cf. Syros 2013; Tezcan 1996, 121.

¹² Tusi's main source, Ibn Sina, had kept Plato's three-fold division into rulers, artisans and guardians: Rosenthal 1958, 152.

¹³ On this literature cf. Tuşalp Atiyas 2013 and cf. below, Chapter III.

¹⁴ The work has been published in transcription (Tursun Beg – Tulum 1977), in facsimile and extensive English summary (Tursun Beg – İnalçık – Murphey 1978), and recently in Italian translation (Tursun Bey – Berardi 2007). On Tursun's patron, Mahmud Pasha, see Stavrides 2001; on his political ideas see İnalçık 1977, 65ff; Tursun Beg – İnalçık – Murphey 1978, 20-24; Fodor 1986, 221-223; İnan 2003; İnan 2006; İnan 2009, 113-114; Yılmaz 2005, 40-41; Görgün 2014, 413-417.

¹⁵ Tusi's work is referred to explicitly (Tursun Beg – Tulum 1977, 16). Another source is the *Chahar maqala* by Nizamî-i 'Arudî-i Semerkandî (probably composed in 1156); see İnan 2006.

right) as embodied in his patron, Mahmud Pasha, who met his death under Mehmed II's executioners. Contrary to what the title of Tursun's history may imply, it is far from a hagiography of Mehmed II; as a matter of fact, Tursun seems to have taken pains to criticize—discretely—his subject and rather eulogize his successor Bayezid.

Indeed, Tursun rephrases Amasi's chapter on human associations, stressing that man tends to create societies by nature and for this purpose he tends to associate with other people, but that due to the differences between men a special kind of arrangement (*tedbir*) is needed, called government (*siyaset*). Tursun then enters in Tusi's moral theory (citing him explicitly), enumerating the three faculties in the human spirit and the respective virtues, whose moderation is called justice. Next Tursun Beg starts to describe his late patron, Mahmud Pasha, emphasizing his mildness and generosity. Clearly, Tursun uses his patron's alleged words as his own political advice. One may even suspect that he did not care much for the elaborate ethical system he borrowed from Tusi: he begins with it so as to introduce smoothly Mahmud Pasha's encomium and his stress on mildness, for lack of which he suffered, as Tursun clearly implies. After Mehmed II's death, Mahmud Pasha had acquired a status of the perfect statesman, both an exponent of Mehmed's imperial project and a victim of his centralization efforts and ruthless nature; the Pasha's exaltation even reached the point of creating an anonymous hagiography, depicting him as a saint with supernatural powers. It is to be noted that copies of this legend were often grouped together with the anti-imperial texts on the "blessed Edirne" vs. "cursed Constantinople", which circulated widely in the anti-imperial circles of this period.¹⁶ Putting his political advice in the mouth of a posthumous champion of the anti-Mehmed opposition, Tursun enforced both his criticism against Mehmed's policies and his own position in the new environment after Bayezid's enthronement.

İdris-i Bitlisi

An equally important figure that also played a significant role in early sixteenth-century Ottoman letters was İdris b. Hüsameddin Bitlisi. Born in Bitlis some time between 1452 and 1457, he served under Uzun Hasan and his Akkoyunlu successors before adhering to Bayezid II in 1500 and living in the Ottoman state till

¹⁶ See Stavrides 2001, 356ff. On the legend, particularly, see *ibid.* 369-396; Reindl-Kiel 2003.

his death in 1520. Bitlisi was thus part of an intellectual bureaucracy which was characterized by an international mobility and a continuous shift in allegiances, like Amasi, Ahmedî or Şeyhoğlu Mustafa (or, nearer to Bitlisi's own era, Musannifek from Herat, who came to Anatolia in 1444 and composed to works on government for Mehmed II and for Tursun's patron, Mahmud Pasha)¹⁷; this "international class" seems to have played a major role in introducing Persian moral and political ideas to the Ottoman *milieu* and in shaping Ottoman institutions and ideas. An accomplished scholar and bureaucrat, but also a Sufi of note, he became a not-so-successful courtier in Istanbul; he had more success under Selim I, who used him as an envoy and informant during the beginnings of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict. As a matter of fact, Bitlisi played a crucial role in persuading the Kurdish chieftains to declare allegiance to Selim I.¹⁸ He is best known, however, for his various historical and other works, among them the famous *Hesht bihisht*, i.e. the history of the Ottoman dynasty in Persian verse. In the epilogue of this work, Bitlisi tries to justify Selim's takeover of power by stating that during the late years of Bayezid II's reign, the world was full of disorder because the old Sultan had abandoned all affairs to his officials or proxies (*nevvab*), believing that they would act for the best. He stresses that the Sultan should possess the four cardinal virtues and argues that among Bayezid's children only Selim was suitable; his elder brother, Ahmed, is dismissed with the argument that competent as he might be, he had a similar disposition to his father's and thus was also favoured by the (corrupt) officials.¹⁹

Bitlisi wrote another work which is directly drawing from the same tradition as Amasi or Tursun Beg. *Qanûn-i shehinshâhî* ("Imperial law") was also written in Persian, probably during the reign of Selim I, and is a typical treatise on moral and political virtues, based on previous similar literature.²⁰ Bitlisi sets to analyze the meaning of kingship, caliphate and world order, and then describes some of the virtues leading to right government. He then deals with the four cardinal virtues a ruler has to master, along with their respective secondary virtues. Then he examines

¹⁷ Yılmaz 2005, 37-38.

¹⁸ Imber 2009, 39; for a comprehensive and insightful biography of Bitlisi see now Sönmez 2012.

¹⁹ Bitlisi – Başaran 2000, 126ff.

²⁰ Hasan Tavakkolî's edition and translation of the text (Bitlisi – Tavakkoli 1974) was inaccessible to me; I used the selective Turkish summary (omitting the non-political parts) in Akgündüz 1990-1996, vol. 3, 13-40 (and facs. of the Persian ms. in 41-84). On Bitlisi's ideas see Yılmaz 2005, 82-86; Sönmez 2012.

the practice of kingship. This part of the work is closer to the *adab* literature; however there is a degree of abstraction unusual for other “mirrors for princes”. Bitlisi’s treatise constitutes a full-fledged exposition of the Persian political and moral tradition. True, the discussion of governments (originating to al-Farabi), included by Amasi, is missing, in favour of a more weighty place for individual ethics; but on the other hand, this lack is substituted by an *adab*-styled discussion of concrete advice. Here we have both an account of the soul and virtues theory and one of the first instances of the dichotomy of the administrative apparatus, i.e. the antagonism between military and scribal service. As a matter of fact, Bitlisi’s sources are two-fold: on the one hand, the moral theory comes from Jalal al-Din Davvani’s *Akhlâq-e Jalâlî*, an improved and extended version of Tusi’s ethical system. On the other, for the last set of rules, with their emphasis to the conduct of imperial councils and the care for the peasants, Bitlisi reverts to the famous *Siyâsetnâme* by Nizâm al-Mulk (Nizâmü’l-mülk), a work belonging more to the “mirror for princes” or *adab* genre. This kind of synthesis appears for the first time in the Ottoman letters: Amasi or Tursun presented only Tusi’s philosophical system, while Şeyhoğlu or Sinan Pasha stressed either abstract moral advice for the ruler or a somehow ethical reading of earlier *adab*. With Bitlisi, the literary unity of the Islamicate cultures from Anatolia to Khorasan shows one of its last shinings: his synthesis was a superb specimen of the fertile mobility of this international bureaucratic stratum he belonged to; but while Persian poetry continued to function as a model for Ottoman *literati*, political thought took (for the most part) a distinct way from then on, all the more since the heretical position of the Persian dynasty in the Ottoman eyes made its political views rather reprehensible.

The consummation: Kınalızade Ali

Amasi, Tursun and Bitlisi’s works did much to popularize this coupling of political advice with moral philosophy in a complete explanatory system, based mainly on Tusi’s and Davvani’s elaboration on al-Farabi and Ibn Sina’s neo-Aristotelian theory. Their efforts, however, seem not to have been crowned with success: all three works were scarcely popular in their age, with very few manuscripts copied; furthermore, as we are going to see in the next chapters, the major political thinkers of the sixteenth century tended to abandon this approach in favor of a more

down-to-earth, “mirror for princes” style. There were a few authors, mostly immigrants like Bitlisi, who (in a similarly unpopular way) tried to transfer the Tusian system: contemporary with Bitlisi, Şemseddin Cahramî (Jahramî) came probably from Iran (Jahram is small town near Shiraz) and wrote his work probably entitled *Siyâsiya berâ-ye Sultân Selîm* (“Government for Sultan Selim”) in 1513. The work is structured in three parts, concerning administrating oneself (*siyâsat-i nafs*), one’s household (*siyâsat-i khâssa*) and the commons (*siyâsat-i ‘amma*). Cahramî considers the strong ruler necessary for good administration and presupposes that he has full control of his state; thus, he stresses the need for his maintaining not only high moral standards but also complete physical health, which is placed above the Sultan’s piety as the latter is permitted to drink wine. Like Bitlisi, Cahramî also endeavours a synthesis of Tusian ethical theory with the “mirror of princes” style of advice: he distinguishes the “ruling elite” (*khâssa*) into inner (*andarûn*) and outer (*bîrûn*); the latter, in its turn, consists of ten governmental offices, for which the author gives specific principles. Deeper into the sixteenth century, Muzaffar b. Osman el-Barmakî, better known as Hızır Münşî (d. 1556), was serving the court of a local dynasty in Azerbaijan and fled (probably because of Safavid interference and his own Sunni allegiances) first to Georgia in 1533 and then to Trabzon. His work (*Akhlâq al-atqiyâ wa sifât al-asfiyâ* or “The noblest ethics and the purest qualities”, dedicated to Süleyman) is composed in an eclectic style, as it copies from different sources (including Tusi and al-Ghazali); its content covers the three areas of ethics (individual, household, politics) as discussed by Tusi and his followers. What is interesting is that in his case (as, one may remember, in Tursun Beg) the political part comes first, while the following parts are mostly discussing the virtues of the individual.²¹

There was still to be a major expounder of the “philosophical trend”, in fact the most systematic and comprehensive of all, even if we consider his work the swan song rather than the heyday of this trend. Son of a kadi and poet, Kınalızade Ali Çelebi (1510-1572) had a formidable education and a prodigious career. He studied in Istanbul and became an assistant (*mülazim*) of the *şeyhülislam* (1539-41) Çivizade (d. 1547, a strong opponent of Sufî thought and especially of Ibn Arabî, who was

²¹ Yılmaz 2005, 104-107 (on Cahramî) and 101-104 (on Hızır Münşî).

dismissed for attacking a number of Sufi icons).²² Having eventually submitted his works to the opponent of the latter, Ebussu'ud Efendi, Kınalızade was appointed as *müderris* in various medreses in Edirne, Bursa, Kütahya, finally Istanbul. In 1563 he was sent as a judge to Damascus, then to Cairo, Bursa and Edirne. In 1570 he was appointed judge of Istanbul, and next year Anadolu *kazaskeri*. His son, Kınalızade Hasan Çelebi, was the author of a famous collection of poets' biographies.

Kınalızade wrote various treatises on *fikh*, history, correspondence and Holy Law. His most important work, however, is the famous *Ahlâk-ı Alâî* ("Sublime Ethics"). Composed in 1563-1565, while the author was judge of Damascus (where he also discussed his work with Mustafa Ali, then *divan kâtibi* of the beylerbey), it soon became a very widespread, popular and influential work ("one of the 'bestsellers' of the Ottoman bookmarket from the 16th to the 18th centuries", as characterized by Baki Tezcan²³). It constitutes an ambitious enterprise to encompass a full view of ethics in all three levels: individual ethics, or the governance of self, household economics (the governance of the family and the house) and political theory (the governance of the city, *recte* society).

Kınalızade's analysis is primarily based in the well-known categories of ethics, as expounded by his predecessors; apart from Tusi and Davvani, he also used al-Ghazali's philosophy and Ibn Sina's terminology.²⁴ Kınalızade deals first with the faculties of the soul, their moral qualities and the cardinal virtues; then, he examines what could be described as "economics" or the governance of one's household (*ilm-i tedbirü'l-menzil*), including servants. Here Kınalızade, explains that economics may be viewed in three ways: from the point of view of revenue, of keeping hold of the former, and of its expenditure. Concerning the sources of revenue, there are several categorizations: one is bipartite, i.e. revenue that comes through gain and by choice (e.g. trade or craft) vs. revenue that comes incidentally, such as gifts or inheritance. This far we have read in Amasi; but then Kınalızade describes another, more

²² On Çivizade and his views see Repp 1986, 244ff. and cf. below, Chapter III.

²³ Tezcan 2001, 110. Printed in Bulak in 1833, this major work was published in transcription only in 2007 (Kınalızade – Koç 2007; a modern Turkish version was also published in 1974 and 1975). Tezcan 1996, 65ff gives a detailed synopsis of the book, noting carefully the respective sources (Tusi and Davvani); cf. also the detailed analyses in Tezcan 2001; Oktay 2002; Unan 2004; Ermiş 2014, 60-71 and 81-110.

²⁴ See Tezcan 1996, 67 fn. 244, 81 fn. 294. On Kınalızade's philosophical and psychological ideas cf. also Yurtoğlu 2014.

“economic” theory, namely speaking of revenue from commerce, craftsmanship or agriculture. A third view sees four ways of revenue, adding leadership (*emaret*), i.e. pensions and salaries (*vezayif ü ulufat*) coming from the ruler. Kınalızade then proceeds in analyzing craftsmanship (*sına’at*), in fact studying the professions and their possible categorizations. Finally, he enters the domain of political theory, dealing with the need of humankind for settlement and the beginnings of political society (drawing mainly from Tusi and Davvani). Kınalızâde draws (in much more detail than Amasi, who used only Tusi’s theory) the well-known Aristotelian distinction (*via al-Farabî*) between the virtuous and the imperfect state (*medine-i fazıla, medine-i gayr-ı fazıla*), following closely Davvani and his Platonic interpretations.²⁵ The virtuous state is only of one kind, while the imperfect ones have three forms: In the “ignorant state” (*medine-i cahile*), it is the bodily powers rather than the faculty of reason that lies behind the need for association (accordingly, there can be the “irascible ignorant state” or the “appetitive ignorant state”, *medine-i cahile-i sebu’iyye* and *medine-i cahile-i behimiyye*); in the vicious or wicked state (*medine-i fasıka*) the faculty of reason exists among the people, but faculties of the body prevail; finally, in the “erroneous state” (*medine-i dalle*) people use their reason but consider wrong for right. The “erroneous state” can be either infidel, like the Frankish or Russian states, or Muslim, like the Kızılbaş (Safavid Iran).

In a short essay on the rise of states, which otherwise comes as usual from Davvani’s work, Kınalızade introduces a crucial difference: whereas Davvani had the traditional eulogy of unity and harmony among the various classes (enforced by the ruler’s justice), our author stresses the unity of the ruling class, noting specifically that their numbers are very small in comparison to its subjects.²⁶ Apart from the apparent allusion to the Ottoman example, it is tempting to see here an echo of Ibn Khaldun’s *asabiyya* or “esprit de corps”, the solidarity allowing small nomadic tribes to prevail over large settled populations, only to fall in their turn when their members become too accustomed to luxury. Here, thus, we might have the earliest recorded influence of Ibn Khaldunism in the Ottoman letters.²⁷ After illustrating this point with historical

²⁵ On the supplementation of Tusi’s system in Davvani’s work see Rosenthal 1958, 217ff.

²⁶ Cf. Dawwani – Thompson 1839, 384-386; Dawwani – Deen 1939, 199-200.

²⁷ The similarity was also recently noticed by Doğan 2013, 205. Fleischer 1983, 201 showed that Kınalızade’s formulation of the “circle of justice”, a little later in the text, was not taken by Ibn Khaldun as Na’ima claimed more than a century after. Ibn Khaldun indeed cites the circle in the same

examples and verses, Kınalızade (still departing from Davvani's text) describes the famous "circle of equity" and the four "elements of the world", namely the "men of the pen", likened to the water element, the "men of the sword", likened to the fire element, the class of merchants and craftsmen, likened to the air element since they bring ease and relaxation to the souls, and the farmers, likened to the earth element. Like the elements in the human body, these four classes must retain equilibrium.

In terms of conclusion

With Kınalızade's monumental work, Tusi and Davvani's development of the neo-Aristotelian political and moral philosophy (mainly through al-Farabi's version) was at last popularized in the Ottoman letters. In contrast to his predecessors, Amasi, Tursun and Bitlisi, Kınalızade's work enjoyed much popularity; especially notions such as the "circle of equity" or the division of society into the four classes were to dominate or at least to be present in almost every treatise of political advice composed from the mid-sixteenth century onwards. On another level, the al-Farabian notion of "the virtuous state" was incorporated in some sixteenth-century *ulema* authors, as for instance when Ahmed Taşköprüzade (1495-1561), one of the most celebrated Ottoman scholars of his time, presented "the science of government" (*ilm al-siyâsa*) in his encyclopaedia (*Miftâh al-sa'âda wa misbâh al-siyâda fî mawzû'ât al-'ulûm*, or "The key to happiness and the guide to nobility in the objects of science", completed in 1557).²⁸ Taşköprüzade, significantly, has this science as part of his section on ethics, and the authors he enumerates are pseudo-Aristotle, al-Farabi, Tusi and Davvani. A short note on his quite original categorization of science could be useful here: Taşköprüzade attempted to classify knowledgeable sciences along the stages of God's manifestation according to the Sufi doctrine (universal spirit, intellect, nature and man), which correspond to different stages of knowledge. Thus he recognized (a) the spiritual sciences, further divided into practical and theoretical and again

way Kınalızade did (Ibn Khaldun – Rosenthal 1958, 1: 81 and 2: 105; Ibn Khaldun – Rosenthal – Dawood 1969, 41), but it is easier to suppose that the latter used his Persian source (although this specific passage is his own addition to Davvani's text).

²⁸ Taşköprüzade – Bakry – Abu'l-Nur 1968, 1: 407-8 (as translated by Yılmaz 2005, 8).

subdivided into those based on reason and those based on religion²⁹ (what is described as “science of government” above belongs to the practical and rational sciences); (b) the intellectual sciences (*makûlât-ı sâniyya*), such as logic, dialectics, or the art of debate; (c) the oral sciences (*ulûm-ı lafziyya*), i.e. those pertaining to language. These include lexicography and etymology, grammar and rhetoric, but also literary sciences such as philology and –interestingly– history or “conversation with rulers”; and (d) the written sciences (*ulûm-ı hattıyya*), i.e. calligraphy etc. Taşköprüzade’s system is partially influenced by al-Ghazali, but does not follow any of the previous categorizations.³⁰

Yet, Tusi’s system must have seemed too elaborate or, better perhaps, too abstract for the Ottoman authors. We have to wait till the mid-seventeenth century and Kâtib Çelebi to see another theorist with a tendency for general explanatory systems (and, this time, dynamic ones). It was perhaps the very static character of these descriptions of human society that made them sound somehow obsolete to the ears of late sixteenth-century authors, who were witnessing a constant change of fortunes, institutions and moralities. Kınalızade, himself a bit late in this respect (and the first after almost fifty years to take up a Tusian system in Ottoman literature), had no major followers, at least in the political part of his treatise.³¹ In general, authors of the second half of the sixteenth century and the beginnings of the seventeenth seem to have felt that concrete advice was more in place for their times; and concrete advice they did offer. On the other hand, and although the emphasis on the cardinal virtues fades away with the second half of the sixteenth century, the pattern of the “circle of justice” and the four-fold division of society, together with the emphasis on the need

²⁹ This classification produces eventually four classes: (1) philosophical (or theoretical-rational) sciences (*ulûm-ı hikemiyya*), which include metaphysics (the science of man’s soul), theology (angelology, prophetology etc.), natural sciences and medicine (including magic, alchemy or the interpretation of dreams), mathematics and music; (2) practical philosophy (*hikmet-i ameliyya*) or the practical-rational sciences, i.e. ethics and administration (from household to politics and the army); religious or theoretical-religious sciences (*ulûm-ı şer’iyya*), i.e. Koranic exegesis and jurisprudence; finally, esoteric or practical-religious sciences (*ulûm-ı bâtinîyya*), i.e. mysticism.

³⁰ On Taşköprüzade’s views see also Gökbilgin 1975-1976; Unan 1997; Yılmaz 2005, 93-99; Karabela 2010, 165-169. On previous Islamicate categorizations of knowledge see Gardet – Anawati 1970, 101-124; Treiger 2011.

³¹ There have been some continuators but of a rather marginal importance: Sariyannis 2011a, 139; cf. also Yılmaz 2005, 30 fn 13. We also have to note that the notions of moral philosophy used in these works were also present in the *kelam* literature that formed the curriculum in Ottoman medreses (see Fazlıoğlu 2003).

for equilibrium, was to form the basic political vocabulary of Ottoman political ideas till at least the middle of the seventeenth century.

Chapter III

Imperial lawmakers, bureaucrats, ulema

The discussion on whether Süleyman the Magnificent's reign was the classical period (whatever this means) of the Ottoman Empire notwithstanding, it was to form a standard for comparison in the next centuries. In this chapter, we will seek somehow incoherently to give an overview of the ideas prevailing in the field of juristic and political thought during this reign, in order to detect the beginnings of trends that followed, or the attitudes against which subsequent authors reacted.¹

Ebussuud and Ibn Taymiyya's reception

Süleyman was named *Kanunî*, “the Lawgiver”, although he surely was not the first Sultan to issue *kanunnames* or books of laws and regulations.² His reputation rests primarily on his collaboration with the two major *şeyhülislams* of the sixteenth century, Kemalpaşazade (1525-1534) and Ebussu'ud Efendi (1545-1574). Both were outstanding scholars; the latter was also the organizer of the *şeyhülislam* office into a fully institutionalized quasi-governmental bureau, and he was a paragon of what has been called the Ottoman synthesis of secular and sacred law.³ “Secular” law itself was a synthesis, since in the previous centuries the Sultans had been issuing edicts complementing customary laws and regulations; what Ebussu'ud mainly achieved was to locate those points in “secular” law which contradicted the Sharia (e.g. the concept of “state land” or the use of monetary fines) and reformulate them in terms of Hanafi jurisprudence so as to make them fit it. The selection of the Hanafi school in itself as the “official” school in Ottoman jurisprudence, or in other words the institutionalization of law and the firm connection of jurisprudence with the state (a process made through the institution of a state-appointed *şeyhülislam*, the formation of an imperial system of legal education, and ultimately the rise of an Ottoman canon of jurisprudence), was an Ottoman novelty—although a novelty shared in a common legal culture by other post-Mongol Islamicate dynasties of the region as well, such as

¹ This chapter owes a lot to Yılmaz 2005, who located and studied plenty of heretofore unknown minor sixteenth-century authors of political literature.

² İnalçık 1969; İnalçık 1992. On *kanunnames* see also the bibliographical survey by Howard 1996.

³ Ebussuud – Düzdağ 1972; Repp 1986, 224ff (on Kemalpaşazade) and 272ff (on Ebussu'ud); Imber 1997.

the Timurids and the Mughals.⁴ On the other hand, jurists (especially in the Arabic provinces, it would seem) kept having recourse to various schools of law in what was recently named “pragmatic eclecticism”; in this context, with the adoption of the Hanafi school by the Ottomans Hanafism acquired a “semi-default status” in practice, rather than an all-defining one (although Ottoman elites did try to enforce or at least promote Hanafi judges even in predominantly non-Hanafi provinces).⁵ In a way, this synthesis was the Ottoman political thought *par excellence*: in other words, a practical answer to the old question that had occupied the minds of Muslim political thinkers for centuries, namely how to reconcile secular authority with the all-encompassing power of Sharia in the absence of a legitimate caliph (although, as we shall see, there were also other ways to surpass the latter problem).

Ebussu’ud did not write any major treatise explaining the grounds of his reformulation of the Ottoman sultanic-*cum*-customary law in Hanafi terms (his most influential treatise was a commentary of the Quran, which became quite famous and esteemed).⁶ He produced an extraordinary number of *fetvas*, which virtually formed Ottoman law in the Suleymanic era; furthermore, he also wrote commentaries on juristic issues and the Quran, as well as legal treatises. By the time Ebussu’ud became *şeyhülislam*, there was already a huge literature on *fikh* or Islamic jurisprudence regulating everyday aspects of the Sharia or Holy Law; on the other hand, Ottoman Sultans from the late fifteenth century onwards had issued several codes of law (*kanunnames*), especially on land-holding, tax and penal issues, which in various way departed from the precepts of the Sharia. Ebussu’ud’s task, as we saw, was to reconcile the religious law with the *kanun* or secular law, in order to produce a coherent body of legal precepts which would respond to the needs of a quasi-feudal empire such as the Ottoman was in this period. In practice, what Ebussu’ud did was to create Islamic foundations for a secular legal building, i.e. to provide justifications

⁴ See the recent study by Burak 2013. The adoption of the Hanafi school by the Ottomans had begun already in the beginnings of the fifteenth century, but was made apparent in the Suleymanic years and especially after the conquest of Baghdad (1535), when Süleyman visited Abu Hanifa’s tomb and ordered its reconstruction.

⁵ Ibrahim 2015. In the shift from *ijtihad* (interpretative freedom) to *taqlid* (legal conformism to an established corpus of jurisdictions), this eclecticism provided a flexibility necessary for the Muslim populations (in the same way, Christian subjects often had recourse to the Muslim courts in order to enjoy the same kind of flexibility). On the promotion of the Hanafi school by the Ottoman elite in Egypt see Hathaway 2003.

⁶ On Ebussu’ud’s Quranic commentary and its importance for Ottoman intellectual history see Naguib 2013.

based on Sharia-based stratagems and precepts for institutions and practices which had a clearly secular basis; the emphasis on the enhanced authority of the Sultan was facilitated by Ebussu'ud's redesignation of the former as Caliph. Moreover, Ebussu'ud's rulings had often clearly political goals, justifying the Sultanic policies in various disputable issues (such as the executions of Princes Mustafa in 1553 and Beyazid in 1559, or the breaking of the peace treaty with Venice in 1570).

With his legal devices, and in close collaboration with Süleyman (and perhaps less with his successor, Selim II), he legitimized current Ottoman practices under Islamic terms. In land-holding, Ebussu'ud established state ownership over the land (a key notion for the Ottoman feudal and taxing system), and redefined the relevant terminology (and taxation) on the basis of traditional Hanafi theorizing on rent and loan. In another one of the main legal controversies that erupted in the mid-sixteenth century, that on religious endowments (*vakf*) and the legitimacy of endowing cash, on which he had to write a short treatise, Ebussu'ud defended the legitimacy of donation of cash, i.e. of using money-lending with interest for charitable purposes. Ebussu'ud's arguments in this case are of special interest: he stressed first that such endowments had been legitimized by constant usage for centuries, and secondly that a possible annulment of these established endowments would jeopardize the welfare of the community. On this issue he embarked on a bitter debate not only with his predecessor Çivizade Efendi but also with Birgivi Mehmed b. Pir Ali (1523-1573), a highly influential scholar who insisted that such endowments would constitute usury and thus should be condemned.⁷

It is interesting that a justification of the right of the ruler to intervene in the Holy Law precepts was sought and found in the work of Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), a strong opponent of Sufism and of “innovations”, who (in the words of E. I. J. Rosenthal) advocated for “a reform of the administration in the spirit of the ideal Sharia” and argued that “the welfare of a country depends on obedience to God and his Prophet, on condition that there is a properly constituted authority which

⁷ See Mandaville 1979 and Karataş 2010 (on cash-*vakfs*); Johansen 1988, 98ff., Imber 1997, 115ff. and Ivanyi 2012, 270ff. (on land tenure). On previous treatises on cash-*vakfs* see Kemalpaşazade – Özcan 2000.

‘commands the good and forbids the evil’’.⁸ Ibn Taymiyya’s ideas seem closer to those expounded by Mehmed Birgivi, since he is generally seen as the forefather of Islamic fundamentalism. There were, however, points in his work that facilitated an Islamic justification of the Ottoman synthesis: although he stressed the need for the ruler to follow strictly the Sharia law as the ultimate reason and object of his power, Ibn Taymiyya allowed him discretion over crimes and punishments not prescribed by the Holy Law, such as bribery or abuses in administration; the same was valid for revenue sources, provided the consensus of the ulema was not prohibiting them.⁹

A work famously adapting these ideas to the Ottoman context bore the same name as Ibn Taymiyya’s treatise, namely *Risâlat al-siyâsa ash-shar’îya* (“Treatise on the government in accordance with the Holy Law”) or *Siyaset-i şer’iye* (“Government in accordance with the Holy Law”). It was written in Arabic by Kemalüddin İbrahim b. Bahşi, known as Kara Dede or Dede Cöngî Efendi (d. 1565/6 or 1566/7); preserved in several manuscripts, as it became very popular in the Ottoman medreses, it was translated into Turkish at least three times from the late seventeenth century on.¹⁰ An outstanding example of Ottoman social mobility, Dede Cöngî was an illiterate tanner before turning with great success to the ulema career, eventually becoming a *müderris* or teacher in various *medreses* in Bursa, Tire, Merzifon, Diyarbekir, Aleppo and Iznik. In 1557 he became *müfti* of Kefe (Caffa); he retired in 1565 and died in Bursa.

Dede Cöngî’s work is mainly a synopsis of the predominant views on Islamic administration and politics in his era. As Uriel Heyd notes, “[t]here is... very little original thought in Dede Efendi’s work[, as h]e mainly quotes various authorities in the field of public and especially penal law”; his sources are, among others, al-Mawardi, Ibn Taymiyya and Alâ’ al-Dîn Alî b. Khalîl al-Tarâbulusî, a fifteenth-

⁸ On Ibn Taymiyya’s work see Rosenthal 1958, 51-61; Lambton 1981, 143-151; Fakhry 2000, 101-104; Black 2011, 158-163. Ibn Taymiyya’s work became more and more popular throughout the sixteenth century; the translation by Aşık Çelebi (d. 1572), a prolific translator (among other activities) of Arab political treatises such as al-Ghazali’s but also of Husayn Vaiz Kashifi (Davvani’s Timurid continuator), was widely read (see Yılmaz 2005, 55-56, and more particularly Terzioğlu 2007).

⁹ Black 2011, 161ff.

¹⁰ Namely by Seyyid Sebzî Mehmed Efendi (d. 1680), İsmail Müfid Efendi (d. 1802), and Meşrebzâde Mehmed Arif Efendi (d. 1858). This last translation (printed as *Tercüme-i Siyâsetnâme*, Istanbul 1275/1858-9) was published (from a manuscript form) by Akgündüz 1990-1996, 4: 127-173 (facs. follows). On this translation (not very faithful) see *ibid.*, 4:124 and Heyd 1973, 198 fn. 5 (“rather free and enlarged”). Dede Cöngî – Tuna 2011 provides his own Turkish translation; I preferred to follow it in cases of conflict. On Dede Cöngî’s work see Akgündüz 1990-1996, 4: 122-126; Heyd 1973, 198-203; Yılmaz 2005, 73-76; Black 2011, 215.

century Hanafi judge of Jerusalem and author of *Mu'in al-hukkâm*.¹¹ In this respect, it is interesting that (like Ibn Taymiyya had done) he embodied ideas of different schools of law, especially the Hanafi and the Maliki, reflecting perhaps the new legal situation in the Ottoman Empire after the incorporation of the Kurdish and Arab territories; as expected by an Ottoman scholar, however, the Hanafi thought is prevalent.

Another work by Dede Cöngi, composed again in Arabic, concerns the correct ways of distributing state expenses according to sources of income. The work, *Risâla fî amwâl bayt al-mâl* (“Treatise on the wealth of the public treasury”) was presented to Prince Mustafa, Süleyman’s son who was executed in 1553; it presents the established views of *fikh* scholarship (again with abundant quotations) on public finances.¹² The final part of Dede Cöngi’s treatise is of particular interest, since it deals with the rights of the Sultan on land: he notes that land is like any other property in the public treasury and maintains that the Sultan may grant unclaimed land for the general benefit of the Muslims. In a way similar to Ebussu’ud’s arguments on cash-*vakf*, Dede Cöngi claims that the very existence of universally acclaimed medreses and other foundations based on landed property granted by rulers is a proof of the legality of this practice.

The Iranian tradition continued: enter the bureaucrats

The sixteenth century was a century of translations: as the imperial capital drew more and more intellectuals, mainly from the cities of Iran and Central Asia, the heavy dependance on—or, more correctly, the close relationship with—Persian political ideas continued well into Süleyman’s reign and further on. Works such as al-Ghazali’s *Nasîhat al-mulûk*, Hamadânî’s (d. 1385) *Zakhîrat al-mulûk* (influenced by al-Ghazali and Ibn Arabi’s mysticist ethics from a Sufi perspective) or Zamakhshari’s (d. 1143) *Rabî al-abrâr* (an anthology of wisdom literature) kept being translated or adapted in numerous versions by leading Ottoman scholars; similarly, the pseudo-

¹¹ Heyd (1973, 199) notes that “in fact, most parts of Dede Efendi’s treatise are merely shorter versions of some chapters of the *Mu'in*.”

¹² Akgündüz 1990-1996, 4: 213-236 (fac. follows, 236-254); Yılmaz 2005, 73. On the *fikh* theories concerning public income and expenses, cf. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Bayt al-mâl” (N. J. Coulson, C. Cahen et al.). The actual organization of the financial departments did not follow these lines, neither in medieval Islamic empires nor in the Ottoman case; see e.g. Sahillioğlu 1985; Tabakoğlu 1985.

Aristotelic *Sirr al-asrar* (“Secret of secrets”), a medieval compilation of advice on government, ethics, but also physiognomy and medical sciences, which had exerted a major influence in Islamicate (as well as in Medieval European) thought, was translated in 1571 for the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha.¹³ In some unknown date within Süleyman’s reign, Abdüsselâm b. Şükrullah el-Amasî (not to be confused with the early-fifteenth-century author) composed *Tuhfetü’l-ümerâ ve minhatü’l-vüzerâ* (“Gift for the commanders”, a translation of Jizrî Mahmud b. Isma’il b. İbrahim’s (d. 1444) *Dürrat al-garrâ fi nesayih al-mulûk wa al-vüzerâ*, which had been written in 1439 for the Sultan of Egypt.¹⁴ The work speaks of the *imam* or caliph, identifying him explicitly with Süleyman. Following the same model as Şeyhoğlu Mustafa in his fourteenth-century *Kenzü’l-küberâ* (based on his turn on Najm al-Din Razi), Amasi structures his reasoning on the three “situations” (*hal*) of both the Sultan (the relation with his own self, with his people and with God) and the vizier (the relation with God, with the Sultan and with the people and army). Not only translations, but also original works in Arabic or Persian kept being copied. For instance, İbrahim b. Muhammed, an Azeri author of the mid-fifteenth century, was copied by some Mahmud b. Ahmed el-Kayserî in 1545, to be read by Sultan Süleyman. İbrahim’s work is a typical *adab* work, compiling sources such as al-Ghazali or Zamakhshari; it also contains an interesting discussion of justice as the equilibrium in all nature, including fauna and flora.¹⁵

Apart from these translations, the influx of foreign scholars produced original works as well. Among them, there were those transferring Tusi’s neo-Aristotelism in one way or another, such as Bitlisi, Cahrami or Barmaki who were mentioned in the previous chapter. One important trend, enhanced by the Sunni vs. Shi’a side of the emerging Ottoman-Safavid conflict, emphasized the religious purity of the Ottoman sultan and the importance of the ulema. Muhammed b. Mehâsin el-Ensârî, probably an ulema from Syria, completed his *Tuhfa al-zamân ilâ al-malik al-muzaffar Sulaymân* (“The gift of time for Süleyman the victorious ruler”) around 1524. His

¹³ On these translations see Yılmaz 2005, 44-62. On pseudo-Aristotle’s text see Manzalaoui 1974; Grignaschi 1976; Forster 2006. A similar work (*Siraj al-mulûk*) by Turtushi, a twelfth-century Egyptian-based scholar, on principles of good government, was also very popular in its Ottoman translation (see Yılmaz 2005, 53-54).

¹⁴ The work was recently published as Amasi – Coşar 2012. Jizri Mahmud’s work was also translated later by Mehmet b. Firuz [d. 1609] for Selim II.

¹⁵ İbrahim – Acar 2008 (on justice as equilibrium see esp. 154ff).

work seems unique in its emphasis on the legitimacy of the Ottoman rule, probably due to his writing shortly after the suppression of the Egypt rebellion by Ibrahim Pasha. The first chapter, as well as the preface, is devoted to proving this legitimacy and to showing that the subjects were to pay allegiance to the Sultan according to the Sharia. Ensari stresses particularly the duties of the ulema: they are to urge the Sultan to be just and benevolent and to warn him against oppression, thus being exalted even above the ruler (who has to adhere to their opinion). Some decades before Dede Cöngi, Ensari is also one of the first Ottoman authors to include discussions of the public treasury in a treatise on government, focusing on the legitimacy of the various sources of revenue. Finally, he emphasizes that non-Muslims should not be employed in government; this was not a major issue for the Ottomans, but Ensari seems to have followed the Mamluk tradition of political thought and especially Turtushi's *Sirâj al-mulûk*.¹⁶

Another work that stresses the religious role of the Ottoman ruler is the anonymous *Risâla fî mâ yalzim 'alâ al-mulûk* ("A treatise on what rulers need"), written in Arabic and dedicated to Süleyman. The author stresses that the Sultan should conduct the Holy War (*jihâd*, *ghazw*, *mukâatala*) against "polytheists" and seditious people, but also in a view to eliminating vices (*daf' al-sharr*) and disbelief (*izâla al-kufr*) in the interior, while he also advocates against innovations (*bid'a*). The author also gives instructions for persons presenting themselves to the Sultan (viziers and other statesmen and visitors): they should be careful to manage his temper, so as to exhort him effectively on his duties. This exhortation is to be considered a duty in the framework of the "commanding right and forbidding wrong" precept, which is praised as the most virtuous form of Holy War. Finally, the author has a long section on the personal life of statesmen and especially of the Sultan.¹⁷

Another trend had much stronger Sufi connotations. Some authors relied heavily on Ibn Arabi's theory of "the Pole of the world" (*kutb*), the head of the mystic hierarchy governing the world affairs, secretly or not,¹⁸ so as to imply that in their era this role belonged to or at least was close to that of Süleyman (who, after all, was not

¹⁶ Mamluk influences are also evident in various other points of the treatise: Yılmaz 2005, 70-73. On Turtushî see also above, fn. 13. The emphasis on not using non-Muslims in government is also seen in Nizam ul-Mulk's famous "mirror for princes": Rosenthal 1958, 83.

¹⁷ Yılmaz 2005, 65-67.

¹⁸ See İnalçık 1993, 211-212; Ocak 1991, 74-75.

immune to messianic claims himself, as we saw). Dizdar Mustafa b. Abdullah, for whom we only know that he was the commander of the fortress of Çankırı, wrote in 1542 *Kitâb sulûk al-mulûk* (“Book on the paths of the kings”) trying to educate the ruler on the main principles of Sufi tradition. In this effort he gave a great emphasis to the notion of the “Pole of the world”, exhorting the Sultan to enhance his secular authority (*saltana, khilâfa, mulk*) with the spiritual one (*wilâya*). More outspoken, his contemporary anonymous author of *Al-adliyya al-Sulaymâniyya* (“Treatise of Suleymanic justice”), probably an immigrant from the East, extolled also the role of the secret Pole, urging Süleyman to cooperate with him. He ensures Süleyman that in his fight against the heretic Kızılbaş he would be aided by the present Pole, who is now a Hanafi (while the previous ones were Shafi’i; as Hüseyin Yılmaz notes, this is probably a reference to the Mamluk era).¹⁹

Another side of the traditional literature, mostly compiling Iranian sources, was expressed in “encyclopaedic” works, where political theory was seen as a branch of human knowledge and science. Such works in this period had strong religious connotations and often use the notion of “duties”, a concept having its roots back to medieval Persian literature (such as Najm al-Din Razi’s work) and conceived as mutual agreements between the ruler and God, as in the “situations” (*hâlet*) which we met in Şeyhoğlu Mustafa’s and Abdüsselâm b. Şükrullah el-Amasî’s works in the beginnings of the fourteenth and the sixteenth century respectively. For instance, the judge Hüseyin b. Hasan al-Semerkandî wrote his *Latâ’if al-afkâr wa kâshif al-asrâr* (“Fine thoughts and revealer of secrets”) in 1529 and dedicated it to Ibrahim Pasha.²⁰ The work was intended to provide the young Grand Vizier with a concise encyclopedia of government, morals, history etc., and it draws from the ideas and the vocabulary of *fikh* literature.

In the previous chapter we had a look on another encyclopaedist (and a major biographer of Ottoman scholars), Ahmed Taşköprüzade (1495-1561); we saw how

¹⁹ Yılmaz 2005, 89-90 (on Dizdar Mustafa), 86-89 (on *al-Adliyya al-Suleymaniyya*). Among these Sufi-oriented treatises, we should probably include ‘Ârifî Ma’rûf Efendi’s (d. 1593) *Uqûd al-jawâhir li-zaha’ir al-ahâ’ir* (“Precious necklace for matchless treasures”) of 1560, a book on vizierate dedicated to Semiz Ali Pasha a year before his rise to the office of Grand Vizier (Yılmaz 2005, 91-93).

²⁰ Semerkandi’s work was first noticed by Yılmaz 2005, 68-70; for an extensive summary and analysis see Kavak 2012, who points out the strong connection of the work with the *fikh* milieu. The list of requirements for the various offices is an elaboration of a similar list in the Shafi’i jurist Ibn Jama’a (d. 1333): Rosenthal 1958, 49.

close he was to the Tusian model in his 1557 encyclopaedia of knowledge. Taşköprüzade also wrote a specifically political treatise, *Risâla fi bayân asrâr al-khilâfa al-insâniyya wa al-saltana al-ma'nawiyya* (“Treatise explaining the mystery of man’s caliphate and spiritual sultanate”): it is composed of ten sections on sultan and imam, the sultanate, the subjects, the parents, the spouses, the children, the slaves, the servants and the friends. Apart from the first section, the rest are composed in the form of “rights” (*hukûk*): in order to attain the spiritual sultanate, the king must fulfill the rights of others; for example, fulfilling the rights of the sultanate means that the sultan must perform his duties as ordained by the concept of kingship; the rights of subjects correspond to the duty of the sultan to treat them with justice, and so forth. Drawing from al-Ghazali and especially from Hamadani, the author is careful to use Islamic rather than mythical anecdotes in order to illustrate his points.²¹

The scribal tradition

We have noted in the previous chapter that Kınalızade’s monumental work was in a way a belated swan-song of the Tusian theory: even by his era, the fashion had shifted toward Kâshifi rather than Davvani’s popularization of Tusi’s system. Kashifi (d. 1504/5) wrote his work, *Akhlâq-e Muhsinî* (1494/5) for a Timurid ruler, Abu’l-Muhsin.²² Apart from being more recent (and from belonging to the Timurid culture, which had become the literary fashion in Ottoman circles), his work was a loose adaptation of Tusi and Davvani’s books which gave much more weight to ethical advice (the style known as *adab*) than philosophical theory (known as *ahlak*); in other words, the vengeance of the “mirror for princes” tradition over the abstract interpretation of rulership. Kashifi removed the heavy philosophical systems of Tusi and Davvani’s books and replaced them with historical anecdotes and poems. In the Ottoman letters, Kashifi’s work was both copied abundantly in its Persian original and translated four times during the sixteenth century (among the translations, one was made by Idris-i Bitlisi’s son).²³

²¹ Yılmaz 2005, 94-96. Similar views on the mutual duties can be seen in the early-fourteenth-century Mosul historian Ibn al-Tiqaqa (Rosenthal 1958, 65).

²² Kashifi – Keene 1850 (a partial translation focusing on the morality chapters). On Kashifi see Lambton 1956a, 147; Lambton 1962, 115-119; Donaldson 1963, 184-190; the special issue of *Iranian Studies* 36/4 (2003) and esp. Subtelny 2013.

²³ Yılmaz 2005, 45-47: in 1550 by Firâkî Abdurrahman Çelebi; around the same time by Ebu’l-Fazl Mehmed, son of Idris-i Bitlisi; in 1566 by Azmî Efendi, Mehmed III’s tutor, as *Enîsü’l-kulûb*; toward

The shift to Kashifi coincided with the rise of the scribal bureaucracy and its literary production—and perhaps it is no coincidence that Kashifi himself was an accomplished bureaucrat who played a major role in the development of scribal epistolary composition.²⁴ We saw in Chapter I that a bureaucratic structure, manned mostly by medrese-educated scholars from the neighbouring emirates (but also Islamicized Byzantines and Serbians, especially from the mid-fifteenth century onwards), was apparent even by the mid-fourteenth century, while the system of registering the land was in full use by the first decades of the fifteenth century. Tursun Bey or İdris-i Bitlisi, two of the most famous exponents of Tusi’s and Davvani’s political philosophy, were educated or had worked as scribes; however, the most representative literary *genre* produced by these efficient bureaucrats was much more connected to their everyday paperwork, even though it may seem utterly rhetorical to the modern reader. The model prose, *münşeât* or *inşa*, quite close to the contemporaneous epistolography of the Italian cities, presented letter models and instructions with all the necessary ornaments, with a view of serving as a pattern for day-to-day correspondence of the government.²⁵ Usually such collections were compiled and used side-to-side with collections of official documents, copies of registers and law regulations, and other useful texts; one of the earliest Turkish specimens, *Teressül* (“Correspondence”) by Kırımlı Hâfız Hüsâm (probably trained in the Germiyan court of Kütahya in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century), contains general advice for letter-writing and specific model phrases for letters; model letters and answers follow, together with model documents, mainly diplomas for teachers, judges and officers.²⁶ As the palace bureaucracy was growing to a more and more powerful and diversified apparatus,²⁷ such manuals kept multiplying throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, culminating with Feridun Bey (d. 1583) and his famous collection of sultanic letters and treaties, *Münşe’âtü’s-selâtin*

the end of the century by Nevâlî Efendi, the successor of Azmi Efendi. Kınalızade (Kınalızade – Koç 2007, 38-39) refers to Kashifi’s work, but does not seem to have used it.

²⁴ Mitchell 2003.

²⁵ On the evolution of scribal writing style and language, cf. Matuz 1970; Woodhead 1988; Riedlmayer 2008; Darling 2013a; Tuşalp Atiyas 2013, 138ff. On the early Renaissance epistolography and its importance for the history of European political thought see Skinner 1978, I:28ff.

²⁶ Kırımlı Hafız Hüsâm – Tekin 2008. The addresses to merchants (p. 44 and 64) have a special interest, as they stress their generosity and charity. The next known Ottoman manual, copied in 1479, is of a similar content: Yahya bin Mehmed – Tekin 1971; for an early sixteenth-century specimen see Mesîhi – Ménage 1988.

²⁷ Fleischer 1986b; Darling 1996, 49-80; Sariyannis 2013, 105-107; Tuşalp Atiyas 2013, 55ff.

(“Correspondence of Sultans”), completed in 1575. Feridun, the private secretary of the Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, made *reisülküttab* in 1570 and *nişancı* in 1573-76 and again in 1581 till his death, also wrote a history of the Szigetvár campaign and a moral treatise; but his most widely known work was this collection, which was presented to Murad III in 1575 and contained more than five hundred documents, from the first years of Islam till Murad’s times.²⁸ Not all these documents were genuine, and probably some were forged or invented by Feridun himself in order to legitimize the Ottoman dynasty and its world view: as Dimitris Kastritsis recently observed, the collection “was never intended as a practical chancery manual at all, but rather as a type of history writing”.²⁹ The series of documents illustrated the rise of the Ottomans to the status of world power, situated in the middle of an Islamicate world (the addresses to the heretic Safavid shahs are much more pompous than those to the infidel kings of Europe) but not ignoring the European world either: not surprisingly, Feridun had also commissioned the translation of a history of the kings of France.³⁰

Celalzade and the glorification of the empire

Now almost contemporary to Kinalizade, a major exponent of this rising bureaucracy followed this slightly different path, choosing to stand on the steps of Kashifi rather than Davvani or Tusi. Son of a middle-rank kadi, Celâlzâde Mustafa (ca.1490-1567) had a career similar to Feridun’s: he served in the Ottoman chancery first as a scribe of the *divan* (1516-1525), then as *reisülküttab* or chief secretary (1525-1534) and *nişancı* or chancellor (1534-1556). He then retired to return briefly as *nişancı* upon Sultan Süleyman’s death and until his death (1566-67). He is generally regarded as one of the major figures behind Süleyman’s law-giving activity.³¹ Celalzade was also a prolific writer, playing a prominent role in the development of the Ottoman “scribal” style, the *inşa*. He wrote poetry, translation of a biography of the Prophet, a history of Selim I’s reign (*Selimnâme* or *Meâşir-i Selim Hânî*); what mostly interests us here is his monumental chronicle covering the period 1520-1557, *Tabakatü’l-memâlik ve derecâtü’l-mesâlik* (“Layers of kingdoms and

²⁸ Feridun Bey 1848; Vatin 2010, 63ff.; Kastritsis 2013. There are two different printed Ottoman editions of this monumental work and a modern systematic study is highly needed.

²⁹ Kastritsis 2013, 107.

³⁰ Bacqué-Grammont 1997.

³¹ İnalçık 1969, 115 and 138; Yılmaz 2006, 193ff and esp. 204-210; Şahin 2013, 228-30.

levels of routes”), and his Kashifi-influenced treatise, *Mevâhibü’l-hallâk fi merâtibi’l-ahlâk* (“Talents bestowed by the Creator in the levels of ethics”). Both were completed after 1557, when Celalzade had retired from active service; more specifically, *Tabakat* must have begun in the early years of Süleyman’s reign (surely before 1534), while *Mevahib* was composed in 1564. They both were quite popular, as they are preserved in more than twenty manuscripts each.³²

Celalzade planned *Tabakat* to be “a general panorama of the Ottoman enterprise”, “meant to reflect the sixteenth-century *Zeitgeist*”.³³ What survived, i.e. the history of the Empire from 1520 to 1557,³⁴ would only be the last section or layer (*tabaka*) out of thirty. The inclusion of history into a spatial description of an Empire implies a worldview that regards the present as the consummation of history and as an ideal perfection of the human condition.³⁵ As a matter of fact, the plan of Celalzade’s book seems to come from the cosmography tradition, which traditionally tried to encompass the world in a similar grid of lists: in Aşık Mehmed’s (ca. 1556/57-1598) monumental work, for instance, or in the geographical part of his contemporary Mustafa Ali’s history, geographical elements (seas, lakes, rivers, springs, wells, islands, mountains, flora and fauna, minerals, and finally cities) are arranged in lists according to their geographical region and alphabetical order.³⁶ Celalzade’s plan, thus, belongs to a tradition of describing the world through the use of lists; and one might argue that eventually this “empire of lists” became a typically scribal *Weltanschauung* for the Ottoman bureaucracy. A special place in Celalzade’s work is reserved in the praise of the scribal career and the importance of the government bureaucracy. This emphasis to the role of the scribal bureaucracy can be found in

³² *Tabakat ül-memâlik* was published in facsimile (Celalzade – Kappert 1981) and in an abridged Turkish translation (with omissions and misunderstandings: Celalzade – Yılmaz 2011). For *Mevahibü’l-hallak*, there is a detailed synopsis in Celalzade – Balcı 1996. On the manuscripts of the two works see Yılmaz 2006, 247-49 and Celalzade – Balcı 1996, 13-14 and 19-20; on their dating, Yılmaz 2006, 154 and Celalzade – Balcı 1996, 24. On Celalzade’s work and ideas, see Fleischer 1990, 69 ff; Yılmaz 2006; Yılmaz 2007; Şahin 2013.

³³ Şahin 2013, 167, 169.

³⁴ On the probable reasons of his stopping in 1557 and the relevant discussion see Şahin 2013, 177-178.

³⁵ Kaya Şahin finds it “neo-Platonic” and notes that it reflects Celalzade’s desire “to represent the world within hierarchically/organizationally bound, recognizable, and also very bureaucratic categories[, a notion which] stems from the idea that every single part of the empire... is tied together within a system in the middle of which sits the sultan, the ultimate lynchpin of a neo-Platonic universe” (Şahin 2013, 174).

³⁶ Aşık Mehmed – Ak 2007; Ali 1860-1868, I:48-237; cf. Schmidt 1991, 49-50 and 289ff., Fleischer 1986a, 140-42, 241-52. This “list phenomenon” seems to have been common across Eurasia, according to Howard 2007, 156-157.

Celalzade's *Mevâhib ül-hallâk*. This work is much closer to the “mirror for princes” genre, being a creative translation of Kashifi's *Akhlaq-e Muhsinî*.³⁷ In comparison with his model, Celalzade added scattered pieces of eulogy of the Ottoman lands and their excellence, as well as chapters on envy, calumny and reason (*akl*); what is more important, he rewrote Kashifi's last chapter on “the servants of a ruler”, dividing it into two, “On the vizierate” and “On the sultanate”. The main part of the work consists of fifty-five chapters on various moral virtues and vices. Celalzade's particular emphasis on reason (which, he says, is the best vizier a sultan can employ) reaches the point of dividing humanity into three groups, namely the intelligent (*akil*), the fool (*ahmak*) and the sinners (*facir*).³⁸ A chapter on justice defines it as the equal treatment of the groups of people, without any of them being treated more or less than it is worth. These groups, governed from the four elements, are the men of the sword (governors and soldiers, under the element of fire), the men of the pen (viziers and scribes, under the element of air), the artisans and merchants (under the element of water) and the peasants (under the element of earth); it is to be noted that the ulema are completely absent from this categorization. In all, Celalzade's formulation of “the circle of justice” is impressively original, since it introduces towns and cities in the classic series of dependences.³⁹

Lutfi Pasha and the beginning of the Ottoman “mirror for princes”

A possible side-effect of the turn from Davvani to Kashifi's influence (or, inversely, a probable cause of it) was that Ottoman political treatises began to be more pragmatic. The quest for a unifying theory of human society gave its place to a stress upon the smooth functioning of the state institutions. Initially, there were the ready-made models of the Iranian “mirror for princes” literature, emphasizing the duty of the ruler to hold court regularly, the use of spies and so forth; the Ottoman authors were to develop this style, focusing on the institutions rather than the person of the Sultan or of the Grand Vizier. If the authors analyzed till now were transmitting the received Persian tradition, occasionally making their own alterations or additions, this

³⁷ On the additions made by Celalzade to his model, see Şahin 2013, 196-197, 232. I used the detailed synopsis in Celalzade – Balcı 1996.

³⁸ See also Şahin 2013, 234-238 for other examples of the importance Celalzade gives to reason.

³⁹ Also quoted in Yılmaz 2006, 159: *mülk adl ile kâyim olur sâhibi kâfir ise dahi, amma zulm ile durmaz vîran olur sâhibi mümin olursa dahi... melik 'askersiz, asker mâlsuz, mâl şehirlersüz, şehirler re'âyasuz, re'âyâ adlsüz olmaz adl cümleden mühim ve lâzım imiş.*

current, which began with Lutfi Pasha's mid-sixteenth century *Asafname*, inaugurates a distinctively Ottoman tradition; and, arguably, in this respect it is not a coincidence that Lutfi Pasha was a full product of the distinctively Ottoman system of recruitment.

Of Albanian origin, Lutfî Pasha (1488-1563) was recruited through the *devşirme* system and was raised in the Palace. He was first appointed as the governor of Kastamonu; he then served in various posts of the administration and participated in quite a few of Selim I and Süleyman's campaigns, becoming a vizier in 1534/5 and ultimately the Grand Vizier in 1539, upon the death of his predecessor, Ayas Pasha. He only served in this post for two years, as he was dismissed in 1541. He retired to his farm in Dimetoka, where he died. During his retirement he wrote several books in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish, among which a history of the Ottoman state (*Tevârih-i âl-i Osmân*) and a treatise (which we shall examine in detail below) defending the right of the Ottoman Sultan to claim the title of caliph. But the work he is most well-known for is his *Âsafnâme*, about the duties of a Grand Vizier, probably completed after his history (i.e. after 1554).⁴⁰ *Âsafnâme* ("The book of Asaf", alluding to the mythical wise vizier of Prophet Solomon—the namesake of Süleyman!) was a very popular and highly influential work; fifteen manuscripts are to be found only in Istanbul, and Evliya Çelebi records a copy in the library of the autonomous Khan of Bitlis, in 1655;⁴¹ as we are going to see in the next chapters, it was partly or wholly incorporated in several treatises on government during the following centuries. Lutfî, it seems, chose deliberately to avoid any theoretical or even moralist musings, focusing onstead in exposing his day-to-day experience in Ottoman administration in order to compile a manual for his successors. This does not mean that there is no theory underlying his advice: the passages on the moral qualities of a vizier, on the importance of the imperial council, or—perhaps most importantly of all—on the strict compartmentalization of society between the taxable *reaya* and the untaxable administrative and military personnel (the *askeri*) clearly follow earlier trends (although the two-fold division of society according to taxation comes from the Ottoman practice rather than the pre-existing political tradition). But on the whole,

⁴⁰ Lutfî Pasha – Tschudi 1910; Lutfî Pasha – Kütükoğlu 1991; Akgündüz 1990-1996, 4: 258-276 (facsimiles, 277-290). On Lutfi Pasha and his work, see Lewis 1962, 71-74; Fodor 1986, 223-224; Yılmaz 2003a, 302-303; Yılmaz 2005, 114-119.

⁴¹ Çolak 2003, 353; Evliya Çelebi – Dankoff 1990, 290.

Âsafnâme stands out as an impressively original work, setting a new example for the *genre* to be followed throughout the sixteenth century.

Âsafnâme is very loosely structured upon the lines of the Persian “mirror for princes”, containing four chapters, on the qualities of the Grand Vizier, on the army, on the treasury and on the peasant subjects. Lütfi illustrates his advice with numerous examples from his personal experience, always specifying particular institutions and instances and stressing the need for keeping the limits among social classes. It is very interesting that Lütfi Pasha seems to have been considered ignorant in the eyes of educated bureaucrats such as Mustafa Ali or (perhaps) Celalzade, who looked with disdain upon *devşirme* recruits in high administrative positions.⁴² As we shall see, however, he was capable of writing elaborate treatises in Arabic with quotations from hadiths and other medieval authorities, like he did in his essay on the caliphate. Now the absence of any reference, quotation or even a trifle of earlier political philosophy in his *Âsafnâme* is striking. Not a single authority is mentioned; he does illustrate his points with stories, but they all come from his own experience under Selim and Süleyman: neither Muhammad or the first caliphs, nor Anushirvan or Iskender are to be found. A reflection of the bureaucratic obsession with lists, which we mentioned when speaking of Celalzade, might perhaps be seen in his enumerations of posts, salaries and pensions.

On a more political level, the emphasis given by Lütfi Pasha (and, in a lesser extent, by Celalzade) on the vizier rather than the Sultan himself is a sign of his times: even before Mehmed II, the Ottoman sultans had begun to seclude themselves; they gradually ceased to appear often in public and even to eat together with their officials, delegating their everyday powers more and more to the viziers and the *kadiaskers*. The Grand Vizier started to be designated as the “absolute proxy” (*vekil-i mutlak*) of the sultanic power, and consequently to have a more and more important position in conducting political affairs.⁴³ While Selim I’s Grand Viziers were short-lived and prone to immediate dismissal or even execution (hence the curse of the time, “may

⁴² Ali admits that for a *devşirme* recruit Lütfi’s education was better than usual, but he considers him an arrogant with a great idea for himself: Yılmaz 2006, 107-8.

⁴³ Stavrides 2001, 30-37 (on the Sultans’ seclusion) and 56-59 (on the growing position of the viziers); Sariyannis 2011a, 129ff.; Yılmaz 2015, 234-237. Stavrides’ analysis relies a lot on the so called “*kanunname* of Mehmed the Conqueror”, which is in fact a much later product (see Imber 2011, 174-178); however, this does not alter his central conclusions.

you become a vizier of Selim's!"),⁴⁴ Süleyman and his successors relied extensively on their viziers (suffice it to mention Ibrahim Pasha and Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's careers), each of whom adhered to specific policy lines and allied with specific power parties. Lütfi may have not been the first or only author who wrote advice for viziers rather than sultans, but he had the authority to do so by experience, and thus he managed to inaugurate a whole new style of treatises, distinctively Ottoman.⁴⁵

A new legitimacy

In the end of Chapter I we saw how the Ottoman dynastic legitimization was developed throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, combining the religious fervor of the *gaza* (as seen by the ulema) with the mythical genealogies linking Osman with noble ancestors and even prophets. As noted above, the fall of Constantinople had brought significant changes in the imperial image. A new emphasis on ceremonial and hierarchy, enhanced by the Sultan's withdrawal from public appearances, was evident in court ritual, literature, but also in the creation of a heavy and imposing style in art and architecture.⁴⁶

In this new image, nobility of lineage, hereditary unity and religious purity continued to play an important role in the legitimacy of the Ottoman sultans;⁴⁷ furthermore, the emphasis on Holy War was renewed, as the Sultan was presented as the champion of the faith both against the Christians and the Shi'a heretics of Iran.⁴⁸ The mystic identification of the Sultan with the Messiah or with the "Pole of the world" does not seem to have lasted long after the first decades of Süleyman's reign.⁴⁹ But a new factor was introduced by Selim I's conquest of the Hijaz (through the annexation of the Mamluk Egypt) and thus of the Sacred Cities, Mecca and Medina (1517); almost simultaneously, the messianic claims of the Safavid Shah Ismail posed a challenge for the Ottoman sultan that had to be answered, even more so since a large

⁴⁴ Ali, as quoted by Hammer 1963, 2: 378; Çıpa 2014, 132.

⁴⁵ Semerkandi's *Latâ'if al-Afkâr* (1529), Alâyi b. Muhibbî al-Şirazî al-Şerîf's *Düstûrî 'l-vüzerâ* (1558) or 'Ârifî Ma'rûf Efendi's *Ukûd al-jawâhir* (1560) also discuss the vizier rather than the sultan (Yılmaz 2005, 68-70, 99-101 and 91-93 respectively).

⁴⁶ Necipoğlu 1992.

⁴⁷ Flemming 1988. The same values played a major role in Idris-i Bitlisi's legitimization of the Kurdish chieftains as presented to the Ottoman side: Sönmez 2012, 72ff.

⁴⁸ A number of treatises on the virtues of Holy War were translated or composed during Süleyman's reign: see Yılmaz 2005, 66 and fn. 125; cf. Imber 1995, 147-149.

⁴⁹ Although the Messianic claims of Süleyman had waned by the 1530s, a certain sense of historical moment did remain, as is also seen in imperial iconography; see Eryılmaz 2010.

part of the Anatolian population, being Alevi, was susceptible to these claims. This development set a new dimension in the issue of the Ottoman legitimacy: was the Ottoman sultan to claim also the title of Caliph, being the protector of the Holy Cities? The fall of the Abbasids under the Mongol invasion (1258) had already led scholars such as al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyya or Ibn Khaldun to accept a much more flexible interpretation of the requirements for the caliphate, essentially identifying the caliph with the king inasmuch the latter was following the Holy Law and executing its precepts.⁵⁰ Moreover, in practice the title had acquired an embellishing, regional meaning which allowed for its use by regional kings such as the early Ottomans and other dynasties of fifteenth-century Anatolia and Iran.⁵¹

It is not surprising, thus, that the Ottoman literature on the caliphate started to flourish after the beginnings of the sixteenth century. Already before the conquest of Egypt (but after Shah Ismail's appearance), in 1514, İdris-i Bitlisi had written an essay in Arabic, *Risâla fî al-khilâfa wa âdâb al-salâtîn* ("Treatise on the caliphate, and manners [i.e., advice] for the Sultans"), where he discussed the issue of the potentially simultaneous existence of more than one caliph: his conclusion was that this is impossible, and to this effect he mentioned hadiths mentioning that if people acknowledged two caliphs, one of them should be killed.⁵² Fifteen years later, writing a universal "history of the caliphs" for Ibrahim Pasha in 1529, Hüseyin b. Hasan al-Semerkandî impressively began the story of the Ottoman caliphate straightly with Selim I, showing thus that the latter was the heir of the caliphal lineage from the Mamluks by conquest.⁵³ Perhaps in the same vein, Abdüsselam Amasi describes the office of the imam and notes that he is the same as caliph, substituting the Prophet in guiding the people in both religious and secular affairs; the author states that the present imam is the Sultan Süleyman; one might suggest that what is implied is also succession by conquest.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ See Rosenthal 1958, 38ff; Sönmez 2012, 130ff.

⁵¹ Imber 1987 and 1992, 179; Sönmez 2012, 132-135.

⁵² Sönmez 2012, 139-162. Bitlisi also used regularly the term caliph for the Ottoman Sultan in his *Heşt Bihist*: Bitlisi – Başaran 2000, 139 and *passim*.

⁵³ Yılmaz 2005, 70; Kavak 2012, 98. It is to be noted that Semerkandi did not succumb to the Messianic literature revolving around Süleyman and Ibrahim at this time, since he reassures the reader that the End of Days is to come several centuries later.

⁵⁴ Amasi – Coşar 2012, 140-145.

Unlike Bitlisi, the issue of descent was exactly what the ex-Grand Vizier Lütfi Pasha chose to tackle in 1554, probably hoping to gain Süleyman's favour again, in a treatise entitled *Halâs al-umma fî ma'rifat al-a'imma* ("Deliverance of the community on the knowledge of the imams").⁵⁵ Lütfi Pasha begins by praising Süleyman as "the Imam of the Age", who "has maintained the Shar'î laws in order and reformed the 'urfî dîwâns". His aim is to refute the arguments of those maintaining that a legitimate caliph should have descent from the tribe of Quraysh, i.e. have a blood relation with the Prophet and his family. Lütfi rejects the opinion that no Caliph is to be recognized after the first four Caliphs and arrives to the conclusion that Süleyman "is the Imam of Age without dubiety". As Hamilton Gibb notes, Lütfi illustrates the *falasifa* theory of the caliphate, i.e. that "adopted universally by Muslim writers of the post-Abbasid age".⁵⁶ This may look as if Lütfi is at pains to prove a matter essentially solved; however, one must note that his very fervor in proving his point shows that the issue was held as urgent and debatable in this time. As Colin Imber remarks, claims to universal sovereignty (always under a religious guise) were made by both Süleyman's rivals, Charles V and Shah Tahmasp.⁵⁷

On the other hand, Ebussu'ud had explicitly stated that Süleyman could exercise the right of the caliph to make definitive choices among different legal opinions, and in several cases quoted an imperial order together with—in fact, as the definitive answer to—authoritative jurisprudence.⁵⁸ An imperial decree issued in 1548 discusses the debate between Ebussu'ud and Çivizade (the former *şeyhülislam*, who had been dismissed for his denunciation of prominent dervishes and had died one year earlier) on the legality of cash *vakfs*; Süleyman takes a clear position on the grounds both that their prohibition would be "the cause of a diminution in benefactions" and that most of the ulema asked have favoured Ebussu'ud's opinion.⁵⁹

Reactions to the imperial vision

Now, although it looked more and more majestically self-justified and inevitable, the imperial model did not cease to have its enemies. While Ebussu'ud and

⁵⁵ The treatise was partially translated in Lütfi Pasha – Gibb 1962; cf. Ocak 1988, 173-174; Fazlıoğlu 2003, 387-389.

⁵⁶ Lütfi Pasha – Gibb 1962, 295.

⁵⁷ Imber 1992, 179-180. On the afterlife of Ottoman claims to caliphate cf. Gerber 2013.

⁵⁸ Imber 1992; Imber 1995, 152-153.

⁵⁹ Repp 1986, 255.

his adherents, such as Dede Çöngü, were trying to “Islamicize” the Ottoman synthesis, the strong religious connotations that the opposition had taken already by Yazıcıoğlu’s time became more and more dominant. A cautionary remark seems in place here: one tends to revert to an opposition of the religious vs. the secular understanding of the world, in the post-Enlightenment sense. However, for the sixteenth-century Ottoman this opposition simply did not exist: one could give more emphasis on the Holy Law precepts, i.e. on the role of the ulema that would interpret and execute it, or on the Sultanic right to complement the law, but all narratives would only move within a “religious” framework and inevitably use “religious” justification.

At the political level, a number of anti-imperial movements all took religious forms, mostly as mysticist reactions based on Ibn Arabi’s notion of “the pole of the world” (*kutb*): apart from the various rebellions of Anatolian sheikhs, rallying the Turcoman heterodox populations, one may mention the messianic movements around Bayrami-Melami (and later Hamzevi, after the execution of the Bosnian Hamza Bali in 1561) dervishes of the central Anatolian region throughout the fifteenth century (1524, 1538, 1568), as well as numerous ulema and (mainly Gülşeni) dervishes accused as heretics and studied in an exemplary way by Ahmet Yaşar Ocak.⁶⁰ We should note, however, that the *şeyhülislam* Çivizade Efendi, a strict defender of the *sharia* and an opponent of Ebussu’ud’s interpretations and syntheses, was dismissed in the early 1540s on account (among others) of his accusations against not only long dead authorities of Sufism such as al-Ghazali, Ibn Arabi and Jalal al-Din Rumi, but also against sheikh İbrahim Gülşenî (d. 1534).⁶¹ On the other hand, the reader will remember how eulogies for Süleyman such as the anonymous *Al-adliyya al-Suleymaniya* or Dizdar Mustafa’s *Kitâb sulûk al-mulûk* used the same notion of the “Pole” to glorify the Empire, as they identified this role with the Ottoman Sultan.

A striking case, where the opposition to the imperial project took the form of a total renunciation of secular power in the name of piety, is to be found (much before Süleyman’s accession) in the works written by Şehzade (prince) Korkud (ca. 1468-1513), the fifth (in most probability) son of Bayezid II. Having already in his

⁶⁰ Ocak 1991 and 1998.

⁶¹ Repp 1986, 250-52; Gel 2010, 233ff.

childhood an inclination for scholarship, in his youth (and after sitting for two weeks in the throne as a regent upon the death of his grandfather, Mehmed II) he served as governor of Manisa, where he was involved in naval conflicts with the French and Venetian (siege of Lesvos, 1501), and then of Antalya, where he collaborated closely with Muslim corsairs. In 1509, seeing perhaps that he stood no chance against Selim, his competitor in the succession struggle, Korkud renounced from succession eligibility and left for Cairo, where he spent more than a year in the court of the Mamluk sultan. He then returned home and became governor of Antalya and afterwards of Manisa. After the Şahkulu rebellion he recognized the accession of his brother Selim I; almost a year later, Korkud fled and eventually was executed near Bursa. During his adventurous life, Korkud wrote many religio-political writings in Turkish and Arabic, mainly addressing the problem of the compromise of imperial authority with the Sharia precepts, but also treatises on mysticism, music, etc. Among his most important works, we should note *Dawat al-nafs al-taliha ila'l-amal al-saliha* (“An errant soul’s summons to virtuous works, through manifest signs and splendid proofs”), which was completed in Arabic in 1508.⁶² Korkud composed *Dawat al-nafs* in Manisa and sent it to the court in order to ask his father to release him from his governing duties, as he no longer aspired to the throne and wished to follow an ulema career (or a kind of honorary retirement as *müteferrika*). This voluminous Arabic work, full of *hadiths*, Quranic quotations and scholarly commentaries, focused on showing that being an effective ruler is incompatible with being a pious and proper Muslim, criticizing at the same time the imperial order as this was crystallized by the beginnings of the sixteenth century; Korkud’s reasoning is heavily influenced by al-Ghazali’s arguments against the ruler’s revenues and on the advantages of seclusion.⁶³

Although Korkud’s works remained mostly uncopied, they were read in the palace by high-rank ulemas such as Kemalpaşazade (d. 1534), especially on the matter of apostasy but also on his analysis on rulership.⁶⁴ The critique contained in the *Dawat al-nafs* against the mixture of Sharia and dynastic law and especially against the use of the capital sentence, on the other hand, was to become a central point in late-sixteenth-century opposition, as we are going to see.

⁶² Al-Tikriti 2004, 196ff gives an extensive English summary of the Arabic text. On Korkud’s ideas see also Fleischer 1990, 70ff; al-Tikriti 2001; Ivanyi 2012, 112-116.

⁶³ Cf. Laoust 1970, 95-104.

⁶⁴ Al-Tikriti 2004, 181-185 and 196.

The ulema opposition to the Suleymanic synthesis

Much more influential was the opposition against the *kanun* synthesis and its jurist exponents, i.e. Ebussu'ud, Dede Cöngi and the like. Çivizade Efendi, the precursor (not immediate) of Ebussu'ud in the post of *şeyhülislam* (1539-1542), was one of the paragons of this opposition.⁶⁵ A son of a respected *medrese* teacher, Çivizade followed also the teaching career, first in Edirne, then in Bursa and finally to Istanbul; he then jumped into the higher posts of the judicial branch, becoming judge of Egypt in 1530-1 and Anadolu *kazasker* in 1537. He was appointed *şeyhülislam* less than two years later, only to be dismissed from the office in 1542. Apparently, the cause of his dismissal was his zealous commitment to Hanafî orthodoxy, which brought him into conflict with what seemed then the consensus of the Ottoman ulema. The issue at stake may seem irrelevant to imperial policy, as it concerned a subtle problem of the Islamic ritual (namely, whether one might perform the ablution with footwear); what seems to have played a more crucial role in his removal must have been Çivizade's rigid condemnation of Sufism, mentioned above. Çivizade returned to his old *medrese* post and later, when Ebussu'ud, then the *kazasker* of Rumili, was appointed *şeyhülislam* (1545), he took his place and kept it till his death in 1547. It was during this period that he engaged in a legal dispute with Ebussu'ud on account of the latter validating religious endowments (*vakfs*) made by donating cash. Çivizade challenged Ebussu'ud's view and succeeded in making the Sultan accept his view; however, and as Çivizade died soon after, Ebussu'ud rallied several retired and active high ulema and eventually had Süleyman issue an order permitting cash donations. Such foundations were in use since the first decades of the fifteenth centuries, and were ratified by famous and respected ulema in the course of the sixteenth century, including no less than Kemalpaşazade; Çivizade's argument was that this tradition was feeble (in comparison to the older Hanafî scholars) and that it opened the way to usury. Apparently, there was some public dispute on this issue, which shows that imperial policies were not accepted without ado.⁶⁶

If Çivizade was a somehow easy opponent for Ebussu'ud to fight, one cannot say the same for Birgivi Mehmed Efendi (1523-1573), a widely respected and

⁶⁵ On Çivizade see Repp 1986, 244-256; and the very analytical dissertation by Gel 2010.

⁶⁶ Mandaville 1979, 297; Kemalpaşazade – Özcan 2000; Gel 2010, 211-230; Karataş 2010.

immensely influential scholar who challenged vehemently Ebussu'ud's legal strategems in favour of a strict interpretation of *fikh* or Islamic jurisprudence. Birgivi was born in Balıkesir into a family of scholars and Sufis and after receiving his first education with his father, a prominent Sufi of the town, he went to Istanbul for further studies. He began to teach and became an army judge in 1551, following his former teacher's appointment as the *kazasker* of Rumili; in about the same period he followed a Sufi fraternity, that of the Bayramiyye, but only to leave it soon for a professor's career in the small and distant town of Birgi, where he lived till his death. His work was both voluminous and popular; his most popular and influential treatises were the *Vasiyyetnâme* ("Testament"; also known as *Risâle-i Birgivi*, "Birgivi's treatise"), a catechism in Turkish, and its Arabic and more complex counterpart, *al-Tarîqa al-Muhammadiyya* ("The Muhammadan way"); one should also note his legal essays dealing with issues such as the cash-*vakf* or the legitimacy of payment for religious services.⁶⁷ Another work of Birgivi's, *Zuhr al-mulûk*, is of a more directly "political" content, since it is addressed to the new ruler, Selim II, exhorting him to follow strictly the precepts of the Holy Law and, particularly, to abolish the Ebussu'udic distortions of the Sharia in land tenure and taxation.⁶⁸

In modern scholarship, Birgivi's name has become a synonym of Ottoman fundamentalism, representing a kind of zealot who condemned every innovation and argued for a complete adherence to the Sharia.⁶⁹ This image, as we will also see in Chapter VI, was much influenced from Birgivi's association with the seventeenth-century Kadızadeli movement, as well as the misattribution to him of several polemical works against innovations by the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century scholar Ahmed al-Rumî al-Akhisarî.⁷⁰ The influence of Ibn Taymiyya on the latter, more particularly, has led many scholars to consider Birgivi a follower of Ibn Taymiyya as well, which is not the case: similarly uncompromising and strict as he may have been, Birgivi seems to have totally ignored Ibn Taymiyya's work, which at this period was mostly (and paradoxically) used by the Ebussu'udic scholarship, as

⁶⁷ On Birgivi's life and work, see Zilfi 1988, 143-146; Ocak 1991, 75-76; Radtke 2002; Ivanyi 2012; Yılmaz 2005, 76-82; Kurz 2011, 56ff.

⁶⁸ Ivanyi 2012, 43-45.

⁶⁹ We will skip the very interesting discussion whether he must be considered a precursor of "Islamic Enlightenment" or "Puritanism" (Schulze 1996; Hagen – Seidenstricker 1998, 95ff.; Ivanyi 2012, 5-7), as it would necessitate a long digression from our subject.

⁷⁰ On these works see Ivanyi 2012, 36-40.

we saw in Dede Cöngi's case.⁷¹ Birgivi's precursors should rather be found in Şehzade Korkud's treatises, and in a lesser degree in his own more or less contemporary "decline" literature (of which more in Chapter IV).

His polemical treatises against Ebussu'ud apart, Birgivi's main and most popular work remains *Al-tarîqa al-Muhammadiyya*.⁷² The general spirit of the treatise is a violent attack against and dismissal of innovation: true, there are innovations which may be allowed or even recommended, such as the building of minarets, but in general innovation is a major threat to religion, closely resembling infidelity. His most important target is "innovation in custom" (*bid'a fi'l-'âda*), and especially when committed by "the Sufis of our time" (although he never dismisses Sufism wholesale): for instance, dancing and music, issues which were to take great importance in later debates. Birgivi's central place in the opposition against the imperial legal synthesis can be seen in the fact that he felt necessary to devote the last chapter of his *Tariqa* to the fiscal and land arrangements sanctified by Ebussu'ud.⁷³ Birgivi stressed the illegality of the land tax and the injustice inferred to the heirs of the peasant; what he was opposing was not so much the very concept of state ownership, which he accepted by necessity, but the function of the *tapu* system of tax and transfer of arable lands.

Birgivi's analysis of the soul faculties and the virtues produced thereof brings him unexpectedly close to the *falasifa* tradition of the Tusian *ahlak* authors; and one may wonder whether this was a simple coincidence. Toward the end of Süleyman's reign, the paragon of the Ottoman *ahlak* tradition, Kınalızade Ali Çelebi, was most vexed by the substitution of Sharia with *kanun*: he draws a simile between the sultanic law or *kanun* and Cengiz Han's arbitrary *yasa*, implying that the former may result to ruin like the latter.⁷⁴ Interestingly, the defence of Ebussu'ud's legal synthesis by these authors fits well with Guy Burak's suggestion that Mongol rule was a major influence

⁷¹ Radtke 2002; Ivanyi 2012, 79-82.

⁷² The most recent and comprehensive study of this important work is Ivanyi 2012. Radtke 2002, 161-170 gives a short synopsis and a detailed report of the sources used by Birgivi.

⁷³ For an analysis of this chapter, see Ivanyi 2012, 239ff and especially 262-283. Cf. Mandaville 1979, 304-306; Mundy – Saumarez Smith 2007, 16-20.

⁷⁴ This section has been interpreted by Cornell Fleischer as a justification of the Ottoman *kanun*, which supports and derives from the Holy Law (Fleischer 1983, 208; 1986, 227); in contrast, Tezcan argued that Kınalızade rather sought to discredit *kanun* (Tezcan 2001, 118). On the shift of meaning of the term *yasa* and *kanun* in the post-Mongol societies of the Middle East cf. Burak 2015.

of this Ottoman development.⁷⁵ In this respect, Kınalızade's view may be seen as a precursor of the seventeenth-century reading of Ibn Taymiyya by the "Sunna-minded" authors, on which we shall speak in Chapter VI. If the ulema were the rising class that claimed its share in the political power from the mid-sixteenth century onwards,⁷⁶ Kınalızade's position within this group may offer a context for his opposition to Süleyman's legal policy.

⁷⁵ Burak 2013, 594-599.

⁷⁶ This is the suggestion made by Tezcan 2010a, 30ff.

Chapter IV

Adab literature, Ottoman style

The perception of the late-sixteenth-century changes as a visible “decline” has been seriously challenged by a series of studies from the early 1990s onwards. Linda Darling showed that the financial bureaucracy actually increased its capacity to deal with tax collection and administration of public finances in the late sixteenth century; Karen Barkey claimed (perhaps with some exaggeration) that the slow and intermittent suppression of the Celali revolts was due to a process of state-making (which was co-opting the rebels into its system, with French and English parallels) rather than state inefficiency; Jane Hathaway addressed the issue of decentralization, arguing that it was in fact a process closely connected to the elites of the central government; Rifaat Abou-El-Haj and Suraiya Faroqhi maintained that, while there was undoubtedly a crisis, what ensued was a transformation of the Ottoman system which led to another version of the imperial paradigm, not necessarily inferior (if this term can be applied) to the previous one.¹ Recently, Baki Tezcan proposed a continuing conflict between what he called “absolutist” and “constitutionalist” trend; in the context of this conflict, Murad III’s reign, universally considered by Ottoman authors (as we will see in detail) as the actual beginning of decline, is interpreted as an effort from the part of the Sultan to take back the reins of actual power, theretofore operated by his viziers and *kuls*.²

For our aims, however, it is important to note that the “decline” paradigm was first initiated by Ottoman authors.³ Abou-El-Haj’s critique to the modern adherents of this theory was based exactly on their use of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century advice literature at face value, while in his view they should be seen as expressing the anxieties of an old order which was losing its prerogatives. True, the *topos* of a

¹ See Kafadar 1993; Darling 1996; Darling 1997; Barkey 1994; Abou-El-Haj 2005; Faroqhi 1994; Hathaway 1996; Quataert 2003.

² See Tezcan 2010a, 55ff. and 97-99; Tezcan also connects Murad’s absolutism with the conflict between “traditional” and “rational” sciences and the flourishing of the latter during his reign (Tezcan 2010b). Tezcan’s theory has met with a rather lukewarm and cautious reception on the part of fellow Ottomanists; similar views were also expressed by Yılmaz 2008 and Yılmaz 2015.

³ On the genealogy of the “decline” trope in Ottoman literature, see Howard 1988.

declining world had been a *leitmotiv* in Ottoman literature already before the Ottoman Empire was established; furthermore, the notion of decline was also a literary convention, which can be seen in several works dating from the first half of the sixteenth century.⁴ It is true, however, that this notion takes completely new dynamics from the mid-century onwards and becomes a central point in almost every treatise dealing with government toward the end of the century. It is important to note that the Ottoman authors we are going to examine do not use terms implying exactly “decline”, i.e. an irreversible process bound to lead to an eventual fall or disaster. When they have to use a term, they usually prefer “corruption” (*fesad*) and, more often, “turmoil” or *ihtilal*:⁵ the meaning is that things do not go well, while they used to be, but on the other hand the situation is prone to ameliorate, provided the Sultan (or the Grand Vizier) follows the authors’ advice. The idealization of a glorious past is evident, but does not yet play a central role in these authors’ argumentation. In their other respects, late sixteenth-century texts generally follow the path opened by Lütü Pasha’s treatise: not only they are addressed mostly to the Grand Vizier, rather than the Sultan himself; they also tend to ignore older tradition, hardly mentioning authorities such as Davvani or al-Ghazali, and, most importantly, they scarcely describe the moral qualities demanded by the higher officials. They may always stress that the Vizier must choose honest subordinates; but the true emphasis lies on the function of the imperial institutions: the janissary system, the palace and the imperial council, the ulema hierarchy, and so forth. In their majority, these are works written by Ottomans for Ottomans, and destined for Ottoman rather than universal use.

Kitâbu mesâlih

We will begin this survey with an anonymous work, *Kitâbu mesâlihi'l-müslimîn ve menâfi'i'l-mü'minîn* (“Book on the proper courses for Muslims and on the interests of the faithful”).⁶ The dating of this text has been an object of scholarly debate, but it seems that the text is almost surely dated in the last decade before

⁴ See for instance Latifi’s complains (Latifi – Pekin 1977; Latifi – Yerasimos 2001), as well as several anecdotes in Lâmi’î Çelebi’s (d. 1532) *Letâifnâme*, compiled by his son (Lami’i-zade – Çalışkan 1997). For more details see Sariyannis 2008, 133-134 and 135-136.

⁵ As we saw in the previous chapter, Mehmed Birgivi was also an adherent of this trend; cf. Ivanyi 2012, 74-75.

⁶ Yücel 1988, 49-142; facsimile follows (citations to the transcribed text). See also Tezcan 2000; Yılmaz 2003a, 303-4; Yılmaz 2005, 119-121; İnan 2009, 120; Tuşalp Atiyas 2013, 56-61.

Süleyman's death (1566).⁷ There are some indications that the author held some minor state offices; although Yücel suggests that he might have belonged to the *ilmiye* class, it seems very probable that he had served in the palace.

The *Kitâbu mesâlih*, which was destined for “the present rulers” and especially for the Grand Vizier, as indicated in many instances, is a rather incoherent work, having fifty-two chapters that contain various practical advices with no apparent structure. Many sections deal with the ulema; the other state officials are perhaps given less importance. The weight falls to the scribal apparatus, and the author is particularly sensitive to the intrusion of strangers to the scribal ranks (while he has no word whatsoever for strangers in the janissary ranks, a highlight of later literature). But janissaries and other militaries form the main object of the author's suggestions and advice; his most extensive chapters concern sartorial limitations, not only for soldiers but also for different classes. The author has also advice on financial and monetary issues, the peasant subjects, the distribution of alms to the poor, the provisioning of Istanbul and so forth. To sum up, the *Kitâbu mesâlih* clearly follows the same footsteps as its contemporary *Âsafnâme*, the famous work by Lütfi Pasha: our anonymous author does not care either for a philosophical foundation of society and politics or for the moral qualities of the Sultan or even the Grand Vizier (who, as the addressee of the treatise, is considered a priori receptive to good advice); rather, he focuses on specific institutions and the ways their shortcomings could be mended. It does this with much more detail (and much less coherence) than Lütfi Pasha, showing a deeper knowledge of the everyday function of the state apparatus; in fact, one might even say that here we have a “bottom-up” approach, the work of a lower

⁷ According to Yaşar Yücel, who published it, the *Kitâbu mesâlih* should be dated shortly after 1639: Yücel 1988, 59-62. Only one manuscript is known, dated earlier than 1643; Yücel's dating is based mostly on the identification of a certain Yahya Çelebi Efendi in Beşiktaş, mentioned in the text, with the famous *şeyhülislam* who died in 1644, and on the vague reference to some decisive victories of the Sultan over the Safavids. Baki Tezcan argued that several external and internal evidence point out to a much earlier date, between 1555 and 1566 (Tezcan 2000, 658-659). Tezcan argued that another Şeyh Yahya Çelebi, a Sufi, resided in Beşiktaş in the mid-sixteenth century, while, moreover, references to particular persons (a physician, Hamunoğlu, who must be a known doctor of Süleyman's era) and events (the conquest of Egypt) as having happened during the author's lifetime suggest that he was alive even during Selim I's reign; other information (e.g. the number of palace ushers, *kapıcı*) conflict with data known for the early seventeenth century. Based on the same reference to the sultanic victories (which arguably implies that the victorious Sultan is still alive), Tezcan concludes that we should date this text before the death of Süleyman (1566) and after the 1555 campaign. One may also add that if we dated the treatise in the late 1630s it would be a quite out-of-date, isolated specimen of old-fashioned scattered advice, ignoring all the major themes steadily recurring in the early seventeenth-century texts (for instance, there is no reference at all to the number of the janissaries).

official watching developments at his own level of government. A further difference is the main feature of this group of texts: namely, the emphasis on what is going wrong in the present day, rather than on the ideal functioning of the institutions.

Hirzû'l-mülûk

This current of “institutional advice” reaches a real outburst in the final decades of the sixteenth century. The political treatises composed in this period may not be more than those produced in Süleyman’s era; what distinguishes them from the earlier literature is their emphasis to the shortcomings of the present era, although the emphasis to a past “Golden Era” was to follow. One of the most characteristic works is *Hirzû'l-mülûk* (“stronghold [or, amulet] of the kings”), an anonymous essay (all we know about its author is that he possessed a fief, *dirlik*) which must have been composed around 1574 and dedicated to Murad III.⁸ The author states that the work is divided to eight chapters but all manuscripts end with chapter four; furthermore, a certain inconsistency in its structure shows we have to do with something like a first draft. The author mentions al-Ghazali’s *İhyâ'-i 'ulûm* (Y176, A36) and various unspecified Persian and Arabic books (Y183, A43), while he also cites numerous anecdotes from Selim I and Süleyman’s reign; in general, however, the treatise bears the distinctively Ottoman late-sixteenth-century feature of having specific criticisms and proposals for the contemporary politics.

The author deals with the kingly virtues, the properties of the viziers, the ulema and the army, often offering counsel directly from the Ottoman experience. Indeed, while the structure and general content of the work is similar to older *adab*-styled literature, the “Ottomanization” begun with Lütfi is also evident. Thus, *Hirzû'l-mülûk* not only is one of the first treatises addressing very specific Ottoman problems, it also inaugurates a long series of texts which point to a “Golden Age” of the past, where all these institutions worked perfectly. We have to note that in this case the “Golden Age” is situated in Selim I’s reign, rather than Süleyman’s: for

⁸ The text was published by Yücel 1988, 171-201 and then by Akgündüz 1990-1996, 8: 31-63 (both with facsimiles). See also Yılmaz 2003a, 306-7; İnan 2009, 115-116; Sariyannis 2011a, 130-131. The dating is based on two verses mentioning Sultan Murad; although a later note in the beginning of one manuscript states that the work was offered to Murad IV, its editor, Yaşar Yücel, remarks that a reference to the practice of sending princes to govern provinces suggests that the Sultan is Murad III (a further evidence for this dating is the mentioning of four viziers). It seems that the treatise was presented to him as soon as (or maybe even before) he ascended to the throne, since a whole section of the work is dedicated to the first acts a Sultan should take.

example, the practice of granting unjustified land grants to viziers dates from Süleyman's reign, when a hundred villages were granted to Mehmed Pasha, while an anecdote presenting Selim I denying a *temlik* to his vizier further illustrates the author's point. Furthermore, this might be the first reference to the intrusion of "strangers" into the military ranks, although the emphasis is given to the sipahis rather than the janissaries (as it would happen in later treatises). One might remark, as Baki Tezcan did, that the emphasis to the need for the Sultan to yield actual power and to take back responsibilities delegated to the Grand Vizier fits well with a treatise dedicated to Murad III, as this is exactly what this Sultan tried to do.⁹

Mustafa Ali and "the politics of cultural despair"¹⁰

The paragon of the "declinist" political literature in this period is undoubtedly Gelibolulu Mustafa b. Ahmed (1541-1600), known with the pen-name 'Âlî, one of the most prolific and interesting writers of the sixteenth century.¹¹ Ali was born in Gelibolu (Gallipoli) and took his first education in his native city before moving to his uncle in Istanbul, where he pursued *medrese* education as a student of Ebussu'ud Efendi's son, Şemseddin Ahmed; at the same time he was closely associated with the poetic circles of the capital, establishing friendly relations with many renowned poets but also with Celalzade and his successor, Nişancı Ramazanzade. From 1561 on he held various offices as secretary attached to his patron, Lala Mustafa Pasha. He accompanied him in Damascus and Egypt and in various campaigns (Cyprus, the Caucasus) till the Pasha's death (in the intervals, Ali served with some minor appointments in Bosnia and Aleppo). Then in 1583 he returned to Istanbul, where he engaged in writing poetical, historiographical and belle-lettristic works while serving in the middle ranks of the financial bureaucracy or as secretary of various Pashas (in Erzurum, Baghdad, Sivas and other Anatolian towns). Back to Istanbul in 1589, he spent some years in bitter isolation continuously sending treatises and literary works to viziers and Sultans in an effort to be noticed; in 1592 Ali was appointed secretary of the janissaries and then registrar of the Imperial Council (*defter emini*), only to be dismissed soon after. In 1595, after Murad III's death, he was sent as provincial governor in Anatolia and finally as governor of Jidda. In the way to this last post, Ali

⁹ Tezcan 2010a, 55-56.

¹⁰ I am borrowing this term from Murphey 1989.

¹¹ The standard work on Ali is Fleischer 1986a; on his historiographical work, see also Schmidt 1991.

arrived in Cairo in 1599; he reached Jidda in the end of the same year, only to die soon after.

Ali's work is vast both in scope and in volume: from poetry to history and from Sufism to etiquette, it is an extraordinary specimen of high-styled *inşa* literature. However, Ali's high expectations met with the complex political alliances of late-sixteenth-century Istanbul, with the result that he almost never had the recognition he felt was owed to him. His formidable erudition combined with his mediocre career produced a work marked by bitterness and despair: living in a general milieu of declinist, even apocalyptic visions, he developed a strong sense of a world in decline; and he did his best to describe it. His haughty style makes even the slightest detail look lofty and integrated in a larger vision of the ideal government.

As far as it concerns political thought, Ali's main work is "Counsel for Sultans" (*Nushatü's-selâtîn*, often quoted as *Nasîhatü's-selâtîn*). Completed in 1581, with minor additions added by 1586, it became quite popular (with nine known manuscripts, among which one dated 1627 and another 1698) while its publication by Andreas Tietze in 1979-1982 must have been one of the most influential editions of Ottoman literary works in the recent decades.¹² In the tradition of *Hirzü'l-mülûk* and other similar works, Ali uses his experience from the middle ranks of financial and military bureaucracy, and especially from his participation in the Eastern campaigns, to give practical advice. Following perhaps the *inşa*' model of lists, as we saw it in Chapter III, Ali organizes his chapters around such lists or items (the same model is followed in his famous universal history, the monumental "Essence of the news" or *Künhü'l-ahbâr*). Thus, he discusses the matters necessary for kings and the weaknesses and abuses, always giving a distinctively Ottoman flavor and lamenting the disorder (*ihtilal*) of his days, contrary to the old customs. Usurers, unfit commanders, specific cases of misadministration, undue expenses when there is no sufficient income, all are targeted in this vein.

In one of his last books, *Mevâidü'n-nefâis fi kavâidi'l-mecâlis* ("Tables of delicacies concerning the rules of social gatherings"), Ali reiterates some of these

¹² Ali – Tietze 1979-1982. See also Fleischer 1986a, 95-105; Fodor 1986, 224-225; Gökbilgin 1991, 199-201; Yılmaz 2003a, 304-306; İnan 2009, 114-115; Black 2011, 260-262.

themes.¹³ An exceptionally fascinating and interesting work, *Mevâidü'n-nefâis* is a collection of rules, descriptions and advice not only on “social gatherings”, as stated in its title, but also on issues as diverse as rulership, travel, musical instruments, slaves, food or Sufism. Political advice may be found scattered in various points of this work, and generally Ali reiterates the themes he had taken up in the *Nüşatü's-selâtîn*. Political advice is contained also in Ali's last book, *Füsûl-i hall ü akd ve usûl-i harc ü nakd* (“The seasons of sovereignty on the principles of critical expenditure”), a short history of the Islamic states from 622 up to 1592.¹⁴ As Cornell Fleischer has shown, this work is a fine example of “dynastic cyclism”: dynasties follow a pattern of rise and decline, as they acquire wealth and allow injustice to spread.¹⁵ The difference with the Ibn Khaldunist version of such cyclist theories, which as we will see was going to be introduced some fifty years later, is that Ali does not use the notion of historical laws; instead, he prefers to stress the more traditional ideas of justice and piety. Ali himself stresses that he compiled this work in order to show how kingdoms can be corrupted and how their fall can be prevented. Ali offers a summary of the history of every Muslim dynasty, focusing on the causes of its decline. A supplement speaks of the Ottoman dynasty, and here one may discern clearly how Ali set the tone for subsequent political treatises.

Ali as a landmark of Ottoman thought

Ali himself stresses that he wishes to depart from the established practice of copying earlier advice books, which were destined for other states and problems. His *Nüşatü's-selâtîn* ends with a series of short appendices and supplements, where he defends himself against accusations of self-interest and bias and emphasizes that the great merit of his book lies in the fact that it has examples and stories from his own experience, giving reliable information on the time present. And indeed, exactly like Lütü Pasha before him, Mustafa Ali chooses deliberately to ignore the neo-Aristotelian and/or neo-Platonic traditions of a philosophical foundation of political society.

¹³ The work has been published in transcription (Ali – Şeker 1997) and English translation (Ali – Brookes 2003). It has not yet drawn the scholarly attention it deserves as a whole (cf. Salgırlı 2003).

¹⁴ Ali – Demir 2006; cf. Fleischer 1986a, 177-178 and 301ff.; Şeker 1995.

¹⁵ Fleischer 1983, esp. 206-216.

The most striking feature of Ali's extraordinary work is the degree in which it deals with very specific problems, proposing equally specifying measures. As we saw, in this Ali follows a fashion current in his age, but he does so in a way more detailed than the average. Of course, much of Ali's advice has clearly to do with his own personal grievances, as when he complains of the honour shown to strangers in the expense of committed servants of the Sultan (like himself). His repeated attacks against the *kuls*, the Sultan's slaves, are a nice example. On the one hand, in more than one ways Ali's attack is targeted against the janissaries, whom he regards as unmanly and corrupt, while he keeps his appraisal for the chivalry and valour of the free sipahis.

On the other hand, Ali is steadily engaged in a struggle against unilinear promotion of palace recruits to administrative posts. It is more than clear that Ali's complains stem from his own disappointment of his mediocre career: he perceived his failure to find a position worthy of his merit and knowledge as the result of palace recruits occupying almost exclusively the higher posts of administration. However, it would be oversimplifying to consider all his remarks a result of his personal bitterness. The view of the janissaries and of the *kul* system in general as a threat for the meritocracy, represented by sipahi cavalry and trained scholars, was to become a standard thread of thought for early seventeenth-century theorists.¹⁶

As in *Kitâbu mesâlih*, in Ali's work too we see an ambiguous attitude vis-à-vis the "old law". In quite a few points, Ali too considers "old custom" an impediment for sound practice, or at least something not necessarily binding. However, one may detect an attitude against the "disorders of the times" which praises the old customs, or, in Ali's words, "the rules" (he speaks of disorder "contrary to the rules", *hilaf-i kavanin*).¹⁷ Ali clearly considers the Ebussu'udic *kanun* a perfectly legitimate source of law, indeed a complementary equivalent of the *sharia*. When speaking of the highest officials of the *divan* bureaucracy, the *reisülküttâb* and the *nişancı*, he asserts that these officials and in particular the "imperial cypher officials" (*tuğrakeşân-ı divan*) are "the jurisconsults of the imperial laws" (*müftiyân-ı kavanin-ı padişahân olub*); the daring use of the *sharia* term *müftî* as a simile for the chief chancellor is

¹⁶ Cf. Abou Hadj 1988. On Ali's contempt for his fellow scribes see Tuşalp Atiyas 2013, 70-72.

¹⁷ Tietze (1:41) translates "the old customs".

more than telling. In this respect, there is a striking slip of tongue in his description of Ottoman rise and decline contained in his last work, *Füsûl-i hall ü akd*: Ali writes literally that, following Mahmud Pasha's proposal, Mehmed II "promulgated an old law" (*bir kanun-i kadim vaz' itmişlerdir*). Obviously the law was not old at the time of its promulgation; its being sanctified thus shows the identification of "just law" with "established custom". This emphasis to the "old law" as almost a synonym of "justice" is not peculiar to political authors of the period: to the contrary, it seems that it had become a permanent feature of Ottoman political ideology throughout the sixteenth century.¹⁸

Ali's contemporaries: Selaniki, Hasan Kâfi Akhisarî

Next to Mustafa Ali (whom he had met and admired), the other great chronicler of this period was Selânîkî Mustafa Efendi (d. after 1600), an official who served in various posts of the government, mainly financial.¹⁹ His work is characterized by frequent and extensive comments on the political situation, in a manner that was to become quite common in Ottoman historiography. Selaniki had no strong reasons to personal bitterness due to unfulfilled high expectations, as Ali did; however, his attitude is clearly similar. For one thing, he constantly makes remarks on the moral decay of his times, from the soldiers who seek "the vanities of this world" to the rulers who "do not practice justice and equity". Murad III is the target of harsh criticism: Selaniki stresses the monetary disorder caused by these wars, as well as the increase of prices and the spread of bribery.

Although lacking systematic exposition, Selaniki's ideas show an original approach; some of them, such as the need for a limited number of viziers or the disapproval of the so-called strangers' intrusion to the janissary ranks were to dominate early seventeenth-century political treatises. Selaniki may well be the first exponent of such ideas, which were obviously current among the ranks of scribal bureaucracy: both Selaniki and the early seventeenth-century authors, which are going

¹⁸ Cf. Sariyannis 2011a, 141-142; Selaniki – İpşirli 1999, index s.v. "kanun-ı kadîm"; İnalçık 1965. Tezcan 2000, 658 shows that Ali systematically speaks of Mehmed II's *kanun* while he could not have seen the original text of the *kanunname*, or at least the text that was circulating as such (see also below, Chapter V).

¹⁹ Selaniki – İpşirli 1999, xii-xvii; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. 'Selânîkî' (M. İpşirli). On the relations of Ali with Selaniki see Fleischer 1986a, 130-31. On Selaniki as social critique cf. also Schaendlinger 1992, 240. The following lines are based on Sariyannis 2008, 137-140.

to form the subject of Chapter V, belonged to this class which seems to have considered departures from established institutional rules a major threat for the Empire. On the other hand, it seems that upon Murad III's death or even during his reign it had become quite common to blame him for whimsical administration of the public affairs.²⁰

One may find some similarities with the quasi-apocalyptic vision of Selaniki in a roughly contemporary text, which had a rich afterlife throughout the seventeenth century. *Papasnâme* ("The priest's book") was written by Derviş Mehmed, allegedly a priest turned Muslim. It is recorded in at least seven manuscripts, all dated after the mid-seventeenth century (the first being dated in 1651).²¹ The text, which can be classified as a "conversion narrative" according to Tijana Krstić, is essentially a prophetic vision narrated by an alleged convert to Islam; his own conversion, all the more since he used to be a priest, illustrates the possibility of changes that would seem unbelievable.²² Its dating is insecure; a series of internal evidence could show that its original compilation should be dated ca. 1597/8, although one cannot exclude the possibility of additions or alterations during its long copying history.²³

One might draw a line connecting all these texts, including Ali's works, with the Islamic millennium (1591/2) seen either as an object of eschatological fear or a landmark for the beginning of a new era.²⁴ If Ali's late work, and especially his universal history of dynasties, display a nostalgia for a past never to come back, texts like Selaniki's history or the prophetic vision of Derviş Mehmed correspond rather to a world view chronologically centered around the year 1000 as a starting point either

²⁰ See e.g. Beyani – Kutluk 1997, 28 (=17-19 of the Ottoman text); cf. Sariyannis 2008, 140-141.

²¹ See Krstić 2011, 116-118. Here I use the mss. of Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS Mixt 689 (1651) and Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Saliha Hatun 112/2 (1685/6). The text is to be published by Günhan Börekçi and Tijana Krstić; I wish to thank them both for their permission and help.

²² Cf. other "alternative histories" (Reindl-Kiel 2002 and Reindl-Kiel 2003).

²³ A terminus post quem concerns a Sultan Murad's victories over the Persians (S5b). Most probably, this is Murad III and his victories in the Caucasus, Azerbaijan and Tabriz, since the author seems to ignore Ottoman history after the rise of Mehmed III (1595-1603). The Prophet Muhammad is mentioned as having "come to the world a thousand and six years ago" (S8b, V9a); according to this the text should be dated in H.956/1550 (if we accept that Muhammad was 50 years old at the time of the Hijra), which seems too early. If there is a misunderstanding of the author and he had the Hijra in mind, the date becomes 1597/8, which is much more sensible. Moreover, the description of Mehmed as a champion against the Central European forces and a reference to the need of inspection of the janissary and the sipahi registers (S23b-24a, V34a-b) could strengthen a dating of the original text just after the battle of Mező Keréztés (October 1596)

²⁴ Cf. Fleischer 1986a, 112, 133-42, 244.

of decline or of rise; at any rate, they all convey a sense of urgency and of a crucial historical moment which has to be overcome. A “Golden Age”, the *topos* of posterior literature, is already present, be it in the past or the distant future.

Hasan Kâfî Akhisarî

Ali's name is often coupled with another late sixteenth century author, Hasan Kâfî b. Turhan b. Davud b. Ya'kub ez-Zîbî el-Akhisarî el-Bosnavî. Akhisari, however, differs in many ways from his great contemporary, both in personality and in his work.²⁵ He was born in Bosnia in 1544, where he had a medrese education, which he continued in Istanbul from 1566 on. In 1575, he returned to Bosnia as a teacher; about a decade later, in 1583, he changed career line to become a judge in his native town, Akhisar. He was then appointed in other towns of the region, went to the Holy Pilgrimage and joined the campaigns to Eğri (1596) and Estergon (1605). He died in 1616 in Akhisar, leaving behind him a large work on philology, *fikh*, theology, philosophy and history. Among his numerous treatises, what interests us most is the *Usûlü'l-hikem fi nizâmi'l-âlem* (“Elements of wisdom for the order of the world”); Akhisari wrote it in 1596 in Arabic; as it was very successful among various ulema and officials, he also translated it into Turkish. Akhisari's treatise was widely read; it was copied in numerous manuscripts and gained a new life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with many editions and translations. In the beginning of his essay, Akhisari states that his treatise concerns the order of the world (*nizam-i âlem*), which has been disorderly and deranged, and explains that he set out to examine all signs of “sedition and confusion” that had happened the last ten years or more, since H. 980 (1572/3), in order to find their causes and ways. The rest of his work is a mixture of *adab* and *akhlak* (especially the parts on the beginning of society and its division into four classes), with some passages specifically mentioning developments in Ottoman rural and military realities, as for instance when he dates the ruin of urban economy in the year 1001 (1592/3), when *reaya* and artisans from towns and villages were forced to join the army, or when he remarks that Ottomans neglected military innovation and thus are constantly defeated.

²⁵ On his life and works see *Diyanet Vakfî İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. (M. Aruçi); Fodor 1986, 225-227; Yılmaz 2003a, 307-308; İnan 2009, 116; Black 2011, 263-264. For the transcription of his *Usûlü'l-hikem* see Akhisari – İpşirli 1979-80; for an early-twentieth-century German translation, see Akhisari – Karácson 1911.

In sum, Akhisari's treatise occupies a mixed position among the currents of his era. On the one hand, he seems more like a representative of the earlier generation, in the tradition of moralistic "mirror for princes" literature; and, as a matter of fact, it seems that his treatise is based on a shortened adaptation of Mahmud al-Zamakhshari's (d. 1143) *Rabî' al-abrâr*, made under the title *Rawz al-ahyâr* by Hatîb Kasımoğlu Muhyiddin Mehmed (d. 1533/4) in the early years of Süleyman's reign. On the other hand, his use of the traditional *medrese* style to convey concrete opinions on contemporary problems, especially military ones, is typical of his age—all the more so since, as we saw, he tends to expose original criticisms and ideas: some parts on the weakness of women's advice in the chapter on consultation, the famous excerpt on the European progresses in military technology, some references to Bosnia, Wallachia and Moldavia, or the disapproval of coffee. These ideas might have influenced the political decisions, as Akhisari's work seems to have been widely read; however, they did not seem to have found their way into his contemporaries or his immediate successors' work, even though other *leitmotifs* of his treatise (such as the emphasis to consultation or the harms of coffeehouses) did.

For the sake of comparison, one may have a look at a very similar work with the same title (*Usûlü'l-hikem fi nizâmi'l-âlem*) by Hasanbeyzâde Ahmed Pasha (d. 1636/7). Known primarily for his chronicle, written in various stages between 1628 and 1635 and covering the period from Süleyman's to Murad IV's reign, Hasanbeyzade entered the palace bureaucracy in the early 1590s and served under various viziers and commanders, taking part in quite a few of the campaigns in the Habsburg front. In 1600 he became *reisülküttab* himself for a while, and then continued to serve in various financial posts in Istanbul and the provinces. His treatise was composed between 1619 and 1621 for Osman II's vizier (Güzelce) Ali Pasha and is preserved in two copies.²⁶ As sources, Hasanbeyzade quotes "various books on ethics" and particularly Hatîb Kasımoğlu Muhyiddin's *Rawz al-ahyâr*, claiming that he took many points concerning the world order and its arrangements from this treatise. As a matter of fact, his work is a summary of *Rawz al-ahyâr*, but in a less detailed or creative way than Akhisari's: Hasanbeyzade keeps some stories Akhisari

²⁶ Istanbul, Belediye Ktp. nr. 0-49; İstanbul Üniversitesi Ktp. T 6944; here I consulted the latter manuscript. See Hasan Bey-zâde – Aykut 2004, XLIX-LV; Aykut seems to confuse the two copies, see p. LIV attributing the Belediye ms. to the copyist of İstanbul Üniv. ms.

omits, and adds no original ideas, either his own or Akhisari's. The exact relationship between Hasanbeyzade's and Akhisari's works, as well as with their common source, is still unclear;²⁷ what is clear is that Akhisari had added plenty of specific advice to his prototype (for instance, the weakness of women's advice in the chapter on consultation, the reference to Western weaponry or to coffeehouses), whereas Hasanbeyzade in the second decade of the seventeenth century and after all the popularity of Akhisari's work was happy with a simple moralistic compilation. A singular point in Hasanbeyzade's treatise seems to have been added by himself, since it is lacking in Akhisari's text: namely, his emphasis to the need for the Sultan to keep the army in discipline with mild measures (*hüsn-i siyaset*) and showing respect to the elder soldiers. When one knows the historical developments that happened soon after the completion of Hasanbeyzade's work, this remark gains a grim feeling of prophecy.

Such criticism became more and more intense as we proceed into the seventeenth century, before taking a different form which we are going to study in the next Chapter. A famous poem named *Nasihat-i İslâmbol* ("Counsel to Istanbul") was written sometime between 1624 and 1638 (since it mentions Baghdad as occupied by the Persians) by a certain Üveysî.²⁸ The usual criticism against the Sultan's court, innovations, and the neglect of the army couples with clear eschatological overtones; one may see here, thus, a revival of the intellectual climate prevailing in the 1590s.

²⁷ *Rawz al-ahyâr* was also translated into Turkish by Aşık Çelebi (whom we also saw as the first translator of Ibn Taymiyya) for Selim II (d. 1574). Aykut (op.cit.) traces the use of Hasanbeyzade's source, which is selective: thus, Hasanbeyzade's first chapter corresponds to some parts of *Rawz al-ahyâr*'s third chapter; his second chapter, to the first and fifth chapter of his source; and so forth. One might conclude that Hasanbeyzade was, as a matter of fact, re-writing Akhisari's compilation or translating his Arabian version. On the other hand, his omissions from Akhisari's work must lead us to the conclusion that they were both using an abridged form of *Rawz al-ahyâr*, possibly the one written by Aşık Çelebi.

²⁸ Üveysî – von Diez 1811; Gibb 1900-1909, 3: 210-218; İz 1966, 1: 117-119. The poet is often confused with his more or less contemporary Veysî (see next Chapter). On the confusion between the two poets see Sariyannis 2008, 143-145; Tezcan (forthcoming).

Chapter V

The “old law” versus “decline”

It was only natural that the political events of the early seventeenth century (culminating with Osman’s regicide) brought about an even more alarming sense of “decline” than the one prevailing in the last decades of the sixteenth century. The comparison with the allegedly glorious times of the past became more and more fashionable throughout the first half of the seventeenth century. Whereas authors such as Mustafa Ali had spoken of “deviations” or “departures” from the institutional lines of old, they had not dismissed novel ways of coping with the contemporary situations, nor had they made this comparison a central argument in their treatises. In contrast, the authors we are going to study in this chapter, while further deepening their predecessors’ “Ottomanization” (by concentrating in specific Ottoman institutions and practices instead of copying general ideas and advice), also focused on the need for a return to the robust past: institutions of the early or mid-sixteenth century were idealized and strict adherence to their rules of function was advocated.

The concept of the “decline” presupposes that of “rise”, in other words a “Golden Age” during which the institutions, the power and the individual virtues of the Ottoman dynasty and state had reached their heyday. The localization of this era varied according to the different authors. The reader may remember that the anonymous author of the *Hirzû’l-mülûk*, for instance, considered Mehmed II or Selim I as ideal rulers, and the same goes for Mustafâ Ali, although they seem to have had different political aims (thus, *Hirzû’l-mülûk* stresses Mehmed II’s absolutism, while Ali sees him as the founder of the “old law”).¹ As we are going to see, while this remark remains valid in the first decades of the seventeenth century, by the early 1620s the decline was seen as beginning with Murad III’s reign and the “Golden Age” was more and more invariably identified with Süleyman’s era (although there are voices, most notably in Koçi Bey’s work, blaming Süleyman of inaugurating administrative malpractice). Eventually, it was Süleyman’s reign that came to be considered as the “Golden Age” of the Ottoman Empire, even as most authors

¹ Cf. Tezcan 2010a, 57-58. On the image of Selim I in advice literature cf. also Çıpa 2014.

acknowledged that signs of what they perceived as “decline” had already started to appear. This “canonization” had begun long before Süleyman’s death (for instance, in Celalzade’s history but also in various commissioned historiographical works, such as Arif’s *Süleymannname* of 1558) but reached its height in the seventeenth century, when a historian such as Solakzade could write (in the 1650s) that “in Süleyman’s reign of justice the Ottoman state found its equilibrium (*mizan*)”.² This canonization of the past must have made its impact felt in practical terms already in the beginnings of the seventeenth century, as seen in several sources refuting ideas of decline.³ Among them, famous is Veysi’s (1561/2-1627/8) *Hâb-nâme* (“Vision” or “Dream book”; mentioned also as *Vâkı’a-nâme*), composed in the early 1610s, where we see Alexander the Great stressing that all present problems never ceased to be present in the history of humanity. This view can be described as optimistic, as it gives emphasis to historical parallels showing thus that the crisis can be overcome, but Veysi was obviously responding to an expanding sense of decline.⁴

According to Baki Tezcan’s recent reading of seventeenth-century Ottoman history, this canonization of the “old law” was one of the two ways in which the ongoing “constitutionalization” of Ottoman power was expressed. Tezcan spoke of “the second Empire”, explained as “the expansion of the political nation and the limitation of royal authority”, when “a much larger segment of the imperial administration came to consist of men whose social origins were among the commoners” and “[t]hus more and more men whose backgrounds were in finance and trade came to occupy significant positions in the government of the empire, replacing those military slaves and *civilizing* the imperial polity”. In this process, various factors of political life (ulemas, military groups, powerful households) began to challenge and legitimately limit (or claimed to have the legitimacy to limit) royal authority even from the beginning of the seventeenth century.⁵ Islamic political theory, at any rate, had already been putting restraints to absolute rule, be them the

² Solakzade 1879, 4 (*bunun ayyam-ı adlında bu devlet buldı mizanı*); quoted in Woodhead 1995, 181. See *ibid.*, 165 for other instances of late sixteenth or seventeenth-century eulogies of Süleyman (Ali, Peçevi, Karaçelebizade); Kafadar 1993.

³ Cf. Sariyannis 2008, 142.

⁴ Veysi – Salimzjanova 1976; Veysi – Altun 2011. Cf. Gibb 1900-1909, 3: 208-210; Fodor 1986, 227-228; Sariyannis 2008a, 143-144; Şen 2011; Tezcan (forthcoming). On the confusion with his contemporary Üveysi see above, Chapter IV.

⁵ Tezcan 2010a, *passim* (the citations are from pp. 232 and 10); cf. Vatin – Veinstein 2003, 84, 219; Yılmaz 2008; Sariyannis 2013; Yılmaz 2015.

religious (or legalist) orientation favoured by Ibn Taymiyya or (as we saw and as we are going to see later on) Birgivi and his followers, or the need for justice stressed by Persian authors. What was originally Ottoman in all this is the cult of the “old law” and of the institutions of the “Golden Age”, and the underlying notion that these rules and institutions served or were intended to serve as a kind of constitution, i.e. as binding rules for the Sultan to follow.⁶ It was in the early seventeenth century that this identification took an elaborate and systematic form.

Somewhat paradoxically (if one keeps the association of the “old law” theorists with “Ottoman constitutionalism”), however, this kind of reasoning was in more than one way associated with Murad IV, presumably one of the most autocratic Sultans in Ottoman history. Indeed, the most famous expounder of the “Golden Age” trend, Koçi Bey, was also perhaps the most successful, as his advice is said to have been followed explicitly by Murad, to whom it was addressed. However, Koçi Bey’s work stands by no means alone; a whole wave of similar texts, mostly of anonymous or contested authorship, shared the same view of the present situation as a dangerous deviation from the rules of Süleyman’s Golden Age, and of the solution lying to a return to these rules. In terms of form, these works were often composed as a continuation of earlier “mirrors for princes”, such as Mustafa Ali’s *Nushatü’s-selâtin* which seems to have set a standard for the genre. On the other hand, the themes dominant in this ideological trend differ in many ways from Ali’s ideas; for instance, while Ali was strongly critical against the *devşirme* system itself and favoured the use of educated freemen in the administration, the writers we are going to examine now consider problematic the abandonment of the *devşirme* method of recruitment, focusing rather in its enhancement against the intrusion of “strangers” into the janissary ranks. The recurring themes of this trend show indeed a remarkable stability: redress of the timar system and of the economical basis of the timariot sipahis, discipline and control (in terms of numbers and wages) of the janissaries, suppression of bribery—these are the main lines that guide the reasoning of political literature in the 1620s through the 1640s. It would perhaps be more fruitful if we saw in this trend a reaction to the rise of the janissaries’ power, rather than an expression of a “constitutionalist” argument against autocratic rule. Authors of this trend (closely

⁶ Tezcan 2010a, 48ff.

associated to the government apparatus, as we are going to see) clearly considered the widening of the janissaries' social basis as an imminent threat to social order and proposed a redressed sipahi nobility as a potential counterweight.

Kitâb-i müstetâb

The heyday of these works came with the beginning of Murad IV's reign, but the first specimen may well be the anonymous *Kitâb-i müstetâb* ("approved [or, agreeable] book"), which was composed around 1620, and at any case during the reign of Osman II (1617-1622), to whom it must have been presented.⁷ The anonymous author gives no information about his life whatsoever. From two passages of the work it seems that he was a *devşirme*-recruit and that he was raised and educated in the palace; he exhibits a detailed knowledge of the *kul* career system, and seems to be acquainted with Anadolu (e.g. Sivas) more than with Rumili. The author notes as his sources personal experience and conversations with "ulema and wise people", as well as "history books" (on the "circle of equity") and Yazıcıoğlu's *Muhammediye*, while (contrary to Mustafa Ali's view) he writes favourably of Lütü Pasha.

Already in the preface, the author states that he will enumerate the causes that brought annoyance to the subjects and disturbance of the world order, proposing also ways of restoring the situation. The work is divided in twelve chapters, explicitly said to match the number of the months of the year and of the signs of the zodiac, and in the first chapter the author sets out to expound his general idea on the beginnings and characteristics of decline: until the beginnings of Murad III's reign, the viziers and officials were administrating justice and respecting the Holy Law and the *kanun* of the Ottoman dynasty. During Murad III's reign, however, the administrators started to neglect justice and to act contrary to the old laws (*kanun-ı kadim*); this is why the villages and the cultivated lands became deserted, the peasants dispersed, the expenses of the treasury surpassed its income, strangers (*ecnebi*) entered the janissary corps. The rest of the book is devoted in elaborating these views, often using detailed lists of garrisons and numbers in the bureaucratic tradition we already saw.

⁷ The work was first published by Yücel 1988, 1-40 (transcription follows) and then by Akgündüz 1990-1996, 9: 600-645 (facsimile follows). Cf. Gökbilgin 1991, 206-209; Fodor 1986, 230-231; Yılmaz 2003a, 309-310; İnan 2009, 117-118.

Thus, *Kitâb-ı müstetâb* can be seen as the link between the Ottoman *adab* literature, initiated by Lütfi Pasha and brought to perfection by Mustafâ Ali, and the canonization of the “Golden Age” vs. “decline” paradigm which was to follow. The emphasis to institutional functions rather than individual virtues and vices, a new stress on social compartmentalization, the sharp polarization between Süleyman’s glorious times and the deplorable past, and the localization of the causes of decline (the disorder in the timar system, the intrusion of strangers into the janissary ranks and the swollen numbers and costs of the latter, and the destructive results of bribery in all levels) were all to dominate Ottoman political literature of the decades to come.

Murad IV’s counselors: Koçi Bey and his circle

The most famous expounder of the “Golden Age” trend is of course Koçi Bey; at the same time, he also is one of the most famous Ottoman political theorists, since he was translated very early into European languages and thus gained a feedback of uttermost appreciation by early Turkish scholars.⁸ In sharp contrast to his fame, very little is known on his life and career: of Albanian origin, he was recruited as a *devşirme* and entered served in the palace under Ahmed I and the subsequent Sultans, until his retirement to his native city of Gorča (Görice, Korytsa) in the late 1640s. He seems to have been a close advisor of Murad IV’s and of his successor, Ibrahim I, for whom he wrote his two successive treatises respectively.⁹

Koçi Bey’s first *Risâle* (“treatise”) was completed around 1630-31, probably in two versions.¹⁰ Koçi Bey’s programmatic idea is that of a decline begun already in

⁸ See Koçi Bey – Çakmakcioğlu 2008, 18 for the various editions and translations. The text was mainly known in the West through Pétis de la Croix’s French (1725) and W. F. A. Behrnauer’s German (Koçi Bey – Behrnauer 1861) translations. Cf. Rosenthal 1958, 226-227; Black 2011, 264-265. On Koçi Bey’s appreciation by nineteenth-century Orientalists and early scholars of the Turkish republic, suffice to mention his naming as “Turkish Montesquieu” in Hammer 1963, 3: 489 (cf. Koçi Bey – Aksüt 1939, 11; repeated in Koçi Bey – Çakmakcioğlu 2008, 9). Hammer even says that Koçi Bey deserves this title just as Ibn Khaldun had been awarded the title of “the Arab Montesquieu”. On the use of the treatise in the mid-nineteenth century cf. Abou-El-Haj 2005, 79-80.

⁹ The most comprehensive biography is that by M. Çağatay Uluçay in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. “Koçi Bey”, supplemented by that of Ömer Faruk Akün in *Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*. Rifaat Abou-El-Haj has presented a detailed outline of Koçi Bey’s first treatise re-organizing its features in order to show its internal logic, i.e. the ideal picture of the “Golden Era” versus the conditions prevailing in the author’s time (Abou-El-Haj 2005, 101-111). On Koçi Bey’s work see also Gökbilgin 1991, 209-211; Lewis 1962, 74-78; Murphey 1981; Murphey 2009a; Fodor 1986, 231-233; Yılmaz 2003a, 310-311; İnan 2009, 118-119.

¹⁰ Almost twenty mss. are known, some containing both treatises; three chapters were added to some (almost half) of them, showing that the author wrote two versions: see Murphey 1981, 1096-97 and fn. 4.

Suleyman's time, and which can be mended by reverting to the pure institutions of the past. He describes in detail these ideal conditions, stressing the role of the timariot sipahis, and then locates the roots of decline in the rising of the janissaries' power, closely connected with the swelling of their numbers and with the intrusion of various sorts of strangers in their ranks. The solution is simple: bribery must be strongly suppressed, and the timariot army must be looked after and grow in numbers, while the salaried janissaries must be diminished: the army should be little in number and strong in quality. Only good and prosperity can be gained if the reforms proposed are implemented; that is, if bribery is abolished, if posts and offices are given to worthy persons and for a long time, and if the timar system serves exclusively the sipahi army.

The "Veliyuddin telhis" textual tradition

The similarities of Koçi Bey's views with the anonymous *Kitab-ı müstetâb* are obvious; he takes up all issues tackled with by the anonymous author and expands them, adding a distinctive emphasis on the role of the Grand Vizier and on the need for long-term appointments in every rank and career line. As a matter of fact, it is highly probable that Koçi Bey's treatise was but a compilation of several distinct memoranda submitted to Murad IV, either by himself or by a circle of middle-rank clerks of the scribal bureaucracy. Rhoads Murphey published in 1979 ten such *telhis* ("Memoranda") from a copybook (*mecmua*) in the Veliyuddin library, which bear numerous textual similarities with this treatise. Out of them, three form part of Koçi Bey's treatise. According to Murphey, the form and style of the *telhis*, which in all probability were submitted to Murad IV in 1632, i.e. in the beginnings of the reorganization efforts of the young Sultan, show that in great probability they may be attributed to Koçi Bey; however, Douglas Howard questioned this authorship as "no more than speculative" and argued that the author of the *telhis* shows a more realistic attitude against timar-holders, accepting the possibility of granting fiefs to valiant peasants or officers in retirement.¹¹ At any rate, these texts are to be counted among a prolific production of memoranda by middle-rank clerks, some of which were indeed read by the Sultan, became *verbatim* imperial orders or otherwise contributed to Murad's actual policy.

¹¹ Murphey 1981; Howard 1988, 65-68; İnan 2009, 119. The full text from the ms. Istanbul, Bayezid Devlet Ktp., Veliiyuddin 3205 was published in Murphey 2009a.

Aziz Efendi

These anonymous and short memoranda apart, an eponymous and important product of the same period is the *Kânûn-nâme-i sultânî* (“Book of Sultanic laws and regulations”) by Aziz Efendi; the very use of this title indicates the growing importance of the notion of *kanun* as a vehicle for political advice in what we called “declinist” literature. Aziz Efendi must have originated from the same milieu as Koçi Bey or the anonymous authors of the Veliyuddin memoranda: he describes himself as an “aged, distinguished, and loyal veteran in the Sultan’s service”, while various clues from his work imply that he was a scribe of the chancellery, possibly of the Imperial Council. It is of some importance to note that the scribal bureaucracy formed also Aziz Efendi’s audience, if we judge from the only existing copy, which was “bound into a volume intended as a learning manual for professional scribes”.¹² According to the *termini ante et post quem*, the composition of the treatise must be set with great accuracy between September 1632 and June 1633, i.e. just before Murad IV embarked on his great redress project and in the wake of his successful suppressing of the sipahi rebellion. The treatise focuses in certain points which are considered pivotal for the proper function of the state. These points are the number of the viziers (which should not exceed four), the salaried troops (whose number has grown exceedingly because of certain innovations), the Kurdish chiefs of the East (who must be gained with guarantees for autonomy), and some matters concerning the ulema. In more than one issue, Aziz Efendi sets a detailed road-map for the Sultan, laying down drafts for imperial prescripts for the rearrangement of the army, the assignment of fiefs and so forth.

The Sultan and his government: A preliminary assessment

To sum up, it is evident that all these texts belong to a common trend, quite distinct from but often using ideas originating in earlier, late-sixteenth-century “mirrors for princes”. The general idea of a “Golden Age” vs. decline set apart, they share a common set of ideas for the reorganization of the state apparatus along the lines that once led it to might and glory. We read that the viziers should not be more

¹² Aziz Efendi – Murphey 1985, vii. The volume (Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz Ms. or. quart. 1209) also includes geographical and historical notices, poetry, a collection of fetvas and regulations, a catalogue of administrative divisions, a list of taxes, instructions for official correspondence and so forth. See Flemming 1968, 347.

than four in the first *telhis* and in Aziz Efendi (the same idea was implied in the anonymous *Hirzû'l-mülûk*, where the viziers are likened to the first four caliphs), and that the *defterdar* should not be among them in Aziz Efendi and in the second *telhis*; that the coinage should be standardized in the earlier *Kitâbu mesâlih* and in the first *telhis*; and so forth. The dominant element holding together the advice which is contained in all these texts, however, concerns the army-*cum*-landholding system. All authors stress that the number of salaried soldiers, either janissaries (infantry) or cavalry, has swollen up from the late sixteenth century onwards, and that conversely the timariot cavalry has decayed due to the misallocation of the fiefs. Thus, they propose a two-fold reform which would secure the timar revenues and the proper distribution of the timars, on the one hand, and check the ranks of the janissaries with a view to drastically reducing their number. In practice, they all seem to agree that the reorganization of the timar system should precede, and that distribution of the land as military fiefs is the most profitable way of landholding;¹³ and, as we saw in the seventh *telhis* or in more detail in Aziz Efendi's work, they propose a very practical and political way to bring this reform gradually into effect. Now, their relation to the actual reforms made by Murad IV, namely the realignment of the timar system, remains an issue open to discussion. The extent to which Murad actually followed such advice (apart from imposing discipline and order) may be considered still debatable; one gets the impression that he did make a serious effort to inspect the timar system and ensure that only those entitled to military fiefs would have them.¹⁴ But was this a result of his advisors' counsel, or did he just follow the general climate of the period, after the janissaries' role in Osman's deposition and death?

In other words, how may we interpret the common background of these authors, anonymous or not? It will be seen that throughout the first decades of the seventeenth century, it was the scribal bureaucracy who took the initiative of advocating reform, rather than discontent ulema or dispossessed officers. A possible interpretation might be based on the growing role of this bureaucracy in actual policy-making. Indeed, one may argue that the central government mechanisms were becoming more and more autonomous and independent from both the provincial military administration and the pasha households throughout the seventeenth century,

¹³ On this idea and its precedents and parallels see Murphey 2009a, 134 fn. 19.

¹⁴ See Murphey 1996, 334-335.

in what was named by Rifaat Abou-El-Haj “the tendency toward a progressive separation between the state and the ruling class”.¹⁵ By the late sixteenth century Ottoman bureaucracy enjoyed an exceptional longevity and continuity of term (in sharp contrast with the other administrative apparatus), while its reproduction strategies ensured a continuity of mentality and perhaps ideology. The professionalization of the scribal class, which was to become even more intense from the late seventeenth century onwards, led to its increased visibility in both political theory and practice. It is only too natural, one may argue, that it also led to their voice in political discourse being more and more distinct and visible. Having identified their interests with those of the central government, they perceived an enlarged political nation of janissaries-*cum*-“lumpenesnaf” (what they called “intruding strangers”) as a major threat, which could be counterbalanced by a stronger sipahi army.

Administration manuals: An Ottoman genre

In order to understand better this political activity of the Ottoman bureaucrats, one must step back and move a bit earlier. If a common source of “declinist” ideology is to be traced in the late sixteenth-century “mirrors for princes” such as Mustafa Ali’s works, another one lies in the very core of scribal literary-administrative production, namely the tendency for codification of the law. In Chapter III we mentioned the obsession of bureaucrat authors (such as Celalzade) with lists; and one may say that lists (of janissary numbers, of timars, of provinces) obtained a normative role in the *Kitab-ı müstetâb* or in Koçi Bey’s work. As a matter of fact, even before the 1630s authors who shared Koçi Bey’s (and his predecessors and followers’) views about the causes and solutions to what they perceived as Ottoman decline had moved a step further. Instead of locating the shortcomings of the present situation against the standards of a Golden Era, they straightforwardly just laid down these rules for the government to follow. It is no coincidence that most of the works that can be classified in this trend bear the title of *kanunname*, or “book of laws”. In the words of Douglas A. Howard, “[s]ome Ottoman authors of advice for kings did use the official government document as a form”; and Heather Ferguson’s remark, that *kanunnames* were by themselves a “paradigm of governance”, which created order and control by

¹⁵ Abou-El-Haj 2005, 7. My discussion here is based on Sariyannis 2013, 103-111; cf. also Tuşalp Atiyas 2013, 63ff.

its being issued, is not out of place here.¹⁶ Even what is known as “the *kanunname* of Mehmed the Conqueror” might well be, according to Colin Imber’s reasoning, an actual product of a historian and (not paradoxically) *divan* scribe, Koca Hüseyin: he included a copy in his history, claiming that he had “taken it out... from the *kanunname* of the Divan” in 1614 (the earliest manuscript of “Mehmed’s *kanunname*” to survive is dated 1620). This would explain several anachronisms, which show that in the form we have the text cannot be dated earlier than 1574.¹⁷ If Imber’s suggestion is correct, the fact that Koca Hüseyin attributed his compilation to no less than Mehmed II, one of the sultans the most celebrated by the “Golden Age” theorists, illustrates splendidly the political agenda of these “administrative manuals”. At any rate, regardless of the authenticity of the *kanunname*, the fact is that its copies began to circulate in the early seventeenth century, as if there was a need to legitimize these regulations by an appeal to the glorious past. The emphasis in the ideal form of institutions seems to have expanded in juridical theory as well: an anthology of *fetvas* and petitions by Ebussu’ud, under the title of *Ma’rûzât* (“statements”), was compiled to be presented to an anonymous sultan, and Colin Imber argues that the compiler might be identified with the *şeyhülislam* Mehmed Es’ad Efendi and the sultan with Murad IV.¹⁸

When stating that some political advice took the form of official documents, Howard focuses on the *telhis* form, used for example by Koçi Bey. And indeed, Koçi Bey’s second *Risale* (“treatise”) is a peculiar contribution to this category of “administration manuals”; in the same time, it illustrates very well the close relation between this genre and the “declinist” advice studied above.¹⁹ It is a kind of memorandum submitted to Sultan Ibrahim as soon as the latter ascended to the throne (1640); it seems that he had asked for an exposition of the structure and function of state affairs and especially of the palace. This time, Koçi Bey avoided giving advice of any sort and only summarized the duties and protocol of the palace, or more

¹⁶ Howard 2007, 147; Ferguson 2008. See also Howard 1988, 59ff.

¹⁷ Akgündüz 1990-1996, 1: 317; Imber 2011, 174-178; cf. Tezcan 2000, 662 fn. 1 and 2 for the rich literature on the authenticity of the *kanunname*. Vatin (forthcoming) suggests, for instance, that the law on fratricide was interpolated during the first years of Süleyman’s reign.

¹⁸ Imber 1992, 180-81 and fn. 11. On this text see also Heyd 1973, 183-185 (Heyd tentatively dated the text in Selim II’s ascension; the editor of the book, V. L. Ménage, suggested Murad III); Repp 1986, 280ff.

¹⁹ Koçi Bey – Aksüt 1939, 77-127; Koçi Bey – Çakmakcioğlu 2008, 101-155; German translation by Koçi Bey – Behrnauer 1864. On its authorship see Uluçay 1950-1955 and Howard 1988, 64-65 fn. 32.

precisely what a Sultan would need to know to be functional within its structure. However, one may still discern the author's political views in his urging the Sultan to begin his reign by inspecting closely first the treasury books and the tax registers, and secondly the janissary and sipahi registers.

Kavânîn-i yeniçeriyân

We began this discussion with Koçi Bey's second treatise, in order to show better the affinities between the "administration manuals" and the "decline" theorists; however, his was only one of the last in a long series of similar essays. Perhaps the first among these attempts to systematize and register the rules and numbers of the state mechanism was the anonymous *Kavânîn-i yeniçeriyân-ı dergâh-ı âlî* ("Rules of the imperial janissaries") of 1606, an effort to codify the structure of the janissary corps which was largely read and copied.²⁰ The author differs from later imitators in that he does not belong to the scribal class: he states that he has served a long time in the janissary corps. The anonymous author begins his treatise stating that he decided to write the rules of the janissary corps, he says, as he heard them from his grandfathers and as he found them himself. The treatise is divided in nine chapters, explaining in every detail the history and structure of the janissaries. The emphasis he gives on the history of these institutions is interesting, since he presents them as something dynamic which underwent many changes with time; he usually finds recent innovations devastating, although there are exceptions. Moreover, the author often explains the reason for such or such arrangement, as if the justification by "the old law" was not sufficient.

Ayn Ali and his continuators

It seems that the last years of Ahmed I's reign, after the definitive defeat of the major Celali chieftains, were seen as an opportunity to reorganize the eastern provinces along the lines of the "classical" timar system. The internal and external peace that prevailed for some years must have incited the rise of more and more "administration manuals" like the ones we just examined, describing the rules of the state in their ideal form. Indeed, Ayn Ali's work (or rather two works), completed ca.

²⁰ At least ten manuscripts are known. Interestingly, the work has been published in multiple editions and languages during the last decades: Petrossian 1987; Fodor 1989; Akgündüz 1990-1996, 9: 127-268 (facs. follows); Toroser 2011 (facs. follows). On the work see also Fodor 1986, 228-230; Petrosjan 1987; Howard 1988, 70-71.

1610,²¹ is the main prototype of the “administration manuals” genre. Muezzinzâde (as Kâtib Çelebi calls him) Ayn Ali was a scribe in the *mukabele* bureau and the Imperial Council, while he served as intendant of the imperial registry (*emin-i defter-i hakani*) in 1607. According to Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, he also was *defterdar* of Egypt in 1609. His two works, very popular and influential,²² are the *Kavânîn-i Âl-ı Osmân der hulâsa-ı mezâmîn-i defter-i dîvân* (“Rules of the House of Osman summing up the contents of the registry of the Imperial Council”) and the *Risâle-i vazife-horân ve merâtib-i bendegân-i âl-i Osman* (“Treatise on the salaried persons and the ranks of the slaves of the House of Osman”).

In the beginning of his first treatise, the *Kavanin*, the author lays down his aim: to list the administrative and financial units of the Empire, the ranks and numbers of its officials and soldiers, with a special view in describing the details of the timar system; all because “it took a long time to search all this information in various scattered registers”. In the last chapter, which differentiates mainly Ayn Ali’s work from other manuals, the author proposes some measures for redressing shortcomings and failures in the timar system. The second treatise, *Risale-i vazife-horân*, aims to register all the persons, high and low, who “take salaries from the imperial threshold”; in this respect, Ayn Ali collected and listed all the salaries paid in the third trimester of H.1018 (1609), in order to present a full and detailed image of the palace personnel and standing army at that moment.

Ayn Ali used imperial registers and *kanunnames*, and probably scribal manuals as well, and his work was extensively imitated. It seems that after the early 1640s, i.e. after the outburst of the “declinist” literature coinciding with Murad IV’s reign, a number of treatises set out to describe in detail the (now dying) timar system, enumerating the provinces of the Empire and their timariot structure and revenues, as well as analyzing the terminology and categories of the various timars. Two almost

²¹ The *Kavanin* is dedicated to Sultan Ahmed I and his Grand Vizier Kuyucu Murad Paşa, so it must have been completed between 1606 and 1611. Ayn Ali describes himself as the “*ex-defter-i hakani emini*”, so 1607 should be a terminus post quem. As for the *Risale-i vazife-horan*, it uses a register of 1609.

²² More than forty mss of the *Kavanin* survive, including two French translations made in the 1730s. A ms. (Fatih 3497) seems to have been an earlier recension of the text by the author (Howard 2008, 88-89). There are numerous editions: Ayn Ali 1978; Ayn Ali – Tuncer 1962 (a very inadequate edition); Akgündüz 1990-1996, 9: 28-126 (with facs.). On Ayn Ali’s work, see Gökbilgin 1991, 203-206; Gökbilgin 1978; Howard 1988; Howard 2007, 152-166; Howard 2008.

identical versions are the treatise copied by (and by some scholars attributed to) Sofyalı Ali Çavuş in 1653 and another similar description, copied the same year.²³ All these texts, including part of Ayn Ali's essay, seem to be based on a series of *kanunname* texts from the Suleymanic era, with corrections and amendments reflecting more or less minor changes in the structure of the Empire.²⁴ As Douglas Howard puts it, Ayn Ali used such "scribal manuals" as "literary models", copying them with corrections and emendations and adding his own commentary and advice.²⁵

Another version is Avni Ömer's treatise, *Kanun-ı Osmânî mefhûm-i defter-i hakanî* ("The Ottoman laws i.e. the content of the imperial register"), which also contains an introduction on the landholding status in the Ottoman lands.²⁶ Avnî Ömer Efendi b. Mustafa also belonged to the bureaucracy: he was trained in the scribal service of the divan and attained the posts of *nişancı* and of *reisülküttâb* (probably during Ibrahim's reign). A disciple of the Halveti sheikh Cihangirî Hasan Efendi, he founded a mosque in Kabataş in 1652; he was buried there after his death in 1659. His work is roughly contemporary with Koçi Bey's second treatise (there is one copy, probably not an autograph but with notes of the author, copied in 1642). The author starts admitting that the timariot system was not functioning any more: he states that he wrote his treatise because issues such as which kind of tax should be paid for lands, or whether those who have the usufruct of a plot have also its freehold property, were unknown and unspecified; so he decided to describe all matters pertaining to villages, peasants, landholding and land.

The afterlife of the genre: late seventeenth century manuals

The voices for a return to "the old laws" grew weaker during the rest of the seventeenth century, as we are going to see later; however, the genre of "administration manuals", offering compilations of rules and lists of provinces and military guards or salaries continued to flourish, with authors often copying each other. As we are going to see in Chapter VII, from the mid-seventeenth century onwards and with Kâtib Çelebi's work new directions emerged, bringing back a complete vision for human society (this time influenced by Ibn Khaldun's ideas);

²³ Hadžibegić 1947; Sertoğlu 1992; Şahin 1979.

²⁴ See Akgündüz 1990-1996, 4:455-527; Howard 2007, 156 fn 97; Howard 2008. Cf. also Howard 1996 for an overview of the timariotic *kanunnames*.

²⁵ Howard 2008, 95-98.

²⁶ Avni Ömer – Uzunçarşılı 1951. See also Gökbilgin 1991, 212; Howard 2008.

therefore, the tendency to make compilations of older sources predominated in those authors continuing the tradition of the “old law”.

A celebrated example is the work of Hezarfen Hüseyin. Hezârfen Hüseyin Efendi b. Ca’fer (ca. 1611-1691)²⁷ was educated in Istanbul and served in the financial bureaucracy, being a *protégé* of Köprülü Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. He was a polymath and an encyclopaedist in the steps of Kâtib Çelebi, and he made extensive use of Greek and Latin sources for his historical works, with two dragomans as intermediaries (among them the famous Panayiotis Nicoussios); his company was frequented by various European orientalists, such as Antoine Galland or Count Marsigli. His works are numerous; among lexicographical, moralist, medical and mystical treatises, one should especially note a universal history (*Tenkîh-i tevârih-i mülûk*) which included the history of Rome, Ancient Greece, Byzantium, China and Indonesia, as well as a narration of the discovery of America.²⁸ Hezarfen composed some old-style moral-political treatises (*Câmi’ü’l-hikâyât, Anîsü’l-ârifîn ve mürşîdü’s-sâlikîn*),²⁹ but his notable “political” work was *Telhîsü’l-beyân bî kavânîn-i Âl-ı Osmân* (“Memorandum on the rules of the House of Osman”).³⁰ Composed in all probability around 1675,³¹ this remarkable treatise is supposed to be an exposition of the history, institutions and rules of the Ottoman state, in the model of Ayn Ali’s work or of Koçi Bey’s second treatise; and indeed, the sources Hezarfen uses include these authors, as well as other regulations and compilations of laws or *fetvas*. However, Hezarfen wished to give more than an exposition of institutions: he copies verbatim large parts of Kâtib Çelebi’s works or Feridun Bey’s collection of correspondence,

²⁷ Hezarfen’s birth and death dates are a matter of dispute. Wurm (1971, 74 and 83) accepts 1611 (based on a Venetian account of his age) and 1691 (based on a marginal note recorded by Flügel, corroborated by Antoine Galland who knew Hezarfen personally) respectively; İlgürel (Hezarfen – İlgürel 1998, 5 and 7-8) adopts Ménage’s date (1600) for his birth and Mehmed Tahir’s (1678) for his death. According to Wurm (ibid.), Marsigli’s information that Hezarfen had died by 1685 must be a mistake.

²⁸ On Hezarfen’s life and work see Anhegger 1953; Wurm 1971; Hezarfen – İlgürel 1998, 4-13. On certain aspects of his universal history cf. Bekar 2011.

²⁹ Wurm 1971, 87, 98, 107.

³⁰ Hezarfen – İlgürel 1998; cf. Anhegger 1953 for an earlier partial publication. See also Lewis 1962, 81-82; Wurm 1971, 102-105; Fodor 1986, 235; Yılmaz 2003a, 313; İnan 2009, 121-122.

³¹ The exact dating of this text is not certain, since various suggestions have been made varying from H. 1080 (1669/70) up to H. 1086 (1675); see Hezarfen – İlgürel 1998, 13 fn. 47 and cf. Wurm 1971, 102.

while he practically incorporates Lütfi Pasha's *Âsafnâme* both partially in various parts of his treatise and as a whole.³²

Hezarfen begins with a eulogy of Mehmed IV and explains that since he had described in such detail the rules of the Mongols and the Chinese in his universal history, he was asked to do the same for the Ottoman state. His work is structured in thirteen chapters (*bab*), dealing with the history of the Ottoman sultans, Istanbul and its history, the function of the palace, the Imperial Council, the protocol of feasts and ceremonies in the palace, the state budget, the various soldiers' salaries and so forth. Finally, Hezarfen copies various legal texts, the whole text of Lütfi Pasha's *Âsafnâme*, as well as two reports on the introduction of coffee and tobacco to the Ottoman Empire (copied from Kâtib Çelebi), ending with a lengthy and very detailed description of the 1672 Sultanic feast in Edirne.

Parallel texts: Eyyubî Efendi, Kavânîn-i osmanî, Dimişki

Although only four copies of Hezarfen's treatise are known, it seems that it had a certain influence; a text bearing extreme similarities is a *Kanunnâme* attributed to some Eyyubî Efendi, for whom we know nothing else.³³ Eyyubi's text is in fact a summary form of Hezarfen's material; its editor, Abdülkadir Özcan, suggests that it is an abridgment of the *Telhisü'l-beyan*, but one cannot exclude the possibility of Eyyubi being Hezarfen's predecessor. Eyyubi's work contains almost verbatim a large part of Hezarfen's treatise, excluding the first (up to the palace servants) and the latter (from after the excursus on Crimea) parts, as well as Hezarfen's more abstract thoughts. Both the 1660/1 budget and a list of the gifts bestowed upon Mehmed IV's enthronement (1648) are common to both texts; if Eyyubi is to be considered posterior, one might postulate that he selected to copy those parts upon the enthronement of the next Sultan, i.e. Süleyman II (1687). Be it as it may, Eyyubi's work is the "administration manual" version of the *Telhisü'l-beyan*, its raw material, so to speak; whether it is its source or its abridgment, it shows the close relation of Hezarfen's work with the earlier tradition of Ayn Ali and his continuators. A similar work of the same period contains almost verbatim (but also simplified) the rules on viziers and provincial governors, the list of provinces and of their revenues, as well as

³² See Hezarfen – İlgürel 1998, 21-29 for a detailed analysis of sources.

³³ Eyyubi – Özcan 1994.

part of the laws on the timar system from Hezarfen's work.³⁴ There are some minor discrepancies, especially in some marginal notes or in the sequence of Crete in the list (Hezarfen, writing just after its final conquest, had placed the island after the province of Anadolu, while the anonymous compiler has it registered between Cyprus and Anadolu), which show that the manuscript was intended to have some practical use.

Another late seventeenth-century work, *Kavânîn-i osmanî ve râbita-ı Âsitâne* ("Ottoman rules and the orderly arrangement of Istanbul"), is essentially a selective reproduction of the *Telhisü'l-beyan*.³⁵ The anonymous author held surely some official post in the palace; the details he gives on the janissaries' history and structure imply that he was closely related to that corps. However, a strong emphasis on the ulema and the *şeyhülislam* in the end of the treatise might imply even a second, different compiler. In general, the relationship of this text with Hezarfen's *Telhisü'l-beyan* makes every identification unsafe; the only sure thing is that the compilation was made after 1688, as Mehmed IV's reign is mentioned as something finished. Almost simultaneously, another description of the Empire was also mostly based to Hezarfen as far as it concerns the non-geographical parts: Ebu Bekr b. Bahrâm Dımışkî's *El-fethü'l-rahmânî fî tarz-i Devletü'l-Osmanî* ("The divine gift on the form of the Ottoman state"), completed in 1689, is partly a reiteration or imitation of Hezarfen's description and partly a geographical compendium.³⁶ Dımışkî (d. 1691), a major figure in the history of Ottoman geography, was a teacher (*müderres*) in Istanbul for twenty years, beginning in 1669. In 1685 he played a pivotal role in completing the translation of Willem Janszoon Blaeuw's *Atlas Maior*, while he also completed Kâtib Çelebi's *Cihânnümâ*.

Thus, "administration manuals" continued to be produced throughout the seventeenth century. However, their exactitude in comparison with the actual situation of the empire grew weaker and weaker with time. If early seventeenth century texts

³⁴ London, British Library, Or. Mss. Harley 3370, ff. 23-79. The manuscript was copied by a certain Salomon Negri in 1709 under the title "Notitia Imperij Othomannici" from an original belonging to the interpreter of the French Ambassador in Istanbul. The relevant parts in *Telhisü'l-beyan* are Hezarfen – İlgürel 1998, 83-85, 114-140. Both works refer to Morea, which gives us a *terminus ante quem* (the loss of the province to the Venetians in 1685). I wish to thank Antonis Hadjikyriacou for bringing this manuscript to my attention.

³⁵ The text was published in İpşirli 1994 (see 18, 19, 28 and elsewhere for the dating).

³⁶ Dımışkî – Dorogi – Hazai 2011-2014. Because of the different paginations, we use here the folios as indicated in the Dorogi – Hazai edition.

were already outdated or exaggerating, Hezarfen's treatise is impressively out-of-date: his use of Lütfi Pasha, already one and a half century old, for matters such as the function and income of viziers, or of Ebussu'ud Efendi for land-holding regulations, show that his work was conceived much more as a compilation than as an actual description or a political agenda. Why then should a late-seventeenth-century author copy mining regulations almost two centuries old? The answer might be sought in the heterogeneous nature of *Telhisü'l-beyan* itself: why should the same author also incorporate the history of coffee and tobacco? As he explains himself, Hezarfen intended to write a *description* of the Ottoman Empire as a supplement to his universal history, where he had similar descriptions of the Central Asian empires.³⁷ In this respect he may be compared to his great contemporary, the traveler Evliya Çelebi, whose volume on Istanbul (the first book of his *Seyahatnâme* or "Book of travels") consists of a similar mixture of history, topography, and institutional description. Compilations like these were conceived and executed within a broader culture of authors copying each other; in a certain degree it was not originality that mattered, but rather an exhibition of polymathy (similar observations have been made on Ottoman lyric poetry). On the other hand, we should bear in mind that such compilations were also having an entertainment value; as Robert Dankoff suggests, Evliya Çelebi had "the traditional twin aims of *edeb*: to instruct and to entertain". In the first case, he might or might not intend to deceive his audience, while in the second there was a kind of mutual agreement.³⁸ One is tempted to apply this observation in the texts we studied above as well.

By this time, moreover, the *kanunname* genre seems to have lost any normative value; Hezarfen's real advice is to be found in scattered pieces of inserted commentary. On the other hand, the anachronistic framework of his description (in contrast with the fact that his lists are quite updated—see for instance the reference to Crete) shows perhaps that the real essence of Hezarfen's work is exactly to be found in this scattered comments, rather than in bringing the "administration manual" genre to perfection. Eyyubi Efendi or the anonymous copyist were belated specimens of this genre, whereas the anonymous author of *Kavânîn-i osmanî ve râbîta-ı Âsitâne* with

³⁷ Hezarfen seems to have embarked in an encyclopaedic project similar to that launched by his mentor, Kâtib Çelebi; one has the impression, however, that his fame rested more with his European acquaintances than with his actual work.

³⁸ Dankoff 2006, 153-154.

his emphasis on both ulema and janissaries was, as we are going to see, more tuned in with late seventeenth-century realities.

Chapter VI

The “Sunna-Minded” trend

(Ekin TUŞALP ATIYAS)

This chapter follows the seventeenth-century conceptualizations of an ideal political order based on the twin premises of the Sharia and the prophetic Sunna. One of the events that have come to define the Ottoman seventeenth century is the emergence of the three successive generations of “Salafist” preachers known as the Kadızadelis.¹ Recent studies on the Kadızadeli movement and the reactions against it have opened a wide venue for the discussion of the concepts of orthodoxy vs. heterodoxy, the multiple pillars of Sufism, the boundaries of religious belief and its early modern regulations in the Ottoman Empire.² What has become evident by now is that the debates of the seventeenth century cannot simply be described as the products of the antagonism between the “Salafist orthodoxy” of the Kadızadelis and the “heterodox” reactions against it from its Sufi targets. The concern for upholding the Sharia and “commanding right and forbidding wrong” in the administration of the Muslim public sphere was shared by the entire spectrum of the participants of the debates examined in this chapter, ranging from Sufi sheikhs to Kadızadeli preachers.

The earlier chapters sought “political thought” in the works written either by the theoretically minded moralists hailing from the Perso-Iranian traditions or by the practically-minded Ottoman bureaucrats who focused on the day-to-day problems inflicting the Ottoman treasury. Most of the writers studied here however, are sheikhs, preachers, disciples and the ulema of lower ranks, some of whom were willingly accommodated, others uncomfortably tolerated by the political establishment. The texts produced by this diverse group would defy any genre-related categorization. These works of advice most often than not transmitted the voices of the preachers who authored them, and lectured their readers on religious and moral duties. In that

¹ The term “Salafism” is coined to describe the social and ideological movements that upheld the practices of the first three generations of Muslims (*al-salaf al-salih*) at the expense of the rationalist and allegorical readings of Islamic scripture. For a recent discussion of the term see Lauzière 2010.

² See Ocak 1979–1983; Öztürk 1981; Zilfi 1986; Zilfi 1988, 129-181; Çavuşoğlu 1990; Terzioğlu 1999; Terzioğlu 2007; Terzioğlu 2010; Terzioğlu 2012; Le Gall 2004; El-Rouayheb 2008; El-Rouayheb 2010; Curry 2010; Ivanyi 2012; Evstatiev 2013; Sariyannis 2012.

sense they resembled by the catechistical *ilm-i hal* literature of the same period. Some even formulated issues in the form of questions and answers similar to fatwa manuals.³ It would also be wrong to conclude that the Kadızadelis and their Sufi opponents monopolized the intellectual discussion of the Sharia and the Sunna in the seventeenth century; there were participants to the debate from all ends of the Ottoman confessional spectrum.

Beyond the social history of the controversy

While Sufi practices seemed to have preoccupied the Kadızadelis in this period, there was by no means a united social or ideological “Sufi” front in its reactions against the Kadızadelis. First of all, the Kadızadeli position on Sufis showed a great variety during the seventeenth century.⁴ Neither the Sharia-minded ideologues of the sixteenth century such as Birgivi, nor the seventeenth-century advocates of the Kadızadeli cause rejected all aspects of Sufism indiscriminately. Quite a few of them actually experimented with it at certain points in their lives. Secondly, when we look at the writings of famous Halveti sheikhs beginning from the late sixteenth century, it becomes apparent that the discourses about correct belief and practice varied greatly from one Halveti branch to another often in open disagreement with each other. In any case, the strict espousal of the Sharia had always been an important qualifier of being a respectable Sufi figure.⁵ It has been argued that, by the ninth century, and certainly in the classical didactic manuals of Sufism of the tenth century, Sufism had already fully embraced the *Sunna*, and antinomian Sufis were, by and large, the exception to the rule.⁶

The most adamant opponents of the Kadızadelis in the first stages of the controversy were themselves “Sunna-promoting Halvetis.” The primary adversary of Kadızade Mehmed in the 1630s, Abdülmecid Sivasi, descended from a family of Sufi sheikhs based in Sivas, and received a thorough instruction in both the exoteric and the esoteric sciences under the direction of his uncle, Şemseddin Sivasi (d. 1597), the founder of the Şemsi branch of the Halveti order. Abdülmecid followed his uncle to Istanbul after an invitation by Mehmed III (r. 1595-1603), and there launched a

³ For a discussion of the seventeenth-century *ilm-i hal* literature and how it represented the religious counterpart of the political advice literature of the period, see Terzioğlu 2013.

⁴ Terzioğlu 1999, 200, 212; Le Gall 2004.

⁵ See Clayer 1994, 75-78.

⁶ See Radtke 1994, 302-7.

distinguished career as Sufi sheikh and preacher. Among those who pledged allegiance to Abdülmecid Sivasi were some of the highest-ranking military officials, the *reisülküttab* (chief secretary) La'li Efendi, the chief mufti Sun'ullah Efendi, and finally Sultan Ahmed I, who was reported to have held the Sufi sheikh in such esteem and intimacy that he addressed him as “my father.”⁷ After Sivasi's death, his disciples, who had taken over many of the city's lodges as well as preaching posts, continued to play an important role in the controversies at least for two more decades. Among them Sivasi's nephew Abdülahad Nuri (d. 1651) was particularly an influential figure, and according to his disciple and biographer Nazmi Efendi, also the last Sivasi sheikh to be effective against Kadızadeli militants.⁸ The Sivasi branch did not appear as a major contender in the third and the last phase of the Kadızadeli wave at least until the 1680s.⁹ Yet, the appearance of such a relatively complaisant stand should not rule out the existence of uniquely dissident voices such as Niyazi Misri who criticized not only the content of the Kadızadeli message but also the loyalties the Kadızadeli managed to procure at the highest levels of the Ottoman political establishment.¹⁰

Münir-i Belgradi and Imam Birgivi

One first has to look back at two late sixteenth-century figures, Münir-i Belgradi and Mehmed Birgivi who were going to be repeatedly mentioned in the writings of the seventeenth-century authors as the ultimate authorities on the correct Sunna. Known as Münir-i Belgradi, İbrahim b. İskender from Belgrade is one of the most important figures of Sufi biographical writing in the Empire.¹¹ As typical of most of the scholars of his generation, Belgradi received a mixed training from Halveti sheikhs in Sofia and Istanbul, plus some *medrese* education. He wrote on many different subjects ranging from his refutation of the Mevlevi *sema* to the branches of Islamic law (*furu*) until his death circa 1620-28 in Belgrade.¹² In his *Silsiletü'l-mukarrebîn ve menakibü'l-muttekin* (“The chain of those who are allowed to approach God and the heroic deeds of the pious ones”), which is a collective

⁷ On Sivasi see Gündoğdu 2000; Terzioğlu 1999, 250-251.

⁸ Çavuşoğlu 1990, 118ff.; Terzioğlu 1999, 250-251; Nuri – Akkaya 2003.

⁹ Terzioğlu 1999, 251-252.

¹⁰ For Misri's critique of the entire Köprülü clan, see Terzioğlu 1999, 336-342.

¹¹ Belgradi – Bitiçi 2001, 116; Clayer 2002; Fotić 2005, 59-60.

¹² See Belgradi – Bitiçi 2001, 20-24.

biography of Sufi sheikhs, he introduced the Ottoman audience to a massive historical lore on Sufism and mostly identified himself with the historical tradition woven around Sufi sheikhs and their miracles.¹³ The *Silsile* exposes how a Sufi *alim* from the Balkans perceived his own time as a period of decline, decrying the decaying status of the *meşayih*, the corruption of the religious establishment (*ulema*) and the dissolution of the aspirations of holy war (*gaza*), as well as inflation or bribery. Belgradi's *Nisabü-l intisab ve adabü'l-iktisab* ("The genealogy of allegiance and the manners of acquisition") on the other hand, seems to have been intended for the internal consumption of a much-restricted audience, i.e. "the *fütüvvet ehli*," the sixteenth-century offshoots of the akhi brotherhoods organized around craft guilds. In the *Nisab*, Belgradi's main concern seems to be steering the guilds away from what he saw as the corrupting influence of certain antinomian Sufi sects. The work is a refutation of Seyyid Muhammed b. Seyyid Alâuddin el-Hüseyin er-Razavî's (d. after 1514) *Miftahü'd-dakaik fi beyani'l-fütüvveti ve'l-hakaik* (also known as the *Fütüvvetname-i kebîr*).¹⁴ According to Belgradi, Seyyid Muhammed resorted to the books which were not respectable (*muteber olmayan*), i.e. the books which in Belgradi's words belonged to "the illiterate Sufis," the Hurufis, the Batinis, and similar groups of "perversion" among others. These did not abide by the Sunna, and transmitted information from one another casting it under the rubric of *marifa*. Overall, the work exemplifies the centrality of the market people as a social force and how their ideological loyalties became a source of concern for the Sunnizing Halveti establishment from the sixteenth century onwards.

The biography and main works of Şeyh Muhyiddin b. Pir Ali b. İskender el-Rûmî el-Birgivi (1523-1573) were described in some detail in Chapter III above. In Ottoman history, Birgivi has been many things at once: the founding father of Salafism in the Ottoman lands, the predecessor of the Kadızadelis, and one of the earliest early-modern critiques of the Islamic tradition opening the way to the much-debated eighteenth-century Islamic "Enlightenment".¹⁵ Birgivi's interpretation of the Sharia and Sunna informed much of the subsequent debates on law, piety and public

¹³ Belgradi – Bitiçi 2001.

¹⁴ Berlin, National Bibliothek no. Lanbd. 589; İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi, Türkçe Yazmalar, MS 6803. On Belgradi's work see Sarıkaya 2010.

¹⁵ A selection of works on Birgivi includes Yüksel 1972; Martı 2008; Birgili – Duman 2000; Birinci 1996; Radtke 2002; Lekesiz 2007; Kaylı 2010; Ivanyi 2012. See also Chapter III above.

administration in the seventeenth century. Ideologically and intellectually, Birgivi's thought was too complex to be simply branded as ultra-conservative and anti-Sufi. In terms of his intellectual sources, although he is frequently mentioned along with Ibn Taymiyya, the textual evidence that is thought to have brought them together is proven to be spurious at its best.¹⁶ Moreover, his relationship with Sufism was much complicated than previously thought. On top of his brief rapprochement with the Bayramiyya in Istanbul, in his writings he advocated a type of Sufism that was focused on sobriety and strict adherence to the law¹⁷ In terms of social outreach, Birgivi's message reached beyond the Kadızadeli ranks in so far as to hold many Sufi intellectuals of the seventeenth century at its sway.

The concern for the primacy of the Sharia permeated all aspects of Birgivi's critique of contemporary political practices, and his handling of the issue of contemporary Ottoman arrangements of land tenure and taxation in the penultimate chapter of the *Al-tarîqa al-Muhammadiyya* was very much echoed in the seventeenth-century Ottoman policies.¹⁸ The most patent repercussion of the insistence on the private property status of the newly conquered lands was in the Cretan *kanunname* of 1670, which was in line with "classical" Hanafi legal theory and rejected the conventional Ottoman interpretation of land as *miri* ("of the ruler").¹⁹ In fact, the Cretan *kanunname* is seen as one of the products of the Kadızadeli influence on the late seventeenth-century administrative decisions.²⁰ However, as we will see, the Sharia-minded approach to public administration in the Ottoman lands did not begin with Birgivi as it did not exclusively belong to the Kadızadeli in the seventeenth century.²¹ Different from Münir-i Belgradi who idealized the Ottoman past based on the glories of its now defunct social, military and political functionaries, Birgivi

¹⁶ Ivanyi 2012, 81; El-Rouayheb 2010, 303; Terzioğlu 1999, 216 fn. 61.

¹⁷ Ivanyi 2012, 110. For a discussion of Birgivi's stance towards Sufism see Ivanyi 2012, 82-110.

¹⁸ See Ivanyi 2012, 179.

¹⁹ Kolovos 2007; Ivanyi 2012, 140.

²⁰ Greene 1996; Gülsoy 2001; Veinstein 2004; Kermeli 2008.

²¹ Birgivi was not the first Ottoman thinker to emphasize the primacy of Sharia as an important tenet of the ideal Muslim rulership and society. As seen in Chapter III, Şehzade Korkud (d. 1513) had introduced a strong Sharia stance in his *Da'wat al-nafs*. Ivanyi points out to a sixteenth-century fetva that is surprisingly similar to Birgivi's in its critique (see again Chapter III above). In a similar vein she notes that Pargalı Ibrahim Pasha had already attempted to "purify" the *kanun* by imposing, among other things, the *cizye* on Vlachs and Martoloses in the preamble to the Bosnian *kanunname* (Ivanyi 2012, 142-143).

discussed the problems of inflation and coin clipping mainly from the perspective of their legal validity and religious permissibility.

Commanding right and forbidding wrong

The Quranic injunction of commanding right and forbidding wrong has come to be seen as the backbone of Salafist theologies and their Sharia-centered repurcussions. Ottoman Hanafism however, has been regarded in general as rooted in “the accommodationist tradition of the Samanid northeast” and therefore not much concerned with the question of how to command right and forbid wrong at least at the doctrinal level.²² Birgivi mentions the duty in his catechistic treatise without elaborating much on it; his treatment does not depart substantially from conventional Hanafî take on the subject.²³

On the practical side, the three successive Kadızadeli waves gave ample opportunity for their proponents to implement the injunction in the seventeenth century, but no clear doctrinal take on the duty seems to have emerged in seventeenth-century Ottoman sources. This doctrinal lacuna partly stems from the fact that the most famous Kadızadeli preachers who were credited with it, did not leave many written works behind especially when compared to their more prolific Halveti counterparts.²⁴ Vani Mehmed Efendi expressed his views on the danger of religious innovations and the necessity of religious obligations in two treatises written in Arabic, *Risâla fî hakk al-farz wa al-sunna wa al-bid‘a fî ba‘z al-‘amal* (“The truth of religious obligations and the practices of Muhammad and innovation in some practices”) and *Risâla fî karâhat al-jahr bi al-zikr* (“The abomination of public recitals of God’s praises”).²⁵ Even when it was mentioned and endorsed in the writings of the Kadızadelis or the Halvetis, the Quranic injunction of commanding right and forbidding wrong seems to have served as a rhetorical tool to support the decline and corruption diagnosis prevalent in the seventeenth-century sources and to legitimize the distinct policies that the authors were rooting for.

²² Cook 2000, 316. See also Chapter I above.

²³ Cook 2000, 323-325.

²⁴ Üstüvani’s sermons were later brought together by one his followers in a catechistical compilation (Üstüvani – Yurdaydın 1963).

²⁵ Köprülü Library: Lala İsmail 685/1, Hacı Beşir Ağa 406/3.

Where else, then, can one look for the expression of Sunna-mindedness in the Ottoman intellectual world? The answer is that in each of the works analyzed in this chapter, a Sharia and Sunna centered viewpoint emerges as embedded in the authors' prognoses about the decline of Ottoman politics, society and morals. Among the most disputed dimensions of the Ottoman decline in the writings of the seventeenth-century polemicists were the disregard for the Sharia, the pervasiveness of innovation, the absence of qualified consultation around the Sultan, the corruption of the ulema, the prevalence of bribery, the erosion of the rules that regulated non-Muslim behavior in the public sphere, the ethics of the market place, and the taxation and administration of land.

Ottoman decline à la Sunna

The crucial social and intellectual link between Birgivi Mehmed Efendi and Kadızade Mehmed was constituted through Birgivi's son Şeyh Fazlullah Efendi (d. 1622), who was taught by his father in Birgi and came to Istanbul around 1611-12. He served as Friday preacher first in Sultan Selim Mosque, then in Beyazid mosque. In both positions, it was Kadızade Mehmed Efendi who succeeded him, first in the position in Sultan Selim mosque and later in Beyazid Mosque following Fazlullah's death.²⁶ It must be Kadızadeli Mehmed's preaching, presumably filled with references to Birgivi, which created a demand for Birgivi's works and mobilized the copyists to reproduce them in increasing quantities.²⁷

Although Kadızade Mehmed must have played a critical role in the introduction of Birgivi's corpus to a wider audience, the recent association of the authorship of *Tacü'r-Resail* with Kadızade Mehmed İlmi instead of Kadızade Mehmed Efendi renders the examination of the latter's intellectual world problematic as it leaves us without any major treatise penned by Kadızade Mehmed. Nevertheless a small portion of Kadızade Mehmed's account of the plight of the Ottoman society is available in the panegyric poems he wrote for Murad IV. In a *kaside* presented to Sultan Murad IV in 1630, Kadızade Mehmed, complained of what he called the

²⁶ Kaylı 2010, 182.

²⁷ In the year of his second succession (1622-3), two copies were made of Birgivi's works after four years of silence. What is more remarkable, within eight years after Kadızadeli Mehmed took up his new position as the preacher of Beyazid Mosque, 26 copies were made of Birgivi's works on religious sciences, compared to only 17 copies that had been produced in some 41 years since Birgivi's death: Kaylı 2010, 187.

disruption of the proper channels of appointment, the domination of the *millet* and the influential people by the women whom he saw responsible of many kinds of innovations (*bid'a*), the engagement of the notables in wine-drinking and sodomy, the preachers who were mischief-makers and liars and transmitting lies and slanders from the pulpits, and the very short duration of beylerbeyi appointments which forced the governors to rebel upon rapidly losing office.²⁸

Kadıızade's chief rival Sivasi was more productive in his rendition of a similarly pessimistic account of the era. He wrote three works which explicitly aimed at an imperial audience: *Letâ'ifü'l-ezhâr ve lezâ'izü'l-esmâr* ("Smart blossoms and delightful conversations", also known as *Nesayihü'l-müluk*, "Advice for the kings"), *Tefsir-i Suretü'll-Fâtiha* ("Commentary on the Sura of Fatiha"), and *Dürer-i 'aka'id* ("The pearls of articles of faith"). In *Dürer-i 'aka'id*, written sometime after 1611, Sivasi described his time as one in which "sedition and rebellion" (*fitne u bugyan*) had set in: the common people (*avamm-ı halk*) believed in whatever they heard, and would rather listen to the "heretics" (*melahide, zenadık*) than to "the singing nightingales of the orchard of the heart." He denounced "the people of innovation" and urged all Muslims to struggle against them. Not only in the *Dürer* and but also in the preamble to the *Tefsir-i Suretü'll-Fâtiha* dedicated to Sultan Osman II (r. 1681-22) he evoked the Quranic injunction to "enjoin the right and forbid the wrong" as the most important duty of a Muslim ruler.²⁹

While Kadıızadeli Mehmed and Sivasi both resorted to the accusation of *bid'a* in their condemnation of contemporary practices, the subjects of the accusation were different. While Kadıızadeli Mehmed's innovators seemed to be a rather mixed combination of women, Halveti preachers and sodomizers, in *Letaif* Sivasi described his innovators on the basis of a more legal rationale. In his attacks against the Hamzevis, Idrisis and Hurufis, Sivasi used the word "people of innovation" as a synonym of "infidels" or "heretics."³⁰ Yet elsewhere he noted that there were innovations that would make their practitioner merely a "person of (blameworthy) innovation" (*mübtedi*), not a heretic. Distinct from the Birgivi line of interpretation of

²⁸ Öztürk 1981, 43.

²⁹ Terzioğlu 1999, 258-260.

³⁰ Abdülmecid Sivasî, *Letâ'ifü'l-ezhâr ve lezâ'izü'l-esmâr (Nesâyih-i Mülûk)*: Süleymaniye Ktp., Laleli MS. 1613, 40.

the injunction “to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong,” that defined the duty to be incumbent on all Muslims (*farz-ı ayn*), the interpretation that was current in the Halveti circles defined it as a duty which must be fulfilled only by some members of the Muslim community (*farz-ı kifaye*), and further qualified who could actually carry it out.³¹ Sivasi’s most vocal disciple Abdulahad Nuri took a less idealistic approach in his analysis of illicit innovation. One of his arguments was that whenever a new custom appeared among the Muslims, the first response of the ulema was to declare it prohibited, and then when it took hold, to reverse that position on grounds of public good (*istihsan*), a principle which was particularly important in Hanefi law.³² A slightly different analysis of commanding right emerges in the *Nasihatu’l-müluk tergiban li-hüsn al-süluk* (“The advice to rulers in anticipation of good ways”) which was written by the chief scribe Sarı Abdullah for Mehmed IV in 1649.³³ In addition to his long career in Ottoman bureaucracy, Sarı Abdullah Efendi was also one of the most renowned Sufi intellectuals of his time.³⁴ Sarı Abdullah engaged in a long discussion of who is responsible for imposing *ih̄tisab* in the work and asked whether *ih̄tisab* could be carried out without the permission of the imam by persons other than the imam.³⁵

Fighting innovation through consultation

³¹ Terzioğlu 1999, 260-262.

³² Terzioğlu 1999, 265; as will be seen in Chapter VII, a similarly matter-of-fact interpretation was made by Katip Çelebi.

³³ It is composed of two sections. The first section deals with the affairs of this world and the second section looks rather like a catechists’ manual instructing its readers in matters of faith, worship and the afterlife. More interestingly it was brought back to life in the early eighteenth century by the very popular satirist and belle-lettrist Osmanzade Taib Ahmed. He wrote an abridged rendition of it, called *Talhis al-nasayih*, and presented it to Ahmed III. Osmanzade’s decision to resuscitate this work makes a lot of sense because in the early eighteenth century, being associated with the Melami circles was still very much in vogue among the political elites of the capital. For example two of the highest-ranking officials, the chief mufti Paşmakçızade Seyyid Ali Efendi (d. 1124/1714) and the grand vizier Şehid Ali Pasha (d. 1716, v. 1713-6) were identified as the two leading Melami-Bayramis of the period.

³⁴ Sarı Abdullah Efendi was a member of Grand Vizier Halil Pasha’s (d. 1629) retinue as his ink bearer and personal secretary. Later on he was appointed as the chief scribe during the eastern campaign against the rebellious Abaza Pasha, and in the aftermath of his patron’s death, following a brief removal from public office, he returned to office as *reisülküttab* during Murad IV’s Baghdad campaign. He was also an important member of the Bayrami-Melami circles in the capital. He was well-known for his massive commentary on the Mesnevi, the *Cevahir-i Bevahir-i Mesnevi* and hence was given the epithet of *şarihü’l-mesnevi*, the commentator of the mesnevi by his contemporaries. His commentary on the first volume of the Mesnevi, which he dedicated to Murad IV in 1631, is the bulkiest Mesnevi commentary written in the seventeenth century.

³⁵ *Nasihatu’l-müluk tergiban li-hüsn al-süluk*, Beyazıt Devlet Kütüphanesi, MS 1977.

One theme common in the works studied in this chapter is the necessity of consultation as a means of imposing the Sharia and eradicating innovation. In the same *kaside* that Kadızade Mehmed submitted to Murad IV, for instance, he advised him to employ people of insight or correct judgment, but also stated that such people were unfortunately hard to find in every religion.³⁶ Another author who placed a great emphasis on the importance of consultation in his works is the Halveti preacher Kadızade Mehmed İlmi (d. 1631-32), the translator of Ibn Taymiyya's *Siyasat al-Shariyya*. In addition to the *Tacü'r-Resail*, he wrote two major *nasihatnames* submitted respectively to grand vizier Kuyucu Murad Paşa (d. 1611) and Murad IV. The first work, *Nushu'l-hükkam sebübü'n-nizam* ("The counsel for rulers, the grounds for order") seems to have been written during the earlier days of Murad IV's reign when the Sultan's infamous iron rule had not been yet established. The second, *Mesmu'atü'n-nekâyah mecmû'tü'n-nesâ'ih* ("Tales for the convalescent, the compilation of counsels") was written before the 1632 uprising and its suppression by Murad IV, a turning point in his reign. Both texts heralded the heavy-handed approach that Murad IV was going to take later in his reign.³⁷ Not only the style but also the content of these works reveals the emphasis cast on preaching and *nasihat*-giving as a means to amend the decay of the Empire. Both works placed excessive emphasis on the need for the Sultan to consult with the right people. The ultimate aim of consultation with those whom Mehmed İlmi referred to as "beneficial guys" (*faydalı ademler*) or "masters of consultation" (*ehl-i daniş*) was to draw the Sultan and other authorities back into the realm of Sharia. Mehmed İlmi justified his point also by reference to precedent (*kanun-i kadim*).

When compared to Sivasi, Mehmed İlmi's works clearly lacked the same intellectual authority and by no means exhibited a similar breadth of legal knowledge. Nevertheless, he managed to demonstrate that his ultimate aim in penning these *nasihatnames* was to uphold the primacy of the Sharia. Further dismantling the prototype of the heterodox Sufi sheikh, Mehmed İlmi exhibited his loyalty to correct belief and correct religious practices by referring to Birgivi as one of the esteemed scholars of the previous times.

³⁶ Öztürk 1981, 176-177.

³⁷ Terzioğlu 2007, 267. Kadızade Mehmed İlmi, *Nushü'l-hükkâm sebübü'n-nizâm*, Süleymaniye Ktp. Aşir Ef. MS 327; *Mesmu'atü'n-nekâyah mecmû'atü'n-nesâ'iyih*, Süleymaniye Ktp. Hüsrev Paşa, MS 629.

Who is to blame? Ulema, non-Muslims and evil merchants

Despite the constant emphasis on the importance of *ilm* and *ulema* in diagnosing and treating the ills of the Empire, the *ulema* of the times were subjected to severe criticism in the texts penned both by the Kadızadelis and the Halvetis. Bribery in appointments and judgements remained one of the much-vilified practices of the time and the *nasihat* givers unanimously called for its eradication. The prevalence of taking bribes led most of the authors to conclusions about the moral depravity of the clerical corps that exhibited itself as sheer perversion, ignorance and worldly pursuits. Abdülahad Nuri's *İnkazü't-talibin 'an-mehavi'l-gafilin* ("The deliverance of the seekers [of knowledge] from the crowds of the ignorant ones") addresses the dangers of engaging in *ilm* for worldly pursuits.³⁸ The thing that disturbed our Sharia-minded commentators the most about contemporary *ulema* practices was their disregard for the Sharia. Kadızade Mehmed İlmi devoted long sections of his work to diatribes against the ignorance of the judges and their neglect of the Sharia and the word of religion.³⁹ Sivasi took one step further and included the neglect of the Sharia in legal judgements among the items that would render one an infidel. One of the examples given by Sivasi included a judge who ignored a Shari predicament by disputing the soundness of a *müfti*'s decision in a *fetva* manual. A judge who pronounced that he would rule by *yasak* and *kanun*, not by Sharia, or who announced that what was not allowed by the Sharia would be allowed by *kanun*, would automatically become an infidel.⁴⁰

The treatment of non-Muslim subjects constituted another item in the agenda of the Sharia-minded reformists. The erosion of the public boundaries between Muslims and non-Muslims was a concern expressed much frequently by the seventeenth-century Ottomans writers. The heavy-handed measures introduced by the grand viziers and other policy makers during the second half of the seventeenth century to deal with this concern did not emerge out of nowhere and rested on at least half a century of discussions that predated them. In his *Letaif*, Sivasi dwelt on a range of misconducts which he thought contaminated the Muslim public sphere. Among

³⁸ Nuri – Akkaya 2003, 103-104.

³⁹ *Nushü'l-hükkâm*, 11, 13.

⁴⁰ Abdülmecid Sivasî, *Letâ'ifü'l-ezhâr ve lezâ'izü'l-esmâr (Nesâyih-i Mülûk)*: Süleymaniye Ktp., Laleli MS. 1613, 72-73.

these were the building of new churches and synagogues in Istanbul, Muslims' frequenting *zimmi* bakeries, the illegal addition of extra stories to non-Muslim houses, and the violation of dress codes. One particular admonition Sivasi made about Muslim and non-Muslim relations directly concerned the functioning of the Ottoman state: the employment of Christians and Jews for running the affairs of the State. According to Sivasi, an even more direct impact of non-Muslims' interference in government and public administration arose in matters of taxation. In the *Letaif*, Sivasi condemned the taxation of wine as one of the fifteen illicit payments that God condemned in the Quran. He objected to any flow of money gathered from the taxation of an item that was explicitly forbidden by the Quran and the Sunna into the treasury of the "Shah of Islam." The Sharia-minded take on non-Muslims included not only the *zimmis* living under Ottoman rule but also other infidels living in the abode of war (*darü'l-harb*). *Tacü'r-resail* begins with a praise of *gaza*, fight for the faith, and a fictitious account of the ransacking of Rome by the Ottomans.⁴¹ In addition to the core section which is the translation of Ibn Taymiyya's work, Kadızade Mehmed İlmî also dwelt on the position of non-Muslim subjects.⁴² The last prominent Kadızadeli preacher, Vani Efendi also expressed a stern interest in *gaza* that is manifest in his correspondence with grand vizier Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmed.⁴³ He also authored an important Qur'anic commentary in 1679–80 called *Ara'is al-Kur'an wa nafa'is al-furkan* where he declared that Turks were divinely ordained to carry out *gaza* whereas Arabs had previously failed in it.⁴⁴ Vani is also reported to have played an active role as part of the "war party" pushing for the siege of Vienna.⁴⁵ This is important for understanding also the motivations of the pro-war party that continued to exert an influence in Ottoman foreign policy until the signing of the Karlowitz Treaty in 1699.

These ideas promulgated by the Kadızadelis and their opponents no doubt constituted the doctrinal backdrop of the strict Sharia measures of the seventeenth century such as the public stoning incident of 1681. It is not known if the person

⁴¹ Terzioğlu 1999, 321.

⁴² Öztürk 1981, 155.

⁴³ Vani Efendi, *Münşe'ât*, Süleymaniye Ktp. Ayasofya MS 4308.

⁴⁴ For a summary of the work, see Pazarbaşı 1997. Baer states that in his summary translation of certain sections of the work, Pazarbaşı omits any references to Kurds found in the original (Baer 2008, 206-210).

⁴⁵ Terzioğlu 1999, 287.

behind the decision, Beyazızade Ahmed Efendi, was openly a Kadızadeli follower, but we know that later in his life he became a Nakşibendi, an order known for its strict interpretation of the Islamic canon.⁴⁶ Beyazızade gave another harsh yet equally controversial sentence: the execution of a bureaucrat, Patburunzade Mehmed Halife, who allegedly made statements amounting to apostasy.⁴⁷ A quick examination of the corpus of works he left behind reveals that Hanefi law occupied a central place for Beyazızade both at the level of the practice of law and its doctrinal sources.⁴⁸ What is interesting is that, according to contemporary sources, in both the stoning case and the Patburunzade case Beyazızade ruled in favour of the application of strictly Shari sentences despite the inadequate number of witnesses required by the same Shari stipulations.

Nonetheless, there were also dissident voices against this increasing “salafization” of the discourse concerning the non-Muslims, those who were Ottoman subjects as well those living in the abode of war. For example, although he is known to have supported the aggressive *gaza* policy of grand vizier Fazıl Ahmed Paşa, Niyasi Mısri was infuriated by the treatment of the non-Muslims in the Empire and reminded the authorities that it was the taxes paid by the non-Muslims that constituted the core of the tyrants’ wealth and that their wealth, lives, honor (*ırz*) and blood had to be protected.⁴⁹ Mehmed İlmi in the *Nüşhat*, advised Murad IV not to take his enemies lightly, and even prefer peace to war in certain situations.⁵⁰ He quoted several Quranic verses praising peace and warned the Sultan that the biggest mistake he could ever make was to continue with warfare when his opponent asked for peace. He added that Sultans must always abide by the terms of peace treaties. In his *Nasihatu’l-müluk tergiban li-hüsn al-süluk* written for Mehmed IV, Sarı Abdullah Efendi offered similar restraint in matters of warfare, arguing that the vizier should prefer peace

⁴⁶ He is the son of Beyazi Hasan Efendi (d. 1653) from Bosnia. Hasan Efendi served as the judge of Mecca and Istanbul. Beyazızade was educated under the tutelage of the famous ulema of the time and got his diploma in Edirne. After having served for twenty years as müderris in various Istanbul medreses, he was first appointed as the judge of Aleppo (1666), then of Bursa (1672), and of Istanbul (1672). He was appointed as the chief military judge or Rumelia in 1680.

⁴⁷ See Defterdar – Özcan 1995, 123 and cf. Sariyannis 2005-2006.

⁴⁸ Ahmed b. Hüsameddin Hasan b. Sinan el-Bosnevi Beyazızade, *Al-tahqiq fi al-redd ala al-zindiq*, Süleymaniye, Esad Efendi, MS 1468; *Al-usul al-munifa li al-imam Abu Hanifa*, Süleymaniye, Esad Efendi, MS 1140; *Sak*, Lala İsmail, MS 93. For a discussion of his place in the seventeenth-century Ottoman *kalam* circles, see Çelebi 1998.

⁴⁹ Terzioğlu 1999, 318-320.

⁵⁰ Kadızade Mehmed İlmi, *Nushü’l-hükkâm*, 69.

when possible and should not force the sultan to conduct warfare when it was not necessary.⁵¹

Another common thread in these Sharia-informed criticisms was the reaction against the contemporary functioning of urban economy and its moral underpinnings. The seventeenth and early eighteenth-century accounts of the Kadızadelis disapprovingly pointed out to the lower-echalons of urban *esnaf* as one of the important constituents of the Kadızadeli movement. Therefore it becomes crucial to understand if and how the leaders of the Kadızadeli movement, its opponents and the remaining participants of the debate interpreted the economic landscape around them. Sivasi in the *Letaif*, enumerated the moral vices of the times. Among them, he denounced those not contenting with what God offered them and those developing excessive ambition to earn more. According to him, these were the two moral shortcomings of hoarders.⁵² In his 1630 *kaside*, Kadızade Mehmed defined the same problem, but in more exact terms: the richest members of the military had become shopkeepers and they certainly did not want the officially-fixed price.⁵³

The most rigorous statement about the partakers of the Ottoman urban economy came from a relatively unknown Sufi preacher, Hasan Efendi. The *pendname* he wrote presumably for the consumption of the local audience of his mosque,⁵⁴ warned his readers against the people of innovation (*ehl-i bidat*), the people of bribery (*ehl-i rüşvet*) and the people of this world (*ehl-i dūnya*). Yet the main targets in his criticism of the pursuants of wordly pleasures and goods were the Sufis themselves. He criticized the inherent hierarchy of Sufism, Sufis' blind adherence to their sheikhs, and their dependence on the public for economic benefits implying and especially their embeddedness in the imperial waqf networks.⁵⁵ The emphasis on earning one's livelihood, sufficing with the moderate, steering away from depending on people's blessings and from borrowing money and food gave the work an almost Melami tone. In his praise for self-sufficiency, Hasan Efendi referred to the producers (*çiftçi*) whom he saw as the ideal examples of moderation in consumption. A similar

⁵¹ Sarı Abdullah dispensed similarly cool-headed advice in another *nasihat* work that is attributed to him, *Tedbir ün-neşeteyn ve ıslahı 'n-nüşateyn*.

⁵² Abdülmecid Sivasî, *Letâ'ifü'l-ehzâr*, 184.

⁵³ Öztürk 1981, 41, 42.

⁵⁴ Terzioğlu 2010, 281.

⁵⁵ *Pendnâme-i Hasan (Hikâyât-ı makbûle ve nazm-ı mergûb)*: Köprülü Ktp. Ahmed Paşa MS 345.

emphasis on the producers also appears in Kadızade Mehmed İlmi's *Nüshat* where he dealt with them not as a morally idealized category but as part of his theory of social classes. Like the many generations of Muslim theoreticians before him, İlmi saw the key to the order of the universe in the preservation of each class (sword, pen, agriculturists and traders).

Political practice and political thought

The texts examined above at times verged on the catechistical, often replicated the preaching voice of their author and mostly addressed a royal audience. Above all, they emphasized the primacy of the Sharia and the Sunna and saw the proper functioning of the imperial political order as a function of the moral and legal underpinnings provided by these two. The question that remains for us to address is whether one can trace the intellectual/ideological origins of the administrative policies carried out during the second half of the seventeenth century – policies which manifestly had strong Shari coloring – to the ideas promoted by the authors of these Sunna-minded political texts.⁵⁶ While it is not possible to associate every major political decision with a specific text, it is possible to trace the social and intellectual networks through which a form of Shari ideology was channeled towards the chancellery and financial arms of the Ottoman bureaucracy and the judicial corps that carried out its implementation. As it will become evident below, the process of the Shariatization of Ottoman public policy stepped up especially during the grand vizierates of the Köprülü or their relatives and protégés.⁵⁷ It is not a coincidence that the policies that created much controversy during the second half of the seventeenth century had been already pronounced by our Sunna-minded authors in the first half of the century.

To begin with, the concerns that Sivasi expressed in his *nasihatname* about the erosion of the boundaries between the non-Muslims and Muslims subjects of the

⁵⁶ Scholars took note of this new “administrative activism” and even emphasized the pull away from the imperial *kanun* towards the Sharia as the underlying drive behind these measures (Murphey 1993). On the growing importance of the Sharia within the Ottoman legal system, see Gerber 1994; Peirce 2003; Buzov 2005.

⁵⁷ The appointment of Köprülü Mehmed Pasha as the grand vizier in September 1656 marks the beginning of the period, which is called in Ottoman history as the “rule of the grandees” or the “Köprülü restoration.” On the Köprülü family see Behçeti İbrahim's (d. ca. 1738) history: *Silsiletü'l-Asafiyye fi hakaniyyeti'l-devleti'l-Osmaniye*, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, Hafız Ahmed Paşa, nr. 212. See Kunt 1971; Kunt 1973; Kunt 1994; Yılmaz 2000; Duman 2006; Aycibin 2011; Özkan 2006.

Empire seem to have been shared by a wide circle of political elites starting from the mid-seventeenth century on. The 1660 fire in Istanbul that burned down most of the southern shores of the Golden Horn, gave the regal matriarch Hadice Turhan Sultan (r. 1651-1683) an excuse to reclaim the Jewish settlements in the area, thus initiating a wave of anti-Jewish and anti-Christian policies that radically transformed the urban profile of Istanbul in the second half of the seventeenth century.⁵⁸ The first preacher of the newly inaugurated mosque of Hadice Turhan was Vani Efendi. It seems that Vani saw an obvious connection between conquest or lack of it in the abode of war and compliance with Sharia in the abode of Islam.⁵⁹ This view actually predates Vani: the Kadızadeli had blamed the 1656 Venetian blockade in the Straits on the fact that the Grand Vizier was a Sufi.⁶⁰

The Ottoman land administration practices that Mehmed Birgivi took issue with in the sixteenth century would this time be targeted by the administration itself during the conquest of Crete.⁶¹ The 1670 Cretan *kanunname* banned all the non-Shari taxes that had been previously collected from the *reaya* as illicit innovation.⁶² It also stipulated that the *cizye* payments due on the *reaya* were to be calculated based on the Shari ratios stated in the fiqh manuals. The *kanunname* also introduced a three-tiered system for *cizye* collection, dividing the non-Muslim populace into three ranks according to their wealth, a policy that would be carried onto the mainland by the 1691 poll-tax regulation.⁶³ This survey and the law book departed radically from the classical Ottoman *tahrir* tradition since what was being registered was not the male population of the villages as it had been the case for centuries, but the land itself. Moreover, the conquerors of Crete used outwardly Islamic terms such as *haraci* to

⁵⁸ For anti-Jewish policies in this period see Thys-Senocak 1998 and Baer 2008, 86-96. For anti-Christian urban policies see Baer 2008, 96-102.

⁵⁹ Baer 2008, 172, 173.

⁶⁰ Baer 2008, 71.

⁶¹ The first known land and population survey (*tahrir*) of the island was undertaken in 1647, although the register did not survive to this day. The first registrar that we have at hand dates from 1650 when the governor of Chania Mehmed Pasha carried out another survey (Gülsoy 2001, 186).

⁶² These were called *divani* taxes and included *ispençe*, *resm-i tapu*, *resm-i ağnam*, *resm-i küvvare*, *resm-i deştbanî*, *resm-i otlak*, *kışlak ve yaylak*, *cürm-i cinayet*, *bad-ı heva*, *resm-i arus* and *tarh-ı milh*. This would be reconfirmed in a later *kanunname* for Crete dated c. 1705-06 which adds that not a single farthing must be collected from the inhabitants of the island in contravention of the holy religious Law. The *kanun*, which laid down these fines and taxes was no longer mentioned. Similarly the *kanunname* for the island of Midilli (Mytilene, Lesbos) in the cadastral register of 1709-08 abolished the fines and many *örfi* taxes. According to a note at the end of the *kanunname* these impositions had already been left out of the “old register” probably that of 1082/1671-2 or earlier (Heyd 1973, 153).

⁶³ Gülsoy 2001; see also Yılmaz 2000, 203-208; Sariyannis 2011b.

define the lands and declared them to be the freehold (*mülk*) of their occupants as stipulated by Hanafi law.⁶⁴

The Cretan departure has been interpreted in different ways: As a reaction to the necessity to incorporate the previous Venetian practices of land administration and ownership,⁶⁵ as a result of the central administration's attempt to attract both the Muslim and non-Muslim *reaya* to (re)settlement,⁶⁶ as a consequence of the general empire-wide transformation of the taxation system, as one of the legal loopholes deliberately created by the Köprülü households who wanted to siphon off revenues from the central treasury for their own benefit⁶⁷ and as a result of the fiscal necessities imposed by the peculiarity of agricultural production in the islands.⁶⁸ It has also been suggested that the application of Shari principles on post-conquest surveys had already been the case with what has been called the “insular *kannunnames*,” that is, the legal regulations issued specifically for the Aegean and Mediterranean islands.⁶⁹ One interesting detail is the similarity of the land taxation policies implemented in Crete to those of Basra, which was subjugated by the Ottomans in 1669.⁷⁰

Although conceived and much debated as one of the most plausible explanations for the peculiarity of the Cretan *kanunname*, none of the studies on the Cretan *kanuns* could offer a tenable link between the Shariatization of Ottoman land management and the Kadızadeli wave, especially the influence of Vani Efendi on the Köprülü administration.⁷¹ Unfortunately very few of the administrative texts produced by the Ottoman bureaucracy chose to reveal the intellectual provenance of the policies they pronounced. Therefore it is highly unlikely that neither Birgivi Mehmed's *Tarikat* nor any other Kadızadeli text would surface in the *kanunnames* as the ideological references to the privatization of land-holding rights in Crete. However it is possible to gauge the influence of Birgivi on the Kadızadelis consulting the Köprülü grand viziers based on the analysis of the circulation of his works, especially

⁶⁴ Gülsoy 2001, 194; Kolovos 2007; Kermeli 2008, 17-48.

⁶⁵ Greene 1996, 78.

⁶⁶ Kermeli 2008, 33. Kermeli mentions this possibility but concludes that “the choice to allow extensive private landed property on the island could not be merely the result of political manoeuvring and propaganda.”

⁶⁷ Greene 2000, 27.

⁶⁸ Veinstein 2004, 101-106.

⁶⁹ Veinstein 2004, 102.

⁷⁰ Khoury 2001, 316.

⁷¹ Greene is skeptical about it and rightly states that the Kadızadelis did not take any explicit stand on this matter (Greene 1996, 73); Veinstein expands on it in detail (Veinstein 2004, 101-106).

the *Tarikat*.⁷² The fact that Kadızade Mehmed Efendi's lifetime was a turning point in the dissemination of Birgivi's religious works has already been mentioned above.⁷³ It is obvious that the *Tarikat* was widely recognized by the Ottoman political elite including Fazıl Ahmed Paşa, as an important legal and political reference work.⁷⁴ Therefore, in spite of the dearth of any direct references, it would not be a far-fetched assumption to state that those who carried out the aforementioned legal reformulations in the spirit of the Sharia were familiar with how Birgivi dealt with the issue of the legal administration of land in his *Tarikat*.

An important source that might explain the changing attitudes towards the taxation of newly conquered lands is a translation commissioned by the then Grand Vizier Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha (d.1683).⁷⁵ The work in question is *Kitab al-Kharaj* (The Book of Land Tax) by the famous Hanafi jurist Abu Yusuf (d. 798).⁷⁶ The person whom the grand vizier commissioned with the translation was a certain Rodosizade (Rodosluzade) Mehmed (d.1701-02), who would become quite well-known for his literary skills and services in the later part of the seventeenth century.⁷⁷ In the introduction of his translation, Rodosizade mentioned that Mustafa Pasha, who was always preoccupied with the conquest of countries, holy war and the improvement of the country, asked for a book that dealt with all these issues.⁷⁸ The ulema in his circle brought to his attention a book written by Abu Yusuf and submitted to Harun al-Rashid. The work seems to have charmed the grand vizier enough to commission Rodosizade with the job of translating it from Arabic into Turkish. The *Kitab al-kharaj* discusses *kharaj*, other taxes such as '*ushr*, *zakat* and *sadaqa*, as well as the poll-tax or *jizya* and the social status, rights, and obligations of

⁷² See Kaylı 2010.

⁷³ Among Birgivi's other religious works, *Tarikat al-Muhammadiyah* was the most popular work with its 296 manuscript copies followed by the *Vasiyetnâme*, which has 164 manuscripts. Ibid., p.163. The ratio of dated manuscripts to the total number of copies for *Tarikat al-Muhammadiyah* is 157/296; for *Vasiyetnâme*, it is 55/164. See Kaylı 2010, 167 and 171.

⁷⁴ Ahmet Kaylı points out to the collection of Fazıl Ahmed Paşa in the Köprülü library which has Birgivi's works on Arabic grammar as well as a copy of his *Tarikat* copied in 1711 by Mustafa b. Ibrahim el-Bosnevi. Kaylı also mentions the fact that Fazıl Ahmed himself copied out some of Birgivi's works including a volume in the collection of Mehmed Asım Bey in the Köprülü library that contains two texts of Birgivi (*Avâmil* and *Izhâr*): Kaylı 2010, 212-213.

⁷⁵ The earliest manuscripts of the translation are: Rodosizade (Rodosluzade) Mehmed, *Terceme-i Kitab-i Harac-i Ebu Yusuf*, Süleymaniye, Şehid Ali Paşa MS 717 (1683); MS 718 (mentioned as an autograph copy); Halet Efendi MS 128 (1683); Lala İsmail MS 85 (1745/1746).

⁷⁶ Abu Yusuf – Abbas 1985; Al-Manasir 1992. Ben Shemesh also studied it as part of the series *Taxation in Islamic Law*. See Shemesh 1958-1969 and cf. Calder 1993; Heck 2002.

⁷⁷ Rodosizade completed the translation of Qazwini's '*Aja'ib al-mahluqat* in 1703 (Hagen 2000, 187).

⁷⁸ Rodosizade (Rodosluzade) Mehmed, *Terceme-i kitabü'l-harac*, Halet Efendi MS 128, 4, 5.

non-Muslim citizens in Islamic territory. The new element that Abu Yusuf introduced to the literature on land taxation was proportional taxation. Abu Yusuf established the inefficiency of the fixed-rate system as imposed by Umar, and proposed that it be replaced by proportional taxation on produce (*muqasama*). The arguments in favour of proportional taxation were presented in such a way as to stress the rights of the imam to vary taxation according to his assessment of what the land will bear. In line with the general spirit of the work that grants a wide legal space for caliphal adjudication, the arguments in the *Kitab al-kharaj* concerning the imposition of *kharaj* aimed to maximize the government's capacity to tax, at discretion, by proportional taxation.⁷⁹

This translation act definitely symbolizes the Ottoman political elite's search for legal precedents for the increasingly Sharia-toned taxation and land policies. In that sense, it echoes the legal exercises that Birgivi carried out a century ago in his *Tarikat al-Muhammadiyya*. Given the date of the work's translation, one can further speculate whether the *Kitab al-kharaj* in Ottoman Turkish was considered as laying the legal groundwork for Kara Mustafa Pasha's unrealized European conquests or whether it was a product of the efforts to introduce more fiscal laxity into the Ottoman taxation system as will be later evinced by the 1691 life-long tax farming (*malikâne*) code. In any case, there is one important difference between Birgivi's interpretation and the resuscitation of the Abu Yusuf text. Birgivi stood clear of any contemporary interpretation that gave the Sultan too much leverage through *kanun* or other kanun-minded manipulations of Hanafi law. However in referencing one of the basic texts of Hanafi law, Kara Mustafa Pasha and the entourage of ulema around him chose a text which opened a room for a degree of flexibility in matters of taxation within the larger Shari framework while maintaining the centrality of caliphal, or in the Ottoman case Sultan's discretion.

Although Rodosizade's *Kitabü'l-harac* continued to circulate extensively in both manuscript and printed forms right into the nineteenth century, the introductory sections of later copies no longer mentioned Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa and left a blank space in lieu of his name. Vani Mehmed had already disappeared from the political scene by the time Fazıl Mustafa became grand vizier. However Fazıl Mustafa also

⁷⁹ Calder 1993, 118, 123-124.

proved to be less than flexible when it came to the matters of conquest and warfare. Although we do not know if he was rooting for an aggressive *gaza* policy for the same ideological reasons as Kara Mustafa Paşa or Vani Mehmed Efendi, we know for instance that he was very much against the diplomatic mission to Vienna, arranged by the then Grand Vizier Bekri Mustafa.⁸⁰

In addition to his fixation with *gaza*, another concern that Fazıl Mustafa inherited from the Sunna-minded discourses of the first half of the century was the legality of market operations. His elimination of the application of state-determined fixed prices on a daily basis (*narh-ı ruzi*) in the markets citing the absence of any stipulations concerning price controls in *fikh* books is seen as one of the most emblematic pro-Sharia statements of the period.⁸¹ What is known as *ta'sir* in Islamic legal terminology had been widely debated in early-Islamic sources. The founding principle behing the rejection of *narh* emanates from an anecdote involving Prophet Muhammad, who is said to have stated that “prices depend upon the will of Allah, it is he who raises and lowers them.”⁸² Nevertheless there were always “cases” in which jurists condoned state intervention in market mechanisms, such as underselling and especially hoarding, which many authors we studied above abhorred. Departing from the Hanafî doctrine they otherwise remained loyal to, Ottomans were engaged in very complex *narh* practices from the very beginning.⁸³ Additionally the one legal authority whom one would assume could influence the Shariatization of the discourses on public administration the most, offered the most flexible and permissing views concerning the application of *narh*. In his *Al-hisbat fi al-Islam*, Ibn Taymiyya condemned *tas'ir*, but refused to make of this condemnation an absolute principle by systematic reference to the categorical decision of the Prophet. Unlike the legal writers, who simply quoted the hadith of Muhammad, Ibn Taymiyya devoted considerable discussion to the context within which the Prophet’s decision was made,

⁸⁰ On the Grand Vizier Bekri Mustafa’s initiative, Alexander Mavrocordato and Zülfikar Efendi were sent to Vienna on a peace mission only to be held captive there between 1688 and 1692. Jobst 1980; “Tahrîr-i Mükamele” by Zülfikar Efendi in Silahdar – Refik 1928, 2: 654-655; Zülfikar – Güler 2007.

⁸¹ Defterdar – Özcan 1995, 388.

⁸² Essid 1995, 152.

⁸³ For *narh* regulations during the classical period see Kafadar 1986, 115-132.

examining the contemporary conditions which had to be understood in interpreting his decision.⁸⁴

At this point one should also pay attention to the fact that the association of Fazıl Mustafa's action with his Shari sensitivities was only made by contemporary historians like Defterdar Sarı Mehmed who did not approve of the policy. Moreover, the texts from the seventeenth century did not offer any explicit doctrinal or moral stand concerning the application of *narh*. Kadızade Mehmed, whom one would expect would take a strict stand against it, in fact condemned the *esnaf*-turned janissaries who did not want any price controls.⁸⁵ It was only a well-known Sufi intellectual from the turn of the century, İsmail Hakkı Burusevi (1653-1724) who provided an argument on the issue. While he seems to have initially objected official price fixing, he later on justified it by referring to the inequitable nature of the people of his time that made it necessary for the authorities to intervene.⁸⁶ The absence of any references to the Shari grounds for Fazıl Mustafa's elimination of *narh* apart from the accounts of disapproving contemporary historians at least shows that there existed other economic pressures that led to this decision. In any case, the decision created so much confusion in the markets along with the unexpected rise in prices that the grand vizier was forced to revoke it before too late.⁸⁷

No matter what the real causes behind his policies were, almost every policy decision that Fazıl Mustafa made seems to have been deliberately legitimized with recourse to the Sharia. Right after he became the grand vizier Fazıl Mustafa abolished the wine tax (*def-i hamr*) imposed on the non-Muslims. According to the historian Raşid, all the catastrophes Ottomans faced on the military front were attributed by the ulema to the neglect of the Sharia and the laxity in its implementation. Especially the selling of wine and rakı and their taxation by the state were deemed contrary to the founding principles of the Ottoman State. According to Raşid it was the warnings of the ulema that resulted in the lifting of these "non-Islamic" taxes.⁸⁸ The same mentality can be seen in Fazıl Mustafa's annulling of the taxes levied on the non-Muslims with the exception of *cizye* and *harac*. Similar to the Cretan case, the

⁸⁴ Essid 1995, 165-167.

⁸⁵ Öztürk 1981, 43.

⁸⁶ Kafadar 1986, 136.

⁸⁷ Defterdar – Özcan 1995, 387-389.

⁸⁸ Raşid 1865, 2: 101.

decision implied that non-Muslims would be exempt from the taxes deemed as extra-Sharia such as *avarız*, *bedel-i nuzûl* and *sürsat*, and their remaining debts would be cancelled.⁸⁹ One contemporary observer expressed his astonishment and claimed that the *mevkufat* registers were almost going to be set on fire.⁹⁰

The death of Fazıl Mustafâ in the battle of Slankamen did not bring an end to the implementation of Shari'a guidelines in public administration. The next most influential character that had a huge sway on Ottoman politics was the *şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi (1638-1703, ş. 1695-1703) who was initially brought to Istanbul from his hometown Erzurum by his father-in-law Vani Mehmed Efendi in 1664. Although he was exposed to the Halveti tradition through his uncle and his father, it was Vani Mehmed, then a resident of Erzurum, who had the biggest influence on young Feyzullah. By the time Vani Mehmed had established himself as an esteemed scholar in Erzurum and became first the protégé of Feyzullah's uncle and later his son-in-law.⁹¹ It was again Vani Mehmed who took Feyzullah to Istanbul and let him participate in the scholarly discussions held in the Sultan's presence, thus bringing him to the notice of the sultan.⁹² The ascension of Mustafa II to the throne in 1695 crowned Feyzullah not only as the head of the entire *ilmiye* hierarchy but also as the Sultan's senior advisor on state affairs. Feyzullah was a critical actor in steering the imperial policy towards *gaza*, and between 1695 and 1697 participated in all three military campaigns against the Habsburgs, not as a passive member of the Sultan's entourage but instead actively fighting along with the army.⁹³ He was also instrumental in concocting an image of the Sultan through a wholly Islamic vocabulary. Writing in 1699, Feyzullah declared Mustafa II the centennial renewer (*müceddid*) in a short treatise of his that was recorded by Uşşakizade in his history. He also praised the sultan for shunning pleasure, entertainment and every amusement and nonsensical involvement, very much echoing the moralist discourses of the

⁸⁹ These taxes had been imposed in order to meet the war expenditures during the post-Vienna environment. See Defterdar – Özcan 1995, 221 and (for their elimination) 298-299.

⁹⁰ Özcan 2000, 11. It was not always the case that non-Muslims benefitted from the shariatization of the Ottoman tax policies. While residing in the island of Lemnos following his banishment by Fazıl Ahmed Paşa, Niyazi Mısri was frequently visited by the priests from Imroz who consulted him about the legitimacy of the *harac* tax imposed on them. In his answer Mısri was reported to imply that the person responsible was Fazıl Mustafâ. Terzioğlu 1999, 177-178.

⁹¹ Nizri 2014, 21-22.

⁹² Kaylı 2010, 221.

⁹³ Nizri 2014, 110.

Kadızedelis before him.⁹⁴ The Sharia-centered vocabulary that governed the reign of Mustafa II found its most formal expression in an edict sent by the Sultan to the deputy Grand Vizier in 1696 which ordained that fermans and decrees from then on could refer to the “noble Sharia” only and strictly advised against the coupling of the terms Sharia and *kanun*.⁹⁵ However, given our survey of the previous espousal of the Sharia ideals by both the Halveti and Kadızedeli preachers, Mustafa II’s prioritizing the sharia in lieu of the *kanun* does not seem so unprecedented.

Mustafa II, Feyzullah Efendi and the entire Feyzullah clique were going to be toppled by the Edirne Incident in no time. However the discourses they had been championing went beyond merely creating the image of a *gazi* sultan: they penetrated the upper segments of imperial bureaucracy which began to emphasize its reverence to early Hanafite legal references in state administration. Such testimony to the continuing observation of Sharia sources among the Ottoman political elites can even be found in an explicitly anti-Feyzullah source, the *Anonymous History* covering the period between 1688-1704. The person who commissioned this history was probably the grand vizier Rami Mehmed Pasha (d. 1708). Rami Mehmed was scandalously elevated from the seat of the chief scribe to grand vizierate under the auspices of Feyzullah Efendi yet later fell at odds with him. In a section that praised Rami Mehmed’s vizierial virtues, the anonymous author gave a long description of an imperial council (*divan*) meeting that took place on January 26, 1703.⁹⁶ The anonymous author described Rami Mehmed’s *divan* as the best *divan* in Ottoman history with regard to its efficiency in handling the petitions and its conformance to legal procedures. An important detail about the operation of the grand vizier’s council is that the scribes at the divan during their free time, occupied themselves with reading *Kitab siyar al-kebir*, the famous work on the Islamic law of nations, attributed to the Hanafi jurist al-Shaybani (b.750) and widely known from al-Sarakhsi’s (b. 1101) commentary.⁹⁷ The main interest of *Kitab siyar* is the jurisdiction of Islamic

⁹⁴ Kaylı 2010, 224; Uşşakizade – Gündoğdu 2005, 750-56.

⁹⁵ See Heyd 1973, 154-5.

⁹⁶ Özcan 2000, 197.

⁹⁷ Al-Sarakhsi’s definition of *siyar* is as follows: “... [Siyar] described the conduct of the believers in their relations with the unbelievers of enemy territory as well as the people with whom the believers had made treaties, who may have been temporarily (*musta’mins*) or permanently (*Dhimmi*) in Islamic lands; with apostates, who were the worst of the unbelievers, since they abjured after they accepted [Islam]; and with rebels (*baghis*), who were not counted as unbelievers, though they were ignorant and their understanding [of Islam] was false.” (Shaybani – Khadduri 1966, 40).

law in relation to non-Muslims living in the domain of war (*dar al-harb*), and those living within the domain of Islam. It is not possible to know exactly what aspect of the work was most relevant for the officials at Rami Mehmed's *divan*. However, it must be emphasized that *Kitab siyar* continued the line of argument made by Abu Yusuf and Birgivi by defining the legal status of a land appropriated by conquest as a function of the status of the land, rather than the personal status of those working it.⁹⁸ In making the *Kitab siyar* the main intellectual reference in the Ottoman chancellery, the anonymous historian attests to the continuing efforts of the central administration to determine its treatment of affairs of state according to Hanafi law and identity.

Conclusion

As already argued by the recent studies on Ottoman Sufism and Sunnism, certain genealogies that had long come to define the field, turned out to have been overstated in scholarship. Neither Ibn Taymiyya nor Birgivi Mehmed served as the sole ideological cradle for the Salafist movements that emerged in the seventeenth century. Even in the cases where their influences were most visible, they were not confined only to the Salafism of the Kadızadelis, but rather captivated a wider audience including the Halvetis. When it comes to the Ottoman Sufis, again recent scholarship has dismantled the image of a united Sufi front and exposed the dynamics that differentiated Sufi communities from one another. The way Münir-i Belgradi shaped his works and his criticisms according to different audiences is the best proof for the diversity of the ideological options available to the Ottoman writers in the late sixteenth century. Amidst this diversity, as in the case of the relationship between Birgivi and his Kadızadeli successors, one cannot speak of an intact ideological core that was passed from Belgradi to the seventeenth-century Halvetis. Birgivi and Belgradi's works exhibited a different type of knowledge that was built on the meticulous analyses of legal traditions in the former's case, and on textual criticism in the latter's, whereas the seventeenth-century Sunna-mindedness exposed itself first in the preachings of the Kadızadelis and Halvetis and was later transferred onto the pages of the advice works they authored. Another characteristic of the seventeenth-century Sunna-centered writings is that their preacher-turned-authors did not belong only to the high-ranking clerical and political elite but descended from a variety of

⁹⁸ Heck 2002, 169.

social backgrounds and also addressed an audience which as equally diverse in social composition.

Chapter VII

A new understanding of innovation and reform

It is around the early 1650s that a more general and “philosophical” view of society, begins to take its place in Ottoman letters, after the torrent of concrete, institutional advice we described in the previous chapters. And it is Kâtib Çelebi, the famous polymath, geograph and encyclopaedist of the first half of the seventeenth century, who initiated this renaissance of political theory (rather than advice).¹ Mustafâ b. Abdullah, known as Kâtib Çelebi or Hacı Halife (1609-1657) was the son of a scribe in the fiscal bureaucracy (and, at the same time, an imperial guard raised in the palace); he became an apprentice in the father’s office in 1622, and accompanied him in various campaigns soon after. After his father’s death in 1626, Kâtib Çelebi continued his scribal career and his occasional military duties, while at the same time he was studying under Kadızade Mehmed Efendi and other scholars. From 1635 onwards he settled permanently in Istanbul, developing himself into a celebrated bibliophile and a “free-lance” teacher of law and theology, but also of mathematics and astronomy. He maintained a circle of intellectuals and a close relation to various renegades, who were translating for him chronicles and geographical works from European languages. Kâtib Çelebi’s work is vast both in volume and in array: he wrote from bio-bibliographical encyclopaedias (his *Keşfü’z-zünûn* is still a valuable source for authors and books now lost) to historical works (like the famous *Fezleke*, one of our main sources for the early seventeenth century) and from political advice to geographical compendiums (his *Cihânnümâ* was based in the newest European atlases), not to mention various treatises or collections on diverse matters. Kâtib Çelebi seems to have embarked into what Gottfried Hagen termed his “Encyclopedic project”, as he strongly believed that the diffusion of scientific knowledge would benefit greatly in coping with the visible crisis. Thus he produced what he considered reference works, focusing on history, letters and geography; and in this context he also translated (with the help of his convert friends) works such as *Atlas Minor* or

¹ On Kâtib Çelebi’s life and work see Gökyay 1991; Hagen 1995/96; Hagen 2003; Yurtoğlu 2009; and the comprehensive article by Gottfried Hagen in the website “Historians of the Ottoman Empire”: <http://ottomanhistorians.uchicago.edu/en/historians/65> (accessed May 2015).

Byzantine and European chronicles. Kâtib Çelebi is generally credited with the introduction of European-style scientific geography and more generally with a major attempt to rationalize Ottoman science and world view. Indeed, in an age where “rational sciences” (e.g. logic or mathematics) had already started to decline in favor of “transmitted” ones (i.e. theology, grammar and law) in the *medrese* curriculum, Kâtib Çelebi emphasized the need and utility of natural sciences, with an emphasis to geography and astronomy.² However, one must not overestimate Kâtib Çelebi’s rationalism: he surely was a product of his tradition, entrenched in the transmitted way of thinking inasmuch he was prone to unquestionably relate to traditions or practices that would nowadays sound quite irrational. The innovation brought about by Kâtib Çelebi was a quest for unambiguity and a widening of the usable array of sources. The translations of the *Atlas Minor* and of similar Western European texts served as an enlargement of the tradition, an enrichment with a new source and, all the more so, a more authoritative one; but it was mainly the traditional textual critique tools that Kâtib Çelebi applied upon these widened sources.

As we are going to see, Kâtib Çelebi’s teacher Kadızade Mehmed Efendi’s legalist and literal reading of the Quran impressed him but did not make him adhere to the revivalist ideas. His own political sympathies were more inclined toward the reformist viziers who tried to get a stronghold in the turbulent politics of 1650s Istanbul, such as Tarhuncu Ahmed Pasha and Köprülü Mehmed Pasha.³ Apart from the favourable references in his chronicle, this is also obvious in his major political work, *Düstürü’l-amel li islahi’l-halel* (“Course of measures to redress the situation”), composed during the vizierate of the former and just a few years before the rise of the latter.⁴ As the author himself narrates (not only in this text but also in his historiographical *Fezleke*),⁵ it was composed in 1653 after a meeting of the financial scribes under the *defterdar* on the balancing of the state budget, in which he took part himself. Indeed, this short essay stresses financial reform; however, its main value

² On this development, which might be an overestimation based on Kâtib Çelebi’s writings, cf. El-Rouayheb 2008; Tezcan 2010b.

³ Hagen 2003, 62-64.

⁴ There are two known mss. (Nuruosmaniye Ktp. 4075; Murat Molla Ktp., Hamidiye, no. 1649, ff. 39b-47a). The treatise was published in Ottoman as an appendix to Ayn Ali 1978, 119-139; Turkish translation in Kâtib Çelebi – Gökyay 1968, 154-161; a German translation had appeared as Kâtib Çelebi – Behrnauer 1857. See also Gökbilgin 1991, 212-217; Lewis 1962, 78-81; Thomas 1972, 73-74; Fodor 1986, 233-235; İnan 2009, 121; Yurtoğlu 2009, 16-22; Black 2011, 265-267.

⁵ Kâtib Çelebi 1869-1871, 2: 384-85.

lays in the exposition of Kâtib Çelebi's sociological ideas, which include a novel medical simile of human society, a pioneering definition of state, and the first systematic introduction of the Ibn Khaldunian notion of the "state stages" into Ottoman philosophy of history.

After defining the term *devlet* as "the human society", Kâtib Çelebi argues that the social condition of man resembles the individual. An individual's life is naturally divided into three stages, namely growth, standstill and physical decline; the coming of each age, in its turn, depends on the disposition of the individual, so that a strong man comes to his old age later than a weak one. Similarly, now, runs the social state of man, i.e. society or *devlet*, which is also divided into three ages depending on its strength: this is why some societies reached decline soon, while others were late in joining the age of standstill. Moreover, specific signs show the coming of each age, and those who want to take measures have to act according to these signs. Man's disposition consists of four elements or more accurately the four humours (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile); likewise, the "social and human constitution" is composed by four pillars, namely the ulema, the military, the merchants and the peasants or *reaya*, each corresponding to one bodily humour. More specific advice follows, and Kâtib Çelebi stresses that if the soldiers' number cannot be reduced, their salaries may well be, according to the old rules; but this must be done slowly and gradually. Furthermore, it is not easy to increase the income and diminish the expenses in order to bring the budget to equilibrium, unless it is imposed with compelling force (*bir kâsirin kasrı*).

It is in this work that Kâtib Çelebi's innovative spirit shows itself most. His analysis of human society as composed of four classes is not exactly new, of course: we encountered it in Amasi's (drawing from Tusi), Kinalzade's (drawing from Davvani) and Celalzade's (drawing from Kashifi) work, and in fact it constitutes a very common *topos* of the Persian and Ottoman political tradition. Kâtib Çelebi's contribution is that, whereas all these authors had justified the need for equilibrium based on a simile of the four classes with the four elements, he introduced a more scientific perspective, speaking rather of the four humours of Galenic medicine. Although the coupling of the four humours with the four elements was already made in the antiquity, and although the association of humours with social groups had its

counterpart in Renaissance European thought as well (which however lacked a four-fold division of society and thus was focusing on the need for equilibrium),⁶ earlier Islamic similes stressed the correspondence of the various elements of government with the limbs and organs of the body, as we already saw (for instance in Bitlisi's case).⁷ Neither Renaissance European authors nor medieval Islamic ones had made Kâtib Çelebi's one-to-one coupling of the bodily humours with the four traditional social groups, although we have to note that medieval Islamic and Ottoman medicine was in practice based on the four elements rather than the humours.⁸ Nevertheless, Kâtib Çelebi's medical simile shows his tendency for the use of science in all fields of knowledge; but furthermore, it enables him to elaborate the need for equilibrium much better. Even specific medical advice, such as the role of phlegm in the old age or the use of black bile for the stomach, provides a scientific foundation for exposing tropes on soldiers, peasants and the treasury. Moreover, the simile fits with Kâtib Çelebi's vision of the *devlet*, the state, as something more than just a dynasty or an apparatus: it is the whole society he has in mind.⁹ The whole society is in crisis, not just the state institutions; a perspective very fitting of Kâtib Çelebi's times, at least from his point of view (as we are going to see also in his last work, the *Mizânü'l-Hak*).

What is perhaps more important, the medical vision of society serves as a bridge for the introduction of the Ibn Khaldunian notion of the "state stages" into the Ottoman philosophy of history: a society is like a man, with various ages and an unavoidable end. Nevertheless, Kâtib Çelebi wants to stress that the old age may be extended and health can be restored, albeit temporarily; for this, two things are needed. First, a doctor, the "man of sword" who will impose his will as the doctor prescribes medicine (Kâtib Çelebi's model was probably Murad IV, but he must have

⁶ On the genealogy of the theory of the four elements and its use in political thought see Syros 2013; on the relation between the elements and the humours cf. Ermiş 2014, 48ff. (who erroneously states that "the application of the theory to social contexts" was Na'ima's, rather than Kâtib Çelebi's, contribution: *ibid.*, 49).

⁷ Cf. Sariyannis 2013, 97-100.

⁸ See Savage-Smith 2013; Shefer-Mossensohn 2009, 23-24. Shortly before Kâtib Çelebi's work, during the reign of Murad IV, Zeyn al-Din al-Abidin b. Halil had written an erudite treatise on diet, exposing the humoristic theory in great detail (Shefer-Mossensohn 2009, 29). Kâtib Çelebi himself uses the theory of elements rather than humours in discussing the pros and cons of tobacco and coffee, actually criticizing the work of a famous doctor, Davud al-Antakî (d. 1599), whom he had praised in his biobibliographical encyclopaedia (Kâtib Çelebi – Lewis 1957, 54 and 61-62; cf. Yurtoğlu 2009, 452).

⁹ On Kâtib Çelebi's understanding of *devlet* cf. Sigalas 2007, 400-405; Sariyannis 2013, 92-93.

understood that this role was now to be taken by viziers; Tarhuncu eventually failed, but Köprülü was on his way). Second, this doctor must apply the specific medicine fit for the patient's age: i.e., a mid-seventeenth-century vizier cannot apply measures of the Suleymanic era. It is this defense of innovation, of the notion that different times need different policies, that makes the greatest difference between Kâtib Çelebi and his predecessors. The reader may remember from Chapter VI that Kadızade Mehmed İlmî also shared this doctor metaphor; his envisaged doctor were the ulema, however, i.e. the men of the pen, while for Kâtib Çelebi it had to be a man of the sword.

Kâtib Çelebi's other works: a vision for history and for society

A more elaborate exposition of Kâtib Çelebi's philosophy of history can be found in his concluding remarks to *Takvîmü't-tevârih* ("Chronicle of histories"), a world history chronicle compiled in 1648, some four years before his political treatise analyzed above.¹⁰ It seems that he had not yet developed the medical simile of society on the basis of the four humours; on the other hand, he appears more faithful to Ibn Khaldun's stage theory, which he exposes in more detail.

One should note here, somehow *en passant*, a short treatise or rather translation that Kâtib Çelebi wrote in 1655, *İrşâdü'l-hayârâ ilâ tarihi'l-Yûnân ve'r-Rûm ve'n-Nasârâ* ("A guide for the perplexed to the history of [Ancient] Greeks, Romans and Christians").¹¹ Using European sources again, he endeavours to discuss the history of (Eastern) Christianity and of European dynasties; what interests us in this rather unknown book is his discussion of the types of government (monarchy, aristocracy, democracy), coming straightforwardly from Aristotelian political philosophy with some minor misunderstandings (as a matter of fact, it is a free adaptation and expansion of a much shorter passage in Mercator's *Atlas Minor*).¹² No matter how radical it might seem, this theoretical piece seems not to have influenced Kâtib Çelebi himself (although a little later on in the same work, he describes the Venetian system in the same terms, as a development from democracy to aristocracy

¹⁰ Kâtib Çelebi 1733, 233-237; Turkish translation in Kâtib Çelebi – Gökyay 1968, 114-117; cf. Yurtoğlu 2009, 22-24.

¹¹ Kâtib Çelebi – Yurtoğlu 2012 (see esp. 46). Cf. Gökyay 1991, 57; Ménage 1971, 421-422; Yurtoğlu 2009, 76-77.

¹² See Mercator 1610, 194 (*De politico statu regni Galliae*; cf. also later, 198). Mercator's text lacks the references to specific philosophers, the examples from contemporary European states and the detailed description of "democracy".

which led to better order);¹³ it left no traces either in his later work or in his late seventeenth-century followers. What is more interesting is that it had a second life, after İbrahim Müteferrika incorporated it in his own political treatise of 1732 without naming his source, with the result that he is often credited with the introduction of political Aristotelianism *stricto sensu* in the Ottoman letters (see below, Chapter IX).

Finally, in his last work, *Mîzânü'l-hak fi ihtiyâri'l-âhak* (“The balance of truth for the selection of the truest [way]”, 1656), Kâtib Çelebi takes part in the current “issue of the day”, the conflict between the Kadızadeli preachers and the Halveti dervishes as for the abolishment of various “innovations”. This essay contains various pieces that further elaborate the author’s views on politics and society.¹⁴ His main thesis is that violent interference to people’s lives and customs brings only dissent and strife. In Kâtib Çelebi’s argumentation one might also detect a perhaps excessive application of *istihsan* (the mainly Hanafi doctrine for reasoning on the basis of personal deliberation) and even more of *istislah* (the similar doctrine stressing the public good or human welfare, i.e. *maslahat*). However, Kâtib Çelebi’s views often seem to go further than the usual practice of *istihsan* and *istislah* reasoning; for one thing, custom never acquired in legal reasoning the dominant position which he is so willing to grant.¹⁵ All the more, one may bring into attention the “rigorously literal legalism” of the Kadızadeli (I am using here the words of Cemal Kafadar), which “could be seen to embody some “legal rationalism” that questioned the preponderant use of vague and subjective criteria such as *istihsan* and *örf*”.¹⁶ Kâtib Çelebi’s flexible use of *istihsan* and *istislah* may be examined in the context of his rejection of Kadızadeli legalism; and if, as I argued elsewhere, the latter can be seen as a parallel of European Reformation and protestant ethics,¹⁷ the similarity of Kâtib Çelebi’s reasoning with the Jesuit casuistry of the same period counterparts might point to a

¹³ Kâtib Çelebi – Yurtoğlu 2012, 97-98 (*ol zamandan beru şehrin intizâmı eyû olub ‘azîm kudrete vâsıl oldular*).

¹⁴ Kâtib Çelebi 1888/89; English translation by Geoffrey L. Lewis in Kâtib Çelebi – Lewis 1957; cf. Gökbilgin 1971. Lewis’ translation is fuller than the 1888 edition, which omits e.g. the eighth chapter of the text (on the parents of the Prophet). Lewis collated this edition with British Museum Add. 7904 (see Kâtib Çelebi – Lewis 1957, 13).

¹⁵ See Hallaq 2001, 215ff. Ebussu’ud himself was very careful to render his appeal to custom in strictly Hanafi terms.

¹⁶ Kafadar 2007, 121. On *istihsan* and *istislah* see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Istihân and Istislâh” (R. Paret); Schacht 1964, 60-62, 204; Hallaq 2002, 107-113. The use of these notions predates greatly the usual emphasis to “Ottoman pragmatism” (cf. Dağlı 2013).

¹⁷ Sariyannis 2012, 282ff.

common intellectual climate in both sides of the Mediterranean. The question is difficult to answer, but intriguing all the same.

Kâtib Çelebi's immediate influence: the conciliation with change

If there is an element from Kâtib Çelebi's writings that passed almost immediately to his contemporaries' work, this must have been his sense of innovation; more particularly, his admission that every kind (or stage) of society (or state) needs different measures, and thus that the potential reformer should adopt a problem-oriented policy rather than revert to some idealized constitutions of the past. His general vision of history (i.e. his Ibn Khaldunist conception of history laws) would take another fifty years to be adopted wholesale; but this conciliation with the idea that societies change and ideal policies change accordingly (often together with the simile to the human body) was integrated very soon in works otherwise belonging to totally different political traditions. Furthermore, in sharp contrast with the "declinist" literature we studied in Chapter V, his continuators ignored the timar problems, like he had, and focused on the military-administrative branch instead.

A nice example is the *Nasihatnâme* ("Book of advice"), composed in 1652, i.e. almost simultaneously with Kâtib Çelebi's *Düstûrî'l-amel*;¹⁸ one should presume that the similarities with Kâtib Çelebi's ideas must be attributed to personal acquaintance rather than textual transmission. The identity of the author is unclear; one of the two manuscripts is followed by some poems signed by Hemdemî, and they might well belong to the same author. On these grounds, Hammer-Purgstall (followed by Rhoads Murphey, who nevertheless considers the identification "far from being definitely established") identified the author as Solakzade Mehmed (d. 1657/8), the well-known historian who also wrote poems with the pen-name Hemdemî. Little is known of Solakzade: he was an early recruit to the palace and was a "constant companion" to Murad IV, together with Evliya Çelebi; it seems that he remained in the palace under the next two Sultans as well. Solakzade was a musician and composer of note, but his main work is the history of the Ottoman dynasty up to 1643,

¹⁸ There are two manuscripts, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Or. Oct. 1598, ff. 125b-172b (copied together with Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa's treatise) and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Ms, N.F. 283. Here I use the Vienna ms., 1b-38b (see Murphey 2009b, 46-47, for some differences; probably a copy). There is no study of this text other than Murphey 2009b.

mainly a compilation of older chronicles.¹⁹ At this stage of research, we cannot be sure about this identification: overall, the *Nasihatnâme* seems to lack the concrete historical references one would expect from a historian (apart from the usual locating of the beginning of decline in the year H. 1000, and some moralistic rather than historical anecdotes on Mehmed II, Selim I and Süleyman I); on the other hand, undoubtedly it shows some signs of historical thought.

For sure, this is not a work that claims originality: if we have to classify it, it would rather fall under the “mirror for princes” category, with a strong flavour of Sunna-minded advice and an all too traditional emphasis to justice. Hemdemi (if we accept at least this identification) begins with a general assessment on the creation of political society, and in this he follows both the earlier traditions and Kâtib Çelebi’s re-introduction of this problematique. After a long excursus on worldly power, Hemdemi sets to describe the diseases plaguing the Exalted State and the ways to mend them, focusing in the ten pillars holding the dome of state power. These pillars are prerequisites such as the maintenance of fortresses, the use of spies, the summoning of regular imperial councils and so on. Among a mixture of *adab* advice and *akhlak* reasoning, the author also expounds an Ibn Khaldunist vision of states, following Kâtib Çelebi’s simile of a state with a patient, with a young one needing other treatment than an older. In an interesting passage, Hemdemi repeats that the Ottoman state has passed through the age of youth into its old age, as luxury and pomp led to the expansion of bribery and corruption and ultimately of oppression.

Hemdemi’s treatise is a strange specimen of the eclectic tendencies in Ottoman literature: among an underlined emphasis to the Holy Law (the author seems to ignore the *kanun* completely) and pieces of received wisdom on Sultanic justice, we perceive signs of acute understanding of his contemporary realities (as in his stress on tax-farming or on the role of household affiliation in obtaining administrative posts). Kâtib Çelebi’s influence is strongly visible not only in the Ibn Khaldunist description of the rise and decline of dynasties and the simile with the human body (including the cautionary remark that each age needs different medicine), but also in Hemdemi’s recurrent references to “the people constituting the realm” (*devlet ve*

¹⁹ Solakzade 1879.

saltanat müştemil olduğu kavmi), which bring to our mind Kâtib Çelebi's definition of *devlet*.

Most probably Hemdemi was a friend or perhaps student of Kâtib Çelebi's; the reader will also remember Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, whose work we studied in Chapter V and who bore striking resemblances with Kâtib Çelebi himself: he had a similar career, he also was a polymath and encyclopaedist, he also used Greek and European sources for his work and had close relations with European scholars active in Istanbul. In a way both men also shared a new culture of learning: instead of teaching in *medreses*, they preferred self-instruction and maintained themselves circles of scholars (in some ways the equivalent of European *salons*), with whom they discussed and exchanged knowledge. Contrary to what is generally believed, however, Hezarfen was more of a compiler and imitator of his mentor, rather than an original spirit; they were probably acquainted (Hezarfen seems to have been almost of the same age as Kâtib Çelebi, although he outlived him by almost forty years). His universal history (*Tenkîh-i tevârih-i mülûk*), incorporating material on China or Byzantium (a practice Kâtib Çelebi had initiated in various works), also contained a conclusion on geography (again his mentor's favourite subject) and a "conclusion of conclusions", which in fact is a verbatim rendering of Kâtib Çelebi's conclusion in his own universal history.²⁰ The simile of the time-span of a society with a man's natural life, the three ages of states and their characteristics, all are copied word by word, while Hezarfen seems to have been more selective in copying his predecessor's final advice. He also added a "warning" (*tenbih*) on the importance of the regulation of prices, which he copied himself in his *Telhisü'l-beyan*, the "administration manual"-*cum*-political treatise we studied in detail in Chapter V.²¹

Now in *Telhisü'l-beyân*, a work very much belonging to an earlier and now bygone tradition, there are also instances of Kâtib Çelebi's influence: Hezarfen notes that the stages of a state all have different arrangements, for "this is the necessity of the natural stages of the civilization and society".²² Furthermore, Kâtib Çelebi's

²⁰ Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, *Tenkîhü't-tevârih*, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hekimoğlu 732, ff. 277b-279b.

²¹ Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hekimoğlu 732, ff. 279a-b; Hezarfen – İlgürel 1998, 248.

²² Hezarfen – İlgürel 1998, 142.

medical vision of the elements of society can be seen in Hezarfen's chapter concerning the ulema, where he likens them with the blood in the human body.²³

Na'ima: the stage theory in the service of peace

Hemdemi and Hezarfen may have reflected Kâtib Çelebi's ideas, especially those promoting Ibn Khaldun's biohistorical theory of stages, but a full-fledged introduction of the Tunisian scholar's ideas into the Ottoman framework would have to wait for half a century and for the work of Na'ima, one of the most important Ottoman historians. Mustafa Na'imâ (ca. 1665-1716) was the son of the janissary commander of Aleppo; he entered the Palace service at a young age and was educated as a scribe, continuing his whole career in the *divan* bureaucracy. Being a *protégé* of the Grand Vizier Amcazade Hüseyin Köprülü Pasha (whom we met above as the principal negotiator of the Treaty of Karlowitz), he was commissioned by him to write a history of the Ottoman Empire, in order to complete a now lost draft by Şarih al-Menarzâde (d. 1657). Na'ima started this task in about 1698 and seems to have been working on it till 1704, when he was promoted to *Anadolu muhasebecisi*; he then held various other posts, always in the financial bureaucracy and with several fluctuations (occasionally due to his preoccupation with astrology), till his death at Patras in 1716. Na'ima's history, *Ravzat al-Hüseyin fi hulâsât ahbâr al-hâfikayn* ("Huseyin's garden, with a summary of news for East and West"; commonly known as *Târîh-i Na'imâ*) is based for a large part on Kâtib Çelebi's *Fezleke*, as well as other historians (Mehmed Halife, Hasanbeyzade and others), oral transmission (Hüseyin Maanoğlu) and lost works (mainly Şarih al-Menarzade); it covers the events from H. 1000 (1591) till 1660, while a treatise on the 1703 "Edirne event" was added in the end (destined to be a preface to the second part of his chronicle, which was to cover the period till Na'ima's own days but was never written). Na'ima's history proved both popular (there are more than twenty manuscripts only in Istanbul, some transcribed from the printed edition) and reliable, as he was carefully using multiple sources with an eye for objectivity and truthfulness.²⁴

²³ Hezarfen – İlgürel 1998, 196.

²⁴ It was first printed by İbrahim Müteferrika in 1733, while two six-volume editions were published during the nineteenth century (H.1280/1863-64 and 1281/1864-66). A translation to modern Turkish (Zuhuri Danişman, *Naima tarihi*, 6 vols) was published in 1967; the definitive edition is now Na'ima – İpşirli 2007 (based on the edition of H.1280, hence noting different pagination than the usual one, since

Na'ima's philosophy of history and politics is mainly to be found in his two prefaces,²⁵ the first written after ca. 1698, when Amcazade Köprülü Hüseyin Pasha commissioned the writing of his history, and the second intended as a preface to the second part of the work and mainly concerning the 1703 revolt (*Edirne vak'ası*). A fluent speaker of Arabic, Na'ima was a careful reader of Ibn Khaldun and transferred wholesale not only his theory on the laws of history and the rise and decline of dynasties, but also on matters as diverse as education or economy; on the other hand, he used extensively the political framework of Kâtib Çelebi's *Düstûrî'l-amel* (as he also did with his historiographical work). In doing all this, which in fact is the most extensive and detailed theoretical introduction an Ottoman historiographer had ever made, he had a clear aim in mind: to justify his patron's actions in negotiating the peace treaty of Karlowitz. Thus, apart from using specific arguments taken from the Islamic tradition, somewhat reminding those used by Akhisari one century earlier, Na'ima also emphasized that peace might be a way for a state in an Ibn Khaldunian stage of decline to restore again its power and glory.²⁶

Part of the preface is based almost verbatim on Kâtib Çelebi's *Düstûrî'l-amel*,²⁷ expanding the medical simile in some details. As for Kâtib Çelebi's conclusions, Na'ima refers to the need of a skilled doctor for society but avoids dwelling in the need for "a man of sword" (this had already happened in the beginning of the Köprülü dynasty of viziers, and Na'ima had another cure in mind, namely peace). As for the rest of Na'ima's preface, it is based on Ibn Khaldun's *Mukaddima*. Na'ima's eclecticism is here evident, since just after describing the three ages of state (according to Kâtib Çelebi's anthropomorphic theory) he sets on describing in detail five such stages, following now more closely the Arab historian. Apart from the stage theory, he also introduces Ibn Khaldun's reasoning on nomadism versus settled civilization (*buduv ü hazar*) as a factor influencing the route of history. Na'ima argues that as the age of standstill of a state comes to its end, the state

most scholars have used the H.1281 edition). On Na'ima's life and work there are less studies than one should wish or expect: the classic and fullest study is Thomas 1972; cf. also Na'ima – İpşirli 2007, 1: XIII-XXXV.

²⁵ Na'ima 1864-1866, 1: 2-65 and 6: Appendix, 2-58; Na'ima – İpşirli 2007, 1: 1-48 and 4: 1858-1893; partial translations in Thomas 1972, 65-89.

²⁶ Cf. Thomas 1972, 66ff.; Abou-El-Haj 1974.

²⁷ Na'ima 1864-1866, 1: 27-33; Na'ima – İpşirli 2007, 1: 21-25; cf. Thomas 1972, 73-76, with a detailed concordance between the two texts.

expenses tend to overcome its income. Balancing the budget is generally considered a very difficult task, and Na'ima agrees with Kâtib Çelebi that only the use of compelling force can manage it. But instead of his predecessor's advice, which focused on the gradual reducing of military salaries by a powerful vizier, Na'ima prefers to stress again (as he had done in his foreword) the need for a temporary abandonment of war and campaigns till the treasury comes to a balance and the soldiers regain their power.

The optimism of the first preface, composed between 1699 (when the Karlowitz treaty was signed) and 1702 (the year of Amcazade's deposition), gives its place to a grimmer image in the second, written soon after the "Edirne event" of 1703.²⁸ Most of this preface is dedicated to a narrative of the revolt, aiming to praise the course of action followed by Ahmed III and his Grand Vizier (and Na'ima's new patron) Moralı Hasan Pasha. Apart from this narrative, Na'ima gives several sorts of political advice and proposes specific measures, noting that, although they may well seem impossible and contradictory, as well as difficult to be implemented effectively in a short time, there are historical precedents.

If we are to summarize Na'ima's theory, then we can say that it is an extension of Kâtib Çelebi's vision of the human body as a parable for the state-society continuum, combined with a full-fledged adaptation of Ibn Khaldun's ideas on the historical laws of decline, which he carefully comments stressing the peculiarities of the Ottoman case. In this vein, the advocacy of peace as a way out of the decline stages is Na'ima's original contribution, and one has to note that he inserts it very carefully in the general framework, at the same time giving very specific advice on how the state should benefit from such a peaceful period to recover. It is significant that Na'ima inserts his own medical similes concerning the peasants and the merchants, in order to stress that none of them should enjoy "excessive luxury". His digression on the role of a capital city and of its population, in the second preface, is of course dictated by the "Edirne event" experience; on the other hand, if we combine it with his other ideas, it shows his distrust and suspiciousness against the janissary-

²⁸ Na'ima 1864-1866, 6: Appendix, 2-58; Na'ima – İpşirli 2007, 4: 1858-1892; partial translations in Thomas 1972, 42-48 and 83-89.

affiliated urban strata which were claiming a more and more constant role in public politics. His praise of Murad IV's harshness may be seen in the same context.

Peace and change: preparing an ideological environment

One may trace the political preoccupations of the period in quite a few other works, which all the more belong to genres other than political writing *stricto sensu*. Evliya Çelebi's monumental *Seyahatnâme* ("Book of travels") contains some scattered views on politics representing in a large degree the *Weltanschauung* of the Ottoman elite as formed toward Murad IV's reign (when Evliya began his life of travels): a mixture of legitimizing discourse in favour of strong sultanic rule and of religious optimism (although the concept of Süleyman's "Golden Age" is not missing).²⁹ Here we will skip this work, which only marginally pertains to politics, in order to follow closer the reverberations of new ideas introduced in the second half of the seventeenth century. For instance, it is not surprising in the light of the wars and treaties of the first decades of the eighteenth century that Na'ima's path of defending peace continued to be followed by different authors. Apart from political thinkers such as Resmi Efendi, whose work we are going to examine in more detail in Chapter IX, this advocacy for peace also found its way in poetry: a whole genre of long poems praising peace, the *Sulhiyye*, flowered in the period between the treaties of Karlowitz (1699) and Passarowitz (1718).³⁰ Yusuf Nâbî's (c. 1642-1712) *Sulhiyye* is also a eulogy of Amcazâde Hüseyin Pasha, whom we also met as Na'ima's mentor; Nabi states that due to his efforts "the world found again its order, with peace and soundness". People had been tired of continuous war, and "without an anchor, the ship of the realm had almost sunk". The Karlowitz peace treaty was like a document of manumission for a slave: friendship succeeded hostility, love and ease took the place of hate and fear. Nabi likens the war with a disease, which had made health invisible, and in this we might perhaps see a reflection of Na'ima's Ibn Khaldunist notion that peace is like a medicine for the sick state. Another poet, Seyyid Vehbî (d. 1736), wrote two similar poems on the treaties of Passarowitz (1718) and of Istanbul (1724, with Iran), praising in his turn the Grand Vizier Damad İbrahim Pasha. Like

²⁹ On Evliya's political views see Dankoff 2006, 83ff. and esp. 106-114; Balta 2006; Taştan 2012.

³⁰ See Rahimguliyev 2007 (in the appendices of the thesis, the author publishes the *Sulhiyyes* of Nabi, Sabit and Vehbi: pp. 91-108). On Vehbi's first *Sulhiyye*, see *ibid.*, 73-80. On early-eighteenth-century views on peace, cf. Menchinger 2014a, 122-124, who argues that "the very rarity of the *sulhiyye* also militates against using it as proof of major change".

his predecessors, he stresses the difficulties of war with multiple enemies; on the other hand, he is much more poignant in lamenting the distress of the Islamic army. Ahmed III, he says, sought peace because he was saddened by the disasters inflicted on his subjects by the Austrians. Vehbi explicitly hopes that İbrahim Pasha would reinstate the might of the empire, avoiding a repetition of Karlowitz (which he sees as a defeat). The praise of peace (rather than military might) is also repeated in a very interesting history of ancient Athens, composed by the *müfti* of the city ca. 1738 and based on Greek sources.³¹

To return to Nabi, one should also mention his most famous work, the moralistic poem *Hayriyye*, written in 1701/2.³² *Hayriyye* became very popular, and was imitated as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century (by another Vehbi, namely Sünbülzâde); it contains moral advice, along with digressions on Istanbul, springtime or poetry, the disadvantages of various professions (following the old style of *Hasbihal*) and criticism of the present era.

The need for peace, as we are going to see, became one of the major tropes of eighteenth-century political texts.³³ Another one was the need for innovation and reform, based on the notion of universal historical laws governing the rise and development of states and hence the idea that different times need different measures. As we are going to see, after Na'ima and toward the end of the eighteenth century the notion of nomadic life as a sign of valour and solidarity, connected with the rise of empires, gained weight as the dominant element of Ibn Khaldunist ideas circulating in these circles. Thus, Na'ima's more faithful rendering of the stage theory did not leave so many traces. On the other hand, it certainly seems that eventually Kâtib Çelebi successfully popularized a three-stage version of Ibn Khaldun's laws of imperial growth, connected with his own simile to the human body, and what is perhaps most important, the idea that measures to be taken should be adapted to the needs of the age. In this respect, it may be said that Kâtib Çelebi set the foundations for all reformist discourse of the eighteenth century.

³¹ Mahmud Efendi – Tunalı 2013, 180-181; see also the original in 251, 279.

³² Nabi – Pala 1989; Nabi – Kaplan 2008. Cf. Diriöz 1994; Sariyannis 2008, 145-147; Sariyannis 2012, 288; Tuşalp Atıyas 2013, 241-243.

³³ The historian Vasıf (d. 1806) follows in general Na'ima's allusion to the peace of Hudaibiya in order to justify late-eighteenth-century decisions for peace: Menchinger 2014a, 139.

Chapter VIII

Innovative traditionalists of the eighteenth century

The eighteenth century contains two outbursts of original works: one during Ahmed III's reign, either at its beginning or during the "Age of Tulips", and one during and after the long and disastrous war with Russia in the last quarter of the century. The gap between the two groups, some forty years of almost total silence, is puzzling; it roughly coincides with the long interval of peace, so unusual for Ottoman history. Indeed, it looks like eighteenth-century political authors concentrated more and more in war affairs, as if they perceived military defeats as the only problem of the state. At a first glance, moreover, a lot of texts from the earlier group seem to constitute a setback from the bold Ibn Khaldunism of Kâtib Çelebi or Na'ima (although Ibn Khaldun's work exerted a serious influence, especially after it was translated in 1730 by Pirizade Mehmed Sahib Efendi).¹ They give the impression of a simple continuation of the "mirror for princes" genre; one may be tempted to say its swansong. They are devoted to giving concrete advice on specific institutions, with a marked emphasis on the army which was bound to dominate Ottoman political thought throughout the century. However, inasmuch they omit wholesale whatever reference to a Golden Age they differ from their predecessors such as Mustafa Ali, Akhisari or Koçi Bey. It looks like early and mid-eighteenth-century Ottomans had lost this feeling of urgency that had dominated the work of their predecessors of the early seventeenth century; and this sounds all the more strange, if set against the background of military difficulties and constant experimentation in military and financial politics which we described above. On the other hand, perhaps this experimentation and repeated attempts to reform the army and the treasury had made old-style reform treatises obsolete (although there were still authors who remained loyal to the "decline" paradigm, usually following Sunna-minded lines).²

Overall, we have to note that by calling this trend "traditionalist" we simply try to distinguish from another group of texts, which we are going to study in the next

¹ Ibn Haldun – Pirizade 2008.

² On such a case (Fazlızade Ali) see Kurz 2011.

Chapter and which are marked by an urgent sense of a need for introduction of European-style institutions and practices, usually pertaining to the army. It is important to note that the works classified here as “traditionalist” show as a matter of fact (as will hopefully be seen in the rest of this chapter) a remarkable development, far from being mere imitations of the sixteenth or seventeenth-century “mirror for princes” literature. Not only are concrete measures proposed for specific problems of the period, but also new concepts are used, borrowed from contemporary Islamicate philosophy and theology, to discuss the new status of the Ottoman Empire against its neighbours and the possibility of redressing it to its former glory. In this respect, it is not surprising that those who may be called “Westernizing” ideologues in the last quarter of the eighteenth century were visibly engaged in a conversation with the “traditionalist” ones, rather than in a blind confrontation (although ideological conflict was more and more markedly present); all the more so, occasionally a “traditionalist” thinker might advocate more “Europeanist” reforms when the Sultanic government favoured this kind of policy. For one thing, as we saw in the previous chapter, Kâtib Çelebi’s argument that every stage of society (or state) needs different measures (and thus that the potential reformer should adopt a problem-oriented policy rather than revert to some idealized constitutions of the past) was integrated very soon in works otherwise belonging to totally different political traditions; in this respect, “traditionalist” thought was much less traditionalist than its name could imply.

Defterdar and his circle

One of the major exponents of the “traditionalist” trend in the early eighteenth century is Bakkalzâde Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Pasha (d. 1717). He started his career as an apprentice in the financial service of the palace (*ruznamçe-i evvel*) and gradually rose to serve as chief minister of finances or *başdefterdar* no less than seven times between 1703 and 1714. His first term began during the vizierate of Rami Mehmed Pasha and ended with the “Edirne event”, during which he was in Edirne by Mustafa II’s side; he was soon reinstated by Ahmed III. He also served in other high bureaucratic and administration posts; in 1716 he was appointed governor of Salonica, before he was executed (being an opponent of the new Grand Vizier) in 1717. While he included some pieces of advice in his historical work, *Zübde-i vekayiat* (“The quintessence of events”, extremely valuable for the history of the last quarter of the

seventeenth century and the “Edirne event”), his most important work from our point of view is his *Nesâyihü’l-vüzerâ ve’l-ümerâ veya Kitab-ı güldeste* (“advice for viziers and statesmen, or a book containing a bunch of flowers”), a quite popular work (it is preserved in more than ten manuscripts, some in slightly different versions) completed probably between 1714 and 1717.³

To a great extent, Defterdar’s work may be called eclectic: he copies or adapts freely passages and ideas, mainly from Lütfî Pasha and Hezarfen, as well as moral treatises. One has to note the emphasis he gives on bribery and on the need for administrative and financial appointments to be made for long periods and, if possible, for life. It is all too natural that, being in the financial bureaucracy himself, Defterdar stresses issues pertaining to his expertise; what is more striking in a stylistic way is his willingness to digress on purely moral issues, like the value of friendship or humbleness. He often refers to older concepts, such as the circle of justice or the “old law”. It is tempting to see his attack against the 1670s-1690s financial policies (such as his indignation at the “sharia-minded” abolition of price regulations by Fazıl Mustafa Pasha in 1691,⁴ or at extensive farming out of revenues) as the expression of a new team of policy-makers, perhaps associated with the autocratic policies of Mustafa II; this suggestion, however, needs more research.

Defterdar’s work may be seen as a continuation of Hezarfen’s *Telhisü’l-beyan*, inasmuch it combines the copying of traditional descriptions or rules with to-the-point advice on contemporary problems; in this respect, however, Defterdar seems to have given more weight to the second element, i.e. the concrete answers to specific demands as he had experienced them throughout his administrative career. It also seems that his work was largely imitated, or perhaps that he had a circle of interlocutors who shared the same ideas and even copied each other. As it seems, they all belonged to the scribal bureaucracy, and this might account for both the similarity of interests and the common arguments: it was exactly in this period that this community developed a common and self-conscious culture praising their own role for the government of the Empire, taking the *inşa* literature a step further and

³ Defterdar – Wright 1935 (Ottoman text and English translation); Defterdar – Uğural 1990 (transcription and translation to modern Turkish). On the work see also Lewis 1962, 82; Yılmaz 2003a, 313-14; Aksan 1993, 55-56 (=Aksan 2004, 29-30); Defterdar – Özcan 1995, lxxxvii-lxxxix.

⁴ Defterdar – Özcan 1995, 387-389; cf. Sariyannis 2012, 289.

connecting it explicitly to the bureaucrats' rank and importance (we saw some aspects of this process in Chapter VI above).⁵ After all, Defterdar and his circle were part of the new scribes-turned-pashas environment: that is to say, they were following the *kalemiye* or scribal career just at the time that it began to have their ways open to the higher administrative and political echelons. The most illustrious example is Râmî Mehmed Efendi (d. 1708), the head of Ottoman diplomacy at Karlowitz and the first scribe to become Grand Vizier (see also above, Chapter VI).⁶ On the other hand, we remarked already that the existence of a circle of like-minded bureaucrats associated with Mustafa II's policies is a tempting hypothesis which is open to further research.

For one thing, a text with political and moral advice, entitled *Ta'lîmât-nâme* ("Book of instructions") and attributed to Şehid Ali Pasha (d. 1716), the Grand Vizier (1713-1716) who died during the campaign for the reconquest of the Morea, is but a shorter version of Defterdar's *Nesâyihü'l-vüzerâ*; it is not impossible that this was also written by Defterdar himself, either as a sketch of his more ambitious work or as a short memorandum to the young vizier summarizing it.⁷ More importantly, there is also a contemporary anonymous chronicle, the "Anonymous History 1688-1704", written by a member of Rami Mehmed's entourage (as stated explicitly by himself).⁸ In many points the text is identical with Defterdar's *Zübde-i vekayiat*, due perhaps to their both copying official reports.⁹

Another author obviously very close to Defterdar, and with quite a similar career, is Nahîfî Süleyman Efendi (1645?-1738). Son of a preacher, he seems to have had a good education; he served in various posts of the scribal service (in a period which indicates that he might be a colleague of Defterdar) and was the scribe of Kavukçu Mehmed Pasha when the latter went to Iran as an imperial envoy in 1689. He also followed the second *defterdar* İbrahim Ağa during the peace negotiations in Passarowitz (1718). He retired in 1725, having served as a second *defterdar* himself,

⁵ Tuşalp Atiyas 2013, 132-191.

⁶ Itzkowitz 1962; Tuşalp Atiyas 2013, 9-29 for Rami's biography and passim for the scribal culture of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Another acquaintance of Rami's was the poet Nabi, whom we studied above as a supporter of the Karlowitz treaty (ibid., 217-218 and 237-238). Interestingly, in 1700 Rami had copied Kâtib Çelebi's *Mizanü'l-hakk* (ibid., 28-29).

⁷ Özcan 1982.

⁸ Özcan 2000. In a later note, the chronicle is named "History of Sultan Süleyman [II]" (*Kitâb-i tevârih-i Sultan Süleyman*); however it also covers the reigns of Ahmed II and Mustafa II.

⁹ Özcan 2000, 37-39. Cf. Özcan 1982, 201; Sariyannis 2008, 147-149; Tuşalp Atiyas 2013, 286-292 (cf. above, Chapter VI).

too. He was the author of numerous poetic and literary works; what interests us here is his *Nasihati'l-vüzerâ* (“Counsel for Viziers”), probably completed after 1717, as the greatest part of the work seems to copy Defterdar’s *Nesâyihü'l-vüzerâ* and more particularly its first part, i.e. that on the office of Grand Vizier.¹⁰ Indeed, in its greatest part Nahifi’s text is but a summary of Defterdar Mehmed Pasha’s treatise, which in some cases he renders almost verbatim usually excluding the moralist parts.¹¹

Thus, there was a team of administrators and authors in the beginnings of the eighteenth century who preferred to move away from the more theoretical and philosophical style of the post-Kâtib Çelebi Ottoman literature, making very specific proposals out of their experience instead. As we are going to see in this and in the next Chapter, this focus in the concrete and the actual was to become a standard feature of eighteenth-century political advice, unprecedented since the early seventeenth-century “declinists”. As this feature was much more intense in the “traditionalist” side (Resmi Efendi from the “Westernizers” being a notable exception), one may say that they saw themselves as a continuation of the “Golden Age” theorists even if they hardly refer to a “Golden Age”. It will be clear from the next Chapter that the “Westernizing” side, on the contrary, based itself much more on Kâtib Çelebi and Na’ima’s paradigm. At any rate, the heavy presence of detailed administrative advice in this group of texts reflects the increasing role of the financial and other scribal bureaucracy in forming Ottoman policies from the late seventeenth century onwards.

The last of the traditionalists

As we have remarked, while the period from the end of the “Age of Tulips” to the Russo-Ottoman war in the late 1760s was full of reformist attempts, political literature remained rather silent. On the other hand, we should note that the work of non-political essayists on quite specific problems of administration remains unstudied. A nice example is *defterdar* Âtîf Mustafa Efendi (d. 1742) and his treatise on the *sivriş* years, i.e. the problems emanating from the disagreement between solar and lunar years; Âtîf Mustafa Efendi boldly proposes that payments should also be made

¹⁰ Nahifi – İpşirli 1997. Cf. Yılmaz 2003a, 314.

¹¹ Cf. for instance Nahifi – İpşirli 1997, 21 (on the virtues of the Grand Vizier), 23-24 (on the need for spies in the land, against bad innovations, and on the regulation of prices), 25-26 (on the unregistered lands, and on military affairs); Defterdar – Uğural 1990, 55-63, 29-31, 23, 101-121 respectively.

according to the solar calendar, and characteristically bases his proposal on a number of Quranic quotations, ranging from the need of the people for salaries to the legitimacy of the solar calendar.¹²

The “Westernizing” authors aside (as we are going to study them in the next chapter), the second outburst of eighteenth-century political thought is in fact the swansong of “traditionalist” reform. It is to be stressed again that with this term we do not imply that the treatises we are going to examine advocate any return to “the old law”, as early seventeenth-century authors did (although they often used this term in an effort to couch their proposals in the traditional language of their predecessors); rather, in a way similar to Defterdar or Nahifi, they compile older pieces of advice that their authors deem appropriate, combining “traditional”, i.e. older views on society and state with a keen eye for specific measures. On the other hand, from among the authors we are going to study here, Dürrî Mehmed Efendi may be described as a follower of Na’ima’s vision for peace as a prerequisite for reform. As for Canikli Ali Pasha and Süleyman Penah Efendi, they both begin from a specific military situation of a provincial nature, which they describe in detail, and they try to make the best out of their own experience and (in the case of Penah Efendi) their readings. Interestingly, they both give extraordinary emphasis to non-military matters, from economy to town-planning, in sharp contrast to the “westernizers” who, as we are going to see in the next Chapter, preferred to focus on army reforms. Penah Efendi even looks in the Spanish experience in the Americas for policy models, in another token of the blurred borders between “traditionalist” and “Westernizing” authors.

Dürrî Mehmed Efendi was born ca. 1734 in Kayseri. In 1751 he entered the chancellery bureaucracy and served in various positions. In 1774, he participated in the retinue of Abdülkerim Efendi, who was sent to Bucharest to negotiate the peace with Russia; he participated again in a peace delegation in 1790-91, when he was sent together with the *reisülküttab* Abdullah Birrî Efendi to a meeting between envoys of Prussia, England and Netherlands in order to negotiate another peace with Austria. Dürrî’s career culminated in 1794, when he was appointed *reisülküttab*, only to die the same year. His *Nuhbetü’l-emel fî tenkihi’l-fesâdi ve’l-halel* (“Selected wishes for

¹² Âtîf Efendi – Gemici 2009; on the *sivîş* crises cf. Sahillioğlu 1968 and 1970. Efforts to compromise the two systems in order to ease this problem had begun from 1710 on (Sahillioğlu 1970, 246-247).

the emendation of mischief and disorder”) was composed in early 1774 and is preserved only in one copy; interestingly, the same manuscript contains embassy reports (among which the famous report of Ebubekir Ratib Efendi; see below, Chapter IX), Humbaracı Ahmed Pasha (Comte de Bonneval)’s treatise (see below, Chapter IX), and even the translation of a letter by Louis XVI to the French National Assembly.¹³ The very composition of the collection, thus, points out to the blurred line between “traditionalist” and “Westernizing” authors. Nowhere is Dürri’s debt to Na’ima more evident than in his epilogue and the use of Salah al-Din’s example for advocating peace; in fact, Dürri copies faithfully the relevant part of Na’ima’s history. What is more important, however, is Dürri’s use of Ibn Khaldun. In an age where, as we are going to see in the next chapter, another aspect of Ibn Khaldunist philosophy (namely, the distinction between settled and nomadic life) was becoming popular, Dürri combines the simile with human aging and the “three ages” (stressed by Kâtib Çelebi) with the more elaborate model of the “five stages” (expounded by Na’ima), mainly in order to emphasize the need for peace in order to reform the state (again just like Na’ima, but also in the vein of a whole series of works written during and after the Ottoman-Russian war). References to the “old law” co-exist with the critique of the tax-farming system and the emphasis to a reordering of the army, typical for the eighteenth century.

A view from the provinces: Canikli Ali Pasha

An outstanding example of an active *ayan* with intense presence in war and politics who also cared to record his views on the contemporary problems of the Ottoman Empire, Canikli Ali Pasha (1720/1-1785) was born in Istanbul; his father was an imperial *kapıcıbaşı*. He succeeded his brother as the *derebey* of Canik (the province of Samsun in the Black Sea) and participated in the Russo-Ottoman war of 1768-1774; during these years he extended his dominions westwards to Trabzon, Sivas and Erzurum. In 1778 his enmity with the neighbouring *derebey* family of the Çapanoğulları cost him his office and rank; he fled to the Crimea until he was reinstated in 1781. Canikli wrote *Tedâbîrü’l-gazavât* (“The expedients of war”; also

¹³ Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, E.H. 1438, ff. 281b-296a. For a description of the manuscript (which however omits an account of Azmi’s embassy, following Dürri’s treatise) see Karatay 1961, 1: 311 (no. 966). Atik 1998 gives a detailed synopsis of the text (with several mistakes in the identification of the manuscript, based on a faulty reading of Karatay’s entry). On the treatise, cf. Menchinger 2014a, 124-126.

copied under the titles *Tedbîr-i nadir*, *tedbîr-i cedîd-i nadir*, *Canikli Ali Paşa'nın risalesi*, *Nesayihü'l-mülûk*) in 1776, while he was engaged in successive campaigns in Iraq and the Crimea.¹⁴

Composed in a rather awkward style, which implies an author more used to action than to writing, Canikli's treatise reminds us of Defterdar and his copyists, as it essentially is a "mirror for princes" adjusted for specific issues of its time. One may note the same emphasis on consultation, which was going to be more and more marked throughout the rest of the century, the same suggestion for life-long appointments, as well as a similar moralistic view on the virtues demanded of a vizier. Canikli's suggestion to revive the timar system is something quite exceptional for this period, and may stem from his provincial origins; the same origins must be responsible for his impressive view of the relationship of Istanbul with the provinces as a balance which has been deranged. Personal motives (at any rate apparent in Canikli's emphasis on the importance of provinces) could also find their way: when Canikli proposes that the Sultan stays in Edirne, he might have in mind that this way the central power would be even less present in his own territory, Canik; when he advocates tax-farming to people who know the land, he clearly has the *ayan* like himself in mind. On the other hand, we see an overwhelming emphasis on the army and on the problems of campaign, which is typical of eighteenth-century texts. Canikli's personal addition to the inventory of ideas is his focus on the need for distinct career lines, as well as his indifference for financial problems: he considers them clearly secondary, and argues that they usually are nothing more than a pretext to avoid action.

Penah Efendi: a break with the past

The work of Süleyman Penah Efendi constitutes one of the most original specimens of "traditionalist" political advice of the eighteenth century. In sharp contrast, and although it has been known since the early 1940s, modern scholarship had neglected it almost completely till recently. Like Canikli Ali Pasha, Penah Efendi too was connected to the provinces, although in a different way. Son of Ismail Efendi of Tripolitsa (the capital of Ottoman Peloponnese/Morea), he was born in Istanbul in

¹⁴ Canikli Ali Paşa – Özkaya 1969 (transcription in pp. 135-73); cf. Cvetkova 1975; Schaendlinger 1992, 250-252; Aksan 2011.

1740 and entered the scribal service, initially in the service of the Grand Vizier Küçük Mustafa Pasha. He worked as scribe in various branches and was present in the 1770 revolt in Morea. He died in Istanbul in 1785, the same year that he wrote his treatise variously known as *Süleyman Penah Efendi mecmuası* (“Süleyman Penah Efendi’s manuscript”), *Mora ihtilâli tarihi* or *Mora ihtilali tarihçesi* (“History of the upheavals in Morea”).¹⁵ As shown from its title, the first one-third of Süleyman Penah Efendi’s text is a narrative of the 1770 revolt in the Morea. After describing in details the events of this revolt, to which he was an eye-witness, he embarks on a detailed discussion concerning potential reforms in practically every aspect of Ottoman state and society, from army and taxation to landholding and administration, and from town-planning to the perfidious Albanian tribes; occasionally, one may see Ibn Khaldunist influences and even a timid suggestion of imitating the Western armies.

The originality of both the thematic axes and the views themselves in Penah Efendi’s work is striking; his emphasis on economy (rather than finances, as he advocates the founding of new centers of manufacture and the favouring of local goods against imported ones) and town-planning, particularly, is almost unique in Ottoman literature, while his proposal for abolition of the timar system and privatization of the arable plots is outstandingly radical and much more than half a century ahead of its era (given that private ownership of arable land, after a long process throughout the 1840s, was only established with the Land Law of 1858;¹⁶ on the other hand, one should note that such proposals were indeed implemented in the late seventeenth century). Although his treatise, just like Canikli’s, is written in a somewhat provincial style (his effort to write in high style often renders his text obscure), Penah had clearly done his reading and for good. Especially the use of books printed by Müteferrika’s press is noteworthy (and reflected in Penah’s high opinion of this press): apart from Na’ima, he must have read *Tarih-i Hind-i Garbî el-müsemâmâ bi-hadîs-i nev (Kitâb-ı cedîd-i iklim)*, whence he must have drawn his

¹⁵ The only edition of the work is Penah Efendi – Berker 1942-1943 (there also exists a Greek translation and study: Penah Efendi – Sarris 1993). See also Cezar 1986, 142-145; Telci 1999; Sabev 2006, 313; Ermiş 2014, 122ff. and esp. 126-128 and 140-144. For the part pertaining to Peloponnese cf. Alexander 1985, 47-49, 117; Gündoğdu 2012, 25-27, discovered an anonymous narrative of the 1770 revolt, which seems to have common sources with (or being aware of) Penah’s report but which “is not that interested in advising the authorities about saving the empire”.

¹⁶ İnalçık 1955, 225-227; İnalçık 1973, 32-33; Hanioglu 2008, 89-90.

knowledge of Spain's policies in America.¹⁷ Penah looks upon this example as a model for dealing with the unruly Albanians. A comparison with the "Westernizing" tracts we are going to study in the next chapter would show the gap dividing Penah from them; and yet, his looking to Spain for policy models (and the dismissal of the classical timar and landholding system) shows that this gap is not as radical as it may seem. After all, the reference to the organization of Christian armies with "regiments" (*regmend*) must have come (as we will see in the next chapter) from İbrahim Müteferrika's own treatise, which is a clear specimen of the "Westernizing" trend.¹⁸

Contrary to his evident underestimation from modern scholarship, Penah Efendi's work was not as isolated as it may seem. For one thing, a whole set of his views, such as the beginning of military reform in the provinces for fear of the janissaries, was recurrent among late eighteenth-century reformers, as we are going to see in the next chapter. Penah Efendi's son, incidentally, was Yusuf Agâh Efendi (d. 1824), a close collaborator of Selim III and the first permanent Ottoman ambassador to London (1793-1796). Furthermore, a reflection of some of Penah Efendi's ideas, such as the encouragement of local manufacture against European and Indian garments or the revival of İbrahim Müteferrika's printing press, can perhaps be seen in the reforms implemented during the vizierate of Halil Hamid Pasha (1782-1785), who however was executed just in the year Penah Efendi's treatise was completed and the author himself died. As he was *şehir emini* of Istanbul in roughly the same period during which Halil Hamid Pasha was *kethüda* of the Grand Vizier (1781) and then Grand Vizier himself, we cannot exclude the possibility that the two men had known each other and perhaps discussed these measures. On the other hand, his emphasis on everyday matters at the "street level", such as town-planning with regard to measures against fires, or various issues pertaining to the poor peasant, bring to mind a slightly earlier chronicler, Mehmed Hâkim Efendi (d. 1770), who has been described as a "*mahalle* historian" with a "street-level line of vision".¹⁹

Traditional reformers: rivers in confluence

¹⁷ This was among the first books published by Müteferrika's press (1730): Sabev 2006, 192-196.

¹⁸ On the other hand, Penah's reference to *fuyte (feuilleton)* or booklets containing the army rules is not to be found in Müteferrika's work and thus must be attributed either to his own experience or another source.

¹⁹ Zilfi 1999.

As we have already stressed, the gap between the “traditionalist” views and the actual “Westernizing” reforms of the later part of the eighteenth century was much narrower than we might be led to believe. Penah Efendi’s work is a typical example, showing the mindset of an Ottoman reformer who would not stand for a wholesale adoption of European military rules, but neither would he restrict himself to the “revival of the old laws”. In other examples, and more particularly the two authors we are going to study below, the same person could move from “traditionalist” to more “Westernizing” viewpoints in the course of his lifetime.

On the eve of Nizam-i Cedid: Vasıf, Ratıb Efendi and Abdullah Halim

Ahmed Vâsıf Efendi (ca. 1730-1806) was born in Baghdad and, after working with several private libraries of local magnates, he served as secretary of the *serasker* Abaza Mehmed Pasha. He was captured by the Russians in 1771, during the Hotin campaign. After his liberation he entered state bureaucracy (1772) and played a role in various diplomatic endeavours, including the negotiations for the peace of Küçük Kaynarca. Upon his return to Istanbul, he directed the revival of Mütferrika’s printing press; in 1783 he was appointed *vakanüvis* (and again in 1789-1791, 1793-1794 and 1799-1805), and then served in various posts, among which being an ambassador to Spain in 1787-1788. In 1805 he became *reisülküttab*.²⁰ Apart from poetry, geography and other minor works, Vasıf’s main work is his court chronicle, *Mehâsinü’l-âsâr ve hakâikü’l-ahbâr* (“The charms and truths of relics and annals”). He also wrote an account of his embassy to Spain (*Sefâretnâme*); most probably, as we are going to see in the next chapter, he may be identified with the author of the strongly pro-reform *Koca Sekbanbaşı risalesi*, composed just before Vasıf’s death. In an earlier age, however, Vasıf was much less tolerant against the imitation of European ways. As a historian, he had criticized Şahin Giray’s efforts in the Crimea to recruit new Muslim troops and impose “Frankish” uniforms on them.²¹ In another instance, Vasıf’s political views were expressed in his *Risâle* (“Essay”), incorporated in his chronicle.²² As stated there, in 1784 the Duke of Montmorency-Luxembourg sent a letter to Abdülhamid I, in which he suggested that Ottoman defeats were due to

²⁰ Ethan L. Menchinger unpublished thesis is an excellent intellectual biography: Menchinger 2014a. See also Vasıf – İlgürel 1978, xix-xlvii.

²¹ Şakul 2014, 661.

²² Vasıf – İlgürel 1978, 150-152. See Mardin 1969b, 28-30; Menchinger 2014a, 71-80; Menchinger 2014b.

the inadequate training of the Ottomans in the science of war and offered his help to instruct the Ottomans the new rules of fortification and artillery, as a token of French friendship. The sultan asked Vasıf to write an essay on these matters, based on his experiences with the infidels.

In a language with highly religious connotations, Vasıf argues that the occasional victories of the infidels are a result of their inducement to temporary success by satanic efforts (*istidrâc*),²³ and that the weapons of the infidels are not different from those already known: their eventual defeat is undoubtedly sure. Using elaborate philosophical arguments, he admits that the Ottomans must strive to procure the means of combat, which, as he maintains, is now happening (presumably through the reforms initiated by Halil Hamid Pasha, his patron). Far from being fatalistic,²⁴ Vasıf's conception of causality is in fact an advocacy for reform, albeit with traditionalist overtones: his ideas for reform are influenced by his mentor, Halil Hamid Pasha, and thus can be said to belong to the same climate as those of Penah Efendi. In his later works, Vasıf further deepens his analysis of "particular events", stressing more and more the need for the Ottomans to muster the means of warfare. In describing the principles of political society, on the other hand, Vasıf uses the more traditional model of the *felsefe* authors, such as Kınalızade.²⁵

A very similar attitude can be found in the early ideas of another personality closely associated with Selim III and his reforms, namely Ebubekir Ratıb Efendi (1750-1799). Ratıb Efendi was the son of a provincial ulema. He was trained in Istanbul by Âmedci (receiver general of the Grand Vizier's provincial correspondence) Edhem Efendi and served in the financial bureaucracy. He became teacher of calligraphy to Prince Selim (III), in which capacity he had assisted the prince in his correspondence with Louis XVI (see also below, Chapter IX). After the death of his mentor Edhem Efendi, he became affiliated with Halil Hamid Pasha and became himself *âmedci* in 1779. After Selim's rise to the throne (1789), he was sent as an ambassador to Vienna for about six months in 1792, and upon his return he

²³ Redhouse dictionary defines *istidrâc* as follows: "God's inciting a sinner to perdition little by little by granting success at the beginning of his sin"; cf. Menchinger 2014b, 147: "a theological concept whereby God gives unbelievers success, making them prideful, in order to lure them to damnation and test believers' fidelity".

²⁴ This is how Vasıf's views are described in Mardin 1969b, 28-30; cf. Berkes 1964, 65-66.

²⁵ Menchinger 2014a, 173ff.

resumed his career to become *reisülküttâb* in 1795. Next year, in the aftermath of the French invasion of Egypt (and apparently due to his enemies' calumnies), he was dismissed, exiled, and finally executed in 1799.

Ratıb Efendi's most famous work is his account of Vienna, the most voluminous of all Ottoman ambassadorial accounts theretofore, with which we are going to deal in the next chapter. But, whereas this account may be seen as a suggestion for European-style reform, an early letter of his to the future Sultan, his disciple Prince Selim, bears many similarities with Penah Efendi or Vasıf Efendi's views.²⁶ This letter was written in 1787, in the context of Selim's correspondence with the King of France; it is in fact a copy of Louis XVI's answer, explained and commented by Ratıb Efendi. Ratıb Efendi smartly suggests that the Ottoman Sultan can achieve no conquests and victories without the control upon the janissaries, the ulema, the viziers and the other officials that his predecessors used to have; Selim should first impose this order and control within his realm, before embarking on campaigns. This must be done with a renewal of the old laws, but according to the nature of this age. Moreover, Ratıb Efendi remarks that every state has its laws and cannot be compared with other states; a wise doctor, i.e. a Grand, can manage to inverse this process and create surpluses, if only he be appointed for life. Now the Ottoman state has no debt and is in no need of other states for raw materials; moreover, the zeal of its religion gives it an advantage.

It is interesting that one of the most "traditional" treatises of the era comes from a scholar closely associated with some of the most fervent supporters of Selim III. Abdullah Halim Efendi was born in 1742/43 and his father was a *müderriş* and imam. He had a good *ulema* education and served as imam, secretary or steward (*kethüda*) under various officers, including the *şeyhülislam* Arabzâde Atâ Efendi, several close collaborators of Selim III, such as the *defterdar* Şerif Efendi or Mustafa Reşid Efendi (*kethüda* of the Grand Vizier), and finally İzzet Mehmed Pasha (later Grand Vizier, in 1794), whose *kethüda* he had been for four years. In 1791 he composed *Seyfü'l-izzet ila hazreti sahibi'd-devlet* ("The sword of glory [or: İzzet's

²⁶ Ratıb Efendi – Yıldız 2013 (transcription in pp. 259-271). On Ratıb Efendi see Karal 1960; Uzunçarşılı 1975; Yeşil 2011a and 2014.

sword] for his Excellency the lord of the state”) upon his patron’s request.²⁷ The main body of the work is almost totally a traditional *adab* essay, drawing heavily on *hadiths* and Islamic jurisprudence (including Dede Cöngi’s *Siyaset-i şer’iye*). By far the most interesting part of the treatise is its epilogue. It is structured in the form of a dialogue: Halim imagines that in the year of the composition of his work, due to the loss of Crimea and other territories to Russia, the population of Istanbul was divided into twelve groups and each one elected its most distinguished and experienced member to voice their opinion. The persona representing the author, Hidayet (“right path”) Çelebi, hears all the usual complains against corruption, ignorance and bad morals but accuses every interlocutor of hypocrisy, as they all blame others and ignore their own sins. Thus, Abdullah Halim Efendi ends his work both launching all traditional accusations against corruption, ignorance and moral decay (smokers and diviners are again among the main targets) and at the same time defending the Sultan and his viziers, as he puts the final responsibility to the conscience of all Muslims.

It may be seen from the remarks above that the gap between “traditionalist” views and the Westernizing reforms of the last decade is narrower than it seems. In the same way, information on Europe was much more widespread than we usually think throughout the century, whereas actual imitation was neither as servile nor as deep as one would expect.²⁸ On the other hand, continuities in Islamic scientific tradition were quite strong and evident even in persons associated with the new trends; one of the most famous mathematicians of the era, İsmail Gelenbevî (d. 1791), who taught geometry and mathematics in the Naval Academy in Istanbul and was the author of a famous essay on logarithms, had also written an innovating treatise in argumentation theory (*adab al-bahs*), a paragon of Islamic logic.²⁹

Religious zeal in the service of reform: Emin Behic and Ömer Faik Efendi

In order to show the continuity of political ideas toward the end of the eighteenth century, another two outstanding cases are to be studied here. They both are considered supporters of the Nizam-i Cedid reforms, and at least the first certainly

²⁷ Halim Efendi – Şahin 2009.

²⁸ See Aksan 2004, 13-23; Murphey 1999.

²⁹ Karabela 2010, 184-189. On Gelenbevî’s life and work see Bingöl 1988.

was so. Nevertheless, it will be evident that their ideas have more of the “traditionalist” type of thought of Canikli Ali or Penah Efendi than of the Westernizing zeal of the authors we are going to see in the next chapter.

Es-Seyyid Mehmed Emin Behîc Efendi, for one thing, was a committed supporter of Selim III and a victim of his enemies. He was a member of the financial bureaucracy and the first director of the paper factory opened in Beykoz in 1804. In 1807 he became chief buyer (*mübayaacı*) of the army for the Danubian coast and thus came into contact with Bayrakdar Mustafa Pasha, the avenger-to-be of the soon afterwards deposed Selim, becoming a member of the “Ruşuk committee” behind him. Behic Efendi was killed by the janissaries in May 1809.³⁰ His *Sevanihü'l-Levayih* (“Inspirational memoranda”), a quite exceptional text, was composed in 1802.³¹ Behic Efendi laments the situation of Muslim knowledge and morals in the Ottoman Empire, and proposes the printing of cheap treatises and the issuing of new regulations (*nizamname*) on the ulema and their behavior. In the same vein, he suggests the founding of a high committee discussing all governmental affairs, as well as similar measures for provincial administration. Recodification of the laws, simplification of official language, detailed registration of urban population and encouraging of local production are Behic Efendi’s other proposals.

In Behic Efendi’s treatise (and he seems to have ignored the part on the military issues, thus the most characteristic section for the categorization of his work) one may see a committed supporter of Selim’s reforms, but this commitment is more evident in his biography than in his treatise. One could believe it was written by Penah Efendi, as far as it concerns the section on the economy at least; even the comparison with Russia (the Ottomans can easily succeed where the Russians have succeeded, since the latter are “the most disgraced of all the European nations”) departs from the *topos* of “reciprocity” (*mukabele bi'l-misl*), while the lengthy first part shows an emphasis on the *ilmiye* and their role that is not to be seen in the army-centered supporters of the Nizam-i Cedid that we are going to study in the next chapter.

³⁰ Cabi – Beyhan 2003, 168 (on his association with Bayraktar Mustafa Pasha), 482 (on his death) and index s.v. “Mehmed Emîn Behîc Efendi, Cihâdiye Defterdârı”; Süreyya – Akbayan 1996, 2: 364; Shaw 1971, 397.

³¹ Behic – Çınar 1992; see also Beydilli 1999b, 42-53; Şakul 2005, 141-145.

If Behic Efendi seems a bit out-of-date among the other authors of his time (as will be seen in the next chapter), Ömer Fâik Efendi is an almost perfect specimen of another era. A palace scribe, he is known to have later followed the Nakşbendi order of dervishes (which, its religious conservatism notwithstanding, had been associated with Sultans such as Ahmed III and Selim III).³² As he narrates himself, he decided to write his treatise, meaningfully titled *Nizâmü'l-atik* (“Old order”), in 1804, after a meeting where he discussed the Nizam-i Cedid reforms with Selim III’s secretary, Ahmed Efendi.³³ Both Kemal Beydilli and Kahraman Şakul argue that in fact he supported Nizam-i Cedid, albeit with certain proposals for amendments and changes; and indeed, certain of his proposals were implemented later by Mahmud II, while there are some striking similarities with Behic Efendi’s treatise. Overall, however, his views sound more like a critique of Selim’s reforms than a support.

Ömer Faik’s central idea is that “spiritual recovery” should have its place in the reform program. To reach this aim, jurisprudence (*fikh*) must be read in the mosques and the population must be illuminated in religious manners; this way, people will obey to the dynasty and pray for the Sultan. Ömer Faik suggests that dervishes and sheikhs should help with their prayers, imams serving in the houses of magnates should help the needy in secret and so forth. His ideas on economy, blaming ostentation and pomp, on the army, suggesting minor practical measures, and on the peasants, proposing the simplification of state orders, remind us of Penah Efendi and even more of Behic Efendi. The rest of his advice, however, is more reminiscent of Defterdar Mehmed Pasha, to say the least, than of his contemporaries; if he indeed should be counted amidst the reformists, it would be only to prove the thin line dividing the two trends.

This may be seen as a more general conclusion as well: the authors we named “traditionalists” do not have radically different points of departure in comparison to those advocating Western-styled reforms. For one thing, they tend to have detailed advice for actual problems and to focus in the condition of the army—just like Westernizers did. Their basic assumptions on the sociopolitical structure of the

³² Artan 2012, 379-380. On the relationship of the Nakşbendi order with Selim’s reform team see Şakul 2005, 120-121; Yıldız 2008, 641-653. Butrus Abu-Manneh even found Nakşbendi influence on the 1839 Gülhane rescript (Abu-Manneh 1994).

³³ Ömer Faik – Sarıkaya 1979. See also Özkul 1996, 329-333; Beydilli 1999b, 37-42; Şakul 2005, 145-148; Yıldız 2008, 183-184.

Ottoman Empire are the same; in fact, the most radical departure in these issues belongs to Penah Efendi (who proposes the abolition of the timar system and of the *miri* landholding principles), who never actually advocates a radical reform along the European lines (nor does he accept the idea that European armies have now surpassed the Ottoman troops). All the same, the blurred line dividing the two trends does not mean that we can neglect the conflict between them—a conflict which grew stronger and stronger toward the end of the century, both in ideological and political levels.

Chapter IX: The “Westernizers”

From the survey attempted in the previous chapter, it may have been clear that Selim III’s reforms were not an abrupt break with previous policies: although his choice of creating new troops, rather than reforming the old, was applied in an unprecedented scale, yet it was an enhancement of older efforts such as those carried out by Bonneval or Baron de Tott. Nor was this emphasis a breakthrough innovation in the ideological level (although similar attempts by fellow Muslim rulers, namely Şahin Giray in the Crimea in the late 1770s and Tipu Sultan in Mysore a decade later, had met a rather unfavorable attitude in Istanbul):¹ as we are going to see, the idea of importing military techniques from Europe had already appeared more than half a century before Selim’s enthronement. And it was the very creator of the first Ottoman Turkish printing press, İbrahim Müteferrika, who was almost the first to make this suggestion (and surely the first to make it in an influential way).

Of Hungarian origin, Müteferrika (whose Christian name we ignore) was born in Koloszvár, Transylvania (1674 or before), and had religious education either in a Calvinist or a Unitarian (as argued by Niyazi Berkes) college in his native city. During the Imre Tököly rebellion (1692-93) he was made a prisoner of the Ottomans and under obscure circumstances turned to Islam (Müteferrika himself writes that his conversion was a voluntary move in his Transylvanian years).² He obtained a solid training in Muslim theology and oriental languages and served as an interpreter and emissary, as well as in various military posts during the wars of the late 1730s. In 1726 he managed to found the first Ottoman Turkish printing press, with the support of the Grand Vizier Nevşehirli İbrahim Pasha. Until he died in 1745, he had published seventeen books on history (including several works of Kâtib Çelebi and Na’ima’s history), geography (including a monumental edition of Kâtib Çelebi’s *Cihannüma*, reworked and supplemented, as well as a description of the Americas) and language

¹ Şakul 2014. Cf. the unfavorable reception of Peter the Great’s reforms by the historian Raşid upon the former’s death: “he had tried to impose crazy new fashions on his people” (Ortaylı 1994b, 221).

² For a recent recapitulation of the relevant discussion see Sabev 2014, 102-108; on his role in transcultural exchange, see Barbarics-Hermanik 2013. On the treatise referring to Müteferrika’s conversion see also Krstić 2011, 203; Tezcan 2014 (who rejects Berkes’s arguments on his Unitarianism).

(among them a Turkish grammar in French). It is interesting to see the rationale used by Müteferrika for justifying the need of a press and for overcoming the objections of some ulema: among his arguments (as published in the introduction of the first book printed), he stresses that the multiplication of copies and the subsequent fall of the book prices would bring knowledge to everyone, from the rich to the poorest students and even the inhabitants of provincial towns and villages.³

Among his own works, which include an essay on the benefits of printing, a treatise on magnetism and translations of geographical and historical works from Latin, *Usûlü'l-hikem fî nizâmi'l-ümem* (“Rational bases for the order of the countries”) was written in 1731 and published in his printing house next year.⁴ The importance of *Usûlü'l-hikem* is two-fold, as is also its structure: on the one hand, it introduces (or rather re-introduces, as in fact it copies a forgotten work by Kâtib Çelebi)⁵ in Ottoman letters the Aristotelian distinction of governments (and as it were, it remained the sole such work for a long time); on the other, this was the first time that an Ottoman proposed straightforwardly a military reform based on the acknowledgment of the superiority of European armies. In the first aspect, Müteferrika’s work stands quite isolated, as indeed is this theoretical part isolated and unexploited inside the *Usûlü'l-hikem* itself; in the second, it was to be followed throughout the next centuries not only by theorists but by government policies as well. Indeed, after describing in length the importance of geographical science, Müteferrika suggests that as European armies are evidently stronger in the battlefield, it is of outmost necessity to study the reforms they had gone through and the new weapons they use. The Ottomans have to learn the methods and innovations used in the new armies, which Müteferrika describes in detail and names “new order” (*nizam-ı cedit*); the disadvantages of the old military techniques are obvious from the outcome of so many battles, and an Islamic state should not ignore or neglect out of laziness the need for reforming its army according to the new systems.

³ Gerçek 1939; Sabev 2006, 139-140; Küçük 2012, 165.

⁴ Müteferrika – Şen 1995. See Berkes 1962; Berkes 1964, 36-45; Yılmaz 2003a, 315-16; Aksan 1993, 56 (=Aksan 2004, 30-31); Sabev 2006 and 2014.

⁵ As Müteferrika never quotes his source and Kâtib Çelebi’s *İrşâdü'l-hayârâ* remained almost totally unknown till its edition in 2012, in general Ottomanist scholarship still attributes the introduction of the Aristotelian theory on government and the first mentioning of democracy to Müteferrika himself, usually alluding to his Transylvanian education. See e.g. Berkes 1964, 42-43; or the present author in Sariyannis 2013, 94. On the use of Kâtib Çelebi’s works by Müteferrika see the detailed analysis in Yurtoğlu 2009, 37ff. and esp. 72-78 on copying *İrşâdü'l-hayârâ*.

It is easy to understand why Müteferrika's work marks the beginning of a quite new trend in Ottoman ideas. Undoubtedly much of his orientations came from his Christian background: for one thing, the detailed knowledge of contemporary European military science must have been originated in his Transylvanian years, and perhaps it was due to the same intellectual origins that he chose to copy Kâtib Çelebi's translation of the Aristotelian conception of politics and government. On the other hand, these influences have been integrated into a more traditional Islamicate framework with remarkable efficiency. If we take a look into Müteferrika's private library, we will encounter (among a multitude of other works on logic, history, science and so forth) Ottoman political works of the previous centuries, including Mustafa Ali's *Fusul-i hall ü akd*, Kınalızade's *Ahlâk-ı Alâî*, and Kâtib Çelebi's *Mizanü'l-hakk* and *İrşâdü'l-hayârâ* (but not *Düstûrü'l-amel*, his main political work).⁶ From these treatises he took most of the ideas expressed in the first part of his work, such as the division of governments (itself quite marginal in Ottoman political thought till then) or the four-fold division of society (both of which, after all, play a minor role in Müteferrika's argumentation). On the other hand, the same list contains another three dozens of books in "Latin" (which could mean any European language), among them some dealing with philosophy and military tactics.

However, one should note that Müteferrika was not the only writer to rely on Aristotle during the "Age of Tulips" and beyond. Yanyalı Esad Efendi (d. 1731), a major intellectual figure of the period and, significantly, one who spoke Greek and frequented Greek circles (which were already undergoing their own Aristotelian renaissance) had translated Aristotle's *Physics* (or rather, a Latin commentary of the ancient work) into Arabic; what is more, intellectual life during Ahmed III's reign was characterized by a regeneration of Aristotelian philosophy, with a marked tendance to purge Aristotle's work from the neo-Platonic ideas inserted by Avicenna or al-Farabi.⁷ Esad Efendi's example shows that Müteferrika's breach with Ottoman political tradition was perhaps more than a simple outcome of his Christian origins. What is perhaps impressing as far as it concerns Müteferrika's novelties is that

⁶ Sabev 2006, 110-127 and 345-364.

⁷ See Küçük 2012 and 2013; on the translation activities during this period cf. Şeşen 2004. The role of Greek scholars in this trend has been also noticed by Ortaylı 2001, 41.

authors of this period “often celebrated both natural philosophy and *bid’at*”,⁸ in this vein, Müteferrika’s innovating ideas on reform, as well as his Aristotelian views on society and politics, would fit together well in the intellectual climate of early-eighteenth-century Istanbul. Furthermore, one should emphasize the role played in this trend by Greek scholars and magnates, such as Chrysanthos Notaras (who was holding a correspondance with Esad Efendi) or Nikolaos Mavrokordatos. Around the same era (ca. 1740), even a provincial *müfti* such as Mahmud Efendi of Athens could write a detailed history of ancient Athens, based on a Greek historical treatise through Greek intermediaries.⁹ It is quite interesting that he also describes democratic government in a quite positive light, while at the same time his grim description of Sparta reminds strongly the current criticisms of Ottoman society and army.¹⁰

However, we should note that this Aristotelian perception of political theory had no continuators at all for the rest of the century. On the contrary, Müteferrika’s views on army reform were widely read and influenced heavily both political thought and practice throughout the century.

Other early proposals for Westernization of the army

Müteferrika was not the sole supporter of the superiority of European army organization. For all we know, the first such instance might be a text known as a “Dialogue between a Muslim and a Christian Officer”. The text was allegedly a record of a dialogue between an Ottoman statesman and a Christian officer, conducted as it seems before the Treaty of Passarowitz (1718); it was copied by the chronicler Esad Efendi (d. 1848), who notes that it was written “in the form of a discussion by some wise men” (*ba’z-ı erbab-ı ukulün muhakeme yollu kaleme alıp*) and “submitted to Ahmed III through the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha”.¹¹ Such “discussions” seem a rather unusual form, but there are parallels from the late seventeenth century; interestingly, one of them is a dialogue between an Ottoman fonctionnary and an

⁸ Küçük 2013, 130 and fn. 20.

⁹ Tunalı Koç 2006; Mahmud Efendi – Tunalı 2013; Tunalı 2014.

¹⁰ Mahmud Efendi – Tunalı 2013, 279-281; cf. also 244, with the inhabitants of Athens deciding to have no king after Codrus’ death and be governed by judges with communal participation (*bi’l-cümle re’y ve tedbiri ve ma’rifetiyle olup yalnız kendü re’yleriyle iş görmüş değiller idi*). Democratic government is described in more detail in pp. 287-289, while later the author stresses that low and base people, as well as women, were not taking part in the assemblies (298-299).

¹¹ Unat 1941; Esad Efendi – Yılmaz 2000, 586-606. See also Mardin 1969b, 26-27; Kafadar 1989, 133; Berkes 1964, 30-33; Schaendlinger 1992, 241-242 and 246-250.

Egyptian janissary, Süleyman, who allegedly had been a prisoner of the French and describes Paris and its region, as well as French morals, political system and social life.¹²

According to the text, during the negotiations for the treaty a Christian officer had some friendly discussions with a notable from the Ottoman army. The text, which was submitted to the Sultan Ahmed III as it was deemed useful for the arrangement of the state affairs, is structured as a series of questions and answers from both parts. The Christian interlocutor remarks that the Ottomans stopped observing the rules of the Holy Law, as well as their old laws, while the Austrians started making trenches and using artillery and began to practice discipline and training. If the Ottomans did the same, they would be invincible, because the Austrians only know the use of guns and ignore combat with swords. The dialogue ends with the Christian explaining the alliances and enmities in Europe.

This peculiar document has drawn the attention of scholars focusing on the “westernization” or “secularization” of the Ottoman society. Its absence from any source other than Esad Efendi’s chronicle (composed in the 1820s) is puzzling and makes its authorship even more disputed. Şerif Mardin attributed it to Damad Ibrahim Pasha himself, while Niyazi Berkes argued that it was “inspired by the recommendations of some European observers who happened to be in Turkey at the time” and suggested more specifically a French officer, De Rochefort, who according to Hammer had submitted in 1717 a project to create an engineering corps in the Ottoman court. Berkes made also the bold hypothesis that “the document was inspired, if not prepared, by Ibrahim [Müteferrika], perhaps with encouragement from his former compatriots, for submittal to his patron, the Sadrazam [Damad] Ibrahim Pasha”.¹³ However, in some ways the text seems to be closer to Esad Efendi’s late era than to its alleged dating. One recognizes Müteferrika’s description of European

¹² *Kitâb-ı fevâ'idü'l-mülûk*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. turc suppl. 221. According to Kafadar, the author praises several aspects of French life and “is severely critical of his own society” (Kafadar 1989, 132-133). Unfortunately, I was not able to examine this manuscript. Another apocryphal “discussion between the preacher Vani Efendi and the Chief Interpreter Panayiotis Nikousios” on matters pertaining to religion, astronomy and the occult was circulating in Greek from the mid-1690s on. See La Croix 1695, 381-401; Zervos 1992, 312-15; Kermeli-Ünal 2013. Perhaps we could presume a Greek Phanariot intermediary.

¹³ Mardin 1969b, 26-27; Berkes 1964, 30-31 and 33; the suggestion of İbrahim Müteferrika’s authorship of the text was also made by Unat 1941, 107 n. 3, and was also thought probable by Schaendlinger 1992, 242 and 250.

military discipline and organization, but also Vasif Efendi's ideas on *istidrac*, as well as Ahmed Resmî Efendi's ideas on the balance of powers (see below); finally, the idea of the Europeans copying the initial discipline and order of the Ottoman army reflects, as we are going to see, similar passages in Müteferrika's treatise but also (much more powerfully resonant) in Ratıb Efendi's and "Koca Sekbanbaşı" (probably Vasif)'s works, composed in the 1790s and 1800s.¹⁴ One should perhaps conclude that, whereas the nucleus of the text might indeed have been composed in 1718 (especially the last part describing diplomatic and strategic suggestions, as they clearly belong to these years), it was reworked by some early nineteenth-century author, possibly Esad Efendi himself.¹⁵

However, there is also another text of the same period (i.e. the earlier part of the century) where we find the same ideas present. Comte de Bonneval, alias Humbaracı Ahmed Pasha, had composed during the 1730s two short treatises (translated to Ottoman Turkish from French).¹⁶ In the first, he sought to explain how the Habsburg government had been organized "according to the rules of political rationalism" (an expression actually pointing to the earlier Islamicate distinction between the Holy Law and the administration according to reason, with the latter deemed also potentially effective); Bonneval stresses the existence of constant laws and regulations which are printed and diffused to the population, as well as (unsurprisingly) the discipline of soldiers which makes them fight as one person. As for the second treatise, it deals with the political history of Europe in the first three decades of the eighteenth century.

Ahmed Resmi Efendi and the balance of powers

As noted in the previous chapter, there is a strange forty-years gap in notable works of political advice, roughly from the end of the "Age of Tulips" till the Ottoman-Russian war. The growing emphasis of Ottoman political thought on

¹⁴ This last idea is to be found in Esad Efendi as well: Esad Efendi – Yılmaz 2000, LXXXVIII, 456, 569-570.

¹⁵ As Ethan Menchinger points out (Menchinger 2014a, 154), there are points in the text which can be found verbatim in Vasif; this might mean either that it was known to him in the early 1800s, or that whoever reworked it was acquainted with Vasif's work. Şükrü Hanioglu (Hanioglu 2008, 44 fn. 4) notes the existence of a copy made in 1719 (Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi H. 1634) entitled *Su'al-ı Osmanî ve cevab-ı Nasranî*, "Questions of an Ottoman and answers of a Christian", which has to be compared carefully with Esad Efendi's version.

¹⁶ Yeşil 2011b.

military organization may (partly) account for this silence, since these four decades were peaceful ones, as if Na'ima, Nabi and the other advocates of peace had been finally heard by the administrators. Furthermore, Na'ima or the anonymous Christian interlocutor in the 1718 dialogue had stressed that peace would be an opportunity for reorganization, with the eventual aim to fight back the infidel with a stronger army. And indeed, personalities such as Bonneval or Ragıb Pasha made serious efforts to reform the army, be it in different ways. When war resumed, the issue of peace re-emerged, and with it the new understanding of international politics as we saw it for example in Bonneval's work.

The channels connecting Western European thought with Ottoman literary circles did not cease to function; on the contrary, they grew more and more influential. To the works cited above we should add an Ottoman translation of Frederick the Great of Prussia's *Anti-Machiavel* (1740), a refutation of Machiavelli's *Prince* (containing also the Italian thinker's text) from an enlightened monarch's point of view.¹⁷ The translation was probably made in the late 1750s; the spirit of Frederick's work fits quite well with traditional Ottoman political thought, since it opposes the view of the monarch as necessarily wicked, cruel and deceiving, while stating that the only appropriate way to act is justice and kindness. Nevertheless, the translator had to cope with terms and notions that were new to the Ottoman political thought; the very fact of the existence of such a text shows that this period was indeed one of marked translation activity. To this, one should add the multiplication of Ottoman envoys sent to European capitals and the proliferation of their reports (*sefaretname*), which then were often incorporated into the official histories and thus available to an even greater audience.¹⁸ From these ambassadors or rather perhaps envoys, one could distinguish Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi, who visited Paris in 1721 and whose son Said Efendi (who had accompanied his father) was a close friend and supporter of İbrahim Müteferrika (in fact, his partner in the printing enterprise till 1731, when he began being sent as an ambassador himself),¹⁹ the historian Vasıf

¹⁷ Aydoğdu 2008. On the circulation of Machiavelli's ideas in late-eighteenth-century Greek Ottoman circles, cf. Stavrakopoulou 2012, 44-45.

¹⁸ On such embassies and the relevant literature, see Berkes 1964, 33-36; Unat 1968; Ortaylı 2001, 40-41; Aksan 2004, 15-16; Korkut 2003; Şakul 2005, 123-124 and fn. 22; Ermiş 2014, 152-157; on the changing Ottoman attitudes on diplomacy, cf. Işıksel 2010 and 2014.

¹⁹ Sabev 2006, 154-156, 168.

Efendi, envoy to Spain, or Ebubekir Ratıb Efendi, whom we already mentioned in the previous chapter and to whom we will revert soon. Another such ambassador, Ahmed Resmî Efendi, was also the initiator of a new understanding of international politics, in the vein of the remarks by Bonneval or the anonymous author of the “Dialogue”, which may be seen as a stage in the gradual “de-moralization” of the Ottoman conceptions for external policies and international relations (or, in other words, a retreat of the Ottoman “exceptionalism”).²⁰

Ahmed Resmî Efendi (1700-1783), of Cretan descent, was the first Ottoman ambassador to Prussia (1763), where he was shown a review of the Frederick the Great’s army (in his turn, he wrote his own report or *sefaretnâme*). Throughout the Russian-Ottoman war (1768-1774) he was the *kethüda* of the Grand Vizier, Halil Pasha, to whom he presented his first essay (1769) on military affairs, partly based on his experience in Berlin (the word “experience”, *tecrübe*, is repeatedly mentioned in the preface of the essay).²¹ Resmi enumerates some issues concerning the order of a campaign, the army logistics, price regulation and the number of janissaries; he also proposes (“in the case that these measures do not bring results”) the creation of a special corps by “two thousand men, chosen from among the lowest ranks of the inhabitants”. With this impressive proposal, modestly hidden in six lines out of twenty-two pages, Resmi proves himself another precursor of the Nizam-i Cedid reforms; although, we have to note, such was the method of recruiting locally raised irregulars, the *levend*, which were the bulk of the army by his time and which, as Virginia Aksan remarks, “ultimately serv[ed] as the model for Selim III’s ‘New Order’ (*Nizam-i Cedid*) troops”.²² In his second treatise, Resmi deals with international politics;²³ completed in 1772, the treatise concludes, through a

²⁰ On this process see Beydilli 1999a. On Ahmed Resmi, a classic study is Aksan 1995.

²¹ İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi, TY 419, 1b-12a. English summary in Aksan 1993, 57-58 (=Aksan 2004, 33-35).

²² Aksan 1998, 28. This model of provincially recruited armies, with the consequent interdependence of the central state to the local elites, was to prevail completely by the early nineteenth century: Şakul 2014b.

²³ *Moskov keferesi kuvve-i istidrâciye ile üç dört sene Bender ve Bucak ve Boğdan ve Eflak'ta yerleşib etraf ü eknafa tasallutta müstemir olmağın fi mâ-ba'd bu taife rızasıyla bu mahalden çekilmek müşkil ve zor ile ihracı muhal görünür diyenlere vech-i tecribeyi irâet ve ale'l-husus bu vahime ile perişan-hatır olan Sadrâzam Muhsinzâde Mehmed Paşa hazretlerine tevsi-i daire-i tesliyet ve tenvir-i basıra-ı mekanet için kaleme alınan makaledir.* Ahmed Resmi – Parmaksızoğlu 1983 (modern Turkish version with facsimile); see also Aksan 1993, 57-59 (=Aksan 2004, 35-36). The ms. is anonymous, but a comparison with other works by Ahmed Resmi shows clearly its authorship (see Ahmed Resmi –

combination of Ibn Khaldunism and exhibition of diplomatic knowledge, that peace is also necessary. Through a lengthy philosophical and political discussion, he argues that if the Ottoman state avoids a new war and contents itself with defending its borders, Russia will necessarily withdraw its armies and fleet and seek a peace treaty. The pieces of advice contained in his last work, *Hülâsatü'l-i'tibâr* (“A summary of admonitions”), a chronicle of the disastrous Russian-Ottoman war of 1768-1774,²⁴ are mostly taken from his 1769 treatise.

Similar ideas are expressed in another anonymous work, *Avrupa'ya mensûb olan mîzân-ı umûr-ı hâriciyye beyânındadır* (“On the balance of foreign affairs relating to Europe”), completed in 1774, just before the negotiations for the peace treaty of Küçük Kaynarca; it is highly probable that its authorship belongs to Resmi Efendi as well.²⁵ It begins with an interesting description of human statehood, characteristically treating the Ottoman Empire as just another state in an international community, and then examines the potential allies who could serve as mediators, in order for the Ottoman state to benefit from the balance of power among the European states.

Selim III and the reform debate

There is no doubt that a vision such as Resmi's on the Ottoman state and its place in the international system made it easier for advocates of Western-style reform to exert their influence; and the acquaintance of Resmi and other officials and intellectuals with the European courts, where they were sent as envoys, further enhanced this trend. In the end of the previous chapter we saw Ebubekir Ratıb Efendi's (1750-1799) early views as reflected in his correspondence with his pupil, the young prince Selim. After Selim's rise to the throne, Ratıb Efendi was sent as ambassador to Vienna (1792); the monumental account of his embassy, known as as

Parmaksızoğlu 1983, 527; accepted also by Aksan). Topkapı Sarayı Ktp. H. 375 (Karatay 1961, 1: 508 no. 1553) seems to be a very short synopsis.

²⁴ Ahmed Resmi – Menchinger 2011.

²⁵ Yeşil 2012 (see some arguments on the authorship of the text in p. 1, fn. 4); see also Aksan 1993, 59-60 (=Aksan 2004, 36-38).

Büyük Layıha, is his most famous and important work, and a substantial change in its author's views can easily be discerned.²⁶

This enormous and detailed account of Austrian government and manners is divided in many chapters and sub-chapters. In its structure it bears elements of the older "administration manual" tradition (e.g. Hezarfen's work), but, as Carter Findley notes, it also "resembles French works of the period that have terms like *état général* or *tableau* in their titles, followed by the kind of taxonomic layout that such a title would seem to imply".²⁷ Ratıb Efendi focuses on the Austrian Count Lacy's reform (1766-1774) as a "new order" (*nizam-ı cedid*). He stresses that Ottomans used to be the first who laid military regulations (*nizam u kavanin*), and argues that it was after they saw the superior Ottoman discipline in the 1680 siege of Vienna that Austrians started to imitate their enemies (we also saw this notion of the Europeans copying the Ottomans in the work of de Bonneval and others, including Ratıb Efendi himself in his correspondence with prince Selim). Then, Ratıb Efendi proceeds into giving very analytical descriptions, in eleven chapters, of the structure, education, regulations, reserves, and logistics of the Austrian army.

Ratıb Efendi's intent to use this description in order to promote his ideas on Ottoman reform is evident; all the more so since another, more concise and private report on his embassy shows a different image of Austria, much less well-ordered and prosperous.²⁸ However, Stanford J. Shaw's assertion that Ratıb Efendi "praised the freedom left to individuals to do what they wanted without restriction by the state" or that he was an advocate of secular justice seems to stem from an overestimation of Ratıb Efendi's observations, which after all end with the remark that "the European states are in such a form that they can no longer be called people of the book".²⁹ Although he is generally counted among the reformist team around Selim III, Ratıb Efendi seems thus to have favoured a "traditionalist" reform, rather than the "modernist" one his Sultan attempted.³⁰ The blurred line between these two stances is

²⁶ Ratıb Efendi – Arıkan 1996. Cf. also Unat 1968, 154-162; Stein 1985; Findley 1995; Ermiş 2014, 122ff. On Ratıb Efendi see also the literature cited in the previous Chapter.

²⁷ Findley 1995, 45ff. It seems that Ratıb Efendi was greatly helped by Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson, whose *Tableau général de l'Empire ottoman* has a very similar structure; cf. Beydilli 1984.

²⁸ Findley 1995, 63-66.

²⁹ Shaw 1971, 95-97.

³⁰ Yeşil 2011a, 237; Ratıb Efendi – Yıldız 2013, 255-256.

perhaps evident from the remarks at the end of the previous chapter; and, as we are going to see, it remained such even after Selim's reforms had begun in earnest.

A nice token of this multiplicity of stances can be found in the memoranda (*layiha*) on possible ways of reforming the state, which as we saw Selim asked from all the members of the higher hierarchy of ulema and bureaucracy in 1792. Most of the authors belonged to the chancery, but there were also high ulema and palace officials (as well as Western envoys or employees, such as Mouradgea d'Ohsson, a close associate of Ratib Efendi, or a certain Brentano); from these memoranda, an abridged treatise was compiled, containing the parts of the individual memoranda which pertain to army reform, brought together under thematic categories (army, military stipends, auxiliary forces and artillery, cavalry).³¹

Quite a few of the memoranda proposed the recruitment of a new army, which was to be trained in the European way. This idea had been indirectly put forth by Bonneval alias Humbaracı Ahmed Pasha, and more directly by Resmi Efendi as early as in 1769, but this was the first time it was proposed with such vigour. More careful advisers emphasized that the introduction of such a new army should be done gradually and with care. One could remark the marked presence of the Ibn Khaldunist ideas on the distinction between nomadism and settled life, especially in Mustafa Reşid Efendi's and Mehmed Şerif Efendi's memoranda. By the third quarter of the eighteenth century, as the reader may have noticed, these ideas were recurrent in the Ottoman intellectual milieu;³² advisers proposing more modest reforms were also influenced by them.

³¹ The abridged treatise was published by Karal 1941-1943. For full editions see Öğreten 1989; Çağman 1995. Particular memoranda have also been published: "Sultan Selim-i Salis devrinde nizam-ı devlet hakkında mütalaaat", *Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni Mecmuası* 7/38 (H. 1332), 74-88; 7/41 (H. 1332), 321-346; 8/43 (H. 1333), 15-34 (Tatarcık Abdullah Efendi); and Çağman 1999 (Mehmed Şerif Efendi). On the memoranda, their authors and their ideas see also Berkes 1964, 72-74; Karal 1988, 34-41; Aksan 1993, 62-63 (=Aksan 2004, 41-43); Özkul 1996, 146-164; Beydilli 1999b, 30-34; Şakul 2005; Ermiş 2014, 135ff. On D'Ohsson's memorandum, see Beydilli 1984, 257-269 and Özkul 1996, 169-174; on the identity of "Brentano" see Beydilli 1984, 264-266 fn. 85 and cf. Özkul 1996, 164-168. The most analytical presentation and discussion remains Shaw 1971, 86ff. and esp. 91-111. On the social and political backgrounds of the team of "reformists" see the detailed analysis by Yıldız 2008, 612-630, who argues that most of them may be connected to the fraction of Halil Hamid Pasha, the reformist Grand Vizier of Abdülhamid I.

³² Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddima*, as noted in the previous chapter, was translated into Ottoman Turkish in 1730 (Ibn Haldun – Pirizade 2008). I am preparing a detailed article on the subject of Ottoman Ibn Khaldunism (to be published in the proceedings of the IX "Halcyon Days in Crete" Symposium on "Political theory and practice in the Ottoman Empire", Rethymno 9-11 January 2015).

For or against reform? “Sekbanbaşı” and Kuşmanî’s propaganda

Once the Nizam-i Cedid corps was created, the reactions against it were naturally expected. The janissaries’ opposition was self-evident and led to the eventual demise of the reforms, as we know; however, one should not underestimate the popular support of this opposition, due both to a strong anti-elite feeling that was arguably evident in Istanbul society and to the close relations of the janissary corps with the lower urban strata.³³ Moreover, it seems that different dervish affiliations (Nakşbendi for the ruling elite, Bektaşî for the opposition) strengthened group identities and the subsequent conflict, although the mutual hatred had more social than religious reasons.³⁴ The most important pieces of political writing advocating Selim’s reforms are in fact polemical tracts, more propaganda than actual political theory, conceived specifically as answers to the opposition. These works included two detailed descriptions of the new corps and regulations, written by Mahmud Raif Efendi and Seyyid Mustafa, translated into French and printed in Istanbul in 1798 and 1803 respectively, obviously with an aim to advertize the reforms in a European audience.³⁵ The second treatise contains a very interesting introduction, where the author, a product himself of the Nizam-i Cedid schools, tries to prove (citing the example of Pascal) that science can be taught regardless of an individual’s inclinations; furthermore, Seyyid Mustafa stresses that countries, men and institutions are subject to continuous change (*bi’l-cümle milletler tagyir ü tebdil ve devletler usulü dahi tahvil olunur*), repeating the (by then old and established enough) argument that Europeans took the basics of military tactics from the early Ottomans, whereas their successors forgot the axiom of “reciprocity” (*mukabele bi’l-misl*) and believed instead that courage and zeal might substitute discipline and science.

³³ Cf. Sunar 2010; Yayıoğlu 2010, 678-683. For an attempt to reconstruct the arguments of the opposition, see Yıldız 2008, 168-181. A document probably written by Mahmud Tayyar Pasha, a descendant of Canikli Ali Pasha and a leading figure of the opposition, stresses that Selim’s real aim seems to be conversion of Islam to another religion (*tecdid-i din-i aher*) and laments that all soldiers became “Frenks wearing hats” (Yıldız 2008, 181-182). On the reactions of the ulema and their motives see Argun 2013.

³⁴ Yıldız 2008, 641-653 and esp. 712-726; Yıldız 2012; cf. Abu-Manneh 1982, Abu-Manneh 1994 and Artan 2012, 378-380 on the strange association between reform and religious Nakşbendi conservatism.

³⁵ Mahmud Raif Efendi – Beydilli – Şahin 2001 and Seyyid Mustafa – Beydilli 1987 (the Ottoman Turkish ms. is transcribed in pp. 430-442, and the French edition is reproduced in pp. 447-479); see also Berkes 1964, 78-81; Özkul 1996, 255-260; Beydilli 1999b, 34-35; Şakul 2005, 125-131; Yıldız 2008, 164ff. (on the propaganda tracts of the Nizam-i Cedid in general).

In a much more polemic mood, one has to note the so-called *Koca Sekbanbaşı risalesi* (Koca Sekbanbaşı's treatise) or, more accurately, *Hulasat ül-kelam fi redd ül-avamm* ("The summary of the discourse to refute the rabble"), composed ca. 1804.³⁶ The authorship of this essay has been disputed; on his own account, Koca Sekbanbaşı (Çelebi Efendi) must have been born ca. 1718/9 (he claims to be eighty-seven years old when composing his treatise). He was participating in campaigns since 1733 and served continuously since 1768, while in his career he had been held prisoner of the Russians (W239). Based mainly on "Sekbanbaşı"'s claiming the authorship of the Maçin petition in 1791 (W261), Kemal Beydilli recently identified him with none else than Ahmed Vâsif Efendi (d. 1806), the well-known diplomat and historiographer (also a captive of the Russians in 1771), who thus is another example of a radical change of attitude (considering his 1784 treatise). Beydilli's arguments seem convincing, although the propagandistic character of the tract seems very different from Vasîf's sober and complex thoughts in his earlier works.³⁷ Yet, as the authorship of the treatise seems still under dispute, we will use the pseudonym "Sekbanbaşı" throughout its analysis. Some of the recurrent themes of reformist thought are apparent in Sekbanbaşı's treatise: the depiction of the undisciplined and ineffective situation of the janissary corps, the alleged origin of Western discipline from the Ottoman army of the Suleymanic era, the justification of military stratagems with examples from the glorious Muslim past; while he refers explicitly to Müteferrika's *Usûlü'l-hikem* and Mustafa Ali's *Fusul-ı hall u akd*,³⁸ it is quite probable that he had read his Resmi Efendi as well.

If Sekbanbaşı's criticisms against the janissaries were made from a mainly military point of view (and his pseudonym, "the old chief of irregulars", clearly meant to stress his relevant experience), there was a more religious counterpart, Dihkânîzâde ("son of the villager") Ubeydullah Kuşmânî, who tried to answer from the

³⁶ The treatise has been published twice in Turkish: *Hulâsat ül-kelâm fi redd il-avâm / Koca Sekbanbaşı'nin idare-i devlet hakkında yazdığı lâyiha dir*. Istanbul: Hilal Matbaası, [1332] [1916] (Supplement to Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni Mecmuası); Abdullah Uçman ed., *Koca Sekbanbaşı risalesi*, Istanbul 1975. Unfortunately, none of these editions was accessible to me; here I used its English translation, contained as an appendix in Wilkinson 1820, 216-294. On the treatise see also Aksan 1993, 61-62 (=Aksan 2004, 38-41); Beydilli 2005; Şakul 2005, 131-135.

³⁷ Beydilli 2005; cf. Menchinger 2014a, 29-30 and 96-100; Menchinger 2014b. On other instances of Vasîf's change of attitude under Selim III see Menchinger 2014a, 248-262.

³⁸ See Wilkinson 1820, 217, 232 (on Ali) and 245 (on Müteferrika); cf. Aksan 1993, 61 and 68 fn. 73 (=Aksan 2004, 39).

opposition's own standpoint. Our only source for Kuşmani's life is his own works. He describes himself as a "dervish traveler" and states that he started his voyages in the year of Selim III's ascension and that he arrived in Istanbul five years later. Kuşmani seems to have traveled in Russia or near Russia as well. Between 1803 and 1805 he was accused of being a spy of Tayyar Mahmud Pasha, because he had come to Istanbul from Erzerum; he was imprisoned and then released. From the historian Cabî Efendi we learn that Kuşmani was exiled from Istanbul in 1808, because he had spoken harshly against the janissaries while preaching in a mosque, and this is the last information we have about him. His treatise, *Zebîre-i Kuşmânî fî ta'rîf-i nizâm-ı İlhâmî* ("the book by Kuşmani describing the order [or, army] by İlhâmî³⁹"), was composed in 1806.⁴⁰

In a similar way with Sekbanbaşı's work, Kuşmani's treatise is in its greatest part structured as a dialogue, with the janissary arguments refuted by the author in the second plural person. Kuşmani's tract presents some of the common reformist arguments (the need for reciprocity or *mukabele bi'l-misl*, or the claim that the Nizam-i Cedid contains no innovations) but also some quite original ones, such as the appropriation of a usually conservative precept ("commanding right and forbidding wrong") or the vehement attack against Hacı Bektaş. The mixed attitude toward Western mentalities is quite noteworthy, as well as the old-styled attack against smoking which brings to mind the "Sunna-minded" authors of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century: by Kuşmani's time (if not earlier), smoking and frequenting coffeehouses had become a trait of the janissary-*cum*-esnaf strata.

The last round: from Selim III to Mahmud II

Till 1826, it seemed that the general climate in Ottoman government had undergone an almost total reversal. Mehmed Said Halet Efendi, an ambassador in Paris from 1802 to 1806 and afterwards a high official of the palace bureaucracy (chancellor of the Imperial Council from 1815 until his execution in 1822), who was playing a prominent role in decision-making, was known as a conservative thinker

³⁹ A play with words: İlhâmî means "inspiration-giving", but it was also the poetic pseudonym of Selim III.

⁴⁰ Kuşmanî – İşbilir 2006. Other works by Kuşmani are a narrative of the 1806 revolt (Kabakçı İsyanı), a very short political essay (*Mevâ'iz-i Kuşmânî*, Millet Ktp. Ali Emîrî-Şer'iyye, nr. 591), and some other treatises that have been lost. See also Beydilli 1999b, 35-37; Şakul 2005, 135-138.

who detested the European influence and had very close relations with the janissaries.⁴¹ As a matter of fact, it seems that Halet Efendi was rather a representative of what we named in the previous chapter “traditionalist” trend of the reformist discourse; even in his contempt for the Europeans, he essentially repeats Behic Efendi’s optimism.⁴²

What was perhaps more typical of Halet Efendi’s views in regard to his era was his marked Ibn Khaldunism, which found an impressive moment of glory at the beginning of the Greek War for Independence (1821), when the Ottoman government proclaimed a return to the “nomadic state” as a remedy for military defeats. Indeed, under Halet Efendi’s influence an imperial order stated that, although Muslims have turned to the settled way of life (which is “a second nature to man’s disposition”), they have now to revert to their ancestors’ nomadic (and hence war-like) customs and fight back. A few months later, another decree also urges Muslims to take arms and abstain from luxury and pomp, “adopting the shape of nomadism and campaign” (*bedeviyyet ve seferiyyet suretini istihsal*). The Muslim inhabitants of Istanbul roamed about in full war-like garment and mounted attacks upon Christians (including foreign subjects), till these behaviours were strictly prohibited a few months later.⁴³ This was the culmination of Ottoman Ibn Khaldunism, which was a recurrent *leitmotiv* in a great part of political and historical thought from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, although during the course of the eighteenth century the emphasis seems to have shifted from the stage theory to the nomadism vs. settled life distinction.

It is usually postulated that the French Revolution played a major role for the advent of the Tanzimat reforms and the introduction of the Ottoman Empire to modernity. This view is based on the identification of modernity with Westernization, on the one hand, and secularization, on the other.⁴⁴ Numerous studies have explored the ways the notions of liberty and equality (together with nationality) were introduced by various agents, including Ottoman ambassadors, enlightened

⁴¹ See Karal 1940; Lewis 1961, 69 and elsewhere.

⁴² See e.g. Karal 1940, 32-33; Lewis 1961, 128.

⁴³ Şânizâde – Yilmazer 2008, 1084, 1169, 1238ff. This rather failed experiment in social engineering was recently studied in detail by Ilıcak 2011. Erdem 2005, 76 notices the measures taken but fails to grasp their Ibn Khaldunist underpinnings.

⁴⁴ See Lewis 1953 and 1961, 53-55; Berkes 1964. On the influence of the French Revolution in Ottoman thought, see also the studies collected in Baquéc-Grammont – Eldem 1990.

bureaucrats and intellectuals, foreign officers and refugees, but also Christian subjects of the Sultan, and eventually they substituted the older notions of the religious state. However, the impact of the revolutionary ideas on Ottoman political thought should not be overestimated. As Niyazi Berkes notes, there is “no written document showing a favourable treatment” of these ideas till the 1830s, and even then it is mainly the idea of modernized Europe that served as intermediary;⁴⁵ and at any rate, viewing the Ottoman late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a bilateral struggle between the religion-laden *ancien régime* and an enlightened secularism is far too oversimplifying a view.⁴⁶

Ottoman authors did not perceive immediately the French Revolution as a major challenge; all the more so since a ruler’s execution in itself was not something uncommon in Ottoman history. Until the French threat became visible in 1797 (with the occupation of the Ionian islands, and all the more so with the invasion to Egypt next year), the attitude of the Ottoman government against France remained in general friendly (the reader may remember Selim III’s correspondence with Louis XVI and the French translation of Mahmud Raif Efendi’s and Seyyid Mustafa’s propagandistic works even as late as 1803).⁴⁷ In the dispatches of Ebubekir Ratıb Efendi from Vienna (1792) the revolution is described as “the rising of the rabble”; although Ratıb Efendi attributes it mainly to the bad financial situation of France, he also notes that the insurgents had “tasted freedom” (*serbestiyet*) and even translates Jacobin arguments, claiming that kings are “human beings like us”.⁴⁸ As for the historian Câbî Ömer Efendi, he gives a rather distorted view of Napoleon executing the French king.⁴⁹ Closer to the source, Moralı Ali Efendi, the Ottoman ambassador to Paris from 1797 to 1802, describes in some detail and in a rather neutral way the function of the Directoire (*müdirân-ı hamse*) and of the Council of Five Hundred (*beşyüz vükela*,

⁴⁵ Berkes 1964, 83-85.

⁴⁶ See Hanioglu 2008, 2; cf. Mardin 1962.

⁴⁷ Cf. Kuran 1990.

⁴⁸ Yeşil 2007. Similar observations were made by Vasıf, who wrote that the French rabble “unscrupulously discussed the advantages of independence (*serbestlik*) and being without a ruler”, while he also stressed the bad financial situation of pre-revolutionary France: Menchinger 2014a, 210-212.

⁴⁹ Cabi – Beyhan 2003, 18-19 (*kral olanlar gökden melâike ile inmedi. Ben kendüme imparatorumuzsun [dedirtince] bu maddede çalışırım*); 503, 831-833.

beşyüz meclisi); interestingly, he seemed more impressed by the new solar calendar and its holidays, which he describes in great detail.⁵⁰

Another memorandum, composed in 1798 by the *reisülküttâb* Âtîf Efendi, stresses the atheist side of the Revolution: followers of the well-known atheists (*zındık*) Voltaire and Rousseau, Âtîf Efendi writes, introduced to the common people ideas such as the abolition of religions and the sweetness of equality and democracy (*müsavât ve cumhuriyet*), drawing all the people to their cause; thus, they succeeded in persuading the commoners (*avam-ı nas*) that “this equality and freedom” (*serbestiyet*) was the sure means for total worldly happiness. Âtîf Efendi argues that there is an imminent danger of these atheistic ideas to expand with ease into “all states and republics” (*kâffe-i düvel ve cemahir*), since the French have translated “what they call [the proclamation of] human rights” (*hukuk-ı insan*) and try now to incite every people and nation against their king (*matbu’ları olan mülukun aleyhine*). He notes repeatedly that they intend to turn all states into “democracies, i.e. interregna” (*cumhuriyete ya’ni fitret suretine*), and impose members of the Jacobin sect, known for its tendency to execute and confiscate. As shown by the example of the Ionian islands, which were put “under the regime of freedom” (*serbestiyet sureti*), this could be threatening the Ottoman lands as well.⁵¹

It is true that concepts such as that of “fatherland” (*vatan*), “nation” (*millet*), “freedom” (*serbestiyet, hürriyet*) acquired their modern meaning in a gradual process throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, eventually losing the religious or legal connotations that dominated them.⁵² On the other hand, Hakan Erdem argued convincingly that the texts and declarations of the Greek Revolution (or Greek War of Independence), on which undoubtedly the French ideas had a major influence, played a crucial role in shaping Ottoman political ideology during the Tanzimat era.⁵³ The last Ottoman author we are going to examine in detail in this book, Ataulh Şanizade Efendi, offers a useful insight of this interplay between Islamicate tradition, European

⁵⁰ Moralı Ali Efendi – Refik 1911. On Moralı Ali Efendi see Soysal 1999, 338-339.

⁵¹ Cevdet 1891/1892, 6: 394-401; Arıkan 1990, 88-90. On Âtîf Efendi’s biography see Soysal 1999, 339-340; cf. *ibid.*, 206-207 and Lewis 1953, 121-122. The attribution of the Revolution to Voltaire and Rousseau’s atheistic ideas was also featuring in in Ratîb Efendi’s dispatches: Yeşil 2007, 293. On Ottoman historiography of the French Revolution, cf. also Arıkan 1990.

⁵² Lewis 1953; 1985; 1988, 38-42, 109-111; Heinzelmann 2002; Erdem 2005, 78-81. For the development of such terms in the Tanzimat period see Doganalp-Votzi – Römer 2008.

⁵³ Erdem 2005, esp. 78ff.

influences and the shock of the national dissident movements, which arguably contributed in shaping Tanzimat thought.

Epilogue

As we declared in the beginning of this chapter, this survey ends with the destruction of the janissaries, arguably the beginning (together with the 1829 clothing laws) of modernity in the Ottoman Empire. Without the janissaries, the main obstacle to the process of Westernization was lost. In the second part of his reign (i.e. after 1826) Mahmud II embarked to a program of reforms far more radical than any applied by his predecessors: aided by his enhanced legitimacy as a desacralized absolute monarch, who was now visible to the people and without any need for intermediaries,⁵⁴ he effectively reformed the governmental administration towards a more modern system of subordinated ministries, introduced a council with jurisdiction in matters not covered by the Holy Law (1838), popularized education and tried to give it a distinctively secular form (except from primary education and especially in its higher echelons), founded a state newspaper, *Takvîm-i Vekayi* (1831), initiated a modernized system of population registers focusing on persons rather than households or production (from 1829 on), and so forth.⁵⁵

Yet, political thought continued for a while along the same lines it had been following throughout the later part of the eighteenth century.⁵⁶ The works produced to justify Mahmud II's first moves, like Esad Efendi's *Üss-i zafer* (1826), kept promoting the concept of "reciprocity" (*mukabele bi'l-misl*) that necessitated the imitation of European military progress in order to fight back the infidel. Later on, authors such as Ragıb Efendi or Keçecizade İzzet Molla (1785-1829) tried to advocate collective decision-making through a consultative assembly (*meclis-i şura*), composed of peers from the highest echelons of administration, which would discuss matters without the presence of the Sultan. Furthermore, İzzet Molla proposed a fixed salary table for all functionaries (the ulema included), claiming that bureaucracy should be given a new order just like the army had been. He also argued, as Penah or Behic

⁵⁴ Berkes 1964, 94; on the change of Mahmud's public image policies after 1826, as a token of modernity, cf. Stephanov 2014.

⁵⁵ See Berkes 1964, 97-135; Ortaylı 1995, 37-41 and 77-85; Collective work 1990; Hanioglu 2008, 60-64.

⁵⁶ On political thought in the early period of Mahmud's reign see Heyd 1961, 64-65, 74-77; Beydilli 1999b, 57-63; Kapıcı 2013.

Efendi before him had done, that local production should be encouraged in order to surpass foreign imports. As for his attitude against imitation of the West, he again used the same arguments seen in Selimian times (e.g. in Behic Efendi's work), i.e. that there is no reason the Ottomans cannot exceed in progress where not only the infidels, "though deprived of divine support", but also the mediocre men ruling Mehmed Ali's Egypt, have succeeded. İzzet Molla argued thus that the "old world" should be arranged into a new order (*eski aleme nizam vermek*), introducing a dynamic dimension in the reform discourse which would flourish in the term "Tanzimat" (reordering) itself. In this issue, as well as in the ultimate emphasis on the Sultan's authority he may be seen as a precursor of the sweeping reforms of the late 1830.⁵⁷ Indeed, concentration of power and authority to the person of the Sultan was a prerequisite for imposing such a wide reform program, and it seems indeed that Selim III had also initiated such a process. His lack of a strong Grand Vizier and his being supported by a group of reform-minded statesmen has been blamed for his eventual failure;⁵⁸ but on the other hand, this situation gave him an absolute control of the ultimate decision-making that was necessary for the implementation of such a program.

As a matter of fact, if one is determined to find precursors of the Tanzimat reforms in Ottoman texts and practices, we can also mention the "social engineering" measures taken by Mahmud II upon the 1821 Greek revolt, when (as narrated in the end of the last chapter) he reverted to a peculiar kind of "applied Ibn Khaldunism" in order to bring the Muslims back to their nomadic, war-like state. Apart from the order for every Muslim to carry arms, these measures included a renouncement of luxury and attempted to impose a simplified way of clothing which would be common for all.⁵⁹ After all, Donald Quataert argued convincingly that it is in 1829 that we have to locate the beginning of the actual age of reforms in the Ottoman Empire, since all clothing laws before (and such laws were markedly present throughout the eighteenth century, including the "Age of Tulips" and Selim III's era) sought to impose social

⁵⁷ Quoted in Kapıcı 2013, 296.

⁵⁸ See Yıldız 2008, 704-712.

⁵⁹ Ilıcak 2011. Butrus Abu-Manneh sees a Nakşbendi, Sunna-minded influence, ignoring the Ibn Khaldunist ideas strongly prevailing in this policy (Abu-Manneh 1982, 22-23).

markers distinguishing along class, gender and social lines, while Mahmud II tried to create “an undifferentiated Ottoman subjecthood without distinction”.⁶⁰

On the other hand, it would be an exaggeration to ignore European influence in discussing the origins of the Tanzimat.⁶¹ French observers paralleled the abolition of the janissaries with the French Revolution, and echoes of the French revolutionary ideology have been detected in the 1839 Gülhane rescript (*hatt-ı şerif*).⁶² However, the majority of scholars agree that the influence of European ideas and institutions did not become eminent until the period after 1839, and that even this first edict was much more traditional than the edicts that followed, or at least that its ideas were (in Niyazi Berkes’ words) “a formulation of those that had become more or less crystallized during the latter part of Mahmud’s reign”.⁶³ True, Mahmud’s reform was a clear effort for Westernization, and all the more one that for the first time “appeared as a formal policy linked to extensive bureaucratic reform and implemented with brutal force”.⁶⁴ In the intellectual level, however, there is no sign of a direct influence of European ideas: the vocabulary of Mahmud’s orders and even of the 1839 edict is still strictly Islamic, even specified (perhaps with a degree of exaggeration) as Nakşbendî-driven emphasis to the Holy Law.⁶⁵ It seems as if, contrary to his unlucky predecessor Selim, Mahmud took great pains in describing his reform program in strictly non-Westernizing terms, leaving full-fledged introduction of European institutions and measures for the next generation, prepared through his educational and centralizing reforms; in this point, Mahmud differed from Peter the Great of Russia, whose reform is often paralleled to the Ottoman “autocratic modernization” of the 1820s and 1830s.⁶⁶ Moreover, the initial motives of the nineteenth-century reforms were of a more pragmatic nature than a simple admiration of revolutionary and modernist ideas. Donald Quataert emphasized that the imitation of France was based on its image as “the most powerful nation in continental Europe”, with the

⁶⁰ Quataert 1997; Quataert 2000, 141-148.

⁶¹ On this discussion, see Koloğlu 1990; Abu-Manneh 1994, 173-176; Ortaylı 1994a; Findley 2008, 17-18.

⁶² Koloğlu 1990; Mantran 1990; Hanioglu 2008, 72-73.

⁶³ Berkes 1964, 144.

⁶⁴ Hanioglu 2008, 63.

⁶⁵ Abu-Manneh 1994, 188ff. and esp. 194-198; cf. the synopsis of Findley 2008, 18 and see also Ortaylı 1995, 86ff. The order announcing the abolition of the janissaries had also been drawn by Pertev Efendi, an official with strong links with the Nakşbendi order, in a similar vocabulary (Abu-Manneh 1982, 21 and 27).

⁶⁶ See e.g. Ortaylı 1995, 32-35.

implication that universal conscription (which presupposed granting of universal rights) was on the basis of this strength.⁶⁷ This argument draws a direct line between Mahmud and his successors' reforms, on the one hand, and the thought of eighteenth-century Ottoman authors, both "traditionalist" and "Westernizing", based on the axiom of "reciprocity", on the other.

⁶⁷ Quataert 2000, 67. Cf. İlber Ortaylı's remark that "the Ottomans chose Westernization out of necessity, rather than out of admiration for the West" (Ortaylı 1995, 19; see also *ibid.*, 124).

Conclusion

Drawing any general conclusions from the survey above is not an easy task; after all, it is not obligatory either, as there is no reason one should seek a unilinear interpretation of the development of Ottoman political ideas. The grouping of texts into ideological trends, often corresponding to distinct literary genres as well, made perhaps clear a genealogy of some ideas. However, one should not overestimate the correspondence of ideological currents with literary genres and sub-genres: such genres co-existed in collections, showing that, even if we can establish currents of thought in the authors' point of view, their audiences were nonetheless more syncretic. This can be seen very clearly in the *mecmuas* (manuscripts with mixed contents), mostly belonging to members of the central bureaucracy as it seems, which contain several treatises of general political character. For instance, we read of such a *mecmua* which contained, among histories or lists of officials and fortresses, the early "declinist" treatise *Kitâb-ı müstetâb*, a version of Ayn Ali's much-circulating mid-seventeenth century treatise describing in detail the *timar* system, and a political essay of the more "traditional" type (*Nesâiyihü'l-mülûk*), stressing the need for the Sultan to be just and compassionate.¹ Further study of the coexistence of political works in such collections would be more than welcome in order to elaborate the ideological conflict and interdependences from the point of view of not only authors, but of their readers as well. Furthermore, political views from the Persian tradition, religious precepts and dicta, moralist commonplaces and empirical advice, all formed cumulatively a huge inventory of themes and ideas, from which various authors regularly drew in order to express different agendas for the actual problems of their times.

One may ask whether this book offered any new findings, apart from amassing information otherwise scattered and disintegrated. It is useful to note, then, three or four points which earlier surveys either overlooked or could not see and which become apparent through the method explained in the Introduction. For one thing, Tursun Beg or Kınalızade Ali Çelebi were long known as political theorists, but their heavy dependence on earlier models (namely Tusi's and Davvani's reformulation of Aristotelian ethicopolitical theory) had often been overlooked. On the one hand, this

¹ Şahin 1979, 906-7. On *mecmuas* in general see Aynur – Çakır – Koncu 2012.

was creating a sense of originality and Ottoman peculiarity which was somehow misleading; on the other, a close comparison of the Iranian sources and of their Ottoman imitators highlights some peculiarities of the latter, such as Kınalızade's misunderstood Ibn Khaldunist points or his opposition to the Suleymanic legal policies. In the later centuries, serial inspection of several authors showed, for instance, that some (such as Hezarfen or Nahifi) just summarized or copied their friends or predecessors (Ottomanist scholarship tended to see them as original thinkers), whereas others (like Hemdemi or Penah Efendi) seem to deserve more attention than what they have drawn so far. Furthermore, in Chapter VI, Ekin Tuşalp Atiyas incorporated for the first time the "Sunna-minded" authors to the history of Ottoman political thought, and showed what we may have been suspecting for some time but never seen in detail: namely, that the seventeenth-century Kadızadeli preachers shared a common ground with their Halveti opponents, and also that we can discern the channels through which this common ground found its way to imperial policy-makers toward the turn of the eighteenth century. Finally, interesting conclusions (and in a similar vein) can be drawn from the study of the eighteenth century as well: we showed that the gap between the "modernist" or "Westernizing" reformers around Selim III and the more "traditionalist" authors writing throughout the second half of the century was more narrow and blurred than we tend to think, and that these two trends shared some common ideas and prerequisites.

Furthermore, we could also try to deduce some turning points in time which constituted a kind of landmark for Ottoman thought. Such a turning point would be Murad III's reign (1574-1595), when the distinct Ottoman style of institutional advice (initiated some decades earlier by Lütü Pasha) was combined with the sense of decline; political treatises continued to stress the need for a return to the old values and rules well into the first half of the seventeenth century. We may trace a second turning point around the mid-seventeenth century: starting with Kâtib Çelebi's work, the idea of change as a necessity of time gradually impermeates Ottoman views in order to justify reformist efforts of several kinds. In parallel, we should not neglect the so-called "Sunna-minded" authors, whose influence seems to culminate toward the turn of the century. A final turning point could be located during or soon after the Russian-Ottoman war of 1768-1774, when even the more traditionalist authors or administrators felt the urgent need of a Western-style reform in the army.

Ottoman political ideas in context

This book tried to avoid dealing in detail with the Islamicate origins of Ottoman political thought. Yet, after nine chapters of analytical descriptions of Ottoman ideas, one might endeavor a short assessment of the place Ottoman ideas occupy in the history of Islamic political thought. For one thing, even if we accept that the Ottoman state followed a trajectory of development similar with developments in Western European states, it must have been clear that from the point of view of intellectual history, on the contrary, Ottoman political thought almost never ceased to belong to the broad category of Islamic ideological genealogies. Even works which tried to follow European developments did not depart greatly, in form or categories of thought, from the Islamic tradition: Kâtib Çelebi's conception of historical change and of universal laws was put in Ibn Khaldunist terms, while the "Westernizing" authors of the late eighteenth century used characteristically Islamic concepts such as *mukabele bi'l-misl* or even *emr bi'l-ma'ruf*.

What the Ottomans inherited (and used) as Islamic political thought may be said to belong to three broad categories: firstly, the "philosophic" (*falâsifa*) or *ahlak* tradition, and more particularly the highly systematized and moralist form that Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd and especially al-Farabi's systems took in thirteenth- to fifteenth-century Persia with the writings of Nasir al-Din Tusi and Jalal al-Din Davvani, combining Aristotle's ethics with Plato's notion of the ideal state. Secondly, the more "down-to-earth" and concrete *adab* literature, again as it emerged in Seljuk Persia with Nizam al-Mulk and his continuators, such as Najm al-Din Razi: these works were founded upon the old idea of justice as the key notion of successful kingship, with strong Sufi overtones under the influence of al-Ghazali. Thirdly, Ibn Taymiyya's early-fourteenth-century formulation of the identification of the secular ruler with the *imam* and his Shari'a-based interpretation of al-Mawardi, al-Ghazali and other theorists of the Caliphate.

As we saw, the first category, that of the *falasifa* theorists, produced some monumental works, culminating in the 1560s with the late example of Kinalizade, and then waned away, leaving behind a standard model for the description of society (the four "pillars") and an emphasis to the need of equilibrium; the second category produced several works, mostly in the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries,

and contributed the “circle of justice” to the standard inventory of Ottoman political ideas, before ceding its place to the typically Ottoman “declinist” advice. As for the third, after giving some weapons to the defenders of the Ebussuudic synthesis, it influenced the Salafist ideas recurrent in the seventeenth century, from the Kadızadeli preachers and their Halveti opponents to the late-seventeenth-century bureaucracy. A fourth category, or rather a single author, namely Ibn Khaldun, did not have a marked presence until some one century and a half after his death, with Kâtib Çelebi and his continuators, and even more so throughout the eighteenth century. In this context, the “declinist” *adab* literature, from Lütü Pasha to Koçi Bey through Mustafa Ali, on the one hand, and Kâtib Çelebi’s emphasis on the Ibn Khaldunist idea that different times require different measures, constitute in a way the Ottoman contribution *par excellence* to Islamicate political thought, from whose traditional formulation they depart both in form and in content.

To write a history of ideas and of their development and genealogy is not a very difficult task in terms of interpretation. The real difficulties come when one seeks to connect these ideas with their political and social milieu. There are some pioneering studies which tried to accomplish this task for some late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century authors, for example, but much more work is needed before we can identify Ottoman groups with a clear political agenda, social interests and common ideological roots or credos. Indeed, what is really striking in the history of Ottoman political thought is the difficulty to associate ideological currents and trends, as expressed by the relevant literature, to political and social developments. Such questions will undoubtedly form part of the agenda for the future; it is to be hoped that the present book set some basis for such enquiries.

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Ottoman Political Thought Up To The Tanzimat: A Concise History, a product of the research project “OTTPOL” carried out at the Institute of Mediterranean Studies/FORTH (Rethymno – Greece), attempts a survey of Ottoman political texts, examined in a book-length study for the first time. From the last glimpses of *ghaza* ideology and the first instances of Persian political philosophy in the fifteenth century till the apologists of Western-style military reform in the early nineteenth century, the book is an effort to study as comprehensively as possible a multitude of theories and views, focusing in an identification of ideological trends rather than a simple enumeration of texts and authors.

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