THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE CRISIS OF RULE IN LATE MEDIEVAL ISLAM:

A STUDY OF IDRĪS BIDLĪSĪ (861-926/1457-1520) AND KINGSHIP

AT THE TURN OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES AND CIVILIZATIONS

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 2015

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Acknowledgments

It is with great pleasure that I extend thanks and acknowledgment to the many people and institutions that offered guidance and support in many forms over the years of research and writing that went into this dissertation.

First, this project, in its disposition, range, and central concerns, is most significantly indebted to my committee members at the University of Chicago. I would like to thank Professors Cornell Fleischer, John Woods, Franklin Lewis, and Muzaffar Alam for their constant support over the years. In many obvious ways, this dissertation clearly bears the imprint of their influence as teachers and scholarly models. My advisor, Cornell Fleischer, offered sage counsel and sincere encouragement on every aspect of this project from its initial inception through the final finishing touches. John Woods, after whose survey course on Islamic history I was motivated to abandon European history as an undergraduate in 2003, was no less a guiding influence on my trajectory as a scholar and the direction and scope of this project. Franklin Lewis suggested productively that I look for earlier iterations of my project's central conceptual terms, offered his patient expertise in my many challenges of adequately handling Persian poetry and prose, and opened my eyes to many aspects of literary production, patronage, language politics, and the construction of biographical sketches of literary personalities. Muzaffar Alam, in the early going, encouraged me to think about my project in a broad framework, and in more recent days, urged me to embrace more fully my authorial voice and write boldly. I do not know that the dissertation wholly succeeds in any single respect, but I do know that it is all the better for their efforts and I am grateful for them.

have shared such an experience with Tunç Şen, who has offered continuously his intellectual generosity, scholarly insight, and heartfelt camaraderie over many years.

The research for this project would not have been possible without a generous grant from the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Award, through which I studied and gathered materials in Istanbul in 2012-2013. During that year, I worked at many manuscript libraries and archives in the city: I would like to thank especially the staff of the Süleymaniye Library, who made working at this unmatched library one of the great pleasures of my research; Zeynep Atbaş and Sevda Ağca of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library and Archive, who graciously made available to me many valuable manuscripts and documents; the staff of the Center for Islamic Studies (İSAM) in Üsküdar, and the staff of the Ottoman Archives of the Office of the Prime Minister. While in Istanbul, I also benefited enormously from the good company of Nir Shafir and Teymour Morel, especially as we worked frequently side by side at Süleymaniye. Also in Istanbul, Ebru Sönmez, who had worked on Idrīs Bidlīsī, and Vural Genç, who was working on him, shared their enthusiasm and ideas on this complex and enigmatic man and I am grateful for our stimulating exchanges.

During the writing phase of this project, I benefited most substantially from two separate, yet equally supportive communities. Back in Chicago in 2013-2014, a dissertation writing group consisting of Sabahat Adil, Edmund Hayes, Austin O'Malley, Kaveh Hemmat, and Alidost Numan offered friendship and useful suggestions on several of the early chapters of this dissertation. In the summer of 2014, I received a generous dissertation write-up fellowship from the IMPAcT Project funded by the European Research Council at the University of Oxford under the direction of Professor Judith Pfeiffer.[1] The opportunity to work in Oxford has been

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[1] This funding was made available by the European Research Council under the European

particularly rewarding, as affiliation with the project has permitted fellowship in yet another supportive community. Judith Pfeiffer, in particular, was always willing to listen and offer pointed advice as aspects of my project necessarily evolved from abstract notion to concrete prose. Yet, more than this, she has also helped foster a sense of community among the fellows on the project. These fellows—Talal Al-Azem, Giovanni Martini, and Walter Young—were generous with their time and offered their insight as I worked to complete this dissertation.

Yet none of these rewarding opportunities and experiences over the years would have been possible without the most fundamental support of my family: my mother, father, brother, sister, and wife. My parents supported me on this path in many ways. My siblings were always with me. And Andrea, especially, Andrea! A careful and thorough reader, an inquisitive and insightful critic, a patient and loving friend, a consoling light in dark days, and a full partner in all things always...

Abbreviations

BOA   Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi

EI²   *Encyclopedia of Islam, second edition*

EIr   *Encyclopeadia Iranica*

İA   *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı)

TSMA   Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi

TSMK   Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi

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Notes on Transliteration, Toponyms, and Dates

Dates in this dissertation are provided in both the Hijri and Common Era calendars. For Arabic, Persian, and Turkish transliteration, I use a modified version of the guidelines established by the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* in accordance with the following tables:

Table 1: Transliteration of Consonants

	A	P	T		A	P	T		A	P	T
ء	ʾ	ʾ	ʾ	ز	z	z	z	ك	k	k	k or n
ب	b	b	b	ژ	--	zh	j				y
پ	--	p	p	س	s	s	s				ğ
ت	t	t	t	ش	sh	sh	ş	گ	g	g	g
ث	th	s̲	s̲	ص	ṣ	ṣ	ṣ	ل	l	l	l
ج	j	j	c	ض	ḍ	ż	ż	م	m	m	m
چ	--	ch	ç	ط	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	ن	n	n	n
ح	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	ه	h	h	h
خ	kh	kh	ḫ	ع	ʿ	ʿ	ʿ	و	w	v or u	v
د	d	d	d	غ	gh	gh	ġ or ğ	ي	y	y	y
ذ	dh	z̲	z̲	ف	f	f	f	ة	a or at		
ر	r	r	r	ق	q	q	q	ال	al or ʾl	ul	

Arabic (A), Persian (P), Ottoman Turkish (T)

Table 2: Transliteration of Vowels:

		Arabic or Persian	Turkish
Long	ا	ā	ā*
	ى	á	á
	و	ū	ū*
	ي	ī	ī*
Doubled	ـِيّ	īy	īy
	ـُوّ	ūw	ūv
Diphthongs	وَ	aw or au	ev
	يَ	ay or ai	ey
Short	ـَ	a	a or e
	ـُ	u	u or ü / o or ö
	ـِ	i	ı or i

* For words of Arabic or Persian origin only, otherwise treated as short vowels.

The vast majority of sources used in this dissertation exist solely as unedited manuscripts. Since the wider scholarly community can only access these works with difficulty, I have included transliterations of all the passages that I translated from primary sources. Many of these passages are in verse or prose that is complex and sometimes difficult to parse. Some of my readings are necessarily tentative. Inclusion of transliterations, therefore, has an added benefit, as other scholars may more easily offer alternative readings to my work. I have not included transliterations of passages translated by others, unless particular terminology in the passage was pertinent to some larger argument. Turkish words in Arabic and Persian texts are transliterated according to the conventions of Arabic and Persian (hence, *bīglarbīgī* for *beğlerbeği* and *yāylāq* for *yaylaq*). Turkish words referred to in isolation are transliterated according to the Turkish system, while words common in all three languages that are mentioned in isolation from particular people or texts conform to the rules of Arabic transliteration (*mudarris* and not *müderris*; *taʾrīkh* and not *tarīḫ; gharaḍ,* not *gharaż* or *ġaraż*).

This system works relatively well for transliterations of extended passages of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish and references to isolated terms. Certain problems, however, arise in attempting to demarcate the linguistic, cultural, and geographic boundaries of these languages especially with respect to the identity of people and places. How should we treat the identities of Turks, such as Ughurlu Muḥammad ibn Uzun Ḥasan, who operated frequently in a Persian linguistic and geo-political context? How do we deal with individuals, such as Idrīs Bidlīsī, the principal subject of this dissertation, who emigrated to Ottoman lands from elsewhere? Should we render places such as Bidlīs, Ḥiṣn Kayfā, and Jazīra-yi ʿUmarīya in conformity with the spelling conventions of the Republic of Turkey (i.e., Bitlis, Hasankeyf, and Cezire)?

Such considerations are more than merely academic. Indeed, the difficulty of arriving at wholly satisfactory solutions for these questions highlights one of the basic themes of this dissertation. Western Asia in the early tenth/sixteenth century underwent significant geo-political transformations, which eventually gave rise in the twentieth century to modern conceptions of Kurdistan as a largely (although contested) Turkish or Arab political and cultural space, Iraq as an (equally contested) Arab political and cultural space, and places further east as Iranian. Yet, the geographic and cultural terrain that this dissertation describes differs markedly from the space that we have come to know since the establishment of nation-states in western Asia in the twentieth century. Consider the example of the modern usage of the term Anatolia, which since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey has come to be understood as coterminous with the borders of the nation-state of Turkey, exclusive of its Balkan possessions. In fact, such an understanding of Anatolia is intimately tied to the nation-state project. Reference to the eastern territories of the Republic of Turkey as Eastern Anatolia (*Doğu Anadolu*, previously Armanīya and Diyārbakr) and Southeastern Anatolia (*Güneydoğu Anadolu,* traditionally part of northern

Syria and territory previously known as Jazīra and Diyārbakr) emerged from a nationalist project that tended to homogenize and erase cultural and linguistic variation wholesale.[1] Not surprisingly, such an expansive and uniform understanding of Anatolia (*Anadolu*) was completely alien to people of the ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries. To be sure, *Anadolu* existed, but only in the western portions of what is now considered Anatolia.[2] Such an understanding is borne out in the initial military administrative arrangements that the Ottomans established when they conquered places further east: governor-generalships (*beğlerbeğilik*) were established in Qarāmān, Rūmīya, Diyārbakr and maintained as distinct, albeit less prestigious, offices from the governor-generalship of Anadolu further west until provincial administrative reforms in the nineteenth century. The same is true if we examine the matter from the perspective of Persian historians between the seventh/thirteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries. Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī (d. after 740/1339-1340) claims that the borders of greater Iran (*Īrān-shahr*) extend as far as Konya. In his historico-geography, the ninth/fifteenth century historian Ḥāfiẓ Abrū (d. 833/1430) traces the border of Iran along the Euphrates and notes that the land of the Byzantines (*bilād-i Rūm*) begins at Erzincan.[3] Idrīs Bidlīsī notes that the province of Qarāmān is bordered by Anadolu in the northwest, Syria in the south, while at its the eastern edge in Kayseri, the province is close to Iran.[4]

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[1] The seven principal regions of the Republic of Turkey (*Marmara*, *Ege*, *Akdeniz*, *Karadeniz*, *İç Anadolu*, *Doğu Anadolu*, and *Güneydoğu Anadolu*) were defined at the First Turkish Geography Congress in Ankara in 1941, the same meeting at which the Turkish Geographic Society was established, Metin Tuncel, "Anadolu," *İA*.

[2] On the diachronic conception of Anatolia since antiquity, see F. Taeschner, "Anadolu, (i) The Name," *EI²*.

[3] Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Jughrāfiyā-yi Ḥafiẓ Abrū: mushtamil bar jughrāfiyā-yi tārīkhī-i diyār-i 'Arab, Maghrib, Andalus, Miṣr va Shām*, ed. Ṣādiq Sajjādī, 1st ed. (Tehran: Bunyān, 1996), 150.

[4] Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Nuruosmaniye 3209, 370a.

In terms of geographic usage and transliterations of toponyms, this dissertation tends to defer to the views of its fifteenth-century subjects, especially Idrīs Bidlīsī. For this period, 'Persian' lands extend more or less to the Euphrates and, as such, place names east of this river are written and transliterated, not according to modern convention, which preferences Turkish spelling, but in conformity with common fifteenth-century usage and the Arabo-Persian transliteration system detailed above (hence, Bidlīs, not Bitlis; Chapākhjūr; not Bingöl; Āmid, not Diyarbakır). For the sake of clarity, I include parenthetically the modern equivalent of these places upon instances of first mention. Major toponyms are rendered in their Anglicized form (Cairo, Konya, Isfahan, Euphrates). I have maintained transliterated forms for some commonly recognized toponyms (Qarāmān, Armanīya, Āẕarbāyjān, Diyārbakr) to signal that the geographic contours of these places differ from modern conceptions, yet make an exception for Ānāṭolī and Rūm-ili, which I refer to as Anadolu and Rumili, respectively. Syria is also a partial exception. I have left it as such even though it refers not to the modern nation-state, but the historical region that encompasses present-day Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, and the parts of present-day Turkey (Hatay and the regions around Adana, Kahramanmaraş, and Gaziantep) that were directly or indirectly controlled by the Mamluk Sultanate during this period. I have also made an exception for Istanbul, which is rendered as Constantinople throughout the dissertation. For while occasional reference to Istanbul (*Isṭānbūl*) predates this period in Arabic sources even by several centuries, in common usage, Constantinople (*Qosṭanṭinīya*) was much more prevalent during this period.

With respect to names of individuals rendered in the Roman alphabet, this dissertation draws similarly fine distinctions. Names of individuals generally follow the transliteration conventions of the language that predominated in their principal location of activity. Hence,

although Turkic, names of Mamluks are transliterated using Arabic convention (Qāyitbāy, Jānbirdī). Names of Ottomans are rendered using the Turkish guidelines. More problematic are individuals or groups who operated across vast terrains (the Qizilbash or Idrīs Bidlīsī). In these cases, I have attempted to assess the formative sphere or primary area of activity of the individual or group and transliterate these names accordingly. An important and somewhat arbitrary exception in this regard concerns Turkish elements of the names of individuals or groups who operated in Iran. In these cases, I have followed Arabo-Persian guidelines, but have not indicated long vowels in these Turkish linguistic elements, as long vowels do not exist in Turkish (Ughurlu Muḥammad, not Ughurlū Muḥammad; Uzun Ḥasan, not Uzūn Ḥasan; Qara Yūsuf, not Qarā Yūsuf; Bayandur, not Bāyandur; and *beg* not *bīg*).

I should acknowledge that adopting this approach, while addressing the problems outlined above, obscures other similarly thorny matters. Dividing western Asia into three linguistic-cultural spaces makes considerable sense from the political and administrative standpoints of literate participants in the geo-political developments of the late fifteenth and early sixteenty centuries. Of course, other peoples writing or speaking other languages (most notably Armenian and Kurdish) also inhabited this space. A preference for Arabic, Persian, or Turkish transliteration obscures this fact, especially, in the case of this dissertation, with respect to transliterations of Kurdish tribes. Despite this shortcoming, the dissertation will proceed along the lines detailed above, in part because the primary sources consulted in its writing were either Arabic, Persian, or Turkish.

Embracing this relatively cumbersome approach to people and place names is crucial because it helps sensitize us to some of the most salient cultural and geo-political features of this period. As this dissertation will elaborate, the Ottomans faced acute challenges in establishing

administrative control and authority in eastern lands conquered in the first decades of the tenth/sixteenth century. Such challenges are perhaps more understandable when we keep in mind how different the political and cultural terrain appeared to these new conquerors. Maintaining distinct systems of transliteration for separate geographies helps remind us of this fact. Conversely, Turkicizing places that eventually became Turkish—nominally, politically, culturally—only in the twentieth century glosses over the complex and—from the perspective of the twenty-first century—apparently alien realities of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Abstract

This dissertation examines the Ottoman transition to a new mode of kingship in the first decades of the sixteenth century by examining the life and work of Idrīs Bidlīsī (861-926/1457-1520), one of the most dynamic scholars and statesmen of the period. It situates Bidlīsī's life within the context of the sweeping geo-political changes that precipitated the dissolution of the most powerful polities in Islamic lands and the emergence of the Ottomans as preeminent.

In his lifetime, Bidlīsī resided or worked at three of the four major sultanates of the region: the Aqquyunlu of western and central Iran, the Ottomans of the Balkans and Anatolia, and the Mamluks of Egypt and Syria. While his itinerant career was somewhat emblematic of this period, his extensive professional and literary activities within these three courts offer a unique view to a political culture in crisis and the efforts of one of these powers, namely the Ottomans, to transcend the basic volatile power dynamics common to all late medieval Islamic polities. Through the composition of two major chronicles of the Ottoman dynasty in Persian, *Hasht bihisht* (*The Eight Paradises*) and the *Salīmshāhnāma* (*The Book of Sultan Selīm*), Bidlīsī recorded his observations of the seminal events of his day and argued for a vision of rule undergirded by innovative discourses that emphasized the cosmic and sacral aspects of kingship.

By focusing on the life, historiographical outlook, and political thought of Bidlīsī, the dissertation elucidates the delicate and often volatile political and patronage dynamic that existed between rulers and their retainers in late medieval Islamic lands and represented the primary challenge to forming centralized administrations. It describes the role of court patronage in the production of historical works and the significance of those works to ideological discourses of rule. Lastly, it traces the spread of a novel vocabulary of sovereignty from its fifteenth-century

origins to its emergence as the ideological basis for empire across large parts of Asia in the

sixteenth century.

Introduction

Four polities dominated the geo-political terrain of western Asia in the late fifteenth century. Since the middle of the thirteenth century the Mamluk Sultanate ruled from Cairo a vast territory centered in Egypt and Syria that also included the Hijaz. Further north, the Ottoman Sultanate had expanded steadily from its early fourteenth-century center of gravity in western Anatolia to subsume the Byzantine Empire and incorporate large parts of southeastern Europe and Anatolia under its control. In western and central Iran, the Aqquyunlu Turkmen confederation ruled from Tabriz, the prestigious former capital of the Ilkhanid dynasty. Further east, descendants of Timur, the Turkic conqueror of large parts of Asia, controlled expansive domains in Khurāsān and Transoxiana. Yet even as these four large sultanates offered a modicum of political stability to the central lands of Islam, the underlying dynamics that informed political life remained untenable. Indeed, by the second decade of the sixteenth century the geo-political landscape was completely transformed. Of the four polities that dominated in the fifteenth century, only one—that is to say, only the Ottomans—continued to exist after 923/1517.

On one level, we may understand Ottoman survival into the sixteenth century as a function of its successful expansion into southeastern Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. After all, the Ottomans, alone among the four Islamic polities, incorporated substantial new territory into the domains of Islam. Consequently, the Ottoman Sultanate was the only major power to enjoy a broadening revenue base to support its activities in governance,

patronage, and monumental construction.[1] Indeed, the historian and scholar Kemālpaşazāde, one

key witness to Ottoman administration in the early sixteenth century, identified the rich

provinces of Rumelia in southeastern Europe as a major distinguishing attribute of the Ottoman

dynasty.[2] Beyond fiscal benefits, Ottoman expansion also garnered considerable prestige within

its growing polity and throughout Islamic lands. Over the first two hundred years of its existence,

Ottoman sultans had personally led raids, campaigns, and conquests of non-Muslim territory that

contributed to the greatest expansion of Islamic lands in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Such activities, referred to alternatively as *ghazāʾ* or *jihād*, accrued significant esteem for the

sultans, who frequently proclaimed their status as preeminent warriors of the faith (*sulṭān-i*

ghāzīyān, sulṭān-i mujāhidīn).[3] In this regard, in 857/1453, when the Ottoman sultan Meḥmed II

(r. 848-850/1444-1446, 856-886/1451-1481) conquered Constantinople—capital of the eastern

Roman Empire and subject of apocalyptic prophecy since the early days of Islam[4]—

contemporary sultanates across the Muslim world took note and in congratulatory missives

affirmed the Ottoman sultan's status as a great warrior of the faith.[5] This distinguishing

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[1] On the significance of Ottoman expansion into the Balkans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see İ Metin Kunt, "Introduction: State and Sultan up to the Age of Süleyman," in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age : The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*, ed. İ Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (London: Longman, 1995), 9–13; Nikolay Antov, "Imperial Expansion, Colonization, and Conversion to Islam in the Islamic World's 'Wild West': The Formation of the Muslim Community in Ottoman Deliorman (N.E. Balkans), 15th-16th Cc" (Ph.D., University of Chicago, 2011), 11–13, 79–81.

[2] Kemalpaşazade, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osmân, I. Defter*, ed. Şerafettin Turan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1970), 20.

[3] These activities and this image are reflected throughout the earliest Ottoman chronicles, see, for instance, Aşıkpaşazade, *Die Altosmanische Chronik Des ᶜAşıkpaşazade*, ed. Friedrich Giese (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1928).

[4] Benjamin. Lellouch and Stefanos Yerasimos, *Les traditions apocalyptiques au tournant de la chute de Constantinople: Actes de la Table ronde d'Istanbul, 13-14 avril 1996* (Paris: Harmattan, 2000).

[5] Mamluk diplomatic correspondence to the Ottomans frequently acknowledged the Ottoman sultan's role in *ghazāʾ*. Still, in Sultan Īnāl's reply to the Ottoman victory proclamation in

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attribute, therefore, can be said without exaggeration to constitute both the *raison d'être* of the

sultanate, as well as a compelling component of its legitimating ideology.[6]

In addition to a *ghazāʾ* ideology, the Ottoman Sultanate also bolstered its claims to rule,

especially through chronicles produced in the fifteenth century, with reference to two other

discourses. These discourses, which elaborated Ottoman connections to prominent Turkic

lineages or historically verifiable legal arguments, sought to defend Ottoman expansion into

Anatolia. In contrast to southeastern Europe, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Anatolia

was governed by a number of Turkmen principalities that had emerged as successors to the

Saljuqid Sultanate during and after its gradual dissolution in the latter half of the thirteenth

century. In reference principally to this political geography, one of these discourses focused on

an Ottoman dynastic lineage that emphasized its superior status among the Turkmen

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857/1453, the Mamluk sultan added the epithet *al-nāṣirī* (the victorious) to the long list of
customary attributes associated with the Ottoman sovereign, Cihan Yüksel Muslu, *The Ottomans
and the Mamluks: Imperial Diplomacy and Warfare in the Islamic World* (London: I.B. Tauris,
2014), 114.

[6] Paul Wittek first presented the *ghazāʾ* thesis as an explanation of the rise of the Ottoman
Sultanate, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire*, Royal Asiatic Society Monographs, Vol. XXIII
(London: The Royal Asiatic society, 1938); For a new edition of this work in the context of
Wittek's other scholarship, see Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the
History of Turkey, Thirteenth-Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. Colin. Heywood, Royal Asiatic Society
Books (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012); for much of the twentieth century, the *ghazāʾ* thesis
was a major flashpoint for discussion of the rise of the Ottoman Sultanate. For a detailed
summary of this scholarship, see Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the
Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 35-59; for the role of *ghazāʾ* in
the development of an Ottoman legitimating ideology, see Colin Imber, "Ideals and Legitimation
in Early Ottoman History," in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in
the Early Modern World*, ed. Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (New York: Longman, 1995),
138–53; Colin Imber, "The Ottoman Dynastic Myth," *Turcica* 19 (1987): 7–27; and Linda T.
Darling, "Reformulating the Gazi Narrative. When Was the Ottoman State a Gazi State," *Turcica*
43 (2011): 13–53.

principalities, all of which claimed common descent from Oghuz Khan, a mythic Turkic ruler.[7]

From the 1420s onwards, Ottoman chroniclers presented genealogies of the Ottoman dynasty

and suggested its superiority in relation to all other Turkmen royal families.[8] The other

legitimating discourse had much the same effect. Specifically, in parallel with Ottoman claims of

esteemed lineage, Ottoman chroniclers in the fifteenth century also argued for its legal

legitimacy to rule in Anatolia in consequence of its historically demonstrable status as the

rightful heirs of the Saljuq Sultanate.[9]

    Yet ultimately, these legitimating strategies are insufficient and unsatisfactory to explain

fully either the continued existence of the Ottoman Sultanate in the sixteenth century or the

ideological underpinnings of the polity. For, in addition to expansion into Europe and Anatolia,

in the last quarter of the fifteenth cenutry, the Ottomans also expanded further eastward into

traditionally Islamic territories. Between 878/1473 and 922/1516, the Ottomans went to war with

the major powers in Arab and Persian lands four times. These conflicts ultimately led to the

incorporation of western Iran, Syria, and Egypt into the Ottoman polity and greatly transformed

the demographic and cultural profile of the sultanate. Over the course of these conflicts and in

their immediate wake, a legitimating ideology of conquest based primarily upon *ghazā'* or

defended with reference to Oghuz heritage and Saljuq inheritance was frequently irrelevant when

articulated in reference to Muslim opponents and conquered subjects. For instance, in 878/1473

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[7] On the details and significance of this discourse, see Colin Imber, "The Ottoman Dynastic Myth," *Turcica* 19 (1987): 16–20; Imber, "Ideals and Legitimation in Early Ottoman History," 149–50.

[8] This is a feature of Ottoman historical narratives from the time of Murād II. For instance, see Yazıcızâde Ali, *Tevârîh-i âl-i Selçuk: (Oğuznâme-Selçuklu târihi): giriş, metin, dizin*, ed. Abdullah. Bakır (Istanbul: Çamlıca, 2009); or Neşrī from later in the fifteenth century: Neşri, *Cihânnümâ: 6. Kısım: Osmanlı Tarihi (687-890/1288-1485): Giriş, Metin, Kronoloji, Dizin, Tıpkıbasım*, ed. Necdet Öztürk (Istanbul: Çamlıca, 2008).

[9] Imber, "The Ottoman Dynastic Myth," 1987, 13–15; Imber, "Ideals and Legitimation in Early Ottoman History," 145–6.

in the buildup before the Ottoman war with the Aqquyunlu Sultanate—admittedly a polity

concerned with its Oghuz identity—one prominent Aqquyunlu commander sent a letter to an

Ottoman counterpart that acknowledged the Ottoman reputation for *ghazāʾ* and suggested such

efforts would be best exercised against unbelievers and not, as he anticipated, against fellow

Muslims.[10] Moreover, for this letter writer, the salient historical touchstone in the Ottoman-

Aqquyunlu conflict was neither Oghuz lineage nor Saljuq inheritance, but the more proximate

legacy of Timur and his conquests.[11] Indeed, the bulk of the letter is devoted to detailing the

Ottoman folly of any war with the Aqquyunlu sultan Uzun Ḥasan (r. 861-882/1457-1478),

recipient of divine favor, who, through fourteen points enumerated in the letter is compared

favorably to Timur, the world conqueror and one-time vanquisher of the Ottomans. Certainly,

Ottoman conflicts with other Muslims caused consternation within Ottoman ruling circles. The

Ottoman war with the Mamluk Sultanate between 890/1485 and 896/1491 disquieted several of

the leading Ottoman scholars of the day and prompted the Hafsid ruler of Tunis to send an envoy

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[10] In an effort to broker peace between Sultan Meḥmed II and the Qaramanids—a percolating conflict that contributed to the war between the Ottomans and Aqquyunlu—the letter writer suggests that both parties concern themselves with *ghazāʾ*. He continues: "The purpose of this wish is that no discord and chaos and opposition occur among Muslims and that the two sides engage in *ghazāʾ*. Because it is a custom of that king (Meḥmed II) from the time of his forebears, they have continuously been occupied with *ghazāʾ*. Since our king (Uzun Ḥasan) was installed as sovereign protector (*parvardigār*) of the Turks, he, too, will busy himself with *ghazāʾ*. And both of them should be brothers, (*maqṣūd-i īn dawlat-khwāh ānast ki dar miyān-i musalmānān fitna va fasād va ikhtilāf vāqiʿ nashavad va az jānibayn bi-ghazā mashghūl shavand zīra ki ābā va ajdād-i ḥażrat-i ān pādishāh dastūr būda ki ʿalā al-davām bi-ghazā mashghūl shuda and va chun pādishāh-i mā rā nīz ḥażrat-i parvardigār dawlat-i atrāk muyassar gardānīd ū nīz bi-ghazā mashghūl shavad va har du barādar bāshand*), TSMA E. 11602. This letter was published in Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, "Uzun Hasan'ın Osmanlılara karşı katî mücadele hazırlıkları ve Osmanlı Akkoyunlu harbinin başlaması," *Belleten* 21, no. 87 (1957): 261–84.

[11] Timur and his conquests. For an analysis of the letter, see John E Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire*, Rev. and expanded ed (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), 115.

to the Ottoman court in an effort to broker peace between the two leading Islamic polities.[12]

Clearly, in these circumstances, a legitimating ideology and vision of rule based solely or even

primarily on the Ottoman sultan's status as warrior of the faith, Oghuz descendant, or Saljuq heir

failed to accommodate the increasingly complex terrain in which the Ottomans operated and

exercised power.

What, then, was the Ottoman vision of rule during this critical period of eastward

expansion that coincided with, and, indeed, helped precipitate, the expansive geo-political

transformations of the early-sixteenth-century Near East? This dissertation will place this

question at the center of its investigation by focusing on the life and thought of Idrīs Bidlīsī (861-

926/1457-1520), one of the most dynamic scholars and statesmen of the period. There are several

aspects of Idrīs' career and intellectual production that lend themselves particularly well to

exploring Ottoman conceptions of rule in the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries.

First, his eclectic education and itinerant career as scholar and statesman connected him

with some of the greatest intellectual luminaries of his day and led to professional or personal

stints at three of the four major polities of the late fifteenth century. His birth, in 861/1457,

within the reclusive messianic community of Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh, inaugurated a lifelong

commitment to exploring the mystical realities that Idrīs believed undergirded the order of the

cosmos and ultimately informed his vision of man's role in the world. His education, principally

under the guidance of his father, Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī Bidlīsī (d. 909/1504), formally initiated him

in such explorations, but also brought him into direct contact with the leading mystical and

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[12] Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Nuruosmaniye 3209, 547a. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent references to *Hasht bihisht* will be made to this manuscript copy. Hoca Sadeddin, *Tācüʾt-tevārīḫ* (Istanbul: Tabhane-yi Âmire, 1279), 2:65; Shai Har-El, *Struggle for Domination in the Middle East: The Ottoman-Mamluk War, 1485-91* (Leiden ;New York: E.J. Brill, 1995), 205.

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philosophical authorities of the day, including ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (817-898/1414-1492) and Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī (830-908/1426/7-1502). Moreover, as an adult, Idrīs traveled widely; he was associated, either professionally or personally, with three of the major sultanates of the period: the Aqquyunlu between 872/1467 and 907/1501, the Ottomans from 908/1502 until his death in 926/1520, and the Mamluks for several months in 917/1511. In his last years, he put these experiences to use as a trusted adviser to the Ottoman sultan Selīm I (r. 918-926/1512-1520) during the conquests of western Iran, Syria, and Egypt between 920/1514 and 923/1517, and as a special envoy to the rulers of Kurdistan, in which capacity he negotiated the incorporation of these lands into Ottoman domains. These varied educational, professional, and personal experiences exposed him to an array of scholarly traditions and methods of governance across a wide geographic area. An alternative Ottoman vision of rule that addressed the concerns of newly subject Muslim populations necessarily drew upon the most salient and widely resonating intellectual strands of the day to formulate a compelling legitimating ideology. For this reason then, Idrīs, with his diverse interests and varied experiences, offers an exceptional prism through which to view the effects of scholarly and administrative activities upon the formulation of political ideology.

Second, Idrīs' extensive literary and scholarly production over a period of approximately forty-five years offers a rare view to the development of a single individual's ideas on sovereignty over nearly the entire span of the period in question. Such scholarly works include a personal notebook containing scientific treatises that he compiled as a teenager, a personally copied Sufi text authored by his father, compilations of prose documents produced in the Aqquyunlu chancery, and more than a dozen literary and scholarly works presented to

Aqquyunlu, Ottoman, and Mamluk patrons.[13] Of the latter, four significant works deal

extensively with notions of the ideal sovereign as envisioned by Idrīs over a nearly twenty-year

period.[14] All four of these works were intended for members of the Ottoman royal family and

offer a varied, yet wholly coherent view of kingship developed across several literary genres and

with reference to a number of scholarly traditions. One of these, his magnum opus, *Hasht bihisht*

(*The Eight Paradises*), is a massive chronicle of the Ottoman dynasty in Persian and attracted

wide-ranging praise (and a modicum of criticism) from the time it was presented to the Ottoman

court in 911/1506. The work remained a mainstay of Ottoman historical writing throughout the

sixteenth century—at least thirty-four partial or complete manuscript copies of the work are

preserved from the first one hundred years after its initial completion and several of the most

prominent Ottoman historians of the sixteenth century explicitly acknowledge its impact.[15]

Significantly, six early witnesses of *Hasht bihisht* bear Idrīs' hand, so study of the work offers an

opportunity to see how the historian developed his ideas over a period of approximately ten

years.[16]

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[13] For catalogs of Idrīs' works, see "İdris-i Bitlisî: Heşt Bihişt Osman Gazi Dönemi (Tahlil ve Tercüme)" (Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi, 2007), XX–XXIX; and Muhammad İbrahim Yıldırım, "İdris-i Bitlisî, Heşt Behişt VII. Ketibe, Sultan Mehmed Devri, 1451-1481" (Ph.D., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2010), XXXIV–XLVI; to these lists should be added a recently discovered work by Vural Genç: *Risāla dar ᶜilm-i qiyāfat* (İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kūtūphanesi, nr. 267), Vural Genç, "'Acem'den Rum'a': İdris-i Bidlîsî'nin Hayatı, Tarihçiliği ve Heşt Behişt'in II. Bayezid Kısmı (1481-1512)" (Ph.D., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2014), 23; and my discovery of a personal compendium compiled by Idrīs in 906/1501 (Ayasofya 3986).

[14] These works are *Mirᵓāt-i jamāl, Qānūn-i Shāhanshāhī, Hasht bihisht*, and *Salīmshāhnāma*.

[15] Koji Imazawa counts twenty-two extant manuscripts of Hasht bihisht from before the early seventeenth century, Koji Imazawa, "İdris Bitlisî'nin Heşt Bihişt'inin Iki Tip Nüshası Üzerine Bir Inceleme," *Belleten* 69 (2005): 859–96; Much of his assessment of the Istanbul manuscripts of the work relies upon the pioneering work of Felix Tauer, see Felix Tauer, "Les Manuscrits persans historiques des bibliothèques de Stamboul, IV," *Archiv Orientální* 4 (1932): 95–98.

[16] These witnesses are Esad Efendi 2199 and 2198 (together they constitute a complete copy of the work), Ayasofya 3541, Esad Efendi 2197, Nuruosmaniye 3209, and Nuruosmaniye 3212 (seventh and eighth book and the conclusion). To these twenty-two manuscripts in Turkey, we

Lastly, focus on Idrīs permits a view of the personal stakes involved in the construction

and defense of a scholar's interrelated views on historiography and kingship. Although he offers

no complete autobiographical sketch of his life in any of his works, he frequently provides

details of his immediate circumstances and reasons for writing in the prefaces to many of his

literary and scholarly pieces. Through a chronological reconstruction of his literary production,

these details offer significant insights into his personal and professional circumstances over

much of his adulthood. Similarly, Idrīs, especially in his last writings, inserts himself directly

into his historical narratives and explains his motivations and positions with respect to intensely

debated policies. Such explanations corroborate and frequently add nuance and detail to the

several extant original reports and letters that Idrīs wrote.

Literary scholars, such as Paul Losensky, have rightfully criticized the tendency among

modern researchers to confuse "the poet's historical life and his poetic personae."[17] Such a

tendency has fueled the impulse to develop psychological assessments of individuals based upon

the evidence offered by poetry or literary prose offerings.[18] Poets and litterateurs operated within

clearly defined conventions, in which the roles of scorned lover, distressed supplicant, ecstatic

mystic, or depressed drunkard were assumed with equal poetic gusto as the occasion dictated.

Accordingly, it is possible to interpret Idrīs' lamentations on exile from home or indignation of

poor treatment at court simply as fulfillment of his consciously cultivated role as talented literary

supplicant of a powerful patron in a new land. Yet, in contrast to many late medieval Persian

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may add an additional twelve from manuscript libraries around the world. For details, see
Appendix D.

[17] Paul E. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 1998), 89.

[18] Losensky skillfully demonstrates the shortcomings of such an approach through an examination of modern scholarship on one of Idrīs' contemporaries in the Aqquyunlu court, the poet Fighānī, ibid., 69–90.

poets, about whom we know little other than what they themselves reveal in poetry, Idrīs'

experiences, thoughts, and feelings as expressed in literary form often are corroborated by

external sources. So, for instance, while a literary lament of his separation from home and family

may be interpreted simply as a consciously crafted poetic convention designed to fulfill the

expectations placed upon an émigré poet, contemporary archival documents that record the death

of his father in his homeland while Idrīs was at the Ottoman court suggest that such expressions

of loss were likely also heartfelt.

Although modern historians have long acknowledged Idrīs' central political and

historiographical role at the Ottoman court in the early sixteenth century, until recently few

scholars took up detailed consideration of any aspect of his life or oeuvre. In the first half of the

twentieth century Mehmed Şükrü studied *Hasht bihisht* with an eye toward outlining the contents

of the work and surveying its extant manuscripts.[19] In the middle of the twentieth century, Victor

Ménage, in his doctoral dissertation, outlined the production history of the work, produced a

detailed description of the most important manuscripts of *Hasht bihisht* and set the work in

relation to the development of an Ottoman historiographical tradition in the fifteenth century.[20]

Unfortunately this work was never published and has remained largely inaccessible to wider

scholarship. Since the turn of the century, interest in Idrīs Bidlīsī has led to a number of Turkish

graduate theses and doctoral dissertations that have established the extent of his oeuvre and

offered Turkish translations of complete works or substantial sections of *Hasht bihisht*.[21] Also in

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[19] Mehmed Şükrü, "Das Hešt Behešt des Idrīs Bitlīsī," *Der Islam* 19 (1931): 131–92.
[20] Victor Ménage, "A Survey of the Early Ottoman Histories, with Studies on Their Textual Problems and Their Sources" (Ph.D., University of London (SOAS), 1961), 254–64, 591–621.
[21] The first of these dissertations provided a translation of Idrīs' Salīmshāhnāma into Turkish, Hicabi Kırlangıç, "İdrîs-i Bidlîsî: Selim Şâhnâme" (Ph.D., Ankara Üniversitesi, 1995); subsequently published: İdrîs Bitlîsî, *İdrîs-i Bidlîsî Selim Şah-nâme*, trans. Hicabi Kırlangıç (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2001); Orhan Başaran translated the verse conclusion of *Hasht*

recent years, two scholars, Koji Imazawa and Mehrdad Fallahzadeh have taken the first

important steps in establishing the relationships between the various extant manuscript copies of

Idrīs' *Hasht bihisht.*[22]

Taken together, a study of Idrīs Bidlīsī offers several productive avenues for an

investigation of the Ottoman vision of rule in the four decades bounded by the accession of

Bāyezīd II in 886/1481 and the death of his son and successor Selīm I in 926/1520. Yet such a

vision, however witnessed or articulated by Idrīs and his contemporaries, was constrained by

several important administrative and ideological considerations that were common to all four of

the major Islamic polities of the late fifteenth century, and which together constituted a crisis of

rule.

On an administrative level, all four polities, including the Ottomans, had to deal with

certain fiscal constraints imposed by the complex arrangements by which sultans offered

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bihihst, Orhan Başaran, "İdrîs-i Bitlîsî'nin Heşt Bihişt'inin Hâtime'si : Metin-İnceleme-Çeviri"
(Ph.D., Atatürk Üniversitesi, 2000); Vural Genç has translated the first volume in his master's
thesis: Vural Genç, "İdris-i Bitlisî: Heşt Bihişt Osman Gazi Dönemi (Tahlil ve Tercüme)"
(Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi, 2007); Muhammad Yıldırım translated the seventh volume of the
history (on Sultan Mehmed II): Muhammad İbrahim Yıldırım, "İdris-i Bitlisî, Heşt Behişt VII.
Ketibe, Sultan Mehmed Devri, 1451-1481" (Ph.D., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2010); Ebru Sönmez,
"An Acem Statesman in the Ottoman Court: İdris-I Bidlîsî and the Making of Ottoman Policy on
Iran" (M.A., Boğaziçi University, 2006); This work was subsequently published in 2012, Ebru
Sönmez, *Idris-I Bidlisi: Ottoman Kurdistan and Islamic Legitimacy* (Libra Kitap ve Yayınları,
2012); For his doctoral dissertation, in addition to a translation of the eighth volume (on Bāyezīd
II), Vural Genç reconstructed Idrīs' life on the basis of information gleaned primarily from
manuscript sources, Vural Genç, "'Acem'den Rum'a': İdris-i Bidlîsî'nin Hayatı, Tarihçiliği ve
Heşt Behişt'in II. Bayezid Kısmı (1481-1512)" (Ph.D., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2014). Dr. Genç
kindly shared his dissertation with me in the final stages of completing my dissertation. My work
had proceeded along similar lines and, in most cases, I had reached independently the same
conclusions as Dr. Genç. Although I have not completed a systematic comparison of our work, I
have tried to indicate in the citations of this dissertation the points of difference between our
works, as well as Dr. Genç's unique discoveries.
[22] Imazawa, "İdris Bitlisî'nin Heşt Bihişt'inin Iki Tip Nüshası Üzerine Bir İnceleme"; Mehrdad
Fallahzadeh, "The Eight Paradises (the Hasht Bihisht) and the Question of the Existence of Its
Autographs," *Der Islam* 91, no. 2 (2014): 374–409.

extensive financial privileges to leading elements in society in exchange for administrative and ideological support. The accumulation and consolidation of these privileges, which frequently assumed the form of significant tax exemptions on land, led to the formation of what Halil İnalcık calls autonomous enclaves and precipitated a reduction in the sources of revenue by means of which the four polities operated.[23] The extension of these privileges was widespread, and, between the late 1460s and early 1490s, all four of the major polities made concerted efforts to set their finances in order through land tenure reforms and re-appropriations of usufruct grants and religious endowments belonging to notables.[24] In all cases, the protests of the effected privileged parties prevailed, and the central administrative reforms of the four polities stalled.

On an ideological level, all four polities strove to formulate a basis for political authority in the absence of any widely agreed upon parameters for articulating legitimacy. This second aspect of the late medieval crisis of rule began with the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate in 656/1258 and intensified after the dissolution of the Chinggisid Ilkhanate in the fourteenth century. Before these monumental events, universal political authority was derived largely from juridical and genealogical discourses that effectively buttressed the claims of ʿAbbāsī or Changīz-Khānī royal claimants to universal rule. Since the eleventh century, Muslim jurists universally agreed that the

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[23] Halil İnalcık, "Autonomous Enclaves in Islamic States: Temlîks, Soyurghals, Yordluḳs-Ocaḳlıḳs, Mâlikâne-Muḵâṭaʿas and Awqāfs," in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer and Sholeh Alysia Quinn (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 112–34.

[24] For discussion of these reform efforts in the Mamluk context, see Igarashi Daisuke, "The Financial Reforms of Sultan Qāytbāy," *Mamluk Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (2009): 27–51; İnalcık, "Autonomous Enclaves in Islamic States: Temlîks, Soyurghals, Yordluḳs-Ocaḳlıḳs, Mâlikâne-Muḵâṭaʿas and Awqāfs"; and Oktay Özel, "Limits of the Almighty: Mehmed II's 'Land Reform' Revisited," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42, no. 2 (1999): 226–46; for the Timurid context of Herat, see Maria Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 406–417; and on the Aqquyunlu, see V. Minorsky, "The Aq-Qoyunlu and Land Reforms," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 17, no. 3 (January 1, 1955): 449–62.

office of caliph should remain the prerogative of a member of the Quraysh tribe of the prophet Muḥammad.[25] For as long as an Abbasid caliph lived, such a view posed no problems, and indeed, effectively buttressed the Abbasid caliph's claim to represent the Sunnī-Jamāʿī Muslim community. The obliteration of the Abbasid Caliphate with the advent of the Mongols in the thirteenth century prompted a crisis among Muslim jurists, yet posed little concern for the Turko-Mongol military elites who dominated the central Islamic lands. For these elites, descent from the world-conqueror Chinggis Khan constituted the principal attribute of an effective claim to universal rule. Yet, by the middle of the fourteenth century, such prestige began to erode and with the dissolution of the Ilkhanid dynasty, no descendant of Chinggis Khan offered a viable bid for *de facto* rule. To be sure, in the post-Abbasid, post-Chinggisid world of the latter fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Muslim jurists attempted to modify the legal arguments of their predecessors, yet no single argument was advanced to establish any broad consensus on the matter. [26] Similarly, an alternative genealogical tradition emerged, especially among Ottoman and Aqquyunlu Turkmen rulers, rooted in Oghuz Turkic genealogical traditions, yet, here too, such discourses failed to resurrect the universal prestige that had accrued to members of the Quraysh in the era of the Abbasids or the offspring of Chinggis Khan during the heyday of the Ilkhanate in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[27] Crucially, none of the principal rulers of the central Islamic lands could claim credibly descent from the Quraysh or Chinggis Khan.

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[25] This stance only begins to change at the end of the fourteenth century.

[26] Post-Abbasid jurists developed a range of approaches to address the requirement for Qurayshī membership. On these approaches, see Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, 138–51.

[27] Barbara Flemming, "Political Genealogies in the Sixteenth Century," *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 7–8 (1988): 123–37; John E. Woods, *The Timurid Dynasty*, Papers on Inner Asia ; No. 14. Y (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University, Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1990) For a recent survey of the Oghuz narratives, see İlker Evrim Binbaş, "Oġuz Khan Narratives," EIr.

Idrīs was attuned to these administrative and ideological aspects of this crisis of rule and the record of his life, historical outlook, and political thought presents a compelling portrait of an individual's conscientious efforts to witness, record, and in some small way shape the tumultuous political landscape in which he lived and worked. Consequently, the first part of the dissertation examines Idrīs' life in an effort to elucidate the contours of these administrative and ideological constraints and the immediate political, cultural, and intellectual contexts that informed his thinking on kingship. The latter portion of the dissertation focuses on Idrīs' ideas, especially his historical outlook and political thought.

The first six chapters develop several, frequently interrelated, themes concerning Idrīs' life and general professional and intellectual disposition. In his lifetime, Idrīs alternated between the strong call of a godly and reclusive mystical life and the ineluctable appeal of the limelight and prestige afforded by a life at court. This tension between worldly and otherworldly concerns troubled Idrīs for many periods of his adulthood. At several moments of personal crisis or professional setback, the call of the Sufi path and renunciation of worldly concerns exercised a profound influence on him and led, in several instances, to a rededication to mystical matters and a life of religious learning. Such a tension is also most obviously reflected in his mature political thought, in which the Sufi doctrines and concepts with which he was most concerned undergirded his theory of sovereignty.

Yet for long stretches of his career, Idrīs was also committed to court life and an administrative career. At both the Aqquyunlu and Ottoman courts, he worked within the chancery to produce finely crafted prose documents that at once advanced the administrative agendas of the two sultanates and articulated legitimating points of ideology. This latter aspect of Idrīs' work reflected the status of the chancery among all four of the principal polities as a major

workhouse of political ideology. Perhaps as a consequence of Idrīs' experiences within the chancery of the Aqquyunlu Sultanate, once he immigrated to Ottoman lands, he also solicited and received the patronage of the Ottoman sultan, Bāyezīd II, for literary and scholarly works. As a result, Idrīs' intellectual production unfolded within a wider cultural context, in which the linguistic, literary, and ideological concerns of the Ottoman court were argued and debated through the composition and reception of lettered patronage. The parameters of these concerns included the place of the Persian language within the Ottoman court, the possibility of a literary Turkish, and the appropriate mode of historical writing. Idrīs, in the face of active opposition by leading members of the court, assumed robust stances on all of these questions and made his positions clear through his steadfast and articulate apologia of a sophisticated and hyperliterate approach to historical writing in Persian.

In his capacity as state secretary and royal adviser, Idrīs was witness to and critic of Aqquyunlu and Ottoman efforts to address the administrative constraints briefly outlined above. While working as a state secretary in the Aqquyunlu Sultanate in the early 890s/late 1480s, Idrīs was an onlooker to one of the major tax and land tenure reforms of the latter half of the fifteenth century. Masterminded by his mentor and friend, Qāżī ʿĪsá Sāvajī, the reform attempted to reclaim tax-exempt properties in the possession of local notables in the province of ʿIrāq-i ʿAjam in west-central Iran. The initiative signaled a desire on the part of Aqquyunlu central administrators to set right the finances of the sultanate. Crucially, the reforms also targeted the privileges of key constituent groups within the sultanate and disturbed the delicate dynamic between the sultan—represented by his administrative agents—and the local notables upon whom the sultanate relied for support. Although the reforms failed, Idrīs' later positive assessment of Qāżī ʿĪsá's career, as well as his continued advocacy of centralizing administrative

policies, indicate clearly his position on this seminal issue of his day. Many of these same underlying issues came to the fore later in Idrīs' life during the Ottoman conquests of Selīm's reign. In the wake of the conquests of Diyārbakr, Syria, and Egypt, Ottoman administrators sought to recruit members of the Syrian and Egyptian scholarly class through their appointment to high offices in the newly conquered provinces. Idrīs criticized these appointments for the large bribes that they precipitated and denounced several other aspects of the early Ottoman administration of these newly conquered lands for propagating the unjust policies of the previous Mamluk regime. While Idrīs had been a vocal advocate of Ottoman eastward conquests for the sake of securing justice and order in the world, he was dismayed and disillusioned by the chaotic, corrupt, and self-serving administrative arrangements initially implemented by Ottoman officials.

Idrīs reflected upon these experiences and offered his own views on governance and kingship in a number of works that he produced in Ottoman domains. In so doing, he helped address the ideological challenges posed to the four major polities of the fifteenth century. The second part of the dissertation focuses upon these processes and Idrīs' reflections on rule and governance through an examination of two interrelated aspects of his thought: his historiographical outlook and theory of kingship.

When Idrīs began writing his massive history of the Ottomans at the beginning of the sixteenth century, he joined a debate about the meaning and purpose of history as a branch of knowledge that had unfolded between Arabophone and Persephone historians over the preceding century. Idrīs' views on the central questions examined by these historians immediately informed how he wrote history and presented his ideas on rule. Significantly, Idrīs understood history as the preeminent literary science, and as such, it should display the full range of rhetorical

technique. In other words, it should draw upon the most varied sciences—whether religious,

poetic, astrological, mystical, physiognomical, or philosophical—to embellish and substantiate

historical narratives. For Idrīs and many of his contemporaries, such narratives rightfully focus

on lauding the good deeds of kings. More than empty praise, such encomia served a didactic

purpose, since reading history encouraged good actions and habits while discouraging bad

behavior. As a consequence of this view, history, for Idrīs and his likeminded contemporaries,

became the foremost mode for articulating and defining ideal kingship.

Yet even as Idrīs' historiographical outlook predisposed him to develop a comprehensive

theory of kingship, the broader political, cultural, and intellectual terrain of the fifteenth century

also facilitated important new responses to the ideological crisis facing Islamic polities well

before his birth. Most substantially, these responses were spurred by the career of the Turkic

conqueror Timur and the competing legitimating claims of his descendants. By focusing on

sovereignty, not as a function of jurisprudential reasoning or genealogical prestige, but as a

consequence of cosmic and divine favor, scholars and secretaries working for Timur and his

heirs began to develop an effective new vocabulary of sovereignty that directly addressed the

ideological challenges Islamic polities faced in the fifteenth century. These scholars and

secretaries undergirded their new vocabulary and the claims of cosmic or divine favor that such

vocabulary entailed with reference to mystical, astrological, and philosophical doctrines and

theories. In this manner they transformed discourses of sovereignty from the rather restrictive

confines of legal discourse and genealogical elaboration to a dynamic discourse conversant with

a wide range of epistemological traditions. As a consequence of the frequent dissolution and

consolidation of powerful competing political courts across the central lands of Islam, these same

scholars and secretaries regularly traveled from Herat to Constantinople and Cairo, where they

found employment in chanceries or produced literary works, which in both cases afforded ample opportunity to deploy the Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty in ever wider contexts.

Clearly, Idrīs' activities and intellectual output are emblematic of this process; he began his career in the Aqquyunlu chancery and finished it as an adviser to the Ottoman sultan Selīm. Not surprisingly, his discussions of sovereignty and ideal kingship substantively reference the Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty to which he was exposed as a young secretary working in the Aqquyunlu Sultanate. Like his immediate Timurid predecessors in the chancery, Idrīs, through his several works on rule, referenced a wide range of epistemological traditions in his construction of a conception of kingship. Although he frequently deployed the Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty in his writings, he also advanced his own conception of kingship, which he called *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* (the vicegerency of God). To be sure, like other Ottoman chroniclers of his day, he developed the themes of *ghazāʾ*, Oghuz lineage, and Saljuq inheritance in his history, yet such themes cannot be said to constitute the principal thrust of his historical and ideological thought.[28] Instead, informed by his didactic and wide-ranging historiographical outlook, in *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs brought together the various epistemological strands to which he was most committed—astrological, mystical, and philosophical—and arrayed their doctrines and conclusions under the umbrella of *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* to define a coherent vision of kingship embodied in the Ottoman sultans.

In some small measure, it is a credit to Idrīs' talents as historian and rhetorician that such a vision of rule was taken on board by the Ottomans in the opening decades of the sixteenth century. Yet the deployment of a new vocabulary of sovereignty for the Ottomans was likely also an outgrowth of the Ottoman conquests of 920-923/1514-1517. The adaptation of this innovate,

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[28] Idrīs prinicipally addresses Oghuz lineage (24b, 27a) and the Saljuq inheritance (31b) in his discursive preface to the reign of ʿOs̱mān, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Nuruosmaniye 3209.

yet broadly resonating vocabulary of sovereignty became an important part of the Ottoman ideological program to persuade predominantly large non-Turkic, Muslim populations in newly conquered regions of the suitability and righteousness of Ottoman rule. Articulated as the divine and cosmic favor shown the Ottoman sultans, yet manifested through their just and awesome actions as rulers, the new vocabulary of sovereignty became a discernible component of an Ottoman ideology of rule for much of the sixteenth century.

Part I: The Realm of Generation and Decay: Idrīs in Iran, 1457-1502

Chapter One: Background and Education, 1457-1480

During the first forty years of Idrīs' life, Persian lands suffered monumental geopolitical strains that profoundly affected Idrīs' personal outlook and professional inclinations. During the period between his birth in 861/1457 and the end of the ninth/fifteenth century, Idrīs' homeland in western Iran witnessed the rise and fall of a major Turkmen dynasty, the Bayandur clan of the Aqquyunlu confederation, the imperial aspirations of which were shortly followed within a matter of decades by a complete descent into chaos and disorder. The resounding success and subsequent unraveling of the Aqquyunlu experiment shaped the educational, social, and professional opportunities available to Idrīs. Drawn by the cultural resplendence of the recently ascendant Aqquyunlu court, Idrīs decided to enter sultanic service as a young man. His professional rise within the court seemed to reflect inversely the more general devolution of Aqquyunlu fortunes in the waning decades of the ninth/fifteenth century. By the late 1480s, as Idrīs entered middle age, he had attained one of the highest offices of state, even as the political instability resulting from years of dynastic conflict and civil war brought the Aqquyunlu polity to the brink of destruction.

Despite this general context, the immediate circumstances of Idrīs' birth and childhood would seem to have foreshadowed a far more reclusive life somewhat insulated from political concerns and dominated by learned pursuits and mystical contemplation. Idrīs was born into a family of scholars with close ties to one of the most important messianic-Sufi movements of the ninth/fifteenth century. Idrīs' father, Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī, was a disciple of Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh at the time of Idrīs' birth and spent the remainder of his life immersed in study. As

Idrīs' primary mentor and teacher, Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī, and his learned friends and colleagues exercised an enormous influence on Idrīs' earliest aspirations. The educational and mystical opportunities that this early upbringing offered seemed to preclude a life entangled with the worldly concerns of governance, court life, and political intrigue.

This tension between the call to a godly life and the draw of a courtly one, constituted the primary axis along which Idrīs assessed his own character. The dichotomy between these personal expectations and professional pursuits also constitute the central organizing principle of part one of this dissertation, and indeed, inform the entire study. The first twenty years of Idrīs' life were dominated by an educational upbringing that emphasized the importance of scholarly independence from worldly concerns. In the example of his father, as well as a number of the leading intellectual luminaries of the age, Idrīs observed a scholarly disposition that at once welcomed the patronage of rulers, yet to some degree resisted close political associations that could erode intellectual independence and moral rectitude. Idrīs' entry into service for the Aqquyunlu sultan Yaʿqūb (r. 883-896/1478-1490) consequently marked a decided rejection of his father's example.

I.1 Birth Beside the Mahdī

Writing in his late teens, Idrīs Bidlīsī recorded his birth above a horoscope in the back of a notebook he kept for copying mathematical works of prominent scholars. The horoscope that Idrīs referenced allowed him to present his birth using a number of dating systems: "The birth of the writer of this calendrical table, Idrīs ibn Mawlānā Ḥusām al-Dīn Bidlīsī, fell on Tuesday evening 21 Ṣafar 861 (18 January 1457) which corresponds to 15 Kānūn al-ākhir 1768, 28

Urdībihisht-i Qadīm 826, and 13 Bahman-māh-i Jalālī in Sūliqān outside Rayy."[1] Next to this notice, Idrīs explains that he copied this table from the horoscope prepared for his birth by Shāh Qāsim ibn al-Imām Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh.[2] Both Qāsim, usually remembered as Qāsim Fayżbakhsh, and his father Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh were the teachers and spiritual guides of Idrīs' father Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī.

Nūrbakhsh was one of several religious figures of the ninth/fifteenth century who led activist messianic movements that sought to reestablish the political, social, and religious framework of their societies.[3] While the particular claims of these movements varied, all of them were informed by a similar set of political, social, and intellectual shifts that affected Iran in the seventh/fourteenth and eighth/fifteenth centuries.

On a political level, the initial devolution of Chinggisid authority with the death of the last Ilkhanid ruler Abū Saʿīd in 736/1335 created a crisis of political authority within Persian lands. Up to that time, ruling dynasties in the central lands of Islam had administered their territories based upon their often-tenuous claims to universal rulership substantiated with reference to prestigious lineages. Before the Ilkhanid dynasty ruled Iran, the 600-year rule of the Abbasid caliphate, centered in Baghdad, was based upon its ties of kinship with the prophet Muḥammad. This kinship, and the dynastic genealogy it eventually produced, formed the basis

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[1] Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Majmūʿa*, Ragıp Paşa 919, 221a.

[2] The note states that the horoscope was "copied from the horoscope [prepared] by the hand of the caster of the horoscope, the refuge of sainthood and work house of wisdom Shah Qasim bin al-Imam Muhammad al-Nūrbakhsh (*naql shud az zāyija ki bi-khaṭṭ-i mustkharij-i ṭāliʿ ast ḥażrat-i valāyat-panāh ḥikmat-dastgāh Shāh Qāsim bin al-imām Muḥammad al-Nūrbakhsh qaddasa Allāh sirrahu*), Bidlīsī, *Majmūʿa*, Ragıp Paşa 919, 221a. *Istikhrāj* is a technical term used for casting horoscopes, see Ahmet Tunç Şen, "Astrology and the Islamic Millennium: Knowledge, Prophecy, and Politics," dissertation University of Chicago, forthcoming.

[3] For a discussion of these movements, see Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order, and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 66–84.

of the Abbasid caliph's *de jure* claims to sovereignty over all the lands of Islam, even during

periods in which the *de facto* authority of the ruler did not extend far beyond the walls of

Baghdad. While the destruction of the Abbasid caliphate at the hands of the Ilkhanids in

656/1258 created a crisis of political legitimacy in its own right, the universalist nature of the

khan's claims to authority in the very least represented a continuity of notions of sovereignty in a

broad sense. With the devolution of this new political dispensation less than one hundred years

later, the societies of the central Islamic lands were well primed to identify what Shahzad Bashir

described as "alternative structures of legitimation undergirding the relationship between the

rulers and the ruled."[4] This search for alternative structures soon expressed itself in a number of

popular religio-political movements that completely challenged traditional forms of temporal

power.[5]

Yet this search for alternative structures can hardly explain why messianic claims

resonated so broadly and deeply. The political shifts outlined above coincided with several social

and intellectual developments that contributed to the appeal of messianic movements during this

period. Foremost among these was the early development of mystical orders (*ṭarīqa*) centered on

the spiritual charisma of a Sufi master. While spiritual authority and charisma had long been a

component of the master-novice relationship in Sufi circles, the thought of the theosophical Sufi

Ibn al-ᶜArabī (d. 638/1240) reinforced and intensified ideas concerning the necessity of spiritual

hierarchies as a precondition of cosmic order.[6] The appeal of these concepts to societies in the

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[4] Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nūrbakhshīya between Medieval and Modern Islam*, Studies in Comparative Religion (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 31.

[5] Sarbadārs are an important example in this regard, see John Masson Smith, *The History of the Sarbadār Dynasty, 1336-1381 A.D. and Its Sources.* (The Hague: Mouton, 1970); Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 69–71.

[6] For more on the centrality of spiritual hierarchy to the cosmic order, see chapter nine.

midst of significant political upheaval aggrandized the position of the Sufi master as a pillar of

the religious and social community he inhabited.[7]

Ambitious men in search of knowledge sought out charismatic spiritual guides, while

rulers in search of legitimacy sought alliances with holy men either through offers of patronage

or marriage alliances. Concurrent with these developments, and frequently overlaid with them,

spiritual loyalty to ʿAlī, the nephew of the prophet Muḥammad and the first imam of Twelver

Shiʿism, emerged as a key feature of religious, social, and even political life.[8] While such loyalty

was sometimes expressed in a formal avowal of Twelver Shiʿism, more frequently scholars,

Sufis, and rulers embraced a fluid understanding of religious affiliation that formally espoused

aspects of both Sunnī and Shiʿī positions. This fluid environment, unified by a broad and deep

sense of Alid loyalty, has led a number of scholars to characterize the period as one of

confessional ambiguity.[9] Indeed, such ambiguity is immediately apparent in the life and

intellectual production of Idrīs' father, who, despite his lifelong loyalty to a Shiʿī spiritual master

and descendant of ʿAlī, wrote an extensive Quranic exegesis from a Shāfiʿī perspective.[10]

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[7] As Shahzad Bashir notes, "the growing ideological centrality of the master to Sufi discourse became fused with Sufi networks' role as primary agents of social cohesion, leading to recognized Sufi masters and heirs acquiring highly elevated positions in local social hierarchies throughout the region," Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions*, 37.

[8] On the status of ʿAlī in political discourses, see Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 41–46.

[9] John Woods first advanced the notion of confessional ambiguity between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 3–4; More recently, Judith Pfeiffer has suggested that, despite the existence of confessional ambiguity in general terms, confessional boundaries sharpened significantly at certain times and in certain places during this period. Judith Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization: Politics and the Negotiation of Religious Boundaries in the Ilkhanate," in *Politics, Patronage, and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th-15th Century Tabriz*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 129–68.

[10] Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī's Quranic exegesis is largely indebted to Bayżavī's Shāfiʿī exegesis, Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī Bidlīsī, *Jāmiʿ al-tanwīl wa al-taʾwīl*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa 109.

These broader social factors all likely contributed to Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī's decision to join

the messianic movement of Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh. By the time ʿAlī joined Nūrbakhsh in

Sūliqān in the 850s/1450s, the movement already existed for approximately thirty years.

Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh was born into a *sayyid* family that traced its lineage back to the Twelver

Imam Mūsá al-Kāẓim. As a young man, he joined the Kubravīya order under the spiritual

guidance of Isḥāq al-Khuttalānī.[11] Nūrbakhsh spent several years by Khuttalānī's side, during

which time he became a prominent member of the master's circle. Prompted by an interpretation

of dreams he experienced in 826/1423, as well as a number of significant astrological portents,

Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh became convinced that God had appointed him to herald in the End

Times as the expected Mahdi. The political implications of such claims were immediately

realized in the Timurid court of Shāhrukh in Herat, who quickly dispatched a military force to

quell Nūrbakhsh's movement. Although he was subsequently released, Nūrbakhsh spent the next

twenty years traveling throughout Iran while seeking to attract followers and avoid the attention

of the Timurid authorities.[12] When Shāhrukh died in 850/1447, the threat of arrest and

persecution was sufficiently removed to permit Nūrbakhsh to settle permanently with his

followers in the small village of Sūliqān outside of Rayy. Between his settlement in Sūliqān in

850/1447 and his death in 869/1464, Nūrbakhsh devoted his attention to the instruction of his

followers.

Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī joined Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh by the mid-1450s during this more

tempered and reclusive period of the Mahdi's mission. Nūrbakhsh notes, in *Risālat al-Hudá*, a

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[11] On the Kubraviya order, see Marijan Molé, "Les kubrawiya entre sunnisme et shi'isme," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* 29 (1961): 61–142; Marijan Molé, "Profession de foi de deux Kubrawis: 'Alī Hamadānī et Muhammad Nūrbakhsh," *Bulletin D'études Orientales* 17 (1962 1961): 133–204; Devin DeWeese, "The Eclipse of the Kubravīyah in Central Asia," *Iranian Studies* 21, no. 1/2 (1988): 45–83.
[12] For details of Nūrbakhsh's life, see Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions*, 29–75.

work dated to 857/1454, that Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī came to Sūliqān through the auspices of another disciple named Shihāb al-Dīn Jurānī (or Gurānī).[13] With Jurānī's death, Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī began to receive guidance directly from Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh, as well as lessons in the mathematical sciences from Nūrbakhsh's son Qāsim Fayżbakhsh.[14] According to *Risālat al-Hudá*, Qāsim was a particularly gifted scholar who had attained most of his knowledge through divine inspiration (*ladunī*), the proof of which was the astronomical table (*zīj*) he created without the benefit of any organized study.[15] As a consequence of this reputation, it is not altogether surprising that Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī requested Qāsim to prepare a horoscope for the birth of his son, Idrīs.

ʿAlī's close personal relationship with Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh and his son Qāsim from this period remained an important aspect of his religious and intellectual identity throughout his life. Yet, on the basis of one late-sixteenth-century source, there is some evidence to suggest that ʿAlī also cultivated ties with another important Sufi order at some point during his lifetime. The source, the *Sharafnāma* of Amīr Sharaf al-Dīn Bidlīsī, is an extensive history of the various Kurdish lords that dominated large parts of Diyārbakr and Āzarbāyjān between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, and in this regard details of the lives of Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī and Idrīs—two important natives of the region. In an anecdote from 906/1501 that explains the nature of Idrīs' relationship with the messianic figure and newly ascendant ruler of Iran Shah Ismāʿīl (d. 930/1524), Sharaf al-Dīn records that Idrīs himself asserted the close connection between his

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[13] Based upon Bashir's dating of *Risālat al-hudá* to 859/1454-5 and the mention of Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī as Nūrbakhsh's disciple at the time of its composition, we can establish a terminus ante quem of 859/1454-5 for Husam al-Din ʿAli's arrival in Sūliqān. It seems, though, that by this date Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī was already well integrated into religious study at Sūliqān, which perhaps suggests his arrival some time well before this date. For the rationale for the dating of *Risālat al-hudá*, see ibid., 68.

[14] Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh, *Risālat al-Hudá*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih 5367, 126a.

[15] ibid, 119b.

family and Shah Ismāᶜīl's immediate forebears, the spiritual leaders of the Ṣafavīya order, by declaring that his father had studied religious matters with Shah Ismāᶜīl's grandfather, Junayd.[16] While such a connection is certainly possible, it was likely brief and fleeting. Between Junayd's contested assumption of leadership in 851/1447, and his death in 864/1460, he transformed the Ṣafavīya from a reclusive mystical order to an increasingly militarized organization that embraced radical messianic rhetoric. For most of this period, Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī resided in Sūliqān where he studied directly under his self-proclaimed spiritual guide—Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh. For this reason, if ᶜAlī studied with Junayd, such collaboration likely occurred before his arrrival in Sūliqān and possibly before Junayd's radical turn.[17] Certainly, Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī's relationship to Nūrbakhsh constituted a more fundamental component of his religious and intellectual identity than any temporary affiliation with Junayd, for throughout his life he described himself as a Nūrbakhshī.[18]

Despite these ties to Nūrbakhsh, it is unclear the extent to which ᶜAlī accepted his master's messianic message. His choice to associate himself with the Nūrbakhshī movement reflected his admiration of Nūrbakhsh's qualities as a Sufi master rather than acceptance of his teacher's Mahdist claims. In an examination of Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī's works, Shahzad Bashir has noticed "a dual emphasis on of the glorification of ᶜAlī and exhortation of the unity of being

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[16] Sharaf Khān Bidlīsī, *Schéref-Nâmeh: Ou, Histoire Des Kourdes*, ed. Vladimir Vladimirovich Veliaminov-Zernov (Westmead, Farnborough UK: Gregg International, 1969), 1:343–4.

[17] This assessment differs from the conclusions recently drawn by Vural Genç. Genç prefers to date Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī's affiliation with Junayd to the period shortly after Idrīs' birth in 861/1457. Vural Genç, "'Acem'den Rum'a'," 39. Given ᶜAlī's lifelong loyalty to Nūrbakhsh, I think it is unlikely that Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī would have abandoned his master before his death in 869/1464.

[18] For instance, in a commentary on the sermons of ᶜAlī, Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī self-identifies as a Nūrbakhshī, *Sharḥ khuṭbat al-bayān amīr al-muʾminīn ʿAlī (karrama Allāh wajhahu)*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Aya Sofya 1777.

(*vaḥdat al-vujūd*) that he may have carried forth from Nūrbakhsh himself."[19] These emphases were also reflective of the broader climate in which mystical circles were dominated by discussions of Ibn al-ʿArabī's thought, while embracing a strong sense of Alid loyalty. Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī maintained a dedicated belief in the spiritual preeminence of the imams of Twelver Shiʿism, even as he downplayed Nūrbakhsh's messianic claims. Such a belief is also reflected in the later work of Idrīs, who describes Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh as "distinguished and unique *after* the twelve imams in the universal perfections of mankind."[20]

If Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī accepted his master's Mahdist claims while studying in Sūliqān, his master's death before the complete realization of his messianic mission likely precipitated a crisis in ʿAlī's worldview. The larger Nūrbakhshī community to which he belonged was certainly rocked by their master's death on 14 Rabīʿ I 869/14 November 1464.[21] Despite Nūrbakhsh's preparations for his own death through the appointment of his son Qāsim Fayżbakhsh as successor, the Mahdi's death precipitated a major bifurcation among his disciples. While some of his most ardent followers remained in Sūliqān under the guidance of Qāsim's modified messianic doctrine, the great majority gradually abandoned the settlement and focused solely on their master's position as a gifted Sufi.[22] Even if Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī remained with his master until his death, he certainly abandoned the messianic message shortly thereafter, as within one year of Nūrbakhsh's death, Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī was back in Bidlīs, the city of his forebears.[23]

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[19] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions*, 168.
[20] *al-ḥaqq baʿd az aʾimma-i isná-ʿashar az ahluʾl-bayt bi-jāmʿiyat-i kamālāt-i nawʿ-i bashar muḥaqqiqi vaḥīd va muvaḥḥidi farīd būd.* Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 346a.
[21] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions*, 163.
[22] Ibid., 164.
[23] Tapu Tahrir Defteri 413, p. 216.

I.2 Childhood and Education

Following the move to Bidlīs, Idrīs' early childhood unfolded against the backdrop of major political shifts and realignments in western Iran that affected his father's professional and political associations. Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī's decision to abandon the Nūrbakhshī enclave at Sūliqān and return to his hometown in Bidlīs occurred on the eve of a major military confrontation between the two most important Turkmen tribal confederations in western Iran. Since Timur's death in 807/1405, western Iran had been divided and controlled by the confederate clans of the Aqquyunlu and Qaraquyunlu Turkmen.[24] The Aqquyunlu had been granted territories by Timur in Diyārbakr and Armanīya, while the Qaraquyunlu eventually wrested control of Āẕarbāyjān, ʿIrāq-i ʿArab, and ʿIrāq-i ʿAjam from Timur's son Shāhrukh. While the first half of the fifteenth century was marked by a number of military conflicts between the Qaraquyunlu confederation and Shāhrukh and his Aqquyunlu allies, these three polities grudgingly established a geopolitical equilibrium that divided control of western Iran along a border west of the Lake Van region.

The consolidation of power by the Aqquyunlu ruler Uzun Ḥasan and his Qaraquyunlu counterpart Jahānshāh in 860s/1460s created a hostile political environment for the region. This situation reached a breaking point in 871/1467 when Jahānshāh, at the head of the Qaraquyunlu forces, entered the Aqquyunlu territory of Armanīya. The ensuing conflict that unfolded over the following two years would see the complete elimination of the Qaraquyunlu confederation as a political force and the emergence of Uzun Ḥasan as the sole master of western and central Iran.

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[24] On the Aqquyunlu-Qaraquyunlu rivalry, see John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire*, Rev. and expanded ed (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), 44–54; İsmail Aka, *İran'da Türkmen hakimiyeti: Kara Koyunlular devri*, vol. sa. 191, Türk Tarih Kurumu yayınları. VII. dizi (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2001).

Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī's arrival in Bidlīs some time before this conflict suggests an affiliation with the Qaraquyunlu confederate clans. Since the fourteenth century, the city had been ruled by the chiefs of the Rūzhakī Kurdish tribes who had proffered their allegience to the Qaraquyunlu rulers to the east.[25] The Kurdish rulers of Bidlīs fought alongside the Qaraquyunlu confederation until the bitter end and, as a consequence, Uzun Ḥasan replaced the local Kurdish lords of Bidlīs and established a direct Aqquyunlu administration in the city, which lasted for twenty years.[26] Yet, Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī's return to his ancestral home in 870/1465, two years before this conflict, reflects close ties with the Rūzhakī Kurdish lords in control of the city. Indeed, ᶜAlī's co-establishment of a charitable foundation (*waqf*) in Bidlīs in 870/1465 further substantiates this point, for his partner in the endeavor was Amīr Sharaf, the Rūzhakī ruler of the city.[27] In all likelihood the financial basis for the foundation came from property grants bestowed upon ᶜAlī by Amīr Sharaf for the mutual benefit of their two families.[28]

Despite his association with the Rūzhakī Kurdish rulers of Bidlīs and their nominal Qaraquyunlu lords, Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī negotiated the treacherous political terrain of this period remarkably well. In his capacity as an ally of Amīr Sharaf, both Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī and his ten-year old son Idrīs accompanied the Rūzhakī Kurds when they joined their Qaraquyunlu allies in campaign against the Aqquyunlu in 872/1467. Years later, Idrīs recollected the campaign and affirmed his firsthand witnessing of Uzun Ḥasan's defeat of his Qaraquyunlu rival at Mūsh.[29] Despite Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī's connections to the Rūzhakī and Qaraquyunlu, Uzun Ḥasan favored

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[25] On the Rūzhakī Kurdish rulers of Bidlīs, see Sharaf Khān Bidlīsī, *Schéref-Nâmeh*.
[26] Until the death of Yaᶜqūb in 896/1490.
[27] TTD 413, p. 216.
[28] According to a *farmān* preserved at Türk İslam Eserler Müzesi, in Muḥarram 876/July 1471 Uzun Ḥasan bestowed upon one of his spiritual guides, Sulṭān Bābā ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān, property in Mārdīn for the pupose of establishing a *waqf*. Türk İslam Eserler Müzesi, nr. 2200; for a discussion of this document, see Woods, *The Aqquyunlu Confederation,* 83.
[29] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht,* 346a.

Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī as an honored scholar and from this point forward both ʿAlī and later his son,

Idrīs, found a place in the Aqquyunlu court. Even as the Aqquyunlu were consolidating their

hold over Qaraquyunlu domains, ʿAlī accompanied the Aqquyunlu forces as they wrested Shiraz

city from Qaraquyunlu control in 873/1469. According to the hagiographic account of the life of

one of Uzun Ḥasan's main spiritual advisers, Ibrāhīm Gulshanī, Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī attended a

scholarly gathering in Shiraz during which leading intellectual luminaries including Jalāl al-Dīn

Davānī discussed logic as it related to theological matters. If the account is accurate, the meeting

likely took place shortly after the city fell to Aqquyunlu forces in 873/1469.[30] Some time after

the conclusion of the conquests, ʿAlī settled in Tabriz and enjoyed the patronage of Uzun

Ḥasan.[31]

Despite his birth in Sūliqān and long residence in Tabriz, Idrīs came from a distinguished

family of learned men associated with the city of Bidlīs for at least three generations.[32] Although

Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī passed the majority of his adult life with the Aqquyunlu court in Tabriz, his

ties to his homeland were significant as evidenced by his establishment of a charitable

foundation in the city of his birth. While Idrīs passed the vast majority of his life outside of

Bidlīs, he clearly maintained important ties to his family's homeland, as he too established a

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[30] ibid; Emre, "İbrahim-i Gülşeni (ca. 1442-1534)," 59-60. Although Uzun Ḥasan dispatched his son Ughurlu Muḥammad to conquer Shiraz, the Aqquyunlu ruler spent two months in the city shortly thereafter, Abu Bakr Tihrani, *Kitab-ı Diyarbakriyya: Ak-Koyunlar tarihi*, vol. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1993), 2:529.

[31] The *terminus post quem* for Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī's residence in Tabriz is 876/1472, at which point Idrīs explains that his father began giving him lessons in mysticism while the two resided in the Aqquyunlu capital, Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Ḥaqq al-mubīn fī sharḥ risālat ḥaqq al-yaqīn*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya 2338, 3a.

[32] According to a note added to an Ottoman cadastral survey of Bidlīs, Idrīs' grandfather was Tāj al-Dīn Ḥājī Ḥusayn ibn Mawlānā Majd al-Dīn al-Bidlīsī (spelled Bitlīsī in the mid-sixteenth-century Ottoman document). This would suggest that the family's connection to Bidlīs extend at least as far as Idrīs' paternal great grandfather. The note was included in the register to indicate that Idrīs Bidlīsī's son Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed, who at that time was serving as the chief finance offcer (*defterdār*) of Rumili, assumed ownership of the endowment, TTD 413, p.216.

charitable foundation in the city upon his return to the region in the service of the Ottomans in 921/1515.[33] Indeed, Idrīs' return was instigated through Sultan Selīm's appointment of Idrīs to recruit Kurdish support in the Ottoman struggle against Shah Ismāᶜīl, in light of his ties of "lineage and association" with the local Kurdish military elite and urban notables.[34]

While this lineage and association suggests a Kurdish ethnicity for Idrīs, such an identity must be understood in terms of the stronger professional and scholarly ties through which Idrīs constructed his worldview. Such professional and scholarly commitments stressed the social dimensions of identity. As such, Idrīs viewed himself and the groups around him through the contrasting identities of *Turk u Tājīk*, which by the middle of the ninth/fifteenth century had come to represent the social and political differences between military elites and urban notables and not necessarily any marker of ethnic background.[35] In the particular Aqquyunlu context in which Idrīs spent the first two-thirds of his life, such distinctions between the ostensibly nomadic military elite ("Turk"), whether ethnically Turkish, Kurdish, or Persian, and the sedentary urban and rural segments of society ("Tājīk") were a reality of life that affected the professional options and general outlooks of all members of society. In such a social space, Idrīs is unlikely to have embraced a discernible Kurdish identity in the place of a self-conception informed by his personal and professional ties to the urban notable class. It is these distinctions between the nomadic military class and urban notables that inform Idrīs' acclamation of the Kurdish scholar

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[33] ibid; Rahmi Tekin. "Medrese-yi İdrisiyye," *A.Ü. Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi* 40 (2009): 233-246.

[34] Idrīs characterizes Selīm's decision to appoint him based upon ties of lineage and association (*bar-ḥasb-i ᶜirs̱ va iktisāb bā īn banda-yi aṣghar dar kamāl-i intisāb būd*), Idrīs Bidlīsī. *Salīmshāhnāma*, Emanet Hazinesi 1423, 119b.

[35] B.G. Fragner, "Tādjīk" *EI²*.

Mollā Gūrānī (d. 893/1488) for his erudition in the religious sciences, even as he once dismissed

a military commander of his homeland as "a witless Kurd."[36]

The almost exclusive use of Persian or Arabic as the languages of literary expression and

daily use constituted one of the key features of the Persian urban notable class to which Idrīs

belonged in his youth. Despite decades of service at the courts of Turkish rulers, Idrīs composed

all of his literary works in either Persian or Arabic. If he knew Turkish as a language of oral

communication, he rarely used it as a mode of written correspondence.[37] This stark linguistic

division between members of the military ruling class and urban notables who filled the ranks of

their chanceries formed a discernible aspect of the administrative approach of most polities in the

central lands of Islam during this period.[38] For instance, according to *Menāqıb-ı Gülşenī*, neither

Sultan Yaʿqūb's chief minister nor his secretary knew Turkish.[39] This linguistic division

highlights another, in this case professional, cleavage that informed Idrīs' identity. The

administrative divisions between the men of the sword (*ahl-i sayf*) and the men of the pen (*ahl-i

qalam*) generally fell along the same axes as the broader social categories of *Turk u Tājīk*. Such

divisions informed appointments to office: men of the sword occupied military offices and

governorships and certain positions at court, while men of the pen filled the ranks of the

secretarial services and religious institutions.[40] These divisions reinforced Idrīs' pride in his

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[36] For the reference to Gūrānī, see Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 612b; for the reference to the Kurdish commanders, see TSMA E. 8333.

[37] For instance all of the extant letters in Idrīs hand addressed to Sultan Selīm are written in Persian. See TSMA E. 1019, E. 5675, E. 8333 (1-3).

[38] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 16–17; Willem M. Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 2001).

[39] Muhyî-yi Gülşenî, *Menâḳıb-i İbrâhîm-i Gülşenî*, ed. Tahsin Yazıcı, Türk Tarih Kurumu yayınları. III. dizi sa. 9. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1982), 66.

[40] In Timurid courts such divisions even were expressed in the establishment of two separate princely councils, the *dīvān-i ʿumarā/Türk divanı* and the *dīvān-i tājīkān/sart divanı*, B.G. Fragner, "Tādjīk" *EI²*.

expressive aptitude in Persian. After all, his position at court was predicated on his ability to produce elegant Persian prose and verse as much as on his erudition in other fields of learning. Such an outlook explains his dismissal of Ottoman histories written in Turkish as unworthy of the subject and the palpable conceit with which he presents his own work on the same subject in Persian.[41]

Such a social worldview contrasts markedly with contemporary attitudes in the Ottoman lands of Idrīs' residence after 908/1502. There, social divisions also existed, but the primary axis of identity lacked even the nominal division between Turk and non-Turk. In contrast, in Ottoman lands during this period members of the ruling class (*ʿaskerī*), as well as the subjects of the sultanate (*reʿāyā*) hailed equally from Turkic and non-Turkic backgrounds. At the turn of the sixteenth century, within the ruling class, military and non-military administrative appointments were open to Turks, non-Turks, and palace recruits of Christian origin alike.[42] Indeed, the experiences of two of Idrīs' sons in Ottoman lands are emblematic of this flexibility. While one son, Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed received a scholarly education, served as a judge in the provinces, and eventually rose to the rank of chief finance director (*defterdār*) during the reign of Süleymān (r. 926-974/1520-1566), another son, Ebūʾl-Mevāhib entered a military career.

As a consequence of these social and professional cleavages, Idrīs' membership in the urban notable estate in Persian lands necessitated a distinct educational program that would facilitate his entry onto an appropriate professional path. Although the trajectory of his studies followed a normal curriculum, his father's position as a well-respected scholar in one of the major Islamic centers of learning afforded Idrīs the opportunity to study with some of the great

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[41] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 8a.
[42] On some of the nearly contemporaneous aspects of these social classes, see Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 18–19.

luminaries of the ninth/fifteenth century. Despite this exposure, the vast majority of Idrīs' studies

unfolded under the personal supervision of his father.

In several places in Idrīs' later writings, he references the profound influence of his father

as a teacher whom he viewed as a master of both the exoteric and esoteric sciences.[43] Indeed,

Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī's scholarly production in his later life demonstrates his facility with

traditional religious sciences as well as a wide range of mystical concepts. In the 1490s, he

finished a four volume complete exegesis of the Quran.[44] In the preface Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī

acknowledges a debt to his teacher Shihāb al-Dīn Hindī, under whom he studied Quranic

exegesis (*tafsīr*). More generally, Ḥusām al-Dīn states that the work was largely influenced by

the famous Shāfiʿī scholar Nāṣir al-Dīn Bayżavī (d. 685/1286).[45] With respect to mystical

thought ʿAlī composed a number of commentaries on the mystical teachings of Sufis such as Ibn

al-ʿArabī, ʿAbd al-Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 736/1335) and Maḥmūd Shabistarī (d. 720/1320).[46]

Sufism was clearly Ḥusām al-Dīn's major interest, for in addition to these commentaries, he also

composed a number of original works. As with all students, Idrīs' studies began with an

examination of the exoteric sciences, including mastery of Quran reading (*qirāʾa*), the traditions

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[43] "*dar ẓāhir az ʿulamā-yi rāsikhīn būd va dar bāṭin az murshidān-i ahl-i ḥaqq va yaqīn*," Bidlīsī, *Ḥaqq al-mubīn*, 3a. Idrīs also compliments his father's scholarly erudition in the preface to *Ḥāshīya ʿalá anwār al-tanzīl*, one copy of which he presented to Sultan Bāyezīd II in his first years among the Ottomans, Idrīs Bidlīsī. *Ḥāshīya ʿalá anwār al-tanzīl*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya 303-M.

[44] Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī Bidlīsī. *Jāmiʿ al-tanzīl waʾl-taʾwīl*. Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa 109-112.

[45] For references to Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī's teachers and influences, see Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī Bidlīsī, *Tafsīr*, Şehid Ali Paşa 109, 2b.

[46] For his supercommentary on Kāshānī's commentary of Ibn al-ʿArabī's *Iṣṭilaḥāt al-ṣūfiyya*, see Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī Bidlīsī, *Sharḥ iṣṭilaḥāt al-ṣūfiyya*, Manisa İl Halk Kütüphanesi nr. 1134; for his commentary on Shabistarī's *Gulshan-i rāz*, see *Sharḥ-i gulshan-i rāz*, Antalya İl Halk Kütüphanesi, nr. 164. This work is mentioned by Idrīs in his own commentary on Shabistarī's *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn* entitled *Ḥaqq al-mubīn fī sharḥ risāla ḥaqq al-yaqīn*; Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Ḥaqq al-mubīn*, 3a/b.

of the prophet (*ḥadīth*), exegesis (*tafsīr*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and theology (*kalām*).[47] In a later

collection of *ḥadīth* compiled by Idrīs, he notes that he obtained two chains of transmission

(*silsila-yi rivāya*) in his life; the first was from his father Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī, while the second

chain passed through the prominent Egyptian scholars Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī (d.

902/1497) and Ibn Ḥajar al-ᶜAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) and was obtained on the authority of Naẓīr

al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Salmāsī.[48]

Idrīs' first forays into Sufism also occurred under the supervision of his father. In the

preface to Idrīs' own commentary on Maḥmūd Shabistarī's *Kitāb Ḥaqq al-yaqīn*, he writes that

his early studies in Sufism began in 876/1471 at the age of approximately fourteen: "While

inflamed by learned discussions and philosophical effusions through the fortunate attention and

generous tenderness of my saintly father... I was becoming familiar with mystical gnosis and in

their verification became enamored of the divinely inspired realities."[49] In this exploration of

esoteric matters, Idrīs notes that he was aided by two of the works of Maḥmūd Shabistarī, *Ḥaqq*

al-yaqīn and *Gulshan-i rāz*. The latter work consists of a short *masnavī* in Persian formulated as

a reply to a letter that poses sixteen questions on difficult concepts of mystical doctrine.

Gulshan-i rāz's breadth of subject yet relative concision, which Idrīs likens to "the launch perch

of the views of that high-flying falcon [Shabistarī],"[50] made the work a popular starting point for

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[47] For a discussion of a student's curriculum in fifteenth-century eastern Iran, see Maria Eva Subtelny and Anas B. Khalidov, "The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning in Timurid Iran in the Light of the Sunni Revival under Shāh-Rukh," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115, no. 2 (April 1, 1995): 210–36.

[48] Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Chihil Hadīs̱*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya 469, 3a. On Salmāsī, see Ḥusayn Karbalāʾī Tabrīzī, *Rawẓāt al-jinān va-jannāt al-janān*, ed. Jaᶜfar Sulṭān Qurrāʾī (Tehran: Bungāh-i Tarjumah va Nashr-i Kitāb, 1965), 1:444–5, 2:58–60.

[49] *Dar as̱nā-yi ishtiᶜāl bi-mubāḥas̱āt-i ᶜilmī v ḥusn-i munāfaqāt-i funūn-i ḥikmī bi-yumn-i mulāzamat va ḥusn-i mulāyamat-i vālid-i qudsī-manzilat... bi-taᶜarruf-i maᶜārif-i ṣūfīya alūf va dar taḥaqquq bi-ḥaqāyiq-i kashfīya shaghūf mī būd*, Bidlīsī, *Ḥaqq al-mubīn*, 3a.

[50] *maṭār-i anẓār-i ān sāhbāz-i buland-parvāz*, Ibid.

students of Sufism.[51] Idrīs' examination of these texts unfolded through the careful guidance of

his father, who at that time decided to write a commentary on *Gulshan-i rāz.* This close

collaboration between father and son was a common feature of all of Idrīs' education and is

evidenced further by the existence of one manuscript of Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī's work on mystical

matters copied in the young hand of Idrīs.[52]

In addition to these studies in the religious sciences, Idrīs, like his father, also developed

an interest in the mathematical sciences. Around 877/1472 he produced a notebook that

contained a number of important treatises on various mathematical sciences.[53] The work includes

copies of Niẓām al-Dīn Ḥasan Nīshāpūrī's *al-Risāla al-shamsīya fi al-ḥisāb*, Ṣafī al-Dīn ᶜAbd al-

Muᵓmin Urmavī's *Risālat al-adwār fīᵓl-mūsīqī*, Shams al-Dīn Samarqandī's *Risālat ashkāl al-

taᵓsīs*, and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Risālat al-tadhkira fī ᶜilm al-hayᵓa*. In all, the collection

demonstrates a well-developed interest in a range of mathematical sciences including accounting,

music, and astronomy. Idrīs' interest in knowledge of the heavens remained a discernible aspect

of his intellectual curiosity throughout his life. As a young man working in the court of the

Aqquyunlu ruler Sultan Yaᶜqūb, he composed a work on the changing seasons that emphasized

the importance of the heavens in this meteorological process.[54] Later, in his history of the

Ottoman dynasty, he emphasized the influence of heavenly bodies on the structure of human

history.[55] Idrīs occasionally tied such studies in astronomy to the intellectual luminaries who

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[51] J.T.P de Bruijn, "Maḥmūd Shabistarī," *EI².*
[52] For instance Idrīs copied his father's work entitled *Kanz al-ḥafī fī bayān maqāmāt al-ṣūfī* at
the age of nineteen in 880/1474. For Idrīs' colophon appended to a copy of this work, see Ḥusām
al-Dīn ᶜAlī Bidlīsī, *Kanz al-ḥafī fī bayān maqāmāt al-ṣūfī,* Milli Kütüphane, Nevşehir ÜR 201,
83a. For a discussion of the relationship of this work with Idrīs' mature political thought, see
chapter nine.
[53] Bidlīsī, *Majmūᶜa*, Ragıp Paşa 919.
[54] Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Risālat rabīᶜ al-abrār*, Ayasofya 3986, 37a-40b. See also chapter two.
[55] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 275b-276a. For a discussion of this relationship, see chapter nine.

elaborated them. For instance, a few years after finishing the notebook on mathematical sciences,

he returned to it in order to include his own commentary on Ṭūsī's *Risālat al-tadhkira fī ʿilm al-hay'a*.[56] Ṭūsī's treatise elaborating the structure of the heavens remained the fundamental work

on astronomy in the Islamic world for several hundred years after its composition in the middle

of the thirteenth century. Ṭūsī produced the work based upon the astronomical observations he

made from the observatory constructed by his Ilkhanid patrons at Marāgha.[57] While the

observatory remained in operation only for a short while, its ruins existed at least until 881/1477

at which time Idrīs passed by the site, and, motivated by Ṭūsī's monumental work, decided to

incorporate his own commentary into the copy of Ṭūsī's astronomical epistle, which he had

transcribed four years earlier.[58]

I.3 Tabriz as Cultural Center

Idrīs' education—whether under the supervision of his father or self-directed—largely

occurred in and around Tabriz. While Ṭūsī's legacy remained an important aspect of the

intellectual heritage of the city, during Idrīs' childhood in the reign of Uzun Ḥasan, Tabriz

enjoyed a similarly vibrant cultural and intellectual life.[59] As the Aqquyunlu Sultanate under

Uzun Ḥasan relied on the ideological and spiritual support of the learned classes to buttress its

legitimating claims to political authority, the sultan actively patronized scholars through land

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[56] Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ṭūsī and F. J. Ragep, *Naṣīr Al-Dīn Al-Ṭūsī's Memoir on Astronomy = Al-Tadhkira Fī 'ilm Al-Hay'a*, vol. 12, Sources in the History of Mathematics and Physical Sciences 12 (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1993).
[57] ibid.
[58] Bidlīsī, *Majmūʿa*, Ragıp Paşa 919, 184a.
[59] For the role of Tabriz in the cultural life of this period, see Judith Pfeiffer, *Politics, Patronage, and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th-15th Century Tabriz*, vol. 8, Iran Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

grants and special tax privileges offered to learned men, as well as generous sponsorship of individual scholarly works.[60] Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī's position at the court in Tabriz resulted from this patronage. More broadly, Uzun Ḥasan sought to develop and maintain patronage ties with scholars further afield. For instance, although Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī never resided in the Aqquyunlu capital of Tabriz, he received Uzun Ḥasan's patronage through his acceptance of the position as judge in Shiraz.[61] In turn, Davānī dedicated a number of his works to Uzun Ḥasan and members of his immediate family. While many of these works were on theological matters, several of them, such as his work on practical ethics, *Lavāmiʿ al-ishrāq fī makārim al-akhlāq* (better known as *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*), laid out the ethical considerations that would promote a ruler's just administration and situated such a discourse within an encomiastic celebration of Uzun Ḥasan's qualities as ruler.[62]

Yet even as scholars accepted a ruler's patronage, they often endeavored to maintain a modicum of independence in thought and action.[63] While Davānī accepted Aqquyunlu appointments in Shiraz and offered dedications of his works to the dynasty's rulers, he never

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[60] Chad G. Lingwood, *Politics, Poetry, and Sufism in Medieval Iran : New Perspectives on Jāmī's Salāmān va Absāl* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 82–86.

[61] Shushtarī's *Majālis* states that Davānī was brought to Tabriz after the enthronement of Sultan Yaʿqūb at which point he was offered the judgeship of Shiraz, Harun Anay, "Celaleddin Devvani, Hayatı, Eserleri, Ahlak ve Siyaset Düşüncesi" (Ph.D., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1994), 61; Nūr Allāh ibn ʿAbd Allāh Shushtarī, *Kitāb mustaṭāb majālis al-mu'minīn.* (Tihrān: Kitābfurūshī-i Islāmīyah, 1365), 2:221.

[62] Davānī dedicated the work to Uzun Ḥasan and prefaced his discourse on ethics with a long panegyric on Uzun Ḥasan, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Asʿad Davānī, *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*, ed. ʿAbdallah Masʿūdī Ārānī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Iṭṭilāʿāt, 1391), 48–51.

[63] Franklin Lewis explores this aspect of patronage in Franklin Lewis, "Sincerely Flattering Panegyrics: The Shrinking Ghaznavid Qasida," in *The Necklace of the Pleiades: Studies in Persian Literature Presented to Heshmat Moayyad on His 80th Birthday : 24 Essays on Persian Literature, Culture and Religion*, ed. Franklin Lewis, Sunil Sharma, and Heshmat Moayyad, Iranian Studies Series (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2010), 209–250.

joined the court in Tabriz.[64] Another anecdote Idrīs provides from his own education in the city

of Tabriz illustrates the inherent tensions of this relationship as well as certain aspects of the

broader intellectual climate of the day. Specifically, the anecdote concerns Idrīs' interaction with

the prominent mystical scholar ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī[65] during his stay in Tabriz while returning

from pilgrimage in 877/1472.[66] Jāmī's circuitous itinerary during this journey highlights the

importance of pilgrimage for scholars as an opportunity for intellectual exchange in foreign lands

and patronage at distant courts. On the way to the Hijaz, Jāmī spent four months in Baghdad,

during which time he acquired a copy of one of Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī's works.[67] Jāmī's return

route from Mecca took him to Damascus where he studied the traditions of the prophet (*ḥadīth*)

with Qāḍī Khuzayrī. While there, Jāmī received an invitation from Sultan Meḥmed II to join the

Ottoman court, which he ultimately declined.[68] Instead, Jāmī continued on his journey back to

Khurāsān via Tabriz, where he met with the leading scholars of the city.

Reflecting on his experiences studying mystical matters with his father, Idrīs describes

Jāmī's arrival and stay in Tabriz in the following terms: "at that time, while I was residing in the

city of Tabriz and waiting for the attention of learned men, news arrived to the groups studying

in the mosques and madrasas from the pilgrimage train of Khurāsān. The pilgrimage train

announced the arrival of the caravan of the leader of the gnostics of the age, the antecedent of the

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[64] Harun Anay, "Celaleddin Devvani, Hayatı, Eserleri, Ahlak ve Siyaset Düşüncesi" (Ph.D., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1994), 61.

[65] For biographical details on Jāmī, see Ertuğrul I. Ökten, "Jāmī (817-898/1414-1492): His Biography and Intellectual Influence in Herat" (Ph.D., University of Chicago, 2007); Hamid Algar, *Jami*, 1st ed., Makers of Islamic Civilization (New Delhi: Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[66] For a detailed account of Jāmī's pilgrimage and return to Khurāsān, see Ökten, "Jāmī (817-898/1414-1492)," 150–159.

[67] Although Jāmī acquired the work in Baghdad, Ökten notes that Jāmī was not particularly impressed with it, ibid., 153–4.

[68] Jāmī's letter to Sultan Meḥmed is preserved in the archives of the Topkapı Palace Museum, TSMA E. 7061.

domain of eloquence, the king of the country of discourse, and the trailblazer of the paths of poetry, Mawlānā ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī."[69] Once settled in the city, Jāmī was joined by the students and learned men of Tabriz, including Idrīs, in a discussion of his interests in mystical doctrines. During the conversation, Idrīs asked whether any of the scholars of Āẕarbāyjān had produced a commentary of Shabistarī's *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn*. These words piqued Jāmī's interest in these two works and upon his request Idrīs "immediately brought the two books to the peerless view of the master himself."[70] Jāmī accepted copies of the work and mentioned that he had been thinking of producing a commentary of Shabistarī's *Ḥaqq al-mubīn* himself. Idrīs' description of Jāmī's visit to Tabriz highlights the important role travel provided in intellectual exchange during this period. The leading scholar's arrival in the city was greeted among the students and teachers of the city's mosques and madrasas with all the fanfare commensurate with the arrival of a major intellectual celebrity. These same students and teachers took advantage of Jāmī's visit to the city to inquire of the scholar his views on a variety of learned matters. Lastly, the incident represented an exchange in the fullest sense, as Jāmī, in turn, benefited by the encounter through the acquisition of two works concerning Shabistarī's mystical doctrines. The city of Tabriz facilitated this exchange through its position as one of the major political and cultural centers of the second-half of the fifteenth century. In this regard, the city itself also may be regarded as a major formative component of Idrīs' early life and education.

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[69] *Dar asnāʾ-i ān awqāt ki iqāmat dar kishvar-i Tabrīz va taraṣṣud-i mulāzamat-i ahl-i kamāl va tamyīz mī namūd nāgāh az ḥulūl va nuzūl-i qāfila-i ḥujjāj-i Khurāsān khabar-i vuṣūl-i qāfila-sālār-i ʿārifān-i zamān va sābiq-i miżmār-i bayān khusraw-i mamālik-i kalāmī va pīshraw-i masālik-i maʿānī niẓāmī Mawlānā ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (barrada Allāh maḍjaʿahu va ṭayyaba marjaʿahu) bi-masāmiʿ-i majāmiʿ-i ahl-i madāris va ṣavāmiʿ rasīd.* Bidlīsī, *Ḥaqq al-mubīn*, 3b.
[70] *Īn faqīr bī-tavaqquf va taqṣīr har du kitāb rā bi-naẓar-i bī-naẓīr mawlawī avard.* ibid., 4a.

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Chapter Two: The Aqquyunlu Crisis of Rule: Idrīs' View from the Chancery, 1480-1497

II.1 Introduction

Despite his father's stimulating scholarly circles in Tabriz, Idrīs, as a young man, decided

to enter royal service at the court of Uzun Ḥasan's son and eventual successor Yaᶜqūb. The

second twenty years of Idrīs' life, which were largely concerned with cultivating professional

connections and securing political advancement in the Aqquyunlu chancery, highlight significant

aspects of the ideological aspirations and administrative challenges faced by Persian courts

during these decades. Specifically, Idrīs' activities in the Aqquyunlu chancery during this period

reflects a number of broader developments within the Aqquyunlu polity. Firstly, the ascendency

of the Bayandur dynasty under the leadership of Uzun Ḥasan facilitated a marked shift in the

ideological trajectory of the Aqquyunlu court. This shift largely coincided with the Aqquyunlu

appointment of several secretaries who had previously worked for Uzun Ḥasan's defeated

Qaraquyunlu and Timurid rivals. These secretaries infused Aqquyunlu chancery practice with the

vocabulary of sovereignty employed by their former masters and, by extension, influenced Idrīs'

early chancery production. Secondly, even as the Aqquyunlu court developed increasingly

sophisticated concepts to express its sovereignty, Yaᶜqūb and his administration necessarily

grappled with the more basic concern of securing the loyalty and cooperation of leading social

elements. In response to this need, the Aqquyunlu court largely continued a number of important

financial and political privileges, the practice of which they had inherited from previous

dynasties.

The record of Idrīs' quotidian secretarial work as reflected in his personal composition

collection (*majmūᶜa-yi inshāʾ*) substantiates the importance of these privileges for the

Aqquyunlu polity. Yet, even as they helped secure the loyalty of social elites, such privileges, which usually took the form of lucrative tax exemptions and usufruct grants, eroded the financial stability of the central administration. Qāżī ᶜĪsá Sāvajī, one of Idrīs' close friends and associates during the reign of Yaᶜqūb, realized the threat posed by these privileges and unsuccessfully endeavored to curtail their use and reform the land regime.

Several leading social groups resisted these reform efforts and consequently contributed inadvertently to the instability of Aqquyunlu rule in the last decade of the ninth/fifteenth century. Idrīs' reflections on this decade focus on the increasing disorder and chaos he witnessed. His support of an exiled Bayandur prince, Aḥmad ibn Ughurlu Muḥammad, in a bid for sovereignty in Aqquyunlu domains represented a desperate effort to help reverse the perceptible slide toward mayhem. The failure of this effort also reflected the further rejection of centralizing tendencies and, for Idrīs, marked the end of the Aqquyunlu reign as masters of Iran. As if to foreshadow the future course of Idrīs' life, as well as the broader geopolitical trajectory of western Iran, Sultan Aḥmad's major patron and provider of political support was the Ottoman sultan Bāyezīd II. In the final twenty years of Idrīs' life, Ottoman involvement in western Iran would become one of the most important factors in reshaping the political landscape of Idrīs' homeland. On a personal level, as a consequence of the devolution of the Aqquyunlu Sultanate and the political instability such devolution precipitated, Idrīs questioned the professional path of sultanic service that he had chosen as a young in the early 1480s. In the light of these tumultuous political developments, Idrīs regretted his youthful decision to abandon the scholarly life embodied by his father.

II.2 Professional Development in the Dīvān *of Sultan Yaʿqūb*

The intellectual and cultural life of the court attracted Idrīs to the Aqquyunlu palace and informed his decision to enter a scribal career. While Idrīs would later remember his entry into secretarial service as a distraction from his interest in mystical matters, as a young man he relished the opportunity to work in an intellectually stimulating environment.[1] The timing of Idrīs' entry into administrative life roughly coincided with a number of crucial political developments within the Aqquyunlu court that would have important ramifications for the future of the Bayandur dynasty.

Throughout Idrīs' childhood, Uzun Ḥasan's ascendant political fortunes precipitated an aggressive Aqquyunlu political and ideological program with respect to the polity's neighbors. Between 871/1467 and 873/1469, the Aqquyunlu confederation under Uzun Ḥasan's leadership defeated all of the principal elements of the Qaraquyunlu confederation, as well as the Timurid ruler of Khurāsān, Sulṭān-Abū Saʿīd. With the defeat of Jahānshāh, Uzun Ḥasan moved his court from Diyārbakr to Tabriz, the prestigious former capital city of the Ilkhanid dynasty. Following his victory over Sulṭān-Abū Saʿīd (d. 873/1469), Uzun Ḥasan sought to extend his influence over Khurāsān through the brief installation of the young prince Yādigār Muḥammad on the Timurid throne in Herat.[2] These successes encouraged Uzun Ḥasan to exert his political will against his western Mamluk and Ottoman neighbors. Political confrontation with the Mamluk and Ottoman

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[1] In *Ḥaqq al-mubīn* Idrīs remarks that forty years of service to sultans kept him from consideration of mystical matters, Bidlīsī, *Ḥaqq al-mubīn*., 4a. As *Ḥaqq al-mubīn* was completed in 921/1515, this would suggest that Idrīs entered the service of the Aqquyunlu court during the reign of Uzun Ḥasan. The forty years to which Idrīs refers may not be literal, but simply a reference to a long period of time. In any event *Risālat rabīʿ al-abrār* clarifies Idrīs' youthful enthusiasm for service to the court and also suggests that he only entered service for Yaʿqūb in 885/1480, see footnote 9 of this chapter for details dating *Risālat rabīʿ al-abrār.*

[2] For Uzun Ḥasan's campaigns between 871/1467 and 873/1469, Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 96–100.

sultanates assumed both military and ideological dimensions. Throughout the mid-870s/early-1470s, Aqquyunlu troops engaged Mamluk and Ottoman contingents west of the Euphrates. In addition to these military confrontations, Uzun Ḥasan also asserted his independent sovereign authority with respect to these two western neighbors. Beginning in 873/1469, Uzun Ḥasan outfitted the Iraqi pilgrimage caravan with an elaborately embroidered palanquin (*maḥmil*). Traditionally, outfitting a *maḥmil* was reserved for independent sovereign rulers and Uzun Ḥasan's gesture was rightfully interpreted by the Mamluks as a mark of his independence and desire to usurp the place of honor occupied by the Mamluk-outfitted Egyptian pilgrimage caravan.[3] With respect to the Ottomans, Uzun Ḥasan extended his protection to the Qaramanid ruler Pīr Aḥmad, who had fled to Uzun Ḥasan's court in the wake of a failed insurrection against his Ottoman overlords.[4] Both actions represented an affront to the political authority of these western neighbors and led to further military confrontation. In the summer of 877/1473 the main Ottoman and Aqquyunlu armies clashed beside the Başkent River at a place called Otlukbeli.

While Uzun Ḥasan's devastating defeat in the battle resulted in little territorial loss, the blow to the sultan's prestige and confidence contributed to deterioration in the sultan's health and entailed serious consequences for the subsequent history of the Aqquyunlu polity. Reflecting on this period, Idrīs strongly associated the sultan's poor health with the political wellbeing of the body politic: "Gradually the misfortune of his own bodily illness and the discordant condition of the state appeared to him. Several illnesses of his temperament were prolonged on account of

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[3] For general remarks on the *maḥmil*, see "Maḥmal," *EI²*. Woods details the particulars of the Aqquyunlu-Mamluk rivalry with respect to the Egyptian and Iraqi pilgrimage trains, Woods, *The Aqquyunlu,* 107-8.

[4] Idrīs suggests that the protection and support Uzun Ḥasan provided Pīr Aḥmad was one of the principal causes of Ottoman-Aqquyunlu hostilities, see Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 456a.

the force of his carnal desires and the weakness of his spiritual strength."[5] In the years following

the defeat, Uzun Ḥasan embarked on few military campaigns against neighboring powers and

instead was forced to contend with several rebellions instigated by his sons who began to

compete for succession. The stability of the polity was further undermined by Uzun Ḥasan's

death in 882/1478, at which point the various factions supporting the sultan's sons and nephews

plunged into open civil war.[6]

The disorder of the civil war lasted one year before Uzun Ḥasan's fourteen-year-old son

Yaʿqūb emerged victorious over the other factions. The enthronement of the young sultan

marked the beginning of a period of relative order and calm within Aqquyunlu domains, which

Idrīs frequently remembers as an effect of the young sultan's just countenance.[7] Indeed, even in

his history of the Ottoman sultans, Idrīs found a way to pay homage to Yaʿqūb; for instance, he

notes that "the effects of fortune and the lights of justice and world-rule appeared from the

eminence of his favor and the magnificence of his action."[8] Incidentally, Yaʿqūb's accession also

marked the beginning of Idrīs' literary career and initiation into the scribal services of the

Aqquyunlu palace.

Idrīs' vehicle for entry into a secretarial career was a relatively short epistle, entitled

Rabīʿ al-abrār (*Springtime of the Dutiful*), which he penned in early 885/spring 1480 in praise of

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[5] *yawmᵃⁿ fa-yawmᵃⁿ ū rā balīyatī az amrāż-i badanī va ḥālat-i fasādī az fiṭrat-i mulkī va madanī bi-ẓuhūr rasīd va bi-vāsiṭa-yi quvvat-i aġrāż-i nafsānī va żaʿf-i quvā-yi rūḥānī chand nawʿ-i khastagī-yi mizājī-yi ū mutamādī shud.* Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 513b.

[6] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 125-7.

[7] Idrīs' remembrance of this period as peaceful and stable belies the disturbances caused by several significant rebellions in the early years of Sultan Yaʿqūb's reign. These disturbances are discussed below with reference to Bayandur ibn Rustam.

[8] *fa-ammā aṯār-i dawlat va bakhtiyārī va anvār-i maʿdalat va jahāndārī az navāṣī-yi iqbāl-i ū va majārī-i aḥvāl va aʿmāl-i ū numāyān mī namud.* Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 514b.

the superiority of spring over the other seasons.[9] Learned young men often composed short

epistles or poems in praise of a potential patron with the hope that, impressed with the erudition

of the author, the powerful individual would offer employment.[10] Idrīs followed this approach

and selected the attributes of spring as a suitable and timely topic. At the time of his writing, the

Aqquyunlu royal court was preparing its semi-annual migration from its winter camp to summer

pastures at Mughān in Āzarbājyān, which Idrīs described as "the first period of youth of the

garden's sprouts, the morning of the first age of fortune's youth, which is to say the season of

spring, when the imperial army is inclined to move from its descent into the warm lowlands of

the south and head to a moderate and concordant summer camp in the pastures among the

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[9] The epistle can be tentatively dated through a reconstruction of Yaᶜqūb's activities in the first
years of his reign. According to *Menākqıb-ı İbrāhīm Gülşenī*, Yaᶜqūb established his summer
camp in early 886/mid-1481 at Qizil Aghach on his return from a state visit to his uncle Farrukh
Yasār, the ruler of Shirvān, *Menâḳıb-i İbrâhîm Gülşenî*, 115; also see note in Fażl Allāh ibn
Rūzbihān Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Tārīkh-i ‘ālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, ed. John E Woods, Revised and
augmented (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1992), 41. According to Idrīs, Sultan Yaᶜqūb spent a
winter with Farrukh Yasār after having passed a summer at Mughān in Āzarbājyān, (Idrīs Bidlīsī,
Risāla-yi khazānīya, Esad Efendi 1888, 243b-250a). *Rabīᶜ al-abrār* makes clear that Mughān
was the destination for Yaᶜqūb's summer encampment, which suggests that *Rabīᶜ al-abrār*
predates *Risāla-yi khazānīya,* (Bidlīsī, *Rabīᶜ al-abrār*, Ayasofya 3986, 37b; Esad Efendi 1888,
233b). Such an order of composition makes sense as Idrīs asks to be accepted in the court of
Yaᶜqūb at the end of the preface of *Rabīᶜ al-abrār*, while he notes that he is firmly established
within the sultan's retinue in *Risāla-yi khazānīya,* compare Bidlīsī, *Rabīᶜ al-abrār* (Ayasofya
3986, 38a) and *Risāla-yi khazānīya*, Esad Efendi 1888, 241b. This reconstruction of Sultan
Yaᶜqūb's itinerary would suggest that the sultan arrived in Mughān in Muḥarram-Ṣafar
885/spring 1480 at which point Idrīs presented *Rabīᶜ al-abrār* to the court. After passing the
summer at Mughān, the royal camp headed to Farrukh Yasār some time between Shaᶜbān-
Ramaḍān 885 (autumn 1480). This move motivated Idrīs to compose *Risāla-yi khazānīya*. Sultan
Yaᶜqūb spent the winter of 1480-1481 (last months of 885) in Sharvanshah before returning to
summer pastures at Qizil Aghach in Āzarbāyjān in the spring of 1481 (Muḥarram 886). This
itinerary would suggest that Idrīs finished *Rabīᶜ al-abrār* shortly after the royal court's arrival in
Mughān in early 885/spring 1480. The itinerary, which includes four different royal camps
within two year, also highlights the degree to which the Aqquyunlu court embraced the nomadic
ideal.

[10] For an example of this process in the context of mid-sixteenth-century Ottoman patronage,
consider the example of Muṣṭafá ᶜĀlī, Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman
Empire*, 34.

mountain peaks."[11] More importantly, the selection of the attributes of spring for the subject of

the epistle was significant because the topic allowed Idrīs to showcase his mastery of rhetorical

and literary techniques, while also demonstrating his facility in a range of exact sciences

including astronomy and meteorology. Idrīs divided the work into four short chapters on 1) the

causes of the change of seasons, 2) the nature and effects of the four seasons, 3) the superiority

of spring, and 4) the causes of atmospheric events and the reason for scarcity and plenty

throughout the year. The contents of the chapters explained the astronomical cause of the change

of seasons as well as the meteorological events that contribute to the life cycle of the world's

flora and fauna. Throughout the work, but especially in the chapter on the superiority of spring,

Idrīs seeks to elevate his discourse through the use of hyperliterate language. The selection of

spring as the main subject of the epistle also enabled Idrīs to develop a recurring metaphor in his

descriptive praise of the young sultan. As spring, the season of new life, spreads its effects over

the world through warming sunlight and nurturing showers, so the young sultan spreads the

lights of justice over the world and showers his subjects with displays of munificence. Idrīs

develops this metaphor in the preface through a poem in praise of the young sultan:

The meadow as fresh as Paradise
Became worthy of the fortune-favored king's banquet

Sultan Yaᶜqūb, grace and gift of the world
For the world was made young by his justice

All the king's lands, a garden became
From the security of his justice, a peaceful domain

From the cloud of munificence in the age of his showering generosity,
His ocean-like hand scattered forth pearls

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[11] *dar ᶜunfuvān-i shabāb-i zamān va avān-i naw-javānī-yi javānān-i bustān aᶜnī faṣl-i rabīᶜ va vaqt-i badīᶜ ki sipāh-i shāh sayyārāt az hubūṭ-i garmsīr-i jānib-i janūb mayl-i intiqāl bi-ṣawb-i nuqṭa-yi iᶜtidāl va āhang-i yaylāmīshī dar yaylāq-i qulal-i jibāl-i shamāl namūda būd.* Bidlīsī, *Risālat rabīᶜ al-abrār*, Esad Efendi 1888, 232a.

The stars followed his shining ideas
Such that every aim he sought was realized

It was his shadow that stood sentry over the earth
When his sword became the watchman of the age[12]

Idrīs's emphasis on the sultan's generosity rather obviously reinforces the other intention of the work, namely a request for patronage. At the end of the epistle, Idrīs extends the metaphor of the youthful effects of spring when he requests that his work (or he himself) be accepted by the servants of Yaʿqūb's palace. The preface ends with Idrīs' hope that "this early fruit of the orchard of refinement, this young wine of the garden of reflection will arrive to a place of acceptance in the good-natured noses and on the straight-minded palates of the servants of that sky-pillared palace and heaven-ceilinged gathering."[13] Evidently the court reacted favorably to this early literary effort, for a few months later Idrīs counted himself among the sultan's servants as the imperial court disembarked from its summer camp in Mughān; in the epistle Idrīs wrote shortly after *Rabīʿ al-abrār*, he introduces himself as "this retainer of this virtuous royal household, the poor servant of God, al-Ḥakīm Idrīs (*īn mulāzim-i āsitān-i afāżil-makān al-faqīr ilá Allāh al-Ḥakīm Idrīs*)."[14]

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[12] *Chaman dar tāzagī chun bāgh-i firdaws / sazā-yi bazm-i shāh-i kāmrān shud / jahān-i luṭf u iḥsān Shāh Yaʿqūb / ki az ʿadlash jahān-i naw javān shud / bihishtī shud zamīn u ʿarṣa-yi mulk / zi amn-i ʿadl-i ū dāruʾl-amān shud / bi-dawr-i jūd-i ū az abr-i anʿām / kaf-i daryā miṣālash durr fishān shud / falak shud tābiʿ-i rāy-i munīrash / ki har maqṣad ki mī just an-chunān shud / zamīn rā sāya-yi ū gashta ḥāris / chu tīghash ku nagahbān-i zamān shud.* Bidlīsī, *Rabīʿ al-abrār*, Aya Sofya 3986, 37b; Bidlīsī, *Rabīʿ al-abrār,* Esad Efendi 1888, 233b.

[13] *umīd ki īn bākūra ṭabīʿyat va naw-bāda-i riyāż-i fikrat bi-mashāmm-i qabūl-i ṭibāʿ-i salīma va maḏāqq-i aẕhān-i mustaqīma-i khuddām-i ān āsitān-i asmān-i arkān va majlisiyān-i qudsī-āshiyān bi-mawqiʿ-i qabūl mawṣūl kard.* Bidlīsī, *Rabīʿ al-abrār*, 234a/b.

[14] Bidlīsī, *Risāla-yi khazāniya*, Esad Efendi 1888, 241b.

II.3 Chancery Training

As a learned young man with family connections to the Bayandur dynasty, Idrīs found work in the central chancery of the Royal Administrative Council (*dīvān-i aᶜlá*) of the Aqquyunlu court. As mentioned in chapter one, the roles of military men and urban notables were well defined in Persian courts of the ninth/fifteenth century. In the Aqquyunlu case, the *Turk* and *Tājīk* high-ranking officers of the central administration gathered in the Royal Administrative Council to advise the sultan and help formulate policy. *Tājīk*s held the principal government secretariats of the scribal, financial, and religious administration, while *Turk*s generally held positions in the military administration and palace offices. The government secretaries consisted of the minister of religious affairs (*ṣadr al-sharīᶜa*), the chief Islamic military judge (*qāżī al-ᶜaskar*), the chief financial minister (*vazīr*), the state secretary (*munshī al-mamālik*), and the state comptroller (*mustawfī*).[15] While a hierarchy certainly existed among the principal secretarial offices, there were few clearly defined career paths within the administration.[16] High-ranking officers often shifted from one position to another and during

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[15] For discussions of the structure of the late Medieval Persian chancery, see Walther Hinz, "Die Persische Geheimkanzlei im Mittelalter," in *FS Rudolf Tschudi*, 1954, 342–55; Woods provides an overview of the structure of the Aqquyunlu royal council, Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 15–17; this characterization of the structure of the council has been echoed by Colin Mitchell in his analysis of early Safavid administration, Colin Paul Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran: Power, Religion and Rhetoric*, I.B. Tauris & BIPS Persian Studies Series (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 49–50; for a detailed discussion of the structure and evolution of the Safavid bureaucracy, see Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, 1–74.

[16] Davānī's treatise on a military review of the provincial government of Fars clarifies certain aspects of the relative rank of Aqquyunlu military and civilian officers, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Davānī, "ᶜArżnāma," ed. Kilisli Rıfᶜat Efendi, *Millî Tetebbuᶜlar Mecmūᶜası* II, no. 5 (n.d.): 273–305; V. Minorsky, "A Civil and Military Review in Fārs in 881/1476," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London* 10, no. 1 (1939): 169–171.

some periods held multiple positions within the administration. Moreover the actual activities of any particular officer were only loosely based on the attributes of his office.[17]

Perhaps as a result of this *ad hoc* approach to governance, aspiring secretaries sought to develop their talents in the widest array of fields applicable to administration. The training and duties of a secretary in the Aqquyunlu court of the late fifteenth century largely corresponded with Idrīs' varied scholarly interests, which ranged from literature and rhetoric to the application of the exact sciences to practical problems.[18] The variegated activities of a secretary therefore appealed to Idrīs' intellectual inclinations. For this reason, Idrīs identified the attributes of a secretary as derived primarily from his ability to use reason (ʿaql). Recognizing this faculty of mankind as the most important gift that God had bestowed upon the sons of Adam, Idrīs considered its exercise the primary mode by which man could bring order to the world. In light of this gift, kings who were entrusted to rule for the sake of order, "had a need for the lords of sound reason in order to organize subjects and soldiers, especially with respect to the safeguarding and caretaking of property and wealth, as well as with respect to regulating relations among the army."[19] In other words, a ruler required secretaries who could effectively

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[17] Floor has noted in his examination of the relative rank of Safavid administrative offices that "it was not the function but rather the holder of the function (his personality, his connections, etc.) that determined the extent of its influence," Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions,* 41. For analogous examples in the earlier Aqquyunlu period, consider, for instance Qāżī ʿĪsá's assignment of his brother Shaykh ʿAlī the *ṣadr* to undertake cadastral surveys in Fars in 894/1489, Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Tarīkh*, 350-369; for more details on this episode, see below.

[18] Little work has been done on the education of secretaries during this period. For educaction of secretaries, see Colin Mitchell, "Safavid Imperial Tarassul and the Persian Insha Tradition," *Studia Iranica* 26, no. 2 (1997): 173–209; for the advice of a Mughal secretary to his son, see Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam: India 1200-1800 / Muzaffar Alam.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 128-132.

[19] *Har āyina har pādishāh-i ʿālījāh rā dar żabṭ-i raʿīyat va sipāh khuṣūṣ^(an) jihat-i muḥāfaẓat va murāqabat-i mulk va māl va murābaṭa va iytilāf miyān-i junūd-i rijāl bi-arbāb-i salīma iḥtiyāj ast.* Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 614a.

record the decisions that regulated his subjects and maintain accurate accounts to help preserve the financial basis of the kingdom.

The practical training of a secretary reflected this theoretical understanding. Since the earliest periods of Islamic history, state administrators had produced scribal manuals that described the duties of a secretary, often accompanied by examples of all the kinds of chancery documents a secretary would need to produce in his professional capacity.[20] While the first of these manuals were written in Arabic and produced during the Abbasid period, secretaries working for Saljūq courts began to produce manuals in Persian beginning in the sixth/twelfth century.[21] In both Arabic and Persian letters, this tradition likely reached its most comprehensive point in the ninth/fifteenth century.[22] In addition to these manuals, prominent statesmen and scholars gathered and collated examples of elegant prose that had been produced for official purposes. Often, especially in later periods, works which were presented as manuals in their

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[20] Although ᶜAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib's *Risāla ilá al-kuttāb* is an important example of Umayyad-era *inshāʾ*, it is not a manual insofar as it only provides examples of letters and no form. With this understanding, *al-Risāla al-ᶜadhra fī mawāzin al-balāgha* of the early Abbasid vizier, Abū al-Yusr Ibrāhīm al-Mudabbir, can be considered the first secretary's manual. For consideration of ᶜAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib and his chancery work, see Wadad Kadi, "The Religious Foundation of Late Umayyad Ideology and Practice," in *Sober religioso y poder politico en el Islam*, ed. Manuela Martin (Madrid: Agencia Espanola de Cooperación Internacional [Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas], 1994), 231–73.

[21] For an early Persian manual from the Saljūq period, see Muḥammad ibn ʾAbd al-Khāliq Mayhanī, *Destūr-i Debīrī*, ed. Adnan Sadık Erzi, Ankara: Türk Tarih Basımevi, 1962.

[22] Colin Mitchell suggests that the late fifteenth century witnessed a resurgence of interest in insha, Colin Paul Mitchell, "To Preserve and Protect: Husayn Vaʾiz-i Kashifi and Perso-Islamic Chancellery Culture," *Iranian Studies* 36, no. 4 (2003): 487; For fifteenth-century Arabic examples of the genre, consider Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī Qalqashandī, *Kitāb Ṣubḥ al-aʿshá*, 14 vols. (al-Qāhirah: al-Maṭbaᶜah al-Amīrīyah, 1331); Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr al-Ḥamawī, *Kitāb Qahwat al-inshāʾ*, ed. Rudolf Veselý, al-Ṭabᶜah 1., vol. 36, al-Nasharāt al-Islāmiyah ; 36 (Berlin: Klaus Schwartz Verlag, 2005); For Persian examples of the genre, consider Maḥmūd Gāvān, *Riyāẓ al-inshāʾ*, ed. Chānd Ḥusayn and Ghulām Yazdānī (Ḥaydarābād-i Dakkan: Sarkār-i ʿĀlī, 1948); Maḥmūd Gāvān, *Manāẓir al-inshāʾ*, Farhangistān-i Zabān va Adab-i Fārsī 12 (Tihrān: Farhangistān-i Zabān va Adab-i Fārsī, 1381); Jalāl al-Dīn Yūsuf Ahl, *Farāʾid-i ghiyāṣī*, ed. Heshmat Moayyad, vol. 53, Zabān va adabīyāt-i Fārsī ; 53 (Tehran: Foundation for Iranian Culture, 1977).

prefaces simply offered examples of elevated prose with little explanation or overt consideration of its diplomatic function in a chancery context.[23] Whether as diplomatic manuals or collections of prose, these two types of works primarily contributed to a secretary's ability to compose correspondence and formulate rescripts.

While these two sorts of works aided the production of useful and elegant documents, other works sharpened Idrīs' ability to maintain accurate accounts. Beginning in the late Abbasid period, secretaries began categorizing their accounting activities as a distinct formal body of knowledge known as the science of revenue bookkeeping (ʿilm al-siyāqa waʾl-ḥisāb).[24] To facilitate its mastery, secretaries produced accounting manuals that were specifically designed to aid in cadastral land surveys, tax assessments, and revenue accounting. In this regard, Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī is attributed with composing an overview of state finance in the middle of the eighth/thirteenth century.[25] Similarly, several manuals from the late Ilkhanid period, such as *Jāmiʿ al-ḥisāb* and *Risāla-yi falakīya*, provided detailed descriptions of a secretary's accounting duties and working methods. These manuals remained popular in fifteenth-century Persian lands, where they were incorporated into updated manuals or copied in their entirety.[26]

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[23] This is especially true of collections produced by scholars with no official connection to a chancery. See for example, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Inshā-yi Jāmī.* (Kānpūr: Naval Kishor, 1893).

[24] C.J. Heywood. "Siyāḳat," *EI²*; for a detailed discussion of accounting practice in fifteenth-century Herat, see Subtelny *Timurids in Transition*, especially 80-82, 143-146.

[25] Mojtaba Minovi and Vladimir Minorsky, "Naṣīr Al-Dīn Ṭūsī on Finance," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London* 10, no. 3 (1940): 755–89.

[26] *Jāmiʿ al-ḥisāb* is a late-Ilkhanid work on accountancy by ʿImād al-Sarāvī examined in "Das sogenannte Gāmeʾ oʾl-Hesāb des ʾEmād assarāwī: Ein Leitf. d. staatl. Rechnungswesens v. ca. 1340" (1962); *Risāla-yi Falakīya*, as preserved in Ayasofya 2756, is a mid-fifteenth century copy of a work originally composed in the Ilkhanid period; see ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad Māzandarānī, *Die Resalä-ye Falakiyyä des ʾAbdollah ibn Mohammad ibn Kiya al-Mazandarani ; ein persischer Leitfaden des staatlichen Rechnungswesens (um 1363)*, ed. Walther Hinz, vol. Bd. 4, Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission Bd. 4 (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1952).

Several fifteenth-century compendia collected by secretaries for their personal use include materials concerning both their chancery and accounting duties. These sources offer a valuable view of the educational and professional proclivities of secretaries whose training and activities are otherwise largely unknown. The range of material gathered in these compendia corresponds to the range of skills a secretary needed to demonstrate in his professional life. Pīr Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Nikidī, a provincial secretary working in Qarāmān in the early 880s/mid-1470s, compiled one such compendium.[27] Pīr Muḥammad's work includes two secretary's manuals in Persian and Turkish, a collection of chancery documents related to the early Ottoman administration of Qarāmān, examples of the *siyāqat* script number system, and a Persian-Turkish dictionary.[28] Taken as a whole, the work provides a relatively detailed view of a wide range of skills required of a secretary working in fifteenth-century Anatolia.[29]

Another such compendium completed at the beginning of the sixteenth century provides a view of late-Aqquyunlu scribal services. In all likelihood the compendium was actually compiled by Idrīs himself at the turn of the tenth/sixteenth century.[30] Like the compendium of the

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[27] There are several indications that Pīr Muḥammad compiled the notebook. Two of the epistles include colophons that attest to his transcription or authorship of the compendium's contents. Pīr Muḥammad's *nisba* indicate family ties to the city of Niğde in the province of Qarāmān. Pīr Muḥammad compiled the Persian-Turkish dictionary included in the compendium. His interest in both Turkish and Persian as administrative languages highlights the greater integration of the two languages into single unified chanceries in Anatolian and Balkan courts. For the two colophons of the compendium, see *Majmūʿa,* Nurbanu Sultan 122, 35a, 118b. See also "Fatih Sultan Mehmed Devrine Âit Bir İnşâ Mecmuası," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 20 (1996): 267–311.

[28] *Majmūʿa,* Nurbanu Sultan 122.

[29] For the Turkish secretary's manual, see Kırımlu Hafız Hüsam. Teressül. 2008., *Kırımlu Hafız Hüsam Teressül (Hacı Selimağa, Nurbanu No:122/5)*, ed. Şinasi Tekin, vol. 87, Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures (Cambridge, Mass.: The Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, Harvard University, 2008).

[30] Although Maria Subtelny tentatively suggests that a secretary working in Herat produced this manuscript, there are several indications that Idrīs Bidlīsī himself produced the compendium while working in Tabriz in 906/1501, Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition,* 146. As with Idrīs's

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Anatolian secretary, this work demonstrates the variegated yet specific sorts of knowledge a

secretary sought to cultivate. The first two sections of the compendium contain secretaries'

manuals written in Persian by Muʿīn ibn Muḥammad ʿAbbās and a secretary of Shāhrukh's court

known as Shihāb Munshī. The two manuals also highlight the shifting literary tastes and

diplomatic conventions embraced by secretaries in the Timurid era. While the first manual was

composed in the Ilkhanid period, the second manual, dedicated to Shāhrukh's chief minister

Khʷāja Pīr Aḥmad, includes more elaborate forms of address better suited to the tastes of

fifteenth-century Persian courts. In addition to these manuals, the compendium contains another

work dedicated to Khʷāja Pīr Aḥmad entitled *Shams al-siyāq fī ʾl-ḥisāb*.[31] While these three

works elaborated the fundamental skills necessary for Idrīs' profession, he supplemented these

manuals through the inclusion of a number of other works designed to facilitate an elegant use of

language. In this respect, Idrīs included in the compendium several works designed to help an

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other extant compendium, this work demonstrates a well-developed interest in astronomical
tables—both compendia include horospcopes for individual birthdates in a similar manner,
compare for instance, Bidlīsī, *Majmūʿa*, Ragıp Paşa 919, 189a and Bidlīsī, *Majmūʿa*, Ayasofya
3986, 135a/b. Moreover, the Aya Sofya compendium includes a copy of Idrīs' *Rabīʿ al-abrār*,
Bidlīsī, *Majmūʿa*, Aya Sofya 3986, 37a-40b. While Idrīs would become a relatively prominent
scholar and statesman after his completion of *Hasht bihihst* in the first decade of the sixteenth
century, up until that time he remained a respected but relatively unknown figure outside of
Tabriz. For this reason, the manuscript seems more likely to be the product of Tabriz than Herat.
Lastly, the compendium also includes a copy of Idrīs' prose writing collection. The only other
extant copy of Idrīs' prose collection was gathered by his son Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed and is
preserved in a manuscript of the Istanbul University Rare Books Library, Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed,
Inshā, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, FY 906. The prose collections contained
in FY 906 and Ayasofya 3986 share approximately half of their letters in common. Moreover in
at least two places in Ayasofya 3986 the complier makes clear that the letters are his own
composition (*min imlā kātibihi* and *min munshaʾāt al-faqīr*), Bidlīsī, *Majmūʿa*, Ayasofya 3986,
42a, 48b. These two letters are precisely the two letters in Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed's collection that
he identifies as his father's composition (*inshā-yi abavī*), Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed, *Inshā*, 9a, 27b.
[31] For a discussion of this work, see Walther Hinz, "Ein orientalisches Handelsunternehmen im
15. Jahrhundert," *Die Welt des Orients* 1, no. 4 (January 1, 1950): 313–40; Subtelny, *Timurids in
Transition*.

author produce witty and elegant prose as well as several poems and other literary epistles.[32] The

messy and inelegant hand with which Idrīs compiled the notebook underscores its use as a

personal reference and record of his professional interests and activities.[33]

II. 4 The Aqquyunlu Chancery in the Reign of Uzun Ḥasan

Idrīs' inclusion of several secretarial manuals produced in Herat reflects the broader

influence of eastern and central Iranian administrative practice within the Aqquyunlu chancery.

The territorial expansion and imperial aspirations of the Aqquyunlu polity during the reign of

Uzun Ḥasan necessitated an equally pronounced expansion of its scribal corps. With the

elimination of its Qaraquyunlu and Timurid rivals, Uzun Ḥasan's court incorporated many of the

most gifted secretaries and state functionaries of its defeated enemies into its own expanding

administration. For instance, Sirāj al-Dīn Qāsim Naqshbandī, who served as chief of protocol

and chancellor for Uzun Ḥasan, arrived at the Aqquyunlu court after more than twenty years of

service in the court of Abū Yūsuf Qaraquyunlu.[34] Similarly, Khwāndamīr notes that Mawlānā

Niẓām al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥayy, who had served as chancellor (*ṣāḥib-i dīvān-i inshāʾ*) in the

Timurid court of Sulṭān-Abū Saʿīd, received the patronage of Uzun Ḥasan after the Battle of

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[32] Bidlīsī, *Majmūʿa*, Ayasofya 3986, 67a-118a.

[33] Hinz noted that the copy was reproduced in a rush and with abridgments, Hinz, "Handulsunternehmen," 314. This assessment prompted Subtelny to characterize the work as the product of a young student whose rush to complete a copy left it "replete with errors," Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 146. In the colophon, Idrīs acknowledges the hasty manner in which he assembled the work. Rather than suggest any grammatical errors, the acknowledgement seems to underscore the personal nature of the compendium for Idrīs, Bidlīsī, *Majmūʿa*, Ayasofya 3986, 134b.

[34] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 18; Ḥusayn Karbalāʾī Tabrīzī, *Rawẓāt al-jinān va-jannāt al-janān*, ed. Jaʿfar Sulṭān Qurrāʾī (Tehran: Bungāh-i Tarjumah va Nashr-i Kitāb, 1965), 1:89–91.

Qarabagh. ʿAbd al-Ḥayy continued his work as chancellor in the Aqquyunlu court until his death in the beginning of the sixteenth century.[35]

In addition to these two secretaries, Abū Bakr Ṭihrānī's activities in the Aqquyunlu chancery of Uzun Ḥasan represent another important example of the Aqquyunlu recruitment of Timurid and Qaraquyunlu secretarial personnel.[36] Abū Bakr's activities as a secretary and historian of the Bayandur dynasty highlight the adoption and absorption of Timurid ideological principles by the Aqquyunlu polity as it sought to develop its own imperial credentials. Abū Bakr began his career working for the provincial administration of Shāhrukh's grandson Muḥammad Mīrzā in his homeland of Isfahan. In the wake of the Qaraquyunlu conquest of Isfahan in 857/1453, he remained employed in the local administration of the province under the governorship of Jahānshāh's son Muḥammadī. He participated in Jahānshāh's campaign in Khurāsān in 862/1458 and after sultan's success began writing a history of the ruler's reign.[37] He never finished this work—although much of it was likely incorporated into *Kitāb-i Diyārbakrīya*—because ten years later his patron, Jahānshāh, was defeated and executed at the hands of Uzun Ḥasan. Shortly after Uzun Ḥasan's defeat of the Timurid sultan Sulṭān-Abū-Saʿīd, Abū Bakr received an invitation from the Aqquyunlu ruler to join his court.[38]

From the time Abū Bakr joined Uzun Ḥasan in Shawwāl 873/April 1469 until the time of his death in 886/1481, he played a major role in formulating Uzun Ḥasan's royal image both through the composition of diplomatic correspondence and other official pronouncements, as

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[35] Khʷāndamīr, (1333 edition), 4:108; for ʿAbd al-Ḥayy's death, see Mitchell's thesis.
[36] For details of Ṭihrānī's life, see Fuat Sezgin's introduction in Abu Bakr Tihrani, *Kitab-ı Diyarbakriyya: Ak-Koyunlar tarihi*, vol. 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1993), i–xxv.
[37] *İn banda bi-tasvīd-i taʾrīkh-i sulṭānī bar ḥasb-i farmūda gāh gāh ṣafḥaʾī mī nivisht*, Abu Bakr Tihrani, *Kitab-ı Diyarbakriyya: Ak-Koyunlar tarihi*, vol. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1993), 353.
[38]Tihrani, *Kitab-ı Diyarbakriyya*, 1:xii.

well as through the completion of a history of the dynasty entitled *Kitāb-i Diyārbakrīya*. Abū

Bakr's history of the Bayandur dynasty presents two significant legitimating terms that Idrīs

adopted thirty years later when writing his history of the Ottoman dynasty. At the time of Abū

Bakr's writing in the 870/1470s, the use of *ghazā* as a legitimating principle had long been

established by the Ottoman sultans.[39] Even so, the term, which referred to a ruler's efforts to

expand the domains of Islam, had a much longer and broader history.[40] Most Timurid chronicles

of the ninth/fifteenth century celebrate Timur as a *ghāzī* for his campaigns against Georgia.[41]

Similarly, in several places in his history, Abū Bakr highlights Uzun Ḥasan's role in *ghazā*ʾ

against the Georgians.[42] Abū Bakr's association of Aqquyunlu rulers with *ghazā*ʾ highlights the

broad application of the term in ninth/fifteenth century historical writing. The second term Abū

Bakr incorporates into his history is presented without any elaboration of its ideological

underpinnings, yet represents an important innovation in ninth/fifteenth-century historiography.

In the lifetime and career of Timur, the term *Ṣāḥib-Qirān* (Master of the Auspicious

Conjunction) connoted the celestial ordination of a world-conqueror.[43] Although *Ṣāḥib-Qirān*

was used in encomiastic Persian poetry as early as the eleventh century, in the fifteenth century

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[39] For discussion of *ghazā*ʾ in the Ottoman context, see Imber, "The Ottoman Dynastic Myth," 1987; and Darling, "Reformulating the Gazi Narrative. When Was the Ottoman State a Gazi State."

[40] For an overview of the historical development of the term *Ṣāḥib-Qirān*, see Naindeep Chann, "Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction: Origins of the Sāhib-Qirān," *Iran and the Caucasus* 13, no. 1 (2009): 93–110.

[41] For an overview of Timurid historiography, see John E. Woods, "The Rise of Tīmūrid Historiography," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 43 (1987): 81–108; Yazdi makes frequent reference to Timur's status as a *ghāzī*, Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī, *Ẓafarnāma Ẓafarnāma,* ed. Sayyid Saʿīd Mīr Muḥammad Ṣādiq and ʿAbd al-Ḥusay Navāʾī (Tehran: Kitābkhāna Mūzih va Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūra-yi Islāmī, 1387).

[42] See for instance, Tihrani, *Kitab-ı Diyarbakriyya,* 2:393-4.

[43] For a detailed discussion of *Ṣāḥib-Qirān* in a broad historical context, see chapter five.

the term became synonymous with Timur and his descendants.[44] Most fifteenth-century Timurid

histories almost exclusively refer to the world-conqueror or his son Shāhrukh by this appellation.

In *Kitāb-i Diyārbakrīya*, Abū Bakr follows this example up to a point. For instance, in his

enumeration of Uzun Ḥasan's forebears, he notes that Uzun Ḥasan's grandfather, ʿUs̱mān Beg,

enjoyed great authority during the reign of "*Ṣāḥib-Qirān*, the great world-protecting emperor

Timur *Kuragān* and received protection and reinforcement from him."[45] Despite this recognition

of the world conqueror's status, Abū Bakr does not extend the same courtesy to Timur's

descendants and instead associates the term with his own patron Uzun Ḥasan.[46] This innovation

is significant as it represents the first prominent usage of this title in a non-Timurid history in the

fifteenth century. In this sense, the application of a Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty to the

Aqquyunlu context can be seen as a relatively natural outgrowth of Abū Bakr's extensive

experience in the courts of Timurid and Qaraquyunlu princes before finding a place in the

Aqquyunlu chancery.

II.5 Idrīs in the Chancery of Sultan Yaʿqūb

    Between his entry into Yaʿqūb's chancery and his flight from Tabriz in 908/1502, Idrīs

rose in the ranks from low-level functionary of the chancery (*mutaṣaddī-yi dīvān-i inshā*) to state

secretary (*munshī al-mamālik*).[47] While the precise trajectory of his promotion is difficult to

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[44] Naindeep Chann, "Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction: Origins of the Sāhib-Qirān," *Iran and the Caucasus* 13, no. 1 (2009): 93–110; A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, 26, n16; for further discussion of the term, see chapter eight below. On the continuing significance of the title in Mughal India, see Lisa Balabanlilar, "The Lords of the Auspicious Conjunction: Turco-Mongol Imperial Identity on the Subcontinent," *Journal of World History*, 8, no. 1 (2007): 1-39.
[45] Tihrani, *Kitab-ı Diyarbakriyya, vol. 1*, 1:12.
[46] Ṭihrānī frequently refers to his patron, Uzun Ḥasan, as *Ṣāḥib-Qirān*. Tihrani, *Kitab-ı Diyarbakriyya, vol. 2*.
[47] In his presentation of an imperial letter Idrīs drafted for Sultan Yaʿqūb in reply to Bāyezīd's news of the conquest of Aqkirmān and Kilī, Idrīs states that he wrote the letter in his capacity as

establish, the record of his activities in the council as reflected in his *inshā* collection provides an important view toward the general business of the late-Aqquyunlu chancery, as well as many of the salient external and internal political challenges that the Aqquyunlu polity faced in the wake of Uzun Ḥasan's death. Accordingly, the variety of material Idrīs includes in his prose collection ranges from official correspondence with neighboring sovereigns to internally circulated announcements, titles of investiture, and tax exemptions for notables.

Although Idrīs' general appraisal of Sultan Yaᶜqūb's reign focuses on the peace and stability that the sultan secured, the early years of his reign witnessed a number of internal threats that precipitated important realignments within the royal court. One of Idrīs' first significant assignments within the chancery was to write the victory proclamation (*fatḥnāma*) communicating news of the defeat of Bayandur ibn Rustam. Bayandur was Yaᶜqūb's second cousin and an instrumental member of the coalition that brought the young prince to power in 883/1478. Bayandur, along with Yaᶜqūb's other ward Sulaymān and the prince's mother Saljūqshāh, constituted the key palace and confederate clan leaders who organized the child prince's political and military campaign against his brother Sulṭān-Khalīl in 882/1477. In the years immediately following Yaᶜqūb's enthronement, Bayandur led Aqquyunlu forces to several victories over hostile Mamluk and Timurid encroachments on Aqquyunlu territory.[48] In addition to these external threats, the reemergence of the radical messianic Mushaᶜshaᶜ movement of

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a functionary of the chancery (*mutaṣaddī-yi dīvān-i inshā*), Bidlīsī, Hasht Bihisht, 535b. The term *mutaṣaddī* was used for members of the scribal corps in Aqquyunlu and Safavid administrations. For an instance of its use in an early Safavid chancery documents, see B.G. Martin, "Seven Safawid Documents from Azarbayjan," in *Documents from Islamic Chanceries*, ed. S.M. Stern, Oriental Studies 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 171–206 While we cannot be certain when exactly Idrīs became *munshī al-mamālik*, according to correspondence he included in his *inshāʾ* collection, it is clear that he held the position at the Aqquyunlu court. In an unspecified letter addressed to Idrīs, he is accorded the title *munshī dīvān al-mamālik*, Bidlīsī, *Majmūᶜa*, Ayasofya 3986, 54b.
[48] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 129–130.

Khūzistān in 883/1473 imperiled Aqquyunlu control over ʿIrāq-i ʿArab. In light of Bayandur's recent successes, Sultan Yaʿqūb appointed Bayandur to dispel the Mushaʿshaʿ. Instead, he advanced as far as Hamadan and declared his independence. Bayandur garnered the allegiance of several important confederate clan leaders, but in the wake of a failed assassination attempt on Sultan Yaʿqūb, his coalition fell apart and Yaʿqūb's generals, Ṣūfī Khalīl Beg Mawṣillu and Sulaymān Beg Bījan, easily defeated him.[49]

Idrīs' appointment to compose the announcement of victory underscores the esteem with which his prose was held at court. At the time of Bayandur's defeat in 886/late 1481, Idrīs had been attached to Yaʿqūb's court for little more than one year. His composition of *Rabīʿ al-abrār* in the first half of 885/1480 facilitated his entry into sultanic service and his completion of another epistle on the virtues of autumn a few months later must have further impressed the court. In the wake of Bayandur's defeat, Idrīs was ordered to compose the victory proclamation that was intended for circulation within Aqquyunlu domains. Special missives informing subjects and neighboring sovereigns of victory constituted an established tradition within Islamic chanceries since at least the fifth/eleventh century.[50] In the fifteenth century, rulers regularly informed neighboring sovereigns of their major victories over internal and external enemies. In addition to providing a brief description of the military activity that led to victory, the letters

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[49] Ibid., 130-1.

[50] Qalqashandī provides an example of a victory proclamation for the Abbasid caliph al-Muʿtaṣim bi-llāh, al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshá*, 6:400; These announcements as regular chancery practice seem to develop more substantially beginning in the Saljūq courts of the fifth/eleventh century, per Osman Turan, *Türkiye Selçukluları Hakkında resmî vesikalar Metin, Tercüme ve Araştırmalar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevı, 1958); For an overview of the genre, see Hasan Aksoy, "Fetihname," *İA*. For its use in the Ottoman context, see Agâh Sırrı Levend, *Ġazavāt-Nāmeler ve Mihaloğlu Ali Bey'in Ġazavāt-Nāmesi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1956).

communicated a ruler's self image to his peers.[51] The circulation of similar missives within the

domains of a polity served a similar purpose insofar as they served to strengthen a populace's

bonds of fealty toward the ruler. Indeed, in the early sixteenth century, Ottoman sultans sent

uniform victory proclamations to the judges of all the major cities of the sultanate, which were in

turn read aloud to the populace at the time of Friday prayers.[52] In this sense then, the circulation

of a victory missive in the wake of a serious rebellion offered Sultan Yaʿqūb a critical

opportunity to reassert his authority throughout Aqquyunlu domains. While the letter provides

certain important details regarding how events developed, Idrīs focuses the content of the letter

on the theoretical relationship between a king and his servants by elucidating the dual role of the

sovereign as succor of the obedient and scourge of the rebellious. He begins the missive by

pointing to Yaʿqūb's special position as the beneficiary of God's special aid: "The high-flying

phoenix of the lofty zeal of our desire spread its triumphant wings in the air of divine succor and

aid."[53] The consequence of this favor is that the sultan always attains his desire, especially

whenever subjects are disobedient and obstinate: "the blood-shedder of divine wrath hastens to

the place of vengeance with the bloody sword of [the Quranic verse] (6:45): 'So, the people that

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[51] Geoffrey L. Lewis was the first to suggest their significance as an ideological instrument, see Geoffrey L. Lewis, "The Utility of the Ottoman Fethnames," in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and P.M. Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 192–96; For a recent analysis of a victory proclamation produced by the Aqquyunlu chancery of Uzun Ḥasan, see Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "The Delicate Art of Aggression: Uzun Hasan's Fathnama to Qaytbay of 1469," *Iranian Studies* 44, no. 2 (2011): 193–214.

[52] See, for instace, victory proclamations in the collection of Ferīdūn Beğ addressed to the judges of Ottoman domains, Ferīdūn Beğ *Münşeʾāt-i selāṭīn*, 1:431; While little work has been done to identify how these announcements were circulated, there are some indications that they were read aloud to the populace at Friday prayers. Lāmiʿī Çelebi includes the Ottoman victory proclamation for the conquest of Hungary in 932/1526 in his *inshāʾ* collection, where he notes that the announcement was read aloud at Bursa's Ulu Cāmiʿi (*ṣūrat-i taʿrīfī ast ki bi tavaqquʿ-i muqarrar-i jāmiʿ-i kabīr gufta barā-yi fatḥ-i mamālik-i Angarus-manḥūs*), Lāmiʿī Çelebi, *Münşeāt-i Lāmiʿī*, Esad Efendi 3316, 106b.

[53] Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed, *Inshāʾ*, 27b.

committed wrong were eliminated.'"[54] Idrīs contrasts the sultan's potentially brutal vengeance with the generosity he shows his servants, especially with respect to Bayandur.[55] As the favors bestowed on Bayandur were returned with disobedience and treachery, the sultan necessarily appointed capable men to subdue the rebellious commander.[56] While the central message of the letter is clear, the role of the chancery in mediating the relations between a king and his subjects deserves some consideration. Certainly, Idrīs was tasked with composing the victory proclamation by virtue of his burgeoning reputation as a talented man of letters. In this regard, his purpose was to communicate eloquently Yaᶜqūb's position on the particular matter of Bayandur's insurrection. Although the central message was likely a matter of policy dictated by the highest echelons of the court, the particular expression of this message was left to Idrīs' prerogative. As we will see in chapter nine, secretaries exercised considerable independence in the publically consumed rescripts that they composed, even as such compositions conveyed ideological positions ostensibly formulated and articulated by their sovereign masters. In this manner the chancery constituted a crucial site for the fashioning of legitimating ideology.

The Aqquyunlu court certainly appreciated Idrīs' work product, for in the following years, he penned several notable missives to Yaᶜqūb's Timurid and Ottoman neighbors. Perhaps as a consequence of internal disturbances like Bayandur's rebellion, Yaᶜqūb established cordial relations with both the Timurids to the east and the Ottomans to the west. The extant diplomatic correspondence of Yaᶜqūb's reign attests to the goodwill that the Aqquyunlu court sought to

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[54] *Saffāḥ-i qahramān-i illāhī bi-ḥusām-i khūn-āshām-i "fa-qaṭaᶜa dābir al-qawm alladhīna ẓalamū" bi-maqām-i intiqām musāraᶜat mī-namāyad*, ibid, 28a.
[55] Ibid.
[56] The letter specifically mentions Ṣūfī Khalīl (Khalīl Beg Ṣūfī) who sent Bayandur's head to Yaᶜqūb and administered punishment to the others (*Khalīl Beg Ṣūfī (bi-alqābihi) sar-i ū dar hamān sāᶜat bi-qadam-i mā āvarda va jamᶜi ki dar silk-i āsār būdand baᶜżī rā jihat-i riᶜāyat-i qavāʾid-i siyāsat bi-yāsāq rasānida shud*), ibid, 29a/b.

cultivate with its neighbors. The court entrusted the communication to Idrīs. In Shaᶜbān

889/August 1484, Idrīs composed a letter for Sultan Yaᶜqūb addressed to the Timurid ruler of

Herat, Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqara.[57] In contrast to the aggressive positions asserted by Uzun Ḥasan

in his bid to challenge Sulṭān-Ḥusayn for control of Khurāsān, Idrīs composed a cordial letter

that emphasized the historical mutual bonds of friendship, the power of which he likened to

blinding rays of sunshine.[58] The effusive description of friendship was perhaps necessary, as the

stated purpose of the letter was to renew the bonds of friendship between the two states.[59] One

year later, Idrīs imparted a similar message in a royal rescript destined for the Ottoman court.

Throughout the 880s/1480s, the Aqquyunlu court cultivated friendly relations with the Ottomans

in the west. The *inshāʾ* collections of this period include a large numbers of letters exchanged

between Sultan Bāyezīd II and Sultan Yaᶜqūb.[60] In all of these letters, the parties emphasize the

ties of friendship that bind them. As with the Aqquyunlu policy regarding Sulṭān-Ḥusayn

Bayqara, Idrīs played an important role in cultivating Ottoman goodwill toward the Aqquyunlu

court. The clearest evidence of this role is observable in the Aqquyunlu response that Idrīs

drafted to an Ottoman victory proclamation addressed to Sultan Yaᶜqūb.

In the early years of Bāyezīd's reign, the Ottoman court was equally interested in

securing good relations with Yaᶜqūb. In the first two years of Bāyezīd's rule, his brother Cem

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[57] Both manuscript copies of Idrīs' *inshāʾ* positively identify this letter as Idrīs' composition.
Ayasofya 3986 notes that the letter is "from among my own compositions (*min munshaʾāt al-faqīr*)," while the manuscript assembled by Idrīs' son Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed states that the letter is
his father's composition (*inshā-yi abavī*), Bidlīsī, *Majmūᶜa,* Ayasofya 3986, 48b; Ebūʾl-Fażl
Meḥmed, *Inshāʾ*, 9a.

[58] Ibid, 9b.

[59] *Dāᶜī bar tavāṣul-i mukātabāt va tablīgh-i murāsalāt mī bāsha jihat-i tajdīd-i savābiq-i valā va
taʾkīd-i mabānī-yi ṣidq va ṣafā darīn vilā muᶜatamad al-ḥażra Akhī Beg rā bidān ṣawb
firistādīm*, ibid, 9b.

[60] Ferīdūn Beğ includes fourteen letters exchanged between Bāyezīd and Yaᶜqūb 886/1481 and
896/1490. Ferīdūn Beğ, *Münşeʾatüʾs-selāṭīn*, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Takvimhane-yi Âmire, 1265).

posed a dynastic threat to Bāyezīd's reign through his asserted claims to rule and repeated

incursions into Ottoman domains. In the wake of Cem's flight to Rhodes in 887/1482, Bāyezīd

took advantage of his newfound relative security to reinitiate an expansionary policy in

southeastern Europe through a campaign against Moldavia. The successful outcome of the

campaign, which resulted in the capture of Kilī and Aqkirmān on the Black Sea coast, was

announced to the Aqquyunlu court in a victory proclamation. In addition to announcing the

victory, the Ottoman letter stressed the ties of friendship between the two rulers. In fact, in two

places in the Ottoman address to Yaʿqūb, the Ottomans referenced the Aqquyunlu ruler's

brotherly nature (*ikhvat-maʾāb*).[61] Moreover, the Ottomans stressed Yaʿqūb's good qualities as a

ruler by emphasizing his possession of the blessings of ethics (*ḥāvī-i maʾās̲ir-i mafākhir al-*

saʿādat bi-makārim al-akhlāq), the possession of which would become a major feature of Idrīs'

vision of ideal rule in later years.[62]

Similarly, in the Aqquyunlu reply, Idrīs endeavored to extend every courtesy to the

Ottoman ruler. To this end, in his address to Sultan Bāyezīd, Idrīs not only lauded the sultan as a

warrior in the path of God (*al-mujāhid fī sabīl Allāh*), but also as "the renewer of the foundations

of Islam and the constructor of the institutions of the faith (*mujaddid asās al-islām waʾl-*

muslimīn mushayyid marāsim al-dīn)."[63] Attributing the qualities of a warrior in the faith (*ghāzī*

or *mujāhid*) to an Ottoman sultan was a common courtesy that many of the late fifteenth-century

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[61] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 535b.

[62] Ibid. For the role of virtues in Idrīs' conception of ideal kingship, see chapter nine.

[63] The Aqquyunlu reply as included in Ferīdūn Beğ differs from the letter Idrīs includes in *Hasht bihisht* and claims as his own composition. As the *Hasht bihisht* manuscripts I have used in this study are near contemporary with these events, I am more inclined to trust Idrīs' claim and presentation of the letter. It is unlikely Idrīs would have tried to pass off a different letter as the original when so many of his readers were intimately involved in the events that he reports. For a comparison of the letters, see Ferīdūn Beğ, *Münşeʾāt,* 1:297 and Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 536b-538a.

rulers extended throughout this period.[64] In contrast, the notion of a temporal ruler as renewer of the faith (*mujaddid*) was a relatively new innovation that grew out of an early fifteenth-century Timurid ideological program that sought to cast Shāhrukh as the preeminent ruler of his time.[65] By the late fifteenth century the term was gaining a wider currency within the central lands of Islam.[66]

The movement of secretaries from one court to another facilitated the spread of this new vocabulary of sovereignty. In fact, Idrīs' counterpart in this diplomatic exchange with the Ottomans was also a product of the Aqquyunlu administrative tradition, and had taken up work within the Ottoman chancery only after his capture on the battlefield at Otlukbeli in 877/1473. The author of the Ottoman victory proclamation, Sayyid Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Munshī Shīrāzī, often known in contemporary sources as Mawlānā Munshī, had served Uzun Ḥasan as a secretary in the Aqquyunlu chancery.[67] In the aftermath of Uzun Ḥasan's defeat at Otlukbeli, the Ottomans captured a number of high-ranking military officers and notable learned men.

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[64] For a fifteenth-century example of this usage in the context of Ottoman-Mamluk relations, see Cihan Yüksel Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks: Imperial Diplomacy and Warfare in the Islamic World* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 114.

[65] Subtelny has argued that Shāhrukh was motivated to adopt an Islamic approach to rule as a suitable ideological replacement for his father's charismatic leadership. Evrim Binbaş has suggested that fifteenth-century Timurid rule exhibits a multiplicity of ideological programs. Rather than interpret Shāhrukh's *mujaddid* claims solely as a reflection of a return to Islam, Binbaş explains Shāhrukh's assertions within the more narrow arena of Timurid dynastic rivalry in the wake of Timur's death, İlker Evrim Binbaş and University of Chicago, "Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī (ca. 770s-858/ca. 1370s-1454): Prophecy, Politics, and Historiography in Late Medieval Islamic History," 2009, 320.

[66] Idrīs' deployment of the term in praise of Bāyezīd is but one example from the late ninth/fifteenth century. For a more detailed discussion of the use of *mujaddid* during this period, see chapter eight.

[67] Mawlānā Munshī is mentioned in a number of sixteenth-century Ottoman and Safavid chronicles, all of which likely base their account on the details that Idris provides. Compare for example, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 468a; Ḥasan Rūmlū, *Aḥsan al-tavārīkh*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Navāʾī (Tehran: Bungāh-i Tarjumah va Nashr-i Kitāb, 1349), 2:541; Sadeddin, *Tācüʾt-tevārīḫ*, 1:540.

Mawlānā Munshī was among them and Idrīs notes that Sultan Meḥmed, in recognition of their accomplishments, freed them and "bestowed upon them gifts appropriate to their worthiness of station (*bi-qadr-i istiḥqāq makhṣūṣ bi-inʿāmāt va ayādī kardand*)."[68] According to Idrīs, Mawlānā Munshī, along with the other notables, stayed among the Ottomans for many years where "they were gratified in the shadow of royal favor through various gifts and displays of largesse. Most of them arrived at a high and exalted position and witnessed such patronage and care in this generous (Ottoman) court as had never been seen."[69] While Idrīs may overstate the reception of these notables in the Ottoman court, Mawlānā Munshī clearly played a significant role in the subsequent composition of Ottoman royal letters written in Persian. For the rest of Sultan Meḥmed's life and much of Bāyezīd II's reign, he was an important author of diplomatic correspondence destined for Persian courts.[70] In addition to the victory proclamation of the siege of Aqkirmān and Kilī, Mawlānā Munshī composed at least four other letters addressed to Sultan Yaʿqūb.[71] Moreover he represented an important link between the Ottoman learned class and prominent scholars in Persian lands. For instance, the sixteenth-century scholar Taşköprüzāde notes in his biographical entry for the Ottoman scholar Ḫaṭībzāde that Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī used to correspond with his friend Mawlānā Munshī, who was residing in Ottoman lands.[72] Sultan Yaʿqūb also recognized Mawlānā Munshī's value as a secretary and, in the midst of this spell of warm relations with the Ottomans, requested the secretary's return to Tabriz. The proposal was

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[68] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 468a.
[69] *Va sālhā dar sāya-yi sulṭānī bi-anvāʿ-i tanaʿʿum va kāmrānī masrūr shudand va aksar bi-manāṣib-i ʿaliyya va masānid-i sannīya rasīdand va ānchi az lavāzim-i riʿāyat va ʿināyat hargiz nadīda būdand darīn āsitāna-yi karam dīdand*, Ibid.
[70] Sarı ʿAbdullāh Efendi attributes fourteen letters in his *inshāʾ* collection as originating from Mawlānā Munshī's *inshāʾ*, Sarı ʿAbdullāh Efendi, *Munshaʾāt-i fārsī*, Esad Efendi 3333.
[71] The majority of these letters can be found in Esad Efendi 3333.
[72] Ahmed ibn Mustafa Taşköprüzade, *al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuʿmānīyah fī 'ulamāʾ al-Dawlat al-ʿUthmānīyah*, ed. Ahmed Subhi Furat (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1985), 149.

politely declined both by Sultan Bāyezīd and by Mawlānā Munshī himself, who in a private

letter to an Aqquyunlu commander emphasized his contentment at the Ottoman court.[73] Despite

the broad notoriety Mawlānā Munshī appears to have enjoyed in Ottoman lands, he never held

high office within the Ottoman administration. Like a number of learned men at both the

Aqquyunlu and Ottoman court, Mawlānā Munshī probably enjoyed the regular patronage of the

Ottoman sultans in exchange for periodic and variegated service.[74] For instance, although he is

not mentioned on the regular payroll of the secretaries of the royal treasury, he occasionally

received a dispensation (*taṣadduq*) for his status as a learned notable.[75] Rather than a reflection

of neglect, this reality underscores the *ad hoc* nature of Ottoman administrative practice during

this period. For, even as secretaries exercised independent judgment in crafting royal

correspondence, the bureaucratic protocol of scribal duties and appointments also remained

flexible. In other words, the assignment to compose an important diplomatic communication

frequently fell to talented scholars of acknowledged rhetorical ability whose regular activities

and duties extended beyond the confines of the chancery.[76]

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[73] While Yaʿqūb's letter requesting the return of Mawlānā Munshī is not included in the contents of the manuscript, Bāyezīd's reply makes clear the nature of Yaʿqūb's request, Sarı ʿAbdullāh Efendi, *Munshaʾāt*, 131a-133b.

[74] For more on the position of learned men at Bāyezīd's court, see chapter four. Such service as Mawlānā Munshī rendered likely included specific assignments by leading Ottoman statesmen. For instance, during Sultan Yaʿqūb's reign he composed a letter on behalf of the Ottoman grand vizier Aḥmed Pasha addressed to the Aqquyunlu vizier Qāżī ʿĪsá, Sarı ʿAbdullāh Efendi, *Munshaʾāt*, 129b-130b.

[75] For instance, in Dhūʾl-ḥijja 909/May 1504, he received 200 akçes, Muallim Cevdet O.71, p. 61.

[76] Ferīdūn Beğ specifies a couple of important royal letters written by scholars with no formal appointment to an Ottoman secretarial post. For instance, see Mollā Gūrānī's composition of the Ottoman letter to the Mamluks announcing the conquest of Constantinople (1:235) and Idrīs' letter to the Shirvānshāh upon the conquest of Egypt in 923/1517 (1:438) Ferīdūn Beğ, *Münşeʾāt-i selāṭīn*.

II.6 Exemptions and Privileges to Notables

Idrīs' activities in the Aqquyunlu chancery also underscore the important role urban notables played in the internal dynamics of the Aqquyunlu Sultanate during this period. Idrīs' *inshāʾ* collection includes examples of two separate types of privileges bestowed on prominent members of the urban notable class. More than simply honorary titles, the grants offered specific financial rewards to leaders of certain social classes whose support the dynasty deemed essential. Idrīs drafted one such distinction, known as *tarkhanliq*, for a merchant of Isfahan. The usage of *tarkhan* as a title of distinction in Persian lands originated during the Ilkhanid period. In several places, Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 718/1318), the Ilkhani statesman and historian, mentions Chinggis Khan's bestowal of *tarkhanliq* upon certain distinguished individuals. By Timur's reign the term connoted the right to obtain an audience with the sultan, amnesty for up to nine offenses, as well as exemption from all taxes and the commandeering of the *tarkhan*'s horses.[77] In the context of Aqquyunlu administration, the distinction only seemed to confer an exemption from taxes.[78] The investiture document (*nishān-i tarkhānī*) included in Idrīs' *inshāʾ* adhered to this practice in a limited way. While the document is incomplete, it clarifies that, for the recipient, Khʷāja Muḥammad Iṣfahānī, seven camel-loads of goods would be exempt from any taxes throughout Aqquyunlu domains.[79] As a merchant (*tājir*) who traveled widely, Khʷāja Muḥammad likely attained an honored place at court through the knowledge and goods he offered the Aqquyunlu from other lands. Indeed Idrīs' title of investiture cites the strange and rare gifts that Khʷāja

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[77] Niẓām al-Dīn Shāmī, *Histoire des conquêtes de Tamerlan: intitulée Ẓafarnāma*, ed. Felix Tauer (Prague: Orientální ústav-Oriental institute, 1937), 123; For a thorough discussion of *tarkhān*, see Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung älterer neupersischer Geschichtsquellen, vor allem der Mongolen- und Timuridenzeit* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1963), 3:460–476.
[78] V. Minorsky, "A Soyurghal of Qasim Aq-Qoyunlu (903/1498)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, University of London* IX, no. 4 (1939): 927–60.
[79] Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed, *Inshāʾ*, 34a; Bidlīsī, *Majmūʿa,* Ayasofya 3986, 44b.

Muḥammad brought to the court as a reason for the special dispensation that the Aqquyunlu

sultan bestowed upon him.[80] More generally, these sorts of special privileges helped nurture ties

of fealty between the urban notable class and the Aqquyunlu ruling elite.

The other type of privilege in Idrīs' collection was often granted to leading members of

the learned class. This privilege, known as a *suyurghal*, was often a usufruct grant that

guaranteed complete exemption from any taxes or other royal interference. As with the *nishān-i*

tarkhānī granted to Khʷāja Muḥammad, *suyurghal*s were also a remnant of the Ilkhanid period.[81]

In most of the extant *suyurghal* grants from the fifteenth century, the grants seem to accrue to the

benefit of scholars and other members of the learned class. This is also the case with the two

examples of *suyurghal* documents that Idrīs included in his *inshāʾ*. The first is a general form of

the document tailored for disbursal to descendants of the Prophet (*sādāt*).[82] The inclusion of a

general form for *suyurghal* appointments to the prophet's descendants suggests the relatively

high frequency with which the prophet's descendents received this privilege and further

substantiates the notion that the Aqquyunlu court intended these grants for the benefit of the

religious classes. Certainly the language of the appointment form intimates such support from the

Aqquyunlu sultan as a general principle. After the invocation of God and his prophet

Muḥammad, the document opens by proclaiming the special place among mankind that God has

reserved for descendants of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*). In view of this fact, the Aqquyunlu sultan

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung älterer neupersischer Geschichtsquellen, vor allem der Mongolen- und Timuridenzeit* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1963), 1:351–3.

[82] Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed, *Inshāʾ*, 5b.

always intends to secure for this blessed group an honored place. Accordingly, he fulfills this

desire through the appointment of a *suyurghal* to the benefit of such-and-such *sayyid*.[83]

While it is clear from the few extant *suyurghal* appointments, as well as Idrīs' *inshāʾ*

collection that these types of land grants often accrued to the religious classes, Idrīs' other

reference to *suyurghal* appointments in his collection indicates that members of the central

administration also benefited. In an entry he entitled 'investiture of a *suyurghal* to Shāh Sharaf

al-Dīn Maḥmūd and the children of Shukr Allāh,' Idrīs recorded the *invocatio* and *promulgatio*

of the document.[84] In contrast to the form document for *sayyid*s, this document praises in general

terms the abilities and worthiness of the sultan's servants and suggests that they are all deserving

of manifold rewards. In light of this state of affairs, the sultan has identified the minister of

finance (*vazīr*), Shāh Sharaf al-Dīn Maḥmūd as particularly worthy and consequently seen fit to

bestow upon him a special grant. The two men named in this investiture were also among the

most prominent members of the civilian adminstration during the reign of Yaʿqūb.

While the Aqquyunlu Sultanate inherited both *tarkhanliq* and *suyurghal* from previous

Timurid and Mongol regimes, they remained important elements of the socio-economic structure

that undergirded Persian state and society in the late tenth/fifteenth century.[85] The Aqquyunlu

disbursal of these special privileges and grants to members of the urban notable class, as well as

its own central administration, underscores the key alliance that the Turkmen rulers necessarily

forged with the leading elements of civilian society. Even as these programs of patronage

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[83] Ibid.

[84] Bidlīsī, *Majmūʿa*. Ayasofya 3986, 56a.

[85] For a discussion of some of the features of these privileges across the Turko-Persian cultural zone, see Halil İnalcık, "Autonomous Enclaves in Islamic States: Temlîks, Soyurghals, Yordluḳs-Ocaḳlıḳs, Mâlikâne-Muḳâṭaʿas and Awqāfs," in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer and Sholeh Alysia Quinn (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 112–34.

constituted a fundamental aspect of Aqquyunlu policy, they also served to undermine the basic

revenue sources of the central administration. The Aqquyunlu central administrators were keenly

aware of the dangers posed by this substantial loss of its tax base and on at least two occasions

made concerted efforts to reform the tax system by targeting special land grants such as the

suyurghal.

II.7 Revenue and Land Reform in the Reign of Sultan Yaᶜqūb

The first effort to reform the Aqquyunlu land regime occurred in the final years of

Yaᶜqūb's reign. In 894/1489, the sultan's chief adviser Qāżī ᶜĪsá conceived of a plan to expand

the agrarian tax base of the central administration by couching it in terms of a repeal of the

Mongol-era urban commercial tax (*tamghavāt*). The rationale for this shift focused on the non-

canonical nature of the commercial tax and represented a desire on the part of the Aqquyunlu

court to bring its administration in line with sacred tradition (*sharīᶜa*). Idrīs' colleague in the

chancery, Fażlullāh Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, notes in his history of Yaᶜqūb's reign that the imposition of

the urban commercial tax was a remnant of the legal code of Chinggis Khan (*yāsā-yi*

Changīzkhānī), which had corrupted the application of "the pure-flowing precepts of right

faith."[86] According to Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, at the time of Sultan Yaᶜqūb's reign, these corrupt

commercial taxes represented the largest source of revenue for the central administration.[87]

While Qāżī ᶜĪsá clearly initiated these reforms in order to bring the state administration into

greater conformity with sacred law, he likely intended that the new tax base of the central state

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[86] Fażl Allāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Tārīkh-i 'ālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, ed. John E Woods, Revised and augmented (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1992), 355.
[87] Ibid.

have the effect of strengthening the efficacy of the central administration with respect to the confederate clans and urban notable class.[88]

Idrīs' specific role in this reform movement remains obscure, but his sympathy for Qāżī ᶜĪsá's plan is evident both through his close relationship with the chief minister and positive assessment of his policies. By the latter years of Sultan Yaᶜqūb's reign, Idrīs had comfortably situated himself within the most influential and powerful palace clique. As both the chief military judge and chief financial minister, Qāżī ᶜĪsá had accumulated considerable power within Yaᶜqūb's administration. His father, Shukr Allāh Sāvajī, had been the state comptroller (*mustawfī*) in the reign of Uzun Ḥasan, and by the time of Yaᶜqūb's accession, Qāżī ᶜĪsá was the young prince's tutor.[89] His close proximity to the prince and the coalition that brought him to power helped improve further his position at court. Over the course of the next decade, he consolidated his influence through his appointment to two high-ranking positions as well as through the cultivation of allies in other key posts. He made his friend Shāh Sharaf al-Dīn Maḥmud Daylamī was appointed the finance officer (*vazīr*) and inspector (*mushrif*) of the royal council.[90] Similarly, Qāżī ᶜĪsá showed particular favor toward his nephew, Maḥmūd's son Najm al-Dīn Masᶜūd, who ascended within the secretarial corps to the rank of *parvānachī* (secretary responsible for the production of titles of investiture).[91] While Najm al-Dīn Masᶜūd's *ex officio* powers were not extensive, most contemporary sources agree that, through the influence of Qāżī

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[88] John Woods also views the repeal of *tamgha* revenues as a blow to provincial military leaders of the confederate clans, who frequently benefited from the collection of theses commercial taxes, John E Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire*, Rev. and expanded ed (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), 144.

[89] Jean Aubin, "Études safavides I: Šāh Ismāᶜīl et les notable de l'Iraq persan," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 2 (1959): 48.

[90] Jean Aubin, "L'avènement des Safavides reconsidéré," *Moyen Orient & Océan Indien, XVIe-XIXe s.* 5 (1988): 63.

[91] Ibid.

ᶜĪsá, Masᶜūd was entrusted with the most important affairs of state.[92] Idrīs, who by this point

may have risen to the rank of *munshī al-mamālik*, was also within Qāżī ᶜĪsá's orbit. Indeed, Idrīs

exhibited particular attachment to both Qāżī ᶜĪsá and Najm al-Dīn Masᶜūd. For instance, some

time during Yaᶜqūb's reign Idrīs completed a work on the nature of the soul and dedicated it to

Qāżī ᶜĪsá.[93] In fact, it is possible that Qāżī ᶜĪsá orchestrated Idrīs' rise in the chancery. Khunjī-

Iṣfahānī, who joined the Aqquyunlu chancery midway through Yaᶜqūb's reign, complained of

the coterie of untalented poets around the chief military judge.[94] While the insult was largely

intended as an indictment of Qāżī ᶜĪsá's misplaced attention on non-administrative matters,

Khunjī-Iṣfahānī's mention of the circle of poets around the chief adviser suggests the central role

played by the judge not only in the administrative realm, but also in the cultural life of the court.

This circle likely included Idrīs, especially in light of his early literary offerings. Lastly, the

sixteenth-century hagiography of İbrāhīm Gülşenī presents Qāżī ᶜĪsá, Najm al-Dīn Masᶜūd, and

Idrīs all within the same closely-knit group. While it is unlikely that all three men were as firmly

attached to İbrāhīm Gülşenī as his hagiography asserts, the three were certainly close with one

another and probably encountered the Sufi master regularly.[95]

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[92] Ghiyās̱ al-Dīn ibn Humām al-Dīn Kh° māndamīr, *Tārīkh-i ḥabīb al-siyar fī akhbār afrād bashar*, 3rd edition (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-i Khayyām, 1362), 4:432.

[93] Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Risālat al-nafs*, John Rylands Library, Arabic MS 403 [385].

[94] Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Tārīkh-i ʿālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, 351.

[95] The hagiography of İbrāhīm Gülşenī presents all three men as influenced by the wisdom and charisma of the gifted Sufi. In the case of Idrīs, the work suggests that he became İbrāhīm's disciple during the Ottoman conquest of Egypt. There are two problems with the hagiography's account of this anecdote. Firstly, we may be fairly certain that the *dīvān* was not produced at İbrāhīm's urging. Idrīs' collection of the *dīvān* predates his pilgrimage in 917/1511, as a copy of the work was made from his draft in Constantinople in Jumādá II 918/August-September 1512, several months before his return to Ottoman lands (Muallim Cevdet 121, 39a). Such a dating calls into question the authenticity of the anecdote presented in the *Menāqıb-ı İbrahim-i Gülşenī*, in which Idrīs produced the collection at the urging of İbrāhīm Gülşenī, while Idrīs was in Cairo. (*Dīvān-i Qāżī ᶜĪsá va Najm al-Dīn Masᶜūd*, Atatürk Kitaplığı, Muallim Cevdet 121, 39a). Similarly, the *Dīvān-i Qāżī ᶜĪsá* is included in the booklist of Müeyyedzade's library compiled

Qāżī ʿĪsá's plans for reform initially focused on ʿIrāq-i ʿAjam and Fārs. He appointed his

brother-in-law Maḥmūd Daylamī and his brother Shaykh ʿAlī to head a commission, the central

purpose of which was to produce a cadastral survey of ʿIrāq-i ʿAjam and Fārs, as well as

regularize taxable items. The two commissioners dispatched heralds who announced that the

*suyurghal*s of these regions were suspended and future payments to their beneficiaries should

cease until the commission had assessed the land. The populace complained that those tracts

which were surveyed by the commission had been overvalued and that even "the bull supporting

the earth would not escape their register."[96]

Even as the reforms ostensibly sought to harmonize Aqquyunlu tax policy with the sacred

law, the strongest objections to the reforms emanated from the ranks of the scholarly class. As

the major beneficiaries of *suyurghal* grants, they certainly had much to lose. Khunjī-Iṣfahānī

acknowledges that he implored Shaykh ʿAlī to modify the policy on behalf of many of the great

scholars of Shiraz, including some of his relatives. Similarly, scholars from Fārs including Jalāl

al-Dīn Davānī, Abū Yazīd Davānī, and Muḥammad Muḥyavī appealed directly to Qāżī ʿĪsá.[97]

The hagiography of İbrāhīm Gülşenī notes that the Sufi master successfully intervened on behalf

of the children of the renowned dervish Dada ʿUmar Rushanī.[98] Concern for the abrogation of

*suyurghal*s was rooted in its relationship to religious endowments (*awqāf*). Khunjī-Iṣfahānī

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after his death in 922/1516 (TSMA E. 9291/2, 6b). Secondly, the laudatory lines included in the
hagiography are not included in the manuscript copy of the *dīvān* and are likely a subsequent
accretion of the Gülşeniyye order as part of its effort to legitimize its founder in the sixteenth-
century Ottoman context. This reading of the hagiography is substantiated by the frequent
reference to Idrīs as the father of Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed, current finance director of Rumili at the
time of composition of the hagiography. The close association of İbrāhīm Gülşenī and Idrīs
Bidlīsī in this regard may serve to normalize the activities of the order, especially in the wake of
the controversial positions articulated by İbrāhīm Gülşenī in the 930s/1520s.

[96] Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Tārīkh-i ʿālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, 367; Minorsky, "The Aq-Qoyunlu and Land
Reforms," 453.

[97] Minorsky, "The Aq-Qoyunlu and Land Reforms," 454.

[98] Muhyî-yi Gülşenî, *Menâḳıb-i İbrâhîm-i Gülşenî*, 176–178.

remarks that as a consequence of the commission's seizure of *suyurghal*s from the learned class, most of the charitable funds (*abwāb al-khayr*) and Sufi lodges (*khānaqāh*) were forced to close.[99] The threat posed by the seizure of *suyurghal*s to charitable institutions suggests that the *suyurghal* beneficiaries applied the proceeds of these land grants to finance religious endowments. While the privileges of a *suyurghal* expired with the death of the sultan, previous rulers had always renewed them. As a consequence, it seems the beneficiaries of these grants increasingly viewed *suyurghal*s as heritable and perpetual private property (*milk*), even though the *de jure* rights of the grant were more limited.

The outcry against the reforms reached a breaking point before their complete realization. While Shaykh ʿAlī and Sharaf al-Dīn Maḥmūd were surveying and confiscating tax exemptions in Shiraz, Sultan Yaʿqūb succumbed to illness at his winter camp in Qarābāgh. The governor of Shiraz arrested Shaykh ʿAlī and returned him to Tabriz where he was subjected to torture.[100] Similarly, Qāżī ʿĪsá was arrested four days after the death of Yaʿqūb and subsequently hanged,[101] while Najm al-Dīn Masʿūd escaped briefly before he too was apprehended and executed.[102] In addition to this bloodletting, the reaction to the reforms precipitated their complete reversal and ultimately a reaffirmation of the rights of the *suyurghal*-holders.

Despite the general backlash to the reforms, Idrīs' assessment of Qāżī ʿĪsá's policy indicates approval of his friend's efforts to bring the Aqquyunlu tax regime in line with sacred law. Later in life, when, while residing in Ottoman domains during Bāyezīd's reign, Idrīs collected the poetry of these two friends and colleagues in a single volume and added a preface

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[99] Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Tārīkh-i ʿālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, 373.
[100] V. Minorsky, "The Aq-Qoyunlu and Land Reforms," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 17, no. 3 (January 1, 1955): 454.
[101] Ibid., 157–7; Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 151–2.
[102] Bidlīsī, *Dīvān-i Qāżī ʿĪsá va Najm al-Dīn Masʿūd*, 9a.

which celebrated his bonds of affection and loyalty with them.[103] In the preface, Idrīs emphasizes

the efforts of his two deceased colleagues to implement policies in accordance with the precepts

of faith: "They were the two firm pillars of Islam...in the well-formed foundation of dominion

and faith and in the reinforcement of the edifice of right religion (*shar^c-i mubīn*)."[104] In Qāżī

^cĪsá's official activities, Idrīs notes that his friend always "implemented the affairs of state in

such a way that the virtues of the great scholars of the community were present and gathered in

his ordering of religiously-concordant edicts."[105] Idrīs' approval of Qāżī ^cĪsá's land tax reforms

is also demonstrated through his subsequent positive assessment of Ottoman sources of revenue.

In his introduction to the reign of Sultan Meḥmed II in *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs suggests that one of

the reasons for the Ottoman sultan's superiority resided in the Ottoman state's concern for

harmonizing its revenue system with sacred law.[106]

Idrīs' assessment of the Ottoman revenue system is apposite to the broader revenue

challenges faced by the major sultanates in the late fifteenth century. In fact, the failed reform of

Qāżī ^cĪsá is but one example of a much larger phenomenon that unfolded among all of the major

powers in the Nile to Oxus region during this period. Around the same time in Herat, Sulṭān-

Ḥusayn also wrestled with the negative effects of *suyurghal* exemptions, while a few years

earlier both Sultan Meḥmed II and the reigning Mamluk sultan, Qāyitbāy (r. 872-901/1468-

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[103] This collection is mentioned in *Menāqıb-i İbrāhīm-i Gülşenī*. For a manuscript copy of the *dīvān* along with Idrīs' preface, see *Dīvān-i Qāżī ^cĪsá va Najm al-Dīn Mas^cūd*.

[104] *va ān du … taqwīm-i asās-i mulk va dīn va taqavvī-yi bunyān-i shar^c-i mubīn mī namūdand*, ibid., 6a.

[105] *Va jariyān-i avāmir va navāhī-yi ilāhī rā bar vajhī muqarrir va mu^ctabir farmūd ki dar anjuman-i aḥkām-i sharāyi^c-i intiẓāmash afāżil-i a^ʾimma va ^culamāʾ-i ummat ḥāżir va majmū^c mī būdand,* ibid., 7b.

[106] In the introduction, Idrīs includes an extended discourse on the necessity of a sultan's respect for the two sources of law (sacred tradition (*sharī^ca*) and kingly precedent (*qānūn*)). He states that the Ottoman sultans have always understood this and sought to implement policies in accordance with these two principles. These can be seen in Meḥmed II's policies, especially with respect to the sources of revenue that his state relied upon, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 357b-358a.

1496), sought to reestablish the financial bases of their respective central administrations through the confiscation of religious endowments and private property.[107] The drastic measures taken by all of these sultanates highlight the untenable nature of the traditional patronage arrangements between sovereigns and notables, which had evolved over the course of the fifteenth century. While sovereigns needed to secure the loyalty and support of important elements in society, the privileges that they distributed often alienated state lands from the royal treasury and led to the erosion of effective central administration.

II.8 Aḥmad ibn Ughurlu Muḥammad and the Aqquyunlu Crisis of Rule

The economic reforms initiated by Qāżī ᶜĪsá not only affected the livelihood of the learned class, but also posed a direct threat to the power base of the Turkmen confederate clans. During the reign of Yaᶜqūb, appointments to provincial governorships increasingly shifted from an appanage system favored in the reign of Uzun Ḥasan to a system of provincial administration that favored the confederate clan chieftains. The provincial power bases established by these clan leaders facilitated increasing involvement on the part of the confederates in the dynastic politics of the late Aqquyunlu state. The economic consequences of Qāżī ᶜĪsá's overhaul of the land tenure system threatened to undermine the provincial power base of the confederate clans and likely contributed to their desire to exercise greater influence in the central administration. The mysterious death of Yaᶜqūb followed shortly by the execution of Qāżī ᶜĪsá and Najm al-Dīn Masᶜūd clearly represents a complete rejection of the land reforms orchestrated by the leading faction of the central administration. Although Idrīs asserts that Yaᶜqūb, his brother Yūsuf, and

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[107] For a discussion of Sultan-Ḥusayn's reforms, see Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*; for the Ottomans, see Özel, "Limits of the Almighty"; for the Mamluks, see Daisuke, "The Financial Reforms of Sultan Qāytbāy."

his influential mother Saljūqshāh all died from the same illness, the intimations of foul-play reported by several sources appear more accurate, especially in light of the subsequent execution of Qāżī ᶜĪsá.[108]

As a close friend of Qāżī ᶜĪsá and Najm al-Dīn Masᶜūd, Idrīs' position at court must have been threatened during the subsequent civil war that erupted in the wake of Yaᶜqūb's death. Indeed, the next ten years of Aqquyunlu dynastic politics were dominated by conflicts between all of the Bayandur claimants to the throne, many of whom were manipulated and backed by powerful leaders from the various confederate clans. Idrīs would later characterize the period following Yaᶜqūb's death as "a storm of strife and tumult throughout the lands."[109] The violence and reversals of fortune by the various branches of the Bayandur clan and their confederate allies prompted Idrīs' father to remove himself from the Aqquyunlu court and ultimately seek refuge from the raining "meteorites of misfortune in the Bayandurid domains" through a pilgrimage to Mecca.[110] In contrast, based upon the evidence of Idrīs' prose collection, it seems that Idrīs remained in the service of Yaᶜqūb's nine-year old son and heir, Baysunghur during the initial stage of the young sultan's rule. Yet negotiating the palace and clan politics of this period was fraught with considerable difficulties, as two competing Turkmen factions changed positions of dominance midway through Baysunghur's two-year reign. During the latter stages of this confusing and violent period, Idrīs managed to withdraw himself completely from the political intrigue around the sultan in Tabriz, for at the time of Baysunghur's replacement on the throne

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[108] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 514a.

[109] *Ṭūfān-i fitna va āshūb dar ᶜarṣa-yi mamālik-i shamāl va janūb*, Dīvān-i Qażī ᶜĪsá va Najm al-Dīn Masᶜūd, 9a.

[110] *Tasāqaṭat rujūm al-miḥan fī ʾl-mamālik al-Bāyandur-khānīya*, Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī Bidlīsī, *Jāmiᶜ al-tanzīl,* Şehid Ali Paşa 109, 2a.

with Rustam ibn Maqṣūd in Rajab 897/May 1492, he was residing in Shiraz and enjoying the regular company of Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī.[111]

In several ways, the emergence of Rustam as sultan marked a complete repudiation of Qāżī ʿĪsá's policies in the final years of Yaʿqūb's reign. During his years on the throne, Rustam adopted a conciliatory position with many of the Sufi orders and other segments of the religious establishment. For instance, according to Yaḥyá Qazvīnī's *Lubb al-tavārīkh*, Rustam distributed more beneficences to the learned class than any of his predecessors.[112] Yet on the level of administrative personnel, Rustam's efforts at rapprochement also extended to leading elements of Yaʿqūb's administration; he appointed Shaykh Muḥammad Kujujī to oversee religious matters and recalled Shāh Maḥmūd Jān Daylamī, who was given charge of financial affairs. In all likelihood, Rustam also invited Idrīs to return, for, by Shaʿbān 900/May 1495, Idrīs was a member of the new sultan's council in Tabriz, in which capacity he signed a document bearing witness to the testimony of a notable of Isfahan who had brought a suit against the sultan.[113] Throughout all of these tumultuous events, Idrīs' position as a secretary of the chancery likely insulated him from the worst of the violence and political intrigue that unfolded in his midst. After all, as demonstrated by Uzun Ḥasan's recruitment of several key Qaraquyunlu secretaries around 875/1470, civilian administrators in Persian courts generally continued in their offices through all of the dynastic changes and political failures of their patrons. Indeed, the chancery document bearing Idrīs' signature in 900/1495 testifies to the ability of secretaries to preserve their positions through tumultuous and violent periods of political strife. Of the twenty-six members of Rustam's council who signed the testimony, at least six, including Idrīs, can be

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[111] Vural Genç, "'Acem'den Rum'a'," 97–98. Bidlīsī, Hasht bihisht, Esad Efendi 2198, 269b.
[112] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 156.
[113] For a description of this document, see Jean Aubin, "Notes sur quelques documents Aq Qoyunlu (Archives persanes commentés)," in *Mélanges Massignon* (Damascus, 1956), 139–41.

identified as civilian funcationaries or descendants of functionaries from the reigns of Uzun Ḥasan or Yaᶜqūb.[114] Idrīs' memories of this period present an even-handed appraisal of several of the antagonistic factions that fought over the Bayandur throne and demonstrate a concerted effort to remain apart from the fray. For instance, while Idrīs clearly supported Yaᶜqūb's son, Baysunghur, as successor to the throne, he presents all of the competing confederate clan leaders who manipulated the nine-year-old sultan as brave and capable men.[115] Cultivating this diplomatic neutrality was a necessary skill during the first years after Yaᶜqūb's death, in which more than five claimants to the throne and several of the most prominent confederate clan leaders were killed.[116]

Despite his willingness to work for Rustam, Idrīs largely assessed his reign negatively. In fact, Idrīs neglects to relate any specific policy of Rustam and simply points out that the sultan reigned for six years during which time his rule/fortune (*dawlat*) deteriorated from two causes. Firstly, as a consequence of his young age—he was sixteen upon his accession—he cultivated his carnal desires and forfeited the governance of his domains to his advisers. Instead of showing any interest in the general populace and the troops, he occupied himself with sleeping and lounging about.[117] Secondly, the architect of Rustam's accession, Ayba-Sulṭān, "established a coterie of palace maidens to exercise authority over him and showed no reverence to him in

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[114] These six include two brothers of Qāżī ᶜĪsá (ᶜAlī and Maḥmūd), two sons of Abū Bakr Ṭihrānī (Ḥasan and Muḥammad), Amīr ᶜAbd al-Vahhāb, and Idrīs, ibid., 141. These are the individuals whom I could positively identify; there may be more holdovers from Uzun Ḥasan and Yaᶜqūb's reigns in this document.

[115] Idrīs describes both of the antagonists in this struggle, Ṣūfī Khalīl and Ayba-Sulṭān, in laudatory terms, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 515a/b.

[116] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 125–131.

[117] Bidlīsī, *Hasht Bihisht*, 516a.

considerations of rule." As a consequence, there appeared "various financial deficiencies and every sort of error in the undertaking of royal matters."[118]

While Idrīs' characterization clearly relies on *topoi* that emphasize the base and effete qualities of Rustam, there were several key elements of the Aqquyunlu military and civilian elite that remained unhappy with the new sultan's reign. This opposition was initially led by Nūr ʿAlī Bayandur, Ayba-Sulṭān's brother, who ruled independently in Diyārbakr and refused to recognize Rustam as sultan. When Rustam asserted his authority over Diyārbakr in 899/1494, Nūr ʿAlī fled to the protection of the Mamluk sultan Qāyitbāy. He remained in Egypt for two years until the death of Qāyitbāy, at which time he returned to Aqquyunlu lands and sought the material aid of the Ottomans in a bid to replace Rustam. Nūr ʿAlī's specific appeal to the Ottomans was endorsed by a number of prominent military commanders and urban notables. While Idrīs, in his later writing, does not specifically include himself in the opposition faction, his general appraisal of Rustam's reign as well as his subsequent role in the sultan's downfall suggest his sympathy for their project, if not outright participation.

The nature of the appeal focused on Bāyezīd II's relationship with Aḥmad ibn Ughurlu Muḥammad, a grandson of Uzun Ḥasan who had been born and raised in the Ottoman court. The circumstances of Aḥmad's birth in Ottoman lands was a product of the particular political context of Uzun Ḥasan's final years as well as specific aspects of the eastern policy of Ottoman sultans in the fifteenth century. As previously mentioned, Uzun Ḥasan's grip on power deteriorated significantly after his disastrous defeat to the Ottomans at the Battle of Otlukbeli in 878/1473. The challenges to his rule posed by his second son, Ughurlu Muḥammad, became one

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[118] *jamʿī az ʿavrāt va mukhaddarāt bar-ū musalliṭ va ghālib būdand va dar hīch amrī az avāmir va navāhī ū rā iʿtibār namī namūdand har āyina anvāʿ-i ikhtilāl dar mulk va māl va har gūna quṣūr-hā dar majārī-yi ahvāl-i jāh va jalāl rūy namūd*. Ibid.

of the clearest expressions of this political weakness. Ughurlu Muḥammad had led a number of successful campaigns during Uzun Ḥasan's period of expansion, yet in the wake of the Aqquyunlu defeat in 878/1473, the prince became increasingly critical of his father and, especially in light of Uzun Ḥasan's deteriorating health, forcefully argued to assume the throne. Matters came to a head in 879/1474, when Ughurlu Muḥammad seized the city of Shiraz from his brother Sulṭān-Khalīl. Despite Uzun Ḥasan's successful suppression of the rebellion, Ughurlu Muḥammad fled to Syria and from there continued to his uncle Uvays, the governor of al-Ruhā (present-day Urfa), where he carried on the insurrection. This second revolt also resulted in failure for Ughurlu Muḥammad, who was forced to flee yet again and seek refugee in the Ottoman court of Sultan Meḥmed II.

Ughurlu Muḥammad's arrival in Ottoman lands was not the first time the Ottomans had provided political asylum to members of the Bayandur clan. According to Idrīs, a number of the descendants of Qara ᶜUs̱mān had sought refuge in Ottoman lands during the first Confederate Clan Wars of the first-half of the ninth/fifteenth century. Uzun Ḥasan's own father ᶜAlī ibn ᶜUs̱mān fled with his children to Sultan Murād II out of fear for his older brother Yaᶜqūb. Idrīs remarks that ᶜAlī and his family spent several years under the protection of Murād who conferred upon them the revenues of Iskilib (present-day İskilip) and its environs in the province of Rūmīya.[119] Indeed, providing political asylum to prominent members of princely families was an important aspect of the Ottoman eastern policy in the fifteenth century. After all, one of the causes of Bāyezīd I's (r. 791-805/1389-1403) disastrous campaign against Timur in 804/1402

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[119] Ibid., 456b.

had been his protection of Aḥmad Jalāyir and Qara Yūsuf Qaraquyunlu.[120] Such offers of political asylum could garner prestige for a ruler through his role as protector and patron of lesser neighboring principalities. Indeed, this is exactly why Idrīs mentions Sultan Murād's protection of Uzun Ḥasan's father. In light of this protection offered during Uzun Ḥasan's childhood, Idrīs presents the Aqquyunlu sultan's aggression in the 870s/1470s as ungrateful and indicative of Uzun Ḥasan's treacherous character.[121]

Often these offers of asylum were predicated on pre-existing marriage ties between the Ottoman house and princely families. The Ottoman relationship with the Qaramanid dynasty centered in Konya best exemplifies how these policies of protection and intermarriage contributed to Ottoman eastern expansion in the second half of the fifteenth century.[122] The marriage of Murād II's sister, Sulṭān Ḫātūn to the Qaramanid ruler İbrāhīm Beg produced a number of Qaramanid princes who sought to assert their claims to rule upon their father's death in 868/1464. The eldest of these sons, Pīr Aḥmad Beg sought protection and support in the court of his cousin Meḥmed II. The support Meḥmed offered was contingent upon Ottoman dominion over a portion of the Qaramanid domains and when Pīr Aḥmad subsequently rebelled against the Ottomans, Meḥmed pointed to the ties of kinship and formal agreements which had been broken as a pretext for the complete annexation of Qarāmān.[123]

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[120] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 174b. This aspect of Bāyezīd I's conflict with Timur is also discussed in a number of Ottoman histories which predate *Hasht bihsiht*, see for example Neşrī, *Cihânnümâ*, 155–7.

[121] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 456b.

[122] For a discussion of Ottoman-Qaramanid relations, see M. C. Şehabeddin Tekindağ, "Son Osmanlı - Karaman Münâsebetleri Hakkında Araştırmalar," *Tarih Dergisi* 13, no. 17–18 (1963): 43–76; on Ottoman marriage policy during this period, see Leslie Penn Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, Studies in Middle Eastern History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 28–45.

[123] The Qaramanids failure to honor their past agreements with the Ottomans constitutes a frequent *casus belli* in the many Ottoman conflicts with these Turkish lords. Idrīs states that the

In the light of this eastern policy, Ughurlu Muḥammad's arrival in Ottoman lands in 880/1475 presented an opportunity for Sultan Meḥmed to develop equally beneficial ties to the Bayandur clan. The same year as his arrival, Sultan Meḥmed offered his daughter, Gevher, in marriage to Ughurlu Muḥammad.[124] According to Idrīs, Meḥmed treated the Aqquyunlu prince like a son (*dar silk-i farzandān-i khʷud*) and showed favor to him through appointment to the governorship of Sivas. Ughurlu Muḥammad's appointment to an eastern governorship was likely a strategic move designed to help facilitate the Aqquyunlu prince's swift return to Iran at an opportune moment. In addition to the prince's own household troops, Sultan Meḥmed furnished Ughurlu Muḥammad with financial and military aid to assert his claims to sovereignty in Iran.[125] Upon receiving an erroneous report of Uzun Ḥasan's death, Ughurlu Muḥammad hastily embarked for Iran without Sultan Meḥmed's complete support where he was met by the full force of the Aqquyunlu army, captured, and killed.

Before his death in 882/1477, Ughurlu Muḥammad's Ottoman wife Gevher gave birth to Aḥmad. Aḥmad was raised in the Ottoman court where he received the care and attention befitting a claimant to the Aqquyunlu throne and a nephew of Sultan Bāyezīd. In a palace stipend register dated to approximately 900/1494, Aḥmad was listed among the sons of Ottoman viziers and Turkmen princes who drew a monthly stipend from the royal treasury.[126] The Ottoman patronage of the sons of several Anatolian princely families, including the Dulqadirids, further

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Qaramanids were naturally disposed toward breaking treaties and insubordination (*abᵃⁿ ᶜan jidd majbūl bar naqż-i ᶜahd va ṭughyān būd*) in the beginning of his section on Sultan Meḥmed's conquest of Qarāmān. Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 450b

[124] M. Çağatay Uluçay, *Padişahların kadınları ve kızları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1980).
[125] *ū rā dar tamkīn-i salṭanat-i ᶜAjam va imdād bi-amvāl va ajnād va ᶜidhā-yi karīmāna dād*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht,* 514a.
[126] TSMA D. 9587, 3. Barkan offers 900/1494 as the register's date of compilation based upon its inclusion of Kemāl Reʾīs who returned to the Ottoman court in that year after an expedition in the western Mediterranean, Ömer Lutfi Barkan, "H. 933-934 (M. 1527-1528) Mali Yılına âit bir bütçe örneği," *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 15 (1954 1953): 308.

supports the contention that an Ottoman eastern policy during this period relied significantly

upon their patronage and familial relationships with branches of ruling families east of Ottoman

lands. Beyond this patronage, Sultan Bāyezīd clearly felt a strong familial bond with the young

prince as he frequently addressed Aḥmad as his dear son (*farzand-i arjumand*) in official

correspondence and offered his daughter ᶜAynışāh Sulṭān in marriage to him.[127] The marriage of

Aḥmad and ᶜAynışāh Sulṭān solidified further the bonds between the Ottomans and this branch

of Uzun Ḥasan's family. Indeed, shortly after Ahmad's return to Iran, Bāyezīd received word

that the couple had given birth to their first child.[128]

Aḥmad's decision to return to Iran was prompted by the arrival of an embassy of military

commanders and urban notables sent from Diyārbakr by Nūr ᶜAlī. Even before the arrival of this

embassy, in Idrīs' estimation, Aḥmad "had been driven by his desire for his rightfully inherited

sovereignty (*dar damāgh-i ū dāᶜiya-yi ṭalab-i mulk-i mawrūsī az kamāl-i istihqāq mutaḥarrik

shud*)."[129] The letters that the embassy brought to Sultan Bāyezīd and Aḥmad emphasized the

injustice of Rustam who had been unable to protect his domains from the incursions of raiding

Georgians, which resulted in the enslavement of 6,000 Muslims.[130] Moreover, the embassy

ensured Aḥmad that a broad coalition of support would welcome his return, as, with his triumph,

"these lands (Iran) would become united with those lands (Ottoman lands) and nothing other

than fraternity will prevail and the affairs of this land will be eased as he (Sultan Aḥmad) has

been raised in the shadow of the just emperor (Bāyezīd)."[131] The Ottoman reaction to this

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[127] Sarı ᶜAbdullāh Efendi, *Munshaʾāt-i fārsī*, 62b. On the marriage of Aḥmad bin Ughurlu
Muḥammad with ᶜAynışāh Sulṭān, see Uluçay, Padışahların kadınları ve kızları, 24-5 and
Çağatay Uluçay, "Bayazid II. in Ailesi," *Tarih Dergisi* 10, no. 14 (1959): 119.
[128] Oruç Beğ, *Oruç Beğ Tarihi (1288-1502)*, ed. Necdet Öztürk (Istanbul: Çamlıca, 2007), 173.
[129] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht,* 516a.
[130] Ferīdūn Beğ, *Münşeʾāt*, 1:331.
[131] Ibid.

proposal is difficult to ascertain. While most subsequent Ottoman histories, including Idrīs'

Hasht bihisht, suggest that Bāyezīd politely declined the invitation and helplessly watched as his

son-in-law secretly embarked for Iran, there are several indications that Sultan Bāyezīd

supported Aḥmad in his bid for sovereignty.[132] Most significantly, in the Ottoman reply to the

Aqquyunlu embassy, Bāyezīd makes clear his knowledge of Aḥmad's intentions and offers his

support in the endeavor.[133] The narrative sources, including Idrīs' account, likely minimized

Bāyezīd's involvement in Aḥmad's bid for sovereignty as a consequence of the disastrous results

the young prince's efforts ultimately produced. In any event, Aḥmad left Constantinople and

headed to Erzincan, where he met Nūr ʿAlī and an army of supporters. Aḥmad subsequently

defeated Rustam, who fled in the aftermath of the battle to Georgia, and proceeded to Tabriz

where he was installed as sultan.

If Idrīs was not among the supporters who met Aḥmad in Erzincan, he was certainly in

the new sultan's employment shortly after Aḥmad's triumphal entry into Tabriz. Sultan Aḥmad

ordered Idrīs to compose the victory proclamation (*fatḥnāma*) that was sent to Sultan Bāyezīd

shortly after his enthronement. The letter was conceived as an opportunity to inform the Ottoman

sultan of his son-in-law's success and to thank him for the support Sultan Aḥmad had received in

his own upbringing and bid for sovereignty. To that end, Idrīs emphasizes Aḥmad's rearing

"through the grace of the fatherly care and affection"[134] of Bayezid and thanks the Ottoman

sultan for "attending to the lofty zeal of His Majesty (Aḥmad)."[135] In addition to this praise of

Bāyezīd's paternal and royal affection shown Aḥmad, Idrīs embeds the news of the prince's

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[132] Idrīs writes that Ahmad fled (*bi-ṭarīqa-yi firār*), Bidlīsī, Hasht bihisht, 516b; Oruç Beğ, Tarih, 172; Kemālpaşazāde, *Tevârîḫ-i Âl-i Osmân*, ed. Ahmet Uğur (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1997), 151.

[133] Ferīdūn Beğ, *Münşeʾāt*, 1:332.

[134] Ibid., 1:334.

[135] Ibid., 1:335.

victory in a discourse concerning the necessity and nature of rule that would become a hallmark

of his later writings among the Ottomans. After several Quranic citations and a poem, the letter

opens with a brief discussion of how rule is established in the world through God's desire to

ensure that governance remains a reflection of the message carried by the prophet Muḥammad.

As a consequence of this desire, God established the seat of rule through His creation of a

vicegerent in the world (*sarīr-i rutbat-i sharīfa-yi innī jāᶜil fīˀl-arḍ khalīfa*). Aḥmad's upbringing

in the shadow of a ruler who so clearly reflected this message prepared him for his assumption of

these duties when he set out to claim sovereignty.[136]

Bāyezīd reacted to the news of Sultan Aḥmad's success as if his son-in-law's victory

would entirely accrue to Ottoman benefit. According to the contemporary Ottoman historian

Oruç Beğ, the news of Aḥmad's victory over Rustam arrived on the same day as the news

informing the sultan of the birth of Sultan Aḥmad and Aynışāh Sulṭān's child. Upon hearing the

news of Aḥmad's triumph, the Ottoman historian Oruç Beğ relates that Bāyezīd exclaimed

"Thanks be to God, from now on the lands of Persia are also ours (*el-hamdüli'llah ki şimden girü

Acem vilâyeti dahı bizüm oldı*)."[137] While we may dismiss the historical authenticity of Bāyezīd's

purported exclamation, the underlying notion that such a sentiment expressed was certainly in

keeping with the dynastic marriage strategy the Ottomans had cultivated over the previous

twenty years. Moreover, Bāyezīd ordered that the celebration of victory be undertaken

throughout Ottoman domains. In a letter Sultan Bāyezīd sent to his son Meḥmed in Kefe,

Bāyezīd announced the victory of "my son" Sultan Aḥmad over Rustam and ordered that the

happy news be celebrated in all the cities and provinces under the prince's control.[138]

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[136] Ibid.
[137] Oruç Beğ, *Tarih*, 173.
[138] Ferīdūn Beğ, *Münşeˀāt*, 336.

Several narrative sources, including *Hasht bihisht*, emphasize the Ottoman influence of Aḥmad's upbringing on the policies he sought to implement during his short reign. Idrīs's assessment of Sultan Aḥmad's reign focuses on the ruler's just policies: "in contrast to Rustam Pādishāh, Aḥmad completely concerned himself with the administration of affairs and finance and consideration for the troops and the army."[139] Moreover, Idrīs notes that Aḥmad focused on undertaking reforms in accordance with sacred tradition (*sharīʿa*), while "in the implementation of just laws he imitated the example of Sultan Bāyezīd (*va dar taʿyīn-i qavānīn-i maʿdalat va taqarrur-i āyīn-i salṭanat kh*ʷ*ud rā muqallid va pay-rav-i sulṭan-i mujāhidān maʿdūd mī-farmūd*)."[140] This dual emphasis on a return to *sharʿī*-oriented administration coupled with the establishment of new just laws appealed to Idrīs in light of his experiences working under Qāżī ʿĪsá, as well as his more recent experiences during the tumultuous and chaotic civil war. Several other near-contemporary histories suggest that Sultan Aḥmad, like his uncle Sultan Yaʿqūb, sought to confiscate tax-exempt land holdings and bring the assessment and taxation of lands as well as the disbursal of stipends into the competence of the central administration.[141] As with Sultan Yaʿqūb almost ten years earlier, the mere suggestion of such a policy produced a strong backlash from the entrenched military and urban notable interests who benefited from the old land regime. Within six months, these policies led to insurrection among the confederate clans, who engaged Sultan Aḥmad in battle near Isfahan in Rabīʿ II 903/December 1497. The majority of the Turkmen cavalry defected to the rebels' side and Sultan Aḥmad and his contingent of Ottoman janissaries were killed on the battlefield.

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[139] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 516b.
[140] Ibid.
[141] For an analysis of these sources, see Minorsky, "The Aq-Qoyunlu and Land Reforms," 459–462.

The defeat of Sultan Aḥmad plunged Aqquyunlu domains into a deeper state of chaos. In the wake of his death, a number of Bayandur claimants vied for the Aqquyunlu throne in a series of coups and pitched battles.[142] The conflict produced no clear victor and led Idrīs to conclude that the death of Sultan Aḥmad, in fact, marked the end of the Aqquyunlu dispensation to rule Iran.[143] The sultan's death and the subsequent civil war within the Aqquyunlu tribal confederation also precipitated the rise of a radical messianic figure to political power in Iran. Although Idrīs weathered the initial rise of Ismāᶜīl and his effective seizure of power in Āẕarbāyjān in 906/1501, the near constant political turmoil weighed heavily upon Idrīs' professional and private life and led to a crisis of conscience that prompted his departure from his homeland for the Ottoman court of Bāyezīd II.

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[142] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 158–61.

[143] In his narrative of events following the death of Sultan Aḥmad, Idrīs emphasizes the inability of any of the contenders to exercise effective control of Aqquyunlu domains and notes that "due to the fact that these princes were young, most Turkmen factions turned to oppression and tyranny (*jihat-i ān ki īn pādishāhzād-hā hamagī dar ṣighar-i sinn mī būdand aksar-i īn ṭāyifa-yi tūrkmānān rūyi bi-ẓulm va sitam bī andāza jihat-i jamᶜīyat-i sipāh va lashkarī mī āvardand*), Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 517a.

Part II: Patronage and Place among the Ottomans, 1502-1511

Chapter Three: Patronage among the Ottomans: Idrīs and the court of Bāyezīd II, 1502-1506

III.1 Introduction

The rise of Shah Ismāʿīl in Iran in 907/1501 eventually prompted Idrīs to make one of the most important decisions of his life. Idrīs' exile and migration from Tabriz to Ottoman lands in the following year initiated a fundamental change in the professional trajectory of his life. On a personal level, the loss of his friends, family, and homeland, as well as the sense of alienation he felt in a foreign land remained important themes throughout all of his subsequent autobiographical written remarks. On a professional level, the challenges associated with finding a secure and prosperous footing among the Ottomans represented the most fundamental challenge to Idrīs' life between 908/1502 and 912/1506.

Idrīs met these challenges largely through considerable literary production and efforts to cultivate ties with leading Ottoman statesmen, and members of the dynasty. Over the course of this decade, Idrīs composed his monumental history of the Ottoman Sultanate, *Hasht bihisht*, as well as a number of shorter works that were intended to ingratiate him with members of the Ottoman dynasty. Similarly, throughout this period Idrīs sought to cultivate ties with Ottoman statesmen and scholars who were in a position to help advance his career prospects at the Ottoman court. Despite these efforts, Idrīs' expectations for advancement at the Ottoman court were never fully realized. Feeling marginalized and exploited, Idrīs requested permission to make a pilgrimage to Mecca in 917/1511.

This chapter will develop two sets of interrelated themes. Firstly, Muslim rulers' patronage of scholars and their works facilitated the movement of independent scholars among

Muslim polities and the free circulation of political ideas throughout the ninth/fifteenth century. The consolidation of Ottoman rule in Anadolu and the Balkans, especially after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, intensified the lively competition for the attention of prominent scholars that had already existed among Timurid, Turkmen, and Mamluk rulers. The emergence of the Ottomans as a significant political force in the second-half of the ninth/fifteenth century had far-reaching consequences in the cultural realm as well. Sultan Meḥmed II's successful efforts to attract prominent men of learning such as ʿAlī Qūshchī, as well as less successful attempts to lure ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī and Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī, suggest a concerted Ottoman effort to settle the best and the brightest thinkers of the age in Ottoman domains.[1] In some ways, Idrīs' migration to Ottoman lands can be understood within this larger politico-cultural complex. The uncertain and dire political situation in Tabriz in 907/1501 contributed to Idrīs' decision to flee Iran, but the promise of patronage informed his decision to head to Sultan Bāyezīd's court.

Idrīs' effort to secure patrons upon his arrival in Ottoman lands was largely motivated by his desire to obtain a worthy rank in his new residence. Idrīs had spent the better part of his career working within the Aqquyunlu chancery and in that environment had risen to one of the highest positions of state within the Turkmen polity. In this regard, Idrīs offered potential patrons his hyperliterate rhetorical gifts and literary talents in exchange for patronage and, by extension, an honored place at court. Idrīs' significant literary production, which included the composition of *Hasht bihisht*, as well as at least six other significant works and numerous panegyrics

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[1] Babinger first noted this tendency in his biography of Sultan Meḥmed II, Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, ed. William C Hickman, trans. Ralph Manheim, 2nd ed. for the pbk. ed, Bollingen Series 96 (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1992); A few decades later, Hanna Sohrweide presented a more systematic enumeration of Persian émigrés to Ottoman lands, many of whom received the patronage of the court, Hanna Sohrweide, "Dichter Und Gelehrte Aus Dem Osten Im Osmanischen Reich (1453-1600)," *Islam* 46 (1970): 263–302; On the Ottoman efforts to attract Jāmī, Ökten, "Jāmī (817-898/1414-1492)," 155–9.

dedicated to members of the Ottoman dynasty, underscores his efforts to secure a bright

professional future for himself in Ottoman lands. Idrīs' correspondence with leading statesmen as

well as Sultan Bāyezīd demonstrates a keen understanding of the dynamics of court patronage.

Accordingly, the chapter will explore the dynamics of patronage, literary production, and place

through an examination of Idrīs' activities in his first years of residence among the Ottomans.

III.2 Flight from the Nest of the Oppressive Turks

Idrīs decided to emigrate from Iran in the midst of political upheaval and natural disasters

that amounted to a level of violence and destruction in Persian lands of near apocalyptic

proportions.[2] Because Idrīs' departure more or less coincided with Ismāᶜīl's capture of Tabriz

and the beginning of the young Ṣafavī shaykh's efforts to consolidate political authority in

Āẕarbāyjān, most contemporary scholars have understood Idrīs' emigration from Tabriz solely in

relation to the rise of Ismāᶜīl.[3] While in later years, Idrīs would allude to the spread of the Ṣafavī

apostasy under Ismāᶜīl as a contributing factor in his decision to leave Iran, his earlier writings,

completed in the immediate aftermath of these events, dwell entirely on a more general sense of

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[2] In a work written in 909/1503, Idrīs alludes to the upheaval of his own time as a sign of the coming the end times (*ākhir-i zamān*), see Bidlīsī, *Mirᵓāt al-jamāl*, Aya Sofya 4241, 9b.

[3] This is true of all scholarship on Idrīs, including the most recently published Turkish doctoral dissertations. Most of these analyses rely on an anecdote said to have occurred between Idrīs and Shah Ismāᶜīl shortly after the Qizilbash capture of Tabriz, and first recorded in Sharaf Khān Bidlīsī's history of the Kurds, nearly one hundred years later. For the particulars of the anecdote, see Sharaf Khān Bidlīsī, *Schéref-Nâmeh: Ou, Histoire Des Kourdes*, ed. Vladimir Vladimirovich Veliaminov-Zernov (Westmead, Farnborough UK: Gregg International, 1969), I, 343; For recent assessments of Idrīs' flight from Tabriz, see Orhan Başaran, "İdrîs-i Bitlîsî'nin Heşt Bihişt'inin Hâtime'si : Metin-İnceleme-Çeviri" (Ph.D., Atatürk Üniversitesi, 2000), 17; and Muhammad İbrahim Yıldırım, "İdris-i Bitlisî, Heşt Behişt VII. Ketibe, Sultan Mehmed Devri, 1451-1481" (Ph.D., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2010), xvi; A notable exception in this regard is the work of Vural Genç, who suggests that Idrīs initially welcomed Shah Ismāᶜīl to Tabriz and may have briefly entered the new ruler's service, Vural Genç, "'Acem'den Rum'a'," 105–130.

despair engendered by years of misrule, violent political discord, famine, and plague.

Idrīs' early silence on the rise of Ismāʿīl as a political force in Iran highlights the significant difference between the initial observations of contemporary witnesses to Ismāʿīl's rise and the subsequent memorialization of Ismāʿīl's seizure of Tabriz as the effective historical marker of a major new political dispensation. While viewed from the vantage point of the latter half of the tenth/sixteenth century, Ismāʿīl's arrival in Tabriz in mid 907/autumn 1501 seemed to signal the beginning of a Safavid political order, however these early achievements were not necessarily viewed with this significance until some time after they had transpired.[4] After all, in the four years preceding Ismāʿīl's arrival in Tabriz, the prestigious capital had exchanged hands seven times among the various Bayandur claimants to the throne and their Aqquyunlu confederate clan supporters; given this political turmoil, there was little reason for the residents of Tabriz to have assumed in 907/1501 that this latest conqueror would last long in power.[5]

Indeed, Ismāʿīl's entry into Tabriz in 907/1501 was improbable on account of the young shaykh's age—he was fourteen at the time—as well as in consideration of the relatively modest

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[4] With few exceptions narrative sources (chronicles) for Safavid history only arise in the latter sixteenth century, by which point the Safavid dynasty sought to construct a fairly coherent self-image that did not reflect the more radical ideas expressed in such works as Shah Ismāʿīl's poetry. For the rise of Safavid historical writing, see Quinn "Historiography, vi. Safavid Period," EIr and Sholeh Alysia Quinn, *Historical Writing During the Reign of Shah 'Abbas: Ideology, Imitation, and Legitimacy in Safavid Chronicles* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2000); Sholeh Quinn and Charles Melville, "Safavid Historiography," in *Persian Historiography*, ed. Charles Melville, A History of Persian Literature, v. 10 (London ; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 209–57; For Shah Ismāʿīl's poetry, see Vladimir Minorsky, "The Poetry of Shah Ismāʿīl I," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 10, no. 4 (1942): 1006–53.
[5] Jean Aubin, "L'avènement des Safavides reconsidéré," *Moyen Orient & Océan Indien, XVIe-XIXe s.* 5 (1988): 69.

military force which his movement had hitherto attracted.[6] Ismāʿīl was born in 892/1487 as the

youngest son of Shaykh Ḥaydar, the leader of the Ṣafavī order centered in Ardabil. The origins

of the order extended to Ismāʿīl's forebear Ṣafī al-Dīn Isḥāq, who established a Sufi lodge at

Ardabīl in the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century. Between Ṣafī al-Dīn's death in

735/1334 and the middle of the ninth/fifteenth century the *Ṣafavīya* developed a reputation as a

pietistic order whose leaders were celebrated for their spiritual gifts. Beginning in 861/1456,

under the leadership of Junayd, the order assumed an increasingly militant character, which

sought to leverage the millenarian religious atmosphere of the ninth/fifteenth century through

raids against Christian kingdoms such as Trebizond.[7] This shift from a solely pietistic order to

one that embraced equally a militant identity attracted the allegiance of a number of Turkmen

clans. Concurrent with these developments, Junayd and his filial successor Ḥaydar embraced

radical apocalyptic rhetoric as they cast themselves as descendants of ʿAlī and divine agents of

the End Time.[8] The Ṣafavī success in winning Turkmen followers and executing raids attracted

the attention of the rulers of Shirvān, as well as Sultan Yaʿqūb, who at various times during the

latter decades of the tenth/fifteenth century conducted successful military campaigns against the

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[6] Contemporary Venetian sources, like the subsequent Safavid chronicles, tend to emphasize the relatively small numbers of troops available to Ismāʿīl in the earliest years of his bid for power. According to one report, Ismāʿīl had 6,000 men in 1502 and 8,000 in 1503 ibid., 32.

[7] On the basis of a comparison of Greek, Persian, and Turkish sources, Junayd's campaign against Trebizond can be dated to 861/1456, shortly before he sought refuge with Uzun Ḥasan in Diyārbakr, Adel Allouche, *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman-Ṣafavid Conflict (906-962/1500-1555)* (Berlin: KSchwarz Verlag, 1983), 45; Rustam Shukurov, "The Campaign of Shaykh Djunayd Safawi against Trebizond (1456 AD/860 AH)," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 17 (1993): 127–40. More generally, the period of Junayd's leadership coincided with general confusion within the order that stemmed from a succession dispute between Junayd and his paternal uncle Jaʿfar ibn Shaykh ʿAlī, whom Jahānshāh installed as guardian of the shrine of Ṣafī al-Dīn in Ardabīl following Jahānshāh's expulsion of Junayd from the Ṣafavīya stronghold, R.M. Savory, "The Struggle for Supremacy in Persia after the Death of Tīmūr," *Der Islam* 40 (1964): 49-50.

[8] Allouche, *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman-Ṣafavid Conflict (906-962/1500-1555)*, 43–51.

order, which resulted in the deaths of Junayd at the hands of Shirvānshāh Khalīl in 864/1460 and

Ḥaydar at the hands of a combined Shirvānshāh-Aqquyunlu force in 893/1488.[9]

Consequently Ismāʿīl's early years passed during a period of political uncertainty for the

order. The political instability among the Aqquyunlu confederation led to alternating policies of

oppression and tolerance toward the *Ṣafavīya*. Yet, the messianic and martial message of the

order resonated among the Turkmen tribes in western Iran, Syria, Qarāmān, and even Anadolu.[10]

In the midst of the Aqquyunlu dissolution, especially after the death of Sultan Aḥmad ibn

Ughurlu Muḥammad in 903/1497, the Qizilbash Turkmen followers of Ismāʿīl were well

positioned to make a bid for political power. In 906/1500 Ismāʿīl and his followers attacked

Shirvān, where they brutally exacted revenge for the death of Junayd by executing Farrukh Yasār

and sacking Baku.[11] In the following year, Ismāʿīl engaged Alvand, one of the Bayandur

claimants to the throne outside Tabriz at Sharūr. Ismāʿīl's victory over numerically superior

forces opened the way to Tabriz, which he entered in mid 907/late 1501. Despite Ismāʿīl's string

of early victories, the young shaykh's position in Tabriz remained precarious. In fact, in the

following year, Ismāʿīl may have lost control of the city to Alvand and later in the year was

forced to engage the Bayandur prince Sulṭān-Murād, who approached from Hamadan with a

numerically superior force.[12]

Idrīs likely viewed the political emergence of Shah Ismāʿīl against the backdrop of these

complicated events, all of which brought various reversals of fortune, yet signaled no clear and

lasting victory. Certainly, this is how a number of high-ranking functionaries of the Aqquyunlu

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[9] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 142–3.

[10] Aubin, "L'avènement des Safavides reconsidéré," 9–10.

[11] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 163; Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 23.

[12] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 163; for the relative strengths of Ismāʿīl and Sulṭān-Murād's forces, see Aubin, "L'avènement des Safavides reconsidéré," 32.

Sultanate interpreted events in the first years of Shah Ismāʿīl's reign. With the change in the

prevailing political winds, a number of these functionaries simply accepted posts within

Ismāʿīl's nascent administration. In 907/1501-22, Sharaf al-Dīn Maḥmūd Daylamī, Idrīs' old

colleague in the chancery since Yaʿqūb's reign, accepted from Shah Ismāʿīl the position of

vizier, possibly as a shared appointment with Amīr Zakariyā, another recent recruit from among

the Aqquyunlu civilian functionaries. The appointment of Sharaf al-Dīn Maḥmūd afforded Idrīs

an opportunity to reconcile with Shah Ismāʿīl, for sometime after the new vizier's appointment,

Idrīs wrote to his old friend and asked for his intercession with Ismāʿīl: "O your kindness in

secret and in view is my welfare / he is the solution for my sad tormented heart / Since your eye

has been enlightened by the candle of the Shah / show me the path of a laudable conclusion."[13]

The underlying request of the intercession is relatively ambiguous—it may plausibly signal a

request on Idrīs' part to be appointed to Ismāʿīl's administration or alternatively a request to set

out on some other unstated path.[14] In the very least, Idrīs' appeal to Sharaf al-Dīn Maḥmūd

demonstrates some willingness on his part to maintain a peaceful coexistence with the young

messianic ruler while he exercised control over Tabriz.

This willingness was reconcilable with Idrīs' own confessional disposition. Like many

men of his generation, Idrīs espoused intellectual and spiritual fealty to elements of both Sunnī

and Shiʿī traditions. In his later political writings among the Ottomans, he recognized equally the

political and spiritual preeminence of both the four rightly guided caliphs and the twelve

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[13] *Ay luṭf-i tu dar sirr u ʿayān bihbūdam / vay chāra gar-i īn dil-i gham farsūdam / chun chashm-i tu shud bi-shamʿ-i shāhī rawshan / bi-nmāy rah-i ʿāqibat-i maḥmūdam*, Bidlīsī, *Majmūʿa*, Esad Efendi 1888, 148b.
[14] Genç interprets Idrīs' poem to Sharaf al-Dīn Maḥmūd as a clear request to enter Shah Ismāʿīl's service, Genç, "Acem'den Rum'a," 111.

imams.[15] Similarly, like his father, he professed a profound reverence for the Shiʿī messianic-Sufi Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh, yet also penned Quranic exegetical commentaries within the Shāfiʿī-Sunnī tradition.[16] From this ambiguous confessional perspective, the arrival of Shah Ismāʿīl—even if it necessitated an espousal of radical Alid rhetoric—likely posed no insurmountable challenge to Idrīs' worldview on a spiritual level. In this sense, we may interpret Idrīs' objections to Shah Ismāʿīl—whatever they were—as essentially political.

On a political level, Ismāʿīl's early policies in Tabriz were certainly threatening to a great many scholars. Yet even here, the turmoil precipitated by Ismāʿīl's arrival also may be understood within the broader context of increasing political instability in Iran. Certainly, Idrīs was not the only prominent scholar to despair of the deteriorating political situation in western Iran and immigrate to more secure and prosperous lands during these years. Persian scholars left home and settled in new lands throughout the latter half of the tenth/fifteenth century. In some ways the mobility of scholars had been a common feature of the social and intellectual landscape of the central lands of Islam for centuries.[17] Yet the political upheavals of the latter half of the tenth/fifteenth century, as well as the emergence of new opportunities for patronage, especially in Ottoman domains, intensified the phenomenon.[18] Scholars still migrated in search of knowledge, but increasingly such quests were necessitated by disturbances at home and made all

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[15] See for instance Idrīs' remarks on the twelve imams in Bidlīsī, *Mirʾāt al-jamāl*, Esad Efendi 1888, 4b.

[16] For Idrīs' commentary, see Bidlīsī, *Ḥāshiya ʿalá anwār al-tanzīl*, Aya Sofya 303-M.

[17] On the relationship between travel and scholarship, see Houari Touati, *Islam and Travel in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); and for the same phenomenon in the middle periods of Islamic history, see Garrett Davidson, "Carrying on the Tradition: An Intellectual and Social History of Post-Canonical Hadith Transmission" (Ph.D., University of Chicago, 2014).

[18] For a detailed discussion of scholars' immigration to Ottoman lands during this period, see Sohrweide, "Dichter Und Gelehrte."

the more profitable by the promise of patronage abroad.[19] The emergence of Shah Ismāʿīl as a

political force in Āẕarbāyjān after 907/1501 certainly influenced several prominent scholars and

statesmen to emigrate from their homeland.[20] Some of Idrīs' colleagues and acquaintances in the

Aqquyunlu court emigrated from Tabriz in the wake of Shah Ismāʿīl's arrival. İbrāhīm Gülşenī's

son, Muḥyi al-Dīn narrates a harrowing story of his father's dangerous flight from Tabriz

following persecution at the hands of Shah Ismāʿīl's Qizilbash followers.[21] Similarly, Khunjī-

Iṣfahānī, Idrīs' colleague in the Aqquyunlu chancery, fled the advance of Shah Ismāʿīl across

Iran and ultimately settled at the court of ʿUbayd Allāh Khān in Transoxiana, where he was

actively engaged in nurturing an alliance between his new patrons and the Ottomans against the

Qizilbash.[22] Both these men abhorred the political and religious ideology espoused by Ismāʿīl

and judged that their lives would be more securely spent abroad.

While a number of scholars clearly left Iran as a result of Shah Ismāʿīl's seizure of

Tabriz, the phenomenon of scholarly emigration during these years should be understood within

the context of the quickly evolving and complex political and social environment which

prevailed within Aqquyunlu domains in the last years of ninth/fifteenth century. The instability

of this period encouraged a number of scholars to emigrate or remain abroad even before the

emergence of Shah Ismāʿīl. Idrīs' own father, Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī considered fleeing Aqquyunlu

domains after the death of Sultan Yaʿqūb as a consequence of the political turmoil, but was

dissuaded by his friends who suggested that travel during this period of uncertainty was perhaps

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[19] For further discussion of this point, see chapter eight.

[20] Sohrweide, "Dichter Und Gelehrte," 268; Abdurrahman Atçıl, "The Formation of the Ottoman Learned Class and Legal Scholarship, 1300-1600" (University of Chicago, 2010), 105–7.

[21] Side Emre, "Ibrahim-i Gulseni (ca. 1442-1534): Itinerant Saint and Cairene Ruler" (University of Chicago, 2009), 63–8.

[22] Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Tārīkh-i ʿālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, 3–4 For details on Khunjī-Iṣfahānī's anti-Safavid propaganda and its relationship to Ottoman policy, see chapter six.

more dangerous than remaining at home.[23] Despite these dangers, other scholars and statesmen did indeed emigrate. For instance, the poet Baṣīrī chose to remain in Ottoman lands after completing a diplomatic mission on behalf of Aḥmad ibn Ughurlu Muḥammad in 902/1497.[24] Similarly, one of Idrīs' mystical mentors, Bābā Niᶜmatullāh Nakhjavānī, fled Āẕarbāyjān after Aḥmad's death in Rabīᶜ 903/December 1497 and settled in Aqṣehir (Akşehir) in Qarāmān.[25] Moreover, many other scholars wrestled with the decision to flee Shah Ismāᶜīl or reconcile their beliefs with the emerging regime. Many of the most prominent administrators of the Aqquyunlu court joined Shah Ismāᶜīl's cause in the first decade of the sixteenth century.[26] For instance, mention has been made of Idrīs' friend and colleague from Yaᶜqūb's reign, Shah Sharaf al-Dīn Maḥmūd Daylamī, who chose to remain in Tabriz and worked for Shah Ismāᶜīl's nascent administration. Another friend, Amīr ᶜAbd al-Vahhāb, initially rejected Shah Ismāᶜīl's seizure of power and sought refuge in the court of Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqara in Herat. Like Sharaf al-Dīn Maḥmūd, Amīr al-ᶜAbd al-Vahhāb was a colleague of Idrīs in the Aqquyunlu administratrion since the reign of Yaᶜqūb. In the 1480s, he had assumed his father's position as minister of religious affairs (*shaykh al-islām*) in Tabriz after his father's death. He continued in this office until the rise of Shah Ismāᶜīl in 907/1501, at which point he fled to the protection of Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqara in Herat. After the death of the Timurid sultan in 912/1506, ᶜAbd al-Vahhāb made peace with Shah Ismāᶜīl and resumed his position as *shaykh al-islām* in Tabriz.[27]

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[23] ᶜAlī Bidlīsī, *Tafsīr,* Şehid Ali Paşa 109, 2a.

[24] Sehî, *Tezkire-i Sehî*, ed. Mehmed Şükrü, vol. 1 (Istanbul: Maṭbaᶜa-ı Āmidī, 1325), 116.

[25] Idrīs met with Bābā Niᶜmat Allāh in 919/1513 after a period of fifteen years separation, Bidlīsī, *Ḥaqq al-mubīn*, Ayasofya 2338, 6a. This would suggest they last saw one another around 904/1498, while Idrīs still resided in Tabriz.

[26] Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 28–9.

[27] For details on ᶜAbd al-Vahhāb's life, see Hamid Algar, "Naqshbandīs and Safavids: A Contribution to the Religious History of Iran and Her Neighbors," in *Safavid Iran and Her Neighbors*, ed. Michel Mazzaoui (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2003), 9–13; The

Not surprisingly then, in the early years after his emigration from Tabriz, Idrīs' memory of the period focused not on Ismāʿīl as heretical ruler, but on the general despair engendered by the misrule of Turkmen war lords and the political and social upheaval which their actions wrought. In the preface to a work he presented to Sultan Bāyezīd shortly after his arrival in Ottoman lands, Idrīs remarked that with the death of Sultan Yaʿqūb, Aqquyunlu domains entered into a dark period of injustice that precipitated the swift destruction and replacement of one ruler with another.[28] The instability and mayhem that ensued encouraged him to consider fleeing his homeland, a thought that he described ten years later in 918/1512 in the following terms:

> In accordance with the vicissitudes of perfidious fate, I obligatorily decided to vacate my homeland and emigrate from my country. After the banishment of good thinking, I was made to flee from the nest of the oppressive Turks into the never-ending wilderness of strange grief and flight. I was afflicted with separation from the people of my country and homeland, which became the battlefield of disasters and discord and migrated from my residence, which was the dwelling of one hundred sorts of calamities and misfortunes.[29]

In this assessment of the Iranian political landscape and its effects on Idrīs' departure from Tabriz, Shah Ismāʿīl and his activities seem to represent for Idrīs simply the latest iteration in the

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best near contemporary historical accounts of his life are contained in Karbalāʾī Tabrīzī, *Rawẕāt al-jinān va-jannāt al-janān*, 1:215–7; and Khʷāndamīr, *Tārīkh-i ḥabīb al-siyar fī akhbār afrād bashar*, 4:608–9.

[28] The work is Idrīs' commentary on the Quranic exegesis of Bayżavī. The work was certainly presented to Bāyezīd before his death, as a manuscript copy of the work in Idrīs' own hand bears Bāyezīd II's seal. For an image of the seal, see Bidlīsī, *Ḥāshīya ʿalá anwār al-tanzīl*, 1a; *Ḥāshīya ʿalá anwār al-tanzīl* is also included in the inventory of Bāyezīd II's library compiled by ʿAṭūfī in 909/1504, Magyar Tudomanyos Akademia Künyvtara Keleti Gyüjtement, Török F59, 11a; for a description of the disorder and upheaval after Yaʿqūb's death as a motivating factor in his emigration, see Bidlīsī, *Ḥāshīya 'alá anwār al-tanzīl*, 4b-5a.

[29] *az iqtizāʾ-i taṣārīf-i rūzgār-i ghaddār khulāʾ-i awṭān va jalāʾ-i diyār-i awṭār bi-iżtirār ikhtiyār karda būd va baʿd az tasyīr-i jiyād-i afkār az awkār-i turkān-i sitamkār dar biyābān bī-pāyān akhrān-i gharāyib va hijrān ruy bi-firār āvarda va bi-firqat-i ahl-i diyār va vaṭan ki mawṭan-i havādis̱ va fitan būd dil nihāda va bi-hijrat-i quṭṭān-i sakan ki maskin-i ṣad gūna balā va miḥan mī namūd*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 7a.

"succession of rulings by tyrannous kings and governors."[30] Indeed, such an appraisal would help explain his departure from Tabriz in 908/1502 as opposed to the previous year when Ismāʿīl first entered Tabriz.[31] It is likely that Idrīs, along with a great many residents of Tabriz, held out hope that the emergence of Ismāʿīl would remain a passing temporary disturbance, albeit one which precipitated monumentally violent effects. Such an approach to Idrīs' initial understanding of the threat posed by Shah Ismāʿīl makes sense, especially when set in relation to the other events of 908/1502. It was during this second year of Ismāʿīl's residence in Tabriz that the Ṣafavī leader solidified his control over Āẕarbāyjān through a major victory over the Aqquyunlu prince Sulṭān-Murād near Hamadan.[32] Moreover a major outbreak of the plague in Tabriz as well as widespread famine in western Iran certainly contributed to Idrīs' assessment that life in his homeland was becoming unbearable.[33]

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[30] *taʿāqub-i aḥkām-i mulūk va ḥukkām-i ẓalim*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht Bihisht*, 7a. Or as he put it during the reign of Bāyezīd, "Struggles among the kings and governors of Persia succeeded one another (*taʿāqabat al-taghālub bayn al-mulūk wa ḥukkām al-ʿAjam*)," Bidlīsī, *Ḥāshīya ʿalá anwār al-tanzīl*, 5a.

[31] Idrīs gives two separate dates for his departure from Tabriz. In *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ʿīd,* a work he completed in late Ramaḍān 909/March 1502*,* Idrīs states that he left his homeland in the year 908/1502. In the introduction to *Hasht bihisht*, he states that he left home in 907/1501. As *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ʿīd* was written only a few months after his departure from home, while the introduction to *Hasht bihisht* was written ten years later, the date that he provides in *Munāẓara-yi Ramażān* appears more reliable. The discrepancy between dates highlights a larger problem in Idrīs' work as a historian. In a number of places in *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs provides inaccurate or conflicting dates for a number of events, some of which he himself lived through (see for instance his dating of the Battle of Otlukbeli as 16 Rabīʿ I 877 (and not 878) and the two separate dates (907 and 908) that he provides for the appointment of Yahyá Pasha as *Anadolu Beğlerbeği*), Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 463b, 608a, 609b. While it may be that such discrepancies are simply a mark of poor memory, they may also point to faulty date conversions. If Idrīs used a non-Hijri calendar for his personal categorization of time, such discrepancies could represent careless calendrical conversions.

[32] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 163.

[33] Idrīs interprets the outbreak of famine and plague as a result of the disorder created by the misrule of various Bayandur factions and their confederate clan allies in the wake of Sultan Aḥmad bin Ughurlu Muḥammad's death, Bidlīsī, *Hasht Bihisht*, 517a-b.

This appraisal of Shah Ismāᶜīl as simply the latest manifestation of disorder and upheaval in Iran differs markedly from some of Idrīs' professed positions ten years later. Whereas Idrīs' works written in the immediate wake of his emigration focus on the general decline toward disorder through Turkmen misrule, his references to Ismāᶜīl in the first years of Selīm's reign (r. 918-926/1512-1520) also mention the heretical aspects of Ismāᶜīl's religious and political ideology. While such references were completely omitted in the works that Idrīs completed in 908/1502 and 909/1503, references to 'the predations of the heretics' are included in those portions of *Hasht bihisht* that Idrīs wrote in the last year of Bāyezīd's reign and in the immediate wake of Selīm's accession.[34] This shift in rhetoric likely reflects an evolution in the conception of Ismāᶜīl within Ottoman circles. After all, the reports of Ismāᶜīl's predations and espousal of heretical views likely remained fragmentary and opaque in the immediate context of Ismāᶜīl's rise to power.[35] Only once the nature of Ismāᶜīl's threat was fully recognized—a development that could not have occurred until after Ismāᶜīl had consolidated power—did Ottoman rhetoric on Ismāᶜīl begin to evolve.[36] Accordingly, the change in Idrīs' thought on this matter developed in tandem not only with events as they unfolded but also with broader religious and political discourses in Ottoman lands.[37] But even in this later more politically charged and doctrinally demanding environment, it is difficult to ascertain Idrīs' true beliefs regarding the nature of Shah

[34] Idrīs includes a passing reference to the depredations of the Qizilbash, whom he likens to the Khārijites (*bi-javāriḥ-i khavārij mamālik hamagī muhlak va muʾlam*), Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 7a.
[35] Palmira Brummett has outlined some of the difficulties for gathering reliable reports on Shah Ismail for both European powers and the Ottomans, Palmira Brummett, "The Myth of Shah Ismail Safavi: Political Rhetoric and 'Divine' Kingship," in *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays*, ed. John Victor Tolan (New York: Garland, 1996), 332–5.
[36] Savory, in particular, emphasizes Shah Ismāᶜīl's gradual accumulation of power by the successive victories of the Qizilbash in Persia over the first decade of the sixteenth century, Roger M. Savory, "The Consolidation of Ṣafawid Power in Persia," *Der Islam* 41 (1965): 71–94.
[37] For details of the changes in the early reign of Selim, see Chapter Six (Return to the East, 1514-1520).

Ismāʿīl's threat. Indeed, as a consequence of his perceived poor treatment in Ottoman lands after his presentation of *Hasht bihisht* in 911/1506, Idrīs initiated communication with leading members of Shah Ismāʿīl's court, and, as late as 917/1511, he entertained the possibility of a full reconciliation with Shah Ismāʿīl. This correspondence, which occurred even as Idrīs penned some of his strongest condemnations of the Qizilbash, indicates that, in fact, he held no doctrinally derived animus toward Ismāʿīl.[38]

III.3 Longing and Regret in the Extremity of Rūm

Idrīs' decision to emigrate from Tabriz initiated a two-fold personal crisis. On one level, Idrīs' departure signaled the loss of his homeland and the beginning of his residence in a foreign country (*ghurba*). Such a loss was likely thoroughly disorienting and heartbreaking. For the first forty-four years of his life, Idrīs had prospered both intellectually in the company of his father's friends and associates and professionally at the court of one of the preeminent ruling dynasties of Iran. His arrival in Ottoman lands in 908/1502 completely upended this life. No longer was professional prosperity assured on the basis of key connections and a long record of service. In a certain sense, Idrīs had to start over. On a deeper level, the feeling that his homeland had fallen into a state of complete disorder and injustice triggered a personal crisis of conscience. In the midst of the violent political and social turmoil, Idrīs reflected on his own professional choices and judged that his abandonment of the Sufi path represented a gross misuse of his energies.

Although Idrīs' entry into sultanic service for Yaʿqūb signaled a rejection of the path toward gnostic learning which his father had introduced to him, Idrīs was never completely comfortable with his embrace of worldly matters. On several occasions during periods of

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[38] Bidlīsī, *Majmūʿa*, Esad Efendi 1888, 144a-147a.

personal distress and political uncertainty, he returned to this decision and resolved to recommit himself to a life of learning and piety. The chaos of the final years of Aqquyunlu rule was one such period. Suffering and violence precipitated by political upheavals, plagues, and famines conjured a sense of apocalyptic foreboding for many of the witnesses to events in Iran and prompted Idrīs to reconsider how he had spent his life.[39] The chaos in Iran led him to repent "for what eluded me in terms of a desire to take on lofty actions and good works and I grieved for my insolence in spending my life in pursuit of pleasures and mirth."[40] In the wake of this realization, he turned once again to his father, "who was my refuge in solving most matters of faith and my asylum in every perplexing matter of intellect and conscience."[41] Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī considered his son's predicament and offered him advice that would completely alter the future course of his son's life. He suggested that Idrīs rededicate himself to God, firstly, by undertaking a pilgrimage to Mecca, and secondly, by seeking refuge with the Ottoman sultan Bāyezīd II.[42] While Idrīs does not explain why his father recommended that he approach the Ottoman court, Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī's advice reflects his own warm feelings for the Ottoman house. In *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs remarks that his father, like the other learned men associated with the Qaraquyunlu Turkmen dynasty, was a life-long well-wisher of the Ottoman dynasty.[43] Moreover, Ḥusam al-Dīn ʿAlī himself had entertained the idea of immigrating to Ottoman lands some time after the death of

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[39] In several of Idrīs' works written during the first decade of the tenth/sixteenth century Idrīs likened the upheaval in Iran with the coming End Time. In *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ʿīd*, Idrīs describes his departure from his homeland as "flight from the evil of the upheaval of End Time" (*gurīzān az sharr-i fitna-i ākhir-i zamān*)," Bidlīsī, *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ʿīd*, Ayasofya 3203, 2a.

[40] *nadamtu ʿalá mā fāta ʿanī min al-gharaḍ li-iktisāb maʿālī al-umūr waʾl-khayrāt wa taḥassartu ʿalá mā tajāsartu fī ṣarf al-aʿmār bi-mutābaʿat al-ahwāʾ waʾl-musarrāt*, Bidlīsī, *Ḥāshīya ʿalá anwār al-tanzīl*, 5b.

[41] *bādartu...ilá man kāna malādhī fī ḥall jūll mushkil dīnī wa maʿādhī fī kull amr muʿḍil ʿilmī wa ʿaynī*, ibid.

[42] Ibid, 6b-7a.

[43] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, , 346a.

Sultan Ya'qūb in 894/1490.[44] Although Idrīs would eventually realize both of his father's recommendations, he did not prioritize the pilgrimage. Within a few months of having left Tabriz, Idrīs was in the middle of Ottoman domains in the Balkans.

When Idrīs first arrived in Ottoman lands in 908/1502, he settled in Sofia in the province of Rumili and remained there for at least one year.[45] Despite his prolonged residence, Idrīs found his new environs particularly alienating, as the customs of the Christian inhabitants of the region offended his sensibilities and contributed to his expressed feelings of loneliness. The loss of homeland reinforced by these feelings of loneliness in "the extremity of the lands of Rum," marked the second aspect of Idrīs' mid-life crisis.[46] Throughout many of his works, but especially those completed in the years immediately following his emigration, Idrīs dwelt on the anguish he felt with the loss of his homeland (*vaṭan*). For Idrīs, this loss was most strongly associated with separation from the physical terrain of his homeland and his loved ones who continued to reside there.[47] In Ramaḍān 908/February 1503 during Idrīs' first months of residence in Ottoman lands, he noted the deep pain his emigration caused: "I was afflicted with separation from my young ones and brothers through the imposition of exile from my country and homeland and was cut off from my esteemed relatives and friends... All at once, I was forced

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[44] ʿAlī Bidlīsī, *Tafsīr*, Şehid Ali Paşa 109, 2a-2b.

[45] Idrīs' residence in Sofia lasted from at least the beginning of Ramaḍān 908/middle of February 1502 until some time in 909/1502-1503; as *Munāẓara* clarifies, he resided in Sofia during the holy month and *Sharḥ-i qaṣīda-yi khamrīya* confirms that he was still a resident of the city when he completed the work some time in 909/1502-1503, Bidlīsī, *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ʿīd*, Ayasofya 3203, 5a/b. Bidlīsī, *Sharḥ-i qaṣīda-yi khamrīya*, Ayasofya 4092, 82a; Orhan Başaran, "İdrîs-i Bitlisî'nin Şerh-i kasîde-i Hamriyye'si ve iki yazma nüshası," *Nüsha* 4 (2004): 9.

[46] In two works Idrīs completed shortly after his arrival in Ottoman lands, he describes his residence in Sofia as "the extremity of Rumelia (*dar aqṣā-yi mamālik-i Rūm*), Bidlīsī, *Khamrīya*, Ali Emiri Farsi 134, 5b; and *dar aqṣā-yi mamālik-i islāmī Rūm*, Bidlīsī, *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ʿīd*, Aya Sofya 3203, 2b).

[47] Several of Idrīs' earliest works in Ottoman lands dwell upon his separation from family and home. See for instance the preface to Bidlīsī, *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ʿīd*, 2a.

to demonstrate forbearance due to the distance from my parents and children and the complete

isolation from the homes of loved ones and friends."[48] Although his mother, wife, and children

would later join him in Ottoman lands, the first years of Idrīs' residence among the Ottomans

were profoundly disorienting.[49] Within a year of his arrival at the Ottoman court, Idrīs received

word of his father's death.[50] The loss of his teacher, mentor, and guide in all matters fueled

further these feelings of loss and intensified notions of his imprisonment to circumstance.

The sentiments expressed in Idrīs' recollection of these two personal crises reflected the

literary tastes and expectations of his learned audience. While there is little doubt that Idrīs was

shaken by the developments in his homeland and saddened by his forced migration, his

expression of these feelings channeled the conventional terms of Arabic and Persian *belles-

lettres*. The customs of good style in literary expression were rooted in the thought and works of

Abbasid-era litterateurs (*adīb/udabāʾ*) whose rhetorical formulations on a wide range of topics

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[48] *Ammā mubtalā bi-furqat-i fatīya va ikhvān bi-żarūrat-i jalā-yi diyār va awṭān va judāʾ-i aᶜizza-i aqribā va khullān rūy namūd...ammā yakbāra bi-kanāra-yi dūr az ṣuḥbat-i vālidayn va valadān va biʾl-kull munqaṭaᶜ az manāzil-i aḥibbā va dūstān muṣābarat mīnamūd*, ibid.

[49] We know that Idris' mother subsequently immigrated to Ottoman lands, as she occasionally received financial support from the Ottoman court. For instance, on 29 Rajab 916/1 November 1510, she received a gift and 4,000 akçes, Atatürk Kitaplığı, *İnᶜāmāt Defteri*, MC O. 71, 402. Idrīs' wife, Zaynab Khātūn, outlived him and established a mosque in the Eyüp district of Constantinople beside which Idrīs is buried, Ḥāfız Ḥüseyin Ayvānsarāyī, *Ḥadīkatuʾl-cevāmiᶜ*, ed. Ali Satiʿ Bey (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1281), I, 262–3; Idris also had at least three sons: Ebūʾl-Mevāhib was a military man who served his father on the Diyārbakr campaign of 921/1515. Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed was a scholar educated under Müʾeyyedzāde ᶜAbdurrahmān Efendi, who held various positions as district judge and eventually *defterdar* during the reign of Süleymān. In addition to theses two sons, a salary register from the reign of Sultan Bāyezīd II records the death of an unnamed son on 4 Rabīᶜ II, 915, İsmail Erünsal, "Türk Edebiyatı Tarihinin Arşiv Kaynakları I: II. Bâyezid devrine ait bir in'âmât defteri," *Tarih Entsitüsü Dergisi* X–XI (1980 1979): 327.

[50] Although a number of scholars have suggested that Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī died in 900/1494, this cannot be correct based upon Idrīs' own testimony that his father suggested he travel to Ottoman lands in 908/1502, Bidlīsī, *Ḥāshīya ᶜalá anwār al-tanzīl*, Ayasofya 303-M, 5b. Moreover, Bāyezīd's gift register states that on 13 Shaᶜbān 909/ 31 January 1504, Mawlānā Idrīs Munshī was offered a gift of fine fabric in consolation for the loss of his father in Iran, *İnᶜāmāt Defteri*, MC O. 71, p. 33.

were collected in literary anthologies. Idrīs' disparagement of worldly matters (*dhamm al-dunyā*), praise for a life of poverty and asceticism (*madḥ al-faqr*), as well as nostalgia for the homeland (*ḥanīn ilá al-awṭān*) all correspond to well-established literary themes within the Arabic and Persian canon of *belles-lettres*.[51] Indeed, Idrīs' association of loss of homeland with separation from friends and family represented one of the most widespread conventions of the canon.[52] Idrīs was certainly familiar with these anthologies and in fact praises Rāghib Iṣfahānī (d. early fifth/eleventh century), one of their most renowned compilers, as the genre's finest practitioner.[53] Yet even if Idrīs' presentation of his feelings and experiences appears conventional, the underlying sentiments were genuine.

Notwithstanding the conventional nature of his sentiments, Idrīs used the loneliness and anguish that he felt as creative inspiration for the first two works that he completed in Ottoman domains during his residence in and around Sofia. The two works also dealt with mystical or pious topics in a literary manner and likely reflect his recommitment to a moral life. He penned one of these works on the occasion of Ramaḍān, the Muslim month of fasting. Idrīs explains his rationale for composing the epistle in terms of his migration from home, arrival in the environs of Sofia, and the onset of Ramaḍān, which in that year 908/1503 coincided with the first day of Lent. In view of these circumstances, as well as the fact that the Ottoman royal camp was at that

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[51] For instance, Rāghib Iṣfahānī has sections on all three of these topics in his literary anthology, Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabāʾ wa-muḥāwarāt al-shuʿarāʾ wa-al- bulaghāʾ*, ed. Riyāḍ ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Murād, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār Dār Ṣādir, 2006), 2:299, 4:45, 4:587.

[52] Zayde Antrim has collated a number of references to the connection between loss of homeland and separation from friends and family in Arabic literary anthologies. In her discussion of home and homeland within this tradition she notes that "the social nurture of kinship networks was closely linked to land, and physical separation from that land often meant physical separation from that source of belonging for both men and women," Zayde Antrim, *Routes and Realms: The Power of Place in the Early Islamic World* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 18.

[53] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 12a.

time installed in Sofia, Idrīs decided to compose a literary work comparing the virtues of fasting (*rūza*) and feasting (*ʿīd*).[54] What follows in the treatise is an entertaining debate between the anthropomorphized characters of Feast (*ʿīd*) and Fast (*rūza*) adjudicated by the *Great Feast* (*ʿīd al-aḍha*), whom Idrīs describes as the lord of conjunction of the last age (*Ṣāhib-qirān-i ākhir-i zamān*).[55] The other work that Idrīs wrote in Sofia was also inspired by the loneliness and alienation he felt in his new residence. Idrīs explains that he decided to compose a commentary on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's mystical ode to wine, *al-Khamrīya*, when a line of poetry came to him in the midst of his deep pain caused by separation from friends. In the preface to his commentary on the poem, Idrīs recalls that while "in the extremity of the provinces of *Rūm*, I remained excluded from the honor of good conversation with and honorable service to all my friends.... In order to dispel my anguish, I would sing a melody."[56] In singing the melody, the first lines of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poem happened to come to his mind. Considering the content of the poem, he judged that it would be appropriate to explain its meaning through the composition of a commentary. For both these works, Idrīs channeled his feelings of loss and alienation toward the production of literary pieces that would help advance his position in his new place of residence.

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[54] 1 Ramaḍān 908 fell on Tuesday, 17 February 1502. While lent begins on Wednesday, according to some epistolographical authorities, the beginning of a month (*ghurra-yi māh*) should include the first three days. By such accounting *ghurra-yi Ramaẓān* would also include the first day of Lent, Wednesday 18 February 1502. For a definition of *ghurra* as the first three days of the month, see the widely used style manual of Khuyī which states that according to some authorities, the *ghurra* of the month includes the first three days (*bā qawl-i baʿżī tā si rūz ghurra-yi māh shāyad nivisht*), Ḥusām al-Dīn Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd al-Muʾmin Khūʾī, *Ghunyat al-kātib va munyat al-ṭālib; [va] Rusūm al-rasāʾil va nujūm al-fażāʾil*, ed. Adnan Sadık Erzi (Ankara: Dānishkadah-i Ilahīyāt, Dānishgāh-i Anqarah, 1963), 24.

[55] Bidlīsī, *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ʿīd*, 22a.

[56] *va dar aqṣá-yi mamālik-i Rūm az ʿizz-i ṣuḥbat va sharaf-i khidmat-i hamah-yi ʿazīzān maḥrūm mānda būdam...va jihat-i dafʿ-i andūh-i dil naghmaʾī mī sarūdam li-muʾallif: har laḥẓah gūyam khʷud bi- khʷud dard-i dil dildār-i khʷīsh / har dam sarāyam naghma baḥr-i gham-khʷār-i khʷīsh*, Bidlīsī, *Sharḥ-i qaṣīda-yi khamrīya*, Ali Emiri Farsi 134, 5b-6a.

III.4 Patronage and Literary Production

These early works produced in Ottoman domains underscore the importance of patronage in Idrīs' efforts to establish a new life in a new land. Idrīs presented both works to members of the Ottoman house and no doubt hoped that they would save him from his deplorable circumstances. The composition of the two works served multiple purposes. In the first instance, they were a means of introduction for Idrīs to both Sultan Bāyezīd and his powerful son Sultan Aḥmed. In addition to their use as a cultivator of protection and place in Ottoman lands, one of the works also served as a proposal for the undertaking of a much larger literary project.

Idrīs' interest in attracting the attention of Prince Aḥmed made considerable sense when he first arrived in *Rūm* at the beginning of the ninth/sixteenth century. In addition to the patronage offered by the central court of the Ottoman sultan, the princely households of Bāyezīd's sons and some of his grandsons all represented important loci of patronage for litterateurs, poets, craftsmen, doctors, and astrologers.[57] The Ottoman dynastic system during this period facilitated the promotion of these activities at princely courts, as the sultan's sons, once having reached the age of maturity, were appointed governors in provincial cities where they were expected to learn the art of governance and establish their own households. These provincial princely households assumed the structure of the central court, albeit on a smaller scale, and afforded Ottoman princes the opportunity to cultivate their interest in literature and the arts by supporting talented men. For instance, the salary registers of the princely household of the future sultan Süleymān include not only important advisers such as his personal tutor and

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[57] On the patronage of poets among the princely courts of Meḥmed II and Bāyezīd II's reigns, see Halûk İpekten, *Divan edebiyatinda edebî muhitler* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1996), 162–191; On the importance of these princely courts for poetic patronage in the middle of the sixteenth century, see Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)*, Princeton Studies on the Near East (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1986), 38–40.

various contingents of household troops, but also secretarial posts such as household chancellor (*tevḳīʿī*), chief financial officer (*defterdār*), and council secretaries (*kātibān-i dīvān*).[58] Included among the secretaries of prince Süleymān's council was Sehī Beğ, a prominent poet of the first half of the tenth/sixteenth century and the author of an important biographical dictionary of poets.[59] In fact, many of the Ottoman princes during Bāyezīd's reign became important patrons of literature through their appointment of gifted poets as secretaries within their households. The late-sixteenth-century historian Muṣṭafá ʿĀlī records six prominent poets from Bāyezīd's reign, including Necātī, who held positions ranging from council secretary to chancellor or chief financial officer at princely provincial courts.[60] Connections to an Ottoman prince who subsequently acceded the throne transformed the careers of many young scholars and litterateurs. For instance, a number of the most prominent figures in Bāyezīd's court, including Tācī Beg and Müʾeyyedzāde ʿAbdurraḥmān Efendi, first attracted the attention of the Ottoman sultan while Bāyezīd was still a prince governing in Amasya.[61]

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[58] TSMA D. 10052.

[59] Sehī Beğ is listed as a secretary of the divan with a daily salary of 15 silver aspers (*akçe*). The register also records that one of Sehī Beğ's colleagues on the council was Muṣṭafá Çelebi, which in all likelihood is a reference to Süleymān's future chancellor Celālzāde Muṣṭafá, TSMA D. 10052.

[60] According to Muṣṭafá ʿĀlī, in addition to Necātī and Sehī Beğ, Ṭālıʿ, Ṣunʿī, Zihnī, and Zekāyī all served as secretaries or scribal officers at the court of an Ottoman prince during Bāyezīd's reign, Muṣṭafá bin Aḥmed ʿĀlī, *Künhü'l-ahbâr'ın tezkire kısmı*, ed. Mustafa İsen (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi, 1994), 155–156, 158; Beyond these poets who were employed in the scribal services of a princely court, Muṣṭafá ʿĀlī cites several other poets as renowned panegyrists of Ottoman princes during Bāyezīd's reign, including ʿAndelībī (p. 160), Figānī (p. 162), Münīrī (p. 164), Mihrī (p. 164), Niyāzī (p. 168), Hāşimī (p. 169), ʿĀlī, *Künhü'l-ahbâr'ın tezkire kısmı*.

[61] In addition to these two men, Hasan Karataş has noted that access to patronage at Bāyezīd's princely court "helped the sons of the Amasyan elite to pursue major empire-wide positions in the Ottoman academic and legal hierarchy," Hasan Karataş, "The City as a Historical Actor: The Urbanization and Ottomanization of the Halvetiye Sufi Order by the City of Amasya in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries" (Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley, 2011), 82.

Idrīs' desire to cultivate a relationship with Prince Aḥmed likely reflected his understanding of these courtly dynamics. Moreover, at the turn of the tenth/sixteenth century, Şehzāde Aḥmed was perceived by many court observers to be the favored son of Bāyezīd. His appointment to Amasya, the former seat of his father's princely court, suggested that during this period Bāyezīd wished for Prince Aḥmed to succeed him.[62] Consequently, Idrīs dedicated his other work composed in Sofia to the favored prince. In the preface, Idrīs refers to Aḥmed as the heir-apparent (*valī-ʿahd*) and in the context of a poetic ode to the prince expressed his wish that Aḥmed succeed his father to the Ottoman throne:[63]

> The rank of Caesar falls short in describing him
> victorious, like Alexander, over realm and faith

> The king of saintly virtues Aḥmed Khan
> His benevolence and being are equal to the essence of life![64]

Idrīs' use of the term heir-apparent is a relative anomaly in the Ottoman context of this period. On this one hand, his use may be interpreted as encomiastic praise of a potential patron. Indeed, in his first years among the Ottomans, Idrīs deployed the term in reference to two other sons of

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[62] At the turn of the tenth/sixteenth century, there was a strong association between a governorship in Amasya and a prince's future accession to the throne. In fact, all four Ottoman sultans of the ninth/fifteenth century had served as governors in Amasya. Indeed, Kemalpaşazade interprets Bāyezīd's appointment of Aḥmed to the governorship of Amasya as a sign of his favor, Kemalpaşazade, *Tevârih-i âl-i Osman VII. defter*, ed. Şerafettin Turan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1957), 523–4; Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 80.

[63] "The heir-apparent of the sultan of the age, the majestic prince marked by the signs of kingship, the manifestation of the most blessed attributes and virtues, the proclaimed one of the verses of Muhammadan confirmation, the king of the shining reflection of the noble characteristics of Khusrau, king of broad compassion and virtues, the crown jewel of the royal and storied band, the burning lamp of the house of the Caesarian ceilinged Caliphate (*Ān valī al-ʿahd-i sulṭān-i zamān shāhzāda-yi ʿālī-shān-i sulṭān-nishān maẓhar-i shamāʾil va akhlāq-i aḥmadī muẓhar-i ayāt-i taʾyīd-i muḥammadī shāh-i rawshan-żamīr mukramat-khiṣāl khusraw va malik-i vasīʿ-raḥmat va afżāl-i durrat ul-tāj-i firaq-i shāhi va sarvāyi sirāj-i vahhāj dar khānadān-i khilāfat-i āshyān-i qayṣarī*)," Bidlīsī, *Sharḥ-i qaṣīdat khamrīya*, Ali Emiri Farsi 134, 6b.

[64] *Rutbat-i qayṣarī bar-ū maqṣūr / chun Sikandar bi-millat u dīn manṣūr / Shāh-i qudsī-khiṣāl Aḥmad Khān / luṭf u khalqash ʿadīl-i jawhar-i jān*, ibid, 7b.

Bāyezīd, Selīm and Şehinşāh.[65] In this manner, Idrīs' assertion of Aḥmed's preferred status may

be simply understood as appropriate praise. Yet, on the other hand, there is some indication that

Idrīs offered Aḥmed a special status as heir-apparent in his writings. For instance, even as *Hasht*

bihisht lauds all of Baeyzid's sons as great princes, only Aḥmed is praised in this context as the

sultan's heir apparent.[66] While Bāyezīd may have favored Prince Aḥmed's succession, the

formal appointment of an heir-apparent had no precedent in Ottoman constitutional terms during

the ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries.[67] Like the traditions of the Aqquyunlu

confederation, the Ottoman dynasty adhered to a corporate notion of sovereignty rooted in

Turkic customs, by which any of the male members of the ruling family had an equal claim to

succeed in leadership.[68] In the ninth/fifteenth century this tradition led to a number of civil wars

among familial claimants to sovereignty;[69] Bāyezīd only acceded the throne in 886/1481 after

defeating his brother Cem.[70] His support of Prince Aḥmed was likely rooted in a desire to avoid

future succession conflicts, a wish which was no doubt complicated by the large number of

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[65] In reference to Selīm, see Bidlīsī, *Mirʾāt al-ʿushshāq*, Esad Efendi 1888, 155b; in reference to Şehinşāh, see Bidlīsī, *Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī*, 5.

[66] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Nuruosmaniye 3209, 593b.

[67] I use the term constitution to refer loosely to those traditions by which the Ottoman dynasty constituted itself as a political community. In this sense the term corresponds to the concept of *qānūn*, both as the set of practices handed down from previous sultans and as the rules that regulated the sultan's servants and marked their place within the administrative hierarchy. This understanding of *qānūn* corresponds with Idrīs' use of the term in *Hasht bihisht*.

[68] Halil İnalcık, "Osmanlılar'da Saltanat Veraseti Usulü ve Türk Hâkimiyet Telâkkisiyle İlgisi," *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi* 14, no. 1 (1959): 69–94.

[69] The most famous of these civil wars involved the sons of Bāyezīd I after his defeat to Timur at the Battle of Ankara in 804/1402. For a detailed analysis of this conflict, see Dimitris J. Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid: Empire Building and Representation in the Ottoman Civil War of 1402-1413* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007).

[70] For details on this conflict, see Nicolas Vatin, *Sultan Djem: un prince ottoman dans l'Europe du XVe siècle d'après deux sources contemporaines: Vâḳiʿât-ı Sulṭân Cem, Œuvres de Guillaume Caoursin* (Ankara: Imprimerie de la Société turque d'historire [sic], 1997).

Bāyezīd's adult sons.[71] Idrīs' prominent ascription of heir-apparent to Aḥmed certainly reflects this mood at the Ottoman court, but also likely expresses Idrīs' own desire for orderly successions among rulers. After all, the violent civil wars that destroyed the Aqquyunlu regime in his native land all came about as the result of succession conflicts between competing branches of the Bayandur clan. Idrīs' use of the term likely reflected his own desires for peaceful and orderly succession as much as an attempt to cultivate a protective relationship with a powerful Ottoman prince.

Yet even as Idrīs sought to make connections with Prince Aḥmed and the other powerful sons of Bāyezīd, he was probably more interested in securing the attention of the central Ottoman court. To that end, Idrīs wrote *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ʿīd* and dedicated it to Sultan Bāyezīd.[72] Within the context of the work's preface, Idrīs explains the unfortunate circumstances that led him to Ottoman domains and expressed the wish that his literary efforts would be well received by the sultan's servants. The last portion of the preface includes an ode to Bāyezīd, which emphasizes his fine qualities. While the inclusion of such sentiments in a dedicatory preface is a relatively common feature of most literature from this period, Idrīs also included another panegyric of Bāyezīd at the end of the work, which contains in its verses a proposal for a larger project that would sing the praises of the Ottoman house. The poem laments the fact that Idrīs had not yet been afforded an appropriate opportunity to celebrate the feats of Bāyezīd and his forebears:

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[71] Bāyezīd had eight sons. For details on Bāyezīd's children, see Uluçay, "Bayazid II.'in Ailesi."

[72] One manuscript copy of this work belonged personally to Bāyezīd as it bears his seal in two places; Bidlīsī, *Munzara-yi rūza va ʿīd,* Ayasofya 3203, 1a, 25b. This work is also included in the inventory of Bāyezīd II's library compiled by ʿAṭūfī in 909/1504, where it is referred to as "the epistle of Mawlānā Idrīs on a comparison of fasting and feasting, a sort of history (*risālat Mawlānā Idrīs fī munāẓarat al-ṣawm waʾl-ʿīd min qibal al-tawārīkh*)," Magyar Tudomanyos Akademia Künyvtara Keleti Gyüjtement, Török F59, 95a.

> I have set your lasting memory upon the pages of the heart
> What a pity the writing remains in the night realm of visions!
>
> From the black depth of my eye I would pen your description
> I would set that treatise upon the white surfaces of the earth
>
> If in praise of your house I bring myself honor and purity
> It will be self-praise and that is an inconceivable thought
>
> How is my broken-legged pen going to enter the sea (meter) of your praise?
> The leg of an ant cannot enter the expanse of an ocean[73]

The poem also introduces a concept that would become one of the major hallmarks of Idrīs'

historical thought, as well as one of his most powerful tools for eliciting the support of patrons.

Throughout his historical writings Idrīs suggests that the notion of a lasting memory (*ẕikr-i*

jamīl) is the clearest and most appropriate manner by which rulers may influence the world.

Through good deeds (*maṣlaḥat*) and charitable works (*khayrāt*), rulers develop reputations for

justice and good governance. When these deeds and works are memorialized in prose and verse a

ruler obtains a lasting memory that will long outlive the impermanent quality of his body and the

fleeting nature of his own life.[74] Incidentally, the concept also underscores the essential

importance of gifted historians capable of establishing such a lasting memory in appropriately

elevated prose and poetry.[75] Understandably, Idrīs hoped that historians who were successful in

securing for their patrons a lasting memory would themselves be appropriately rewarded.

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[73] *karda-am ẕikr-i jamīlat sabt bar awrāq-i dil / ḥayf az ān arqām mānad dar shabistān-i khayāl / az savād-i chashm-i khʷud kardam raqam awṣāf-i tū / bar bayāż-i ṣafḥa-yi gītī kunam sabt-i ān maqāl / gar bi-madḥ-i khānadānat nām u ṣāfī baram / khʷud sitāyī bāshad u andīsha-yi fikr-i muḥāl / pā-shikasta-yi kilk-i man dar baḥr-i madḥat chun rūd / pā-yi mūrī rā nabāshad ʿarṣa-yi daryā muḥāl*, Bidlīsī, *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ʿīd*, Aya Sofya 3203, 25a.

[74] There are many places in Idrīs' work where he elaborates on the concept of a lasting memory. One of his most thorough treatments of the subject can be found in the introduction to his volume on Sultan Meḥmed II, see Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Nuruosmaniye 3209, 375a. For further discussion of the concept, see chapter seven.

[75] Idrīs elaborates on this role of the historian in his conclusion to *Hasht bihisht*.

In this way, Idrīs used the presentation of one work, namely *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ʿīd*, as the vehicle for securing the backing for a subsequent literary effort. This technique for soliciting patronage was not unique. In the latter years of Yaʿqūb's reign, Khūnjī-Iṣfahānī proposed to laud the sultan's achievement in a future history in the context of the preface of a much shorter work on Sufism entitled *Badīʿ al-zamān*.[76] The resulting history would become *Tārīkh-i ʿālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, the most important source for the reign of Yaʿqūb. The similarities between Khūnjī-Iṣfahānī and Idrīs' strategies for securing patronage are striking. Like Idrīs in Ottoman lands in 908/1502, when Khūnjī-Iṣfahānī presented *Badīʿ al-zamān* to Yaʿqūb in 892/1487, he had only recently arrived at the Aqquyunlu court. For both Idrīs and Khūnjī-Iṣfahānī, the presentation of these shorter works, therefore, served not only as a means of introduction to the respective courts, but also as a clear proposal for future patronage through writing a major history. Evidently, Bāyezīd was impressed with Idrīs' early work and accepted his proposal. Within a few months of having completed *Munāẓara-yi rūza va 'īd*, Idrīs embarked on his most ambitious literary project. The work of history commonly known as *Hasht bihisht* would secure an honored place for Idrīs among the Ottomans, but it also planted seeds of jealousy and enmity, which would ultimately lead to another exile for the itinerant scholar.

III.5 Idrīs' Early Allies in Ottoman Lands

While writing *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs benefited from the full support of the Ottoman court, as well as from the direcet encouragement of several influential statesmen with close personal ties to Sultan Bāyezīd. These early supporters included high-ranking military leaders, such as Muṣṭafá Pasha, Dāvud Pasha, and ʿAlī Pasha, the long-serving vizier in the first decade of the

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[76] Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Tārīkh-i ʿālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, 72–73.

sixteenth century. To all of these men, Idrīs dedicated panegyric poems and reserved a special

place in his history to recount the highlights of their careers.[77] Yet, two of the most important

supporters of Idrīs in his early years among the Ottomans were Müʾeyyedzāde ʿAbdurraḥmān

Efendi and İskender Pasha. Although the particular careers of Müʾeyyedzāde ʿAbdurraḥmān

Efendi and İskender Pasha assumed markedly different forms, their professional successes both

largely accrued from the personal nature of their relationship with the sultan. As a consequence

of this personal relationship, both men were awarded positions of power and prestige that

became sources of patronage in their own right. Idrīs likely discerned this aspect of their political

influence and sought to cultivate his relationship with both of them.

Müʾeyyedzāde ʿAbdurraḥmān Efendi was a childhood friend of Sultan Bāyezīd, when

the sultan was still a young prince governing in Amasya. According to Taşköprüzāde, the close

relationship of the two young men caused jealousy among other members of the court who

lodged spurious complaints regarding the prince's friend to Sultan Meḥmed II.[78] Hearing that

Sultan Meḥmed planned to order Müʾeyyedzāde's execution, Bāyezīd furnished his friend with

10,000 silver aspers and the means to escape Amasya and flee to Mamluk-controlled Aleppo.

Müʾeyyedzāde's flight initiated a period of seven years abroad during which time he studied in

Syria and Persia. Based upon the scholarly reputation of Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī, Müʾeyyedzāde

ventured to Shiraz where he passed the majority of his period of exile under the instruction of the

great scholar. This period of study was significant for Müʾeyyedzāde, as his experiences in

Shiraz enabled him subsequently to become the major conduit by which Persian scholars and

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[77] Idrīs lauded Muṣṭafá Pasha and Dāvud Pasha through panegyric poetry (Esad Efendi 1888, 135b-137b) and in *Hasht bihisht* (604b, 606b); he included a special section in his chronicle on ʿAlī Pasha, who, at the time of his writing, was the grand vizier (604b).

[78] For a detailed near contemporary account of Müeyyedzade's life and career, see Taşköprüzade, *al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuʿmānīyah fī ʿulamāʾ al-Dawlat al-ʿUthmānīyah*, 290–295.

scholarship passed to Ottoman lands. In this manner, Müʾeyyedzāde, along with a number of

other scholars, popularized the work of Davānī in Ottoman lands.[79] In later years, he would also

become a major contact for Persian scholars fleeing Iran, including Idrīs, in the first decade of

the tenth/sixteenth century.[80]

Upon Bāyezīd's accession, Müʾeyyedzāde was invited back to Ottoman lands where he

was appointed to a teaching position in Istanbul. In 891/1486, upon Müʾeyyedzāde's marriage to

the daughter of Mollā Kestelli, Sultan Bāyezīd awarded his old friend one of the most prestigious

teaching positions in Ottoman lands at the mosque complex of Sultan Meḥmed II. From this

position, Müʾeyyedzāde was elevated to the judgeship of Edirne in 897/1491-2 and later in

907/1501-2 to the military judgeship of *Anadolu*. He reached the pinnacle of the Ottoman

religious administrative hierarchy with his appointment as military judge of Rumili in 911/1505-

6 while Idrīs was in the midst of writing *Hasht bihisht*.

During this period of rise, but especially after he had attained the military judgeship of

Anadolu, Müʾeyyedzāde became an important patron of poets and protector of scholars fleeing

Iran. Müʾeyyedzāde's interest in supporting poets stemmed from his own engagement with

poetry; indeed, he was memorialized by most of the major sixteenth-century biographical

dictionaries of poets for the quality of his verse in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish.[81] Such interest

in poetry led to direct support of poets through gifts and financial rewards. At one point the

young poet Ẕātī declined a position at court after noting that the material support provided by

[79] Atçıl, "The Formation of the Ottoman Learned Class," 119–120.

[80] Ibid., 112–114.

[81] ʿĀşıq Çelebi praises his verse in the three languages, ʿĀşik Çelebi, *Meşâʿirüʾş-Şuʿarâ: Inceleme, Metin*, ed. Filiz Kılıç (Istanbul: İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010), 1496; entries on Müeyyedzāde are also found in the other sixteenth-century Ottoman biograhical dictionearies, including Sehî, *Tezkire-i Sehī*; Latifı, *Tezkiretüʾş-şuʾarâ ve tabsıratüʾn-nuzamâ: inceleme, metin*, ed. Rıdvan Canım (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı, 2000), 383–4; and Hasan Çelebi Kınalızade, *Tezkiretüʾş-şuarâ* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1978), I, 318–25.

Mü'eyyedzāde and the chancellor Ca'fer Çelebi were sufficient to meet his needs.[82] Similarly, when the poet Necātī returned to Constantinople from Manisa after the death of his patron Prince Maḥmūd in 913/1507, Mü'eyyedzāde encouraged the famous poet to gather his work in a *dīvān* (single collection of poetry).[83] Through these gatherings, and the support that he offered Z̲ātī and Necātī, Mü'eyyedzāde became an important patron of Turkish poetry during the final decade of Bāyezīd's rule. During these same years, he also emerged as an important intermediary for Persian scholars who fled their homeland and sought refuge at the Ottoman court. In fact, the military judge helped three of his friends, who were also former students of Davānī, to obtain teaching positions and judgeships in Ottoman domains.[84] The settlement of Persian scholars in Anadolu and the Balkans was often complicated by differences between the Ḥanafī legal tradition embraced by the Ottomans and the Shāfi'ī school, which prevailed among most of the inhabitants of western Iran. This difference affected the aid that Mü'eyyedzāde could provide; only those of his friends who were Ḥanafī were appointed to judgeships.[85] For his Shāfi'ī friends, Mü'eyyedzāde found appointments to teaching positions in Istanbul and the provinces.[86]

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[82] İpekten, *Divan edebiyatinda edebî muhitler*, 52–53; 'Āşiḳ Çelebi, *Meşâ'irü'ş-Şu'arâ*, 3:1581–2.

[83] Necâtî Bey, *Necâtî Beg divanı.*, ed. Ali Nihad Tarlan (İstanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1963), 10; We can surmise that the divan was assembled after the death of Sultan Maḥmūd, as it includes a poetic elegy (mersiye) for the prince, ibid., 110–14.

[84] With Müeyyedzāde's help, Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shīrāzī, Ḥāfiẓ-i 'Ajam, and Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Avval (Saçlı Emīr) all found teaching positions or judgeships in Ottoman lands. Mü'eyyedzāde helped a fourth colleague, Ḥakīm Shāh Muḥammad Qazvīnī, immigrate to Ottoman lands, but Qazvīnī did not teach or adjudicate in a formal capacity. Taşköprüzāde, *al-Shaqā'iq al-nu'mānīyah fī 'ulamā' al-dawlat al-'uthmānīyah*, 329–32, 330–1, 449–51, 488–9.

[85] Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Avval was the son of the Ḥanafī judge of Tabriz. He was the only Persian émigré scholar from this period to attain a high judicial position in the Ottoman administration, Atçıl, "The Formation of the Ottoman Learned Class and Legal Scholarship, 1300-1600," 113.

[86] On the career of Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shīrāzī, see Taşköprüzāde, *al-Shaqā'iq al-nu'mānīyah fī 'ulamā' al-Dawlat al-'Uthmānīyah*, 329–30; on Hafız 'Ajam, see ibid., 449–51.

As a consequence of Müʾeyyedzāde's support of poets and Persian émigré scholars, Idrīs actively cultivated a relationship with this prominent Ottoman and friend of the sultan. In fact, in the earliest version of the chronicle to appear in 911/1506, Idrīs acknowledged the judge's direct involvement with his historiographical project through the various suggestions that he offered.[87] ʿĀşıq Çelebi makes clear that the two enjoyed a close relationship; he notes in his entry for Müʾeyyedzāde that Idrīs would gather with other Persian émigrés for social and scholarly conversation.[88] More importantly, one of Idrīs' sons, Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed, began to study with Müʾeyyedzāde shortly some time after his arrival in Ottoman lands.[89] During these years, study under a prominent scholar within the Ottoman administrative hierarchy was becoming an important prerequisite for accelerated advancement in the growing, yet not fully articulated, Ottoman administrative system.[90] The relationship between teacher and student was particularly important for a young scholar's earliest stages of his career. If a young man's teacher was one of the two military judges, as was the case for Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed, he was almost certainly assured one of the more desirable teaching positions or judgeships for early-career scholars.[91] Ebūʾl-Fażl

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[87] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Esad Efendi 2198, 369b; Genç, "Acem'den Rum'a," 175.

[88] ʿĀşıq Çelebi's account likely conflates several poetic gatherings into a single event. He states that, in addition to Idrīs, the gathering was also attended by Shāh Qāsim. This is impossible, as Shāh Qāsim did not arrive in Constantinople until after the Ottoman conquest of Tabriz in 920/1514. After this campaign, Idrīs did not return to Constantinople until after Müʾeyyedzāde's death in 922/1516, which negates the possibility that these three met in Müʾeyyedzāde's home in Galata. Even so, as ʿĀşıq Çelebi relates the story on the authority of his own teacher, Emīr Gisu, we may conclude that at some point Idrīs visited the home of Müʾeyyedzāde, Āşiḳ Çelebi, *Meşâʿirüʾş-Şuʿarâ*, 1498.

[89] Nevizade Atayi, *Şakaik-i nuʿmaniyye ve zeyilleri*, ed. Abdülkadir Özcan, vol. 2 (Ḥadāʾiq al-Shaqāʾiq fī takmilat al-Shaqāʾiq), Çağrı Yayınları (Istanbul: Çağri Yayınları, 1989), 188.

[90] For the systematization of this prerequisite, see Atçıl, "The Formation of the Ottoman Learned Class and Legal Scholarship, 1300-1600," 197–201.

[91] In fact, ʿĀşıq Çelebi notes that Müeyyedzāde's dismissal from the military judgeship of Rumili in 917/1511 negatively affected Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed's early career prospects. Müʾeyyedzāde's replacement, Mollā Ḫalīl, disliked Idrīs, and consequently appointed Mehmed to an undesirable judgeship in Birunik, Āşiḳ Çelebi, *Meşâʿirüʾş-Şuʿarâ*, 1188.

Meḥmed's study under Müʾeyyedzāde was therefore both confirmation of Idrīs' healthy relationship with Müʾeyyedzāde, as well as a cause for future interaction. Idrīs was aware of the support that Müʾeyyedzāde had bestowed. In recognition of this fact, Idrīs sought to return the favor through praise of the powerful judge. While Idrīs mentioned many of Bāyezīd's statesmen in *Hasht bihisht*, he lavished special attention on Müʾeyyedzāde in both prose and verse. In the context of enumerating Bāyezīd's current military judges, Idrīs praised Müʾeyyedzāde as "unparalleled in the age [in his mastery] of the classes of gnosis and certain truth."[92] Beyond such laudatory titles, Idrīs also included an ode to the Ottoman scholar, in the context of which he portrayed himself as a direct recipient of Müʾeyyedzāde's teaching: "When he sat upon the cushion of instruction / Idrīs would listen from heaven / He is universal reason and the manifestation of all (intellects together) / At the time of his lessons, the angels listened."[93]

İskender Pasha was another statesman from whom Idrīs solicited special support in his first years in Ottoman domains. İskender, and other military commanders like him, represented a distinctly different tradition of Ottoman leadership from men such as Müʾeyyedzāde. In contrast to the members of the Ottoman scholarly administrative class who often hailed from Rumelian or Anatolian Muslim families, many, but not all, of the important military leaders from this period had ties to prominent Christian Balkan families. İskender was born into a Christian family; his mother was Genoese and his father was a Greek from Trabzon.[94] While it is not entirely clear how İskender entered sultanic service, it is unlikely that he was a product of the *devşirme*, as his upbringing and familial relations suggest membership in the mercantile class of Constantinople.

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[92] *ān yagāna-yi zamān dar aṣnāf-i maʿārif va ittiqān,* Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 613a.

[93] *"Chun nashīnad bi-masnad-i tadrīs / gūsh gīrad zi āsimān Idrīs / ʿaql-i kull ast maẓhar-i jāmiʿ / vaqt-i darsash firishtihā sāmiʿ,"* Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Nuruosmaniye 3209, 613a.

[94] Hedda Reindl, *Männer um Bāyezīd: eine prosopographische Studie über die Epoche Sultan Bāyezīds II. (1481-1512)*, vol. 75, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1983), 240.

In any event, by the middle of Sultan Meḥmed II's reign, İskender had attained an important military post as the provincial commander (*sancak beği*) of Eğribos.[95] In 1477, he was elevated to the position of *sancak beği* of Bosnia, a post of considerable military significance, as the province bordered Venetian and Hungarian territory and represented the furthest extent of Ottoman administrative control in the Balkans during this period.[96] Military successes against the Venetians garnered İskender further prestige and in 888/1483-4, he was elevated to the rank of chief military commander of the Rumelian provinces (*Rumili beğlerbeği*).[97] Six years later, he was promoted again to the rank of vizier, a position he held until 904/1499. In that year, İskender, who was sixty-five years old, voluntarily retired from the vizierate. However, in view of his extensive experience in Bosnia, Bāyezīd appointed him again as governor in the border province. Idrīs describes the move as crucial, as in that year the Ottomans initiated hostilities against the Venetians in Morea and required the experience of a gifted soldier such as İskender on the border with Venetian *terra firma*.[98] During this final posting, which extended until the end of his life in 912/1506-1507 and coincided with Idrīs' residence in Ottoman lands, İskender Pasha and his son Muṣṭafá led a number of daring expeditions in Venetian territory which further enhanced his reputation as a fierce warrior who strove for the expansion of the domains of faith.[99]

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[95] Ibid., 75:241.

[96] On the appointment of İskender Pasha to the governorship of Bosnia, see ibid., 75:241 In several places in *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs underscores Bosnia's importance by describing it as the buffer land between domains and the lands of the unbelievers, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 620a.

[97] As the governor of Bosnia, İskender led a successful campaign against the Venetians in Zara. In the first years of Bāyezīd's reign, he was active in Anatolia, where he played an important role in thwarting Cem's efforts to seize the throne from his brother Bāyezīd.

[98] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 557b.

[99] Reindl, *Männer um Bāyezīd*, 75:253–9. Idrīs highlights these expeditions in *Hasht bihisht*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 557b-561b.

The legendary acclaim of İskender Pasha's military prowess was celebrated by Ottoman historians and acknowledged by his Christian adversaries, yet he rendered one particular act of service to Sultan Bāyezīd that cemented his reputation as one of the sultan's favorites. In 899/1492, while serving as vizier, İskender Pasha participated in Sultan Bāyezīd's campaign to reassert Ottoman control over Albania. On its return from the campaign, the Ottoman army passed through Manāstır (Bitola, Macedonia). While on the road outside the town, a dervish approached the sultan in supplication. The sultan's guards gave way, at which point the dervish exclaimed himself the Mahdi, drew a dagger, and attacked the sultan. Only one of the sultan's guards (*çavuşan*) was vigilant enough to intervene; İskender Pasha sprung into action and together with the single guard subdued and killed the assailant.[100]

In view of İskender's outsized standing in relation to Bāyezīd, Idrīs likely viewed the military hero as an important potential ally. Indeed, Idrīs corresponded with İskender during his first years in Ottoman lands while the distinguished soldier governed in Bosnia. In one letter to İskender, Idrīs describes his intention to celebrate the deeds of the great soldier in the context of his yet-to-be written history of the Ottoman dynasty. The letter begins with a lengthy discourse on the nature of friendship before arriving at the heart of the matter. Idrīs clarifies his desire to be counted among the great man's allies and well-wishers. In fact, Idrīs made little pretense to disguise his overture for patronage: "I found an appropriate time to present a petition presumptuously before the lantern of shining conscience and the lamp niche of consideration of your eminence, the refuge of the domains and everlasting angels, the Alexander (İskender) of the

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[100] Of the contemporary Ottoman accounts, only Idrīs mentions the quick reaction of the guard, while all other accounts memorialize the vizier's heroic deed as a solitary action. While the guard's participation is likely, İskender Pasha was rightfully recognized for his quick reaction and subsequently praised for his heroism, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 549b.

Age in Islam, protector of the scholars and impoverished through beneficence."[101] In return for

such support as İskender could offer, Idrīs proposed to memorialize the great man in prose and

poetry in order that "the mention of the good works, sincere requests for intercession, and

constanst well-wishing on behalf of your eminence in my book of history in the above-

mentioned particulars becomes well known and widespread among the people of faith and good

fortune."[102] Although Idrīs indicates that he became aware of İskender's deeds only through the

reports of intermediaries, he promised to offer İskender everlasting renown through rhetorical

exertions in praise of the celebrated soldier:

> For years this despicable one will be honored in that appropriate and fitting
> service. Moreover armies of your eminence's supplicants will be multiplied
> throughout the world by perusing this book of deeds and glancing upon your
> laudable actions and honorable exploits. Verse: I have no other suitable gift for
> your chalice other than invocation / What other worthy gift could there be other
> than invocation? / I would say this much in your praise: May it be agreeable / In
> your praise, may it be equal to the utterance of the people of wisdom.[103]

Idrīs' proposal to İskender is significant in two respects. Firstly, it indicates a clear understanding

on Idrīs' part of the importance of securing well-placed allies at the Ottoman court in the first

years of his residence. The favor of the sultan in commissioning *Hasht bihisht* was crucial, yet

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[101] *Kh^wud rā gustākh har bār bar miṣbāḥ-i żamīr-i mihr-tanvīr va mishkāt-i khāṭir-i khaṭīr-i ḥażrat-i mamālik-panāhī malāyik-i intibāhī Iskandar al-ᶜahd fī al-islām va malāẕ al-ᶜulamāʾ va al-fuqarāʾ fī al-anām (ayyadahu Allāh taᶜāla wa abqāhu wa abbadahu malādh^an al-ṭawāyif ahl Allāh) arża dādan va rātiba-yi duᶜā va vaẓīfa-yi s̱anāʾ-i ghāyibāna rā bi-ᶜizz-i muṣawwar-i nuvvāb-i kāmyāb iᶜlām namūdan munāsib-i vaqt namūd*, Bidlīsī, *Munshaʾāt*, Esad Efendi 1888, 141a.
[102] *Va faqīr rā dāᶜīya-yi ān ast ki ẕikr-i khayr va duᶜā-yi khāliṣ va s̱anā-yi dāʾim-i ān ḥażrat rā dar kitāb-i taʾrīkh bi-tafṣīl-i maẕkūr va miyān-i ahl-i dīn va dawlat mashhūr va manshūr dārad*, ibid.
[103] *Va sālhā īn ḥaqīr bi-ān munāsabat va mulāyamat-i khuddām-i kirām mufākharat va mubāhāt kh^wāhad namūd balkī lashkar-i duᶜāgūyān-i ān ḥażrat bi-vāsiṭa-yi muṭālaᶜa-i kitāb-i maʾāsir va mulāḥaẕa-i makārim va mafākhir dar aṭraf-i ᶜālam munkas̱ir kh^wāhad shud Naẓm tuḥfa-i shāyasta jāmat nadāram juz-i duᶜā / tuḥfa-i lāyiq chi bāshad juz-i duᶜā khayrī ẕikr / dar duᶜāyat īn qadar gūyam ki bāshad mustajāb / dar duᶜāyat bād nuṭq-i ahl-i dānish sar bi-sar*, ibid.

the support of the sultan's men was equally necessary to attain an honored place. Secondly, Idrīs

offers these potential patrons, in exchange for support, the only gift that he could proffer: the

historian's ability to secure for individuals a lasting memory in this world. In this sense, Idrīs

used *Hasht bihisht* not only as an opportunity to laud the deeds of the Ottoman sultans, but also

as a vehicle to memorialize in perpetuity key members of the ruling elite who were in a position

to aid him.

Idrīs' intentions are reflected in *Hasht bihisht*, in which İskender Pasha emerges as one of

the key heroes in the reign of Bāyezīd. In fact, Idrīs situates İskender as the main hero in several

of the chapters from Bāyezīd's reign and acknowledges this fact in his summary biography of the

man.[104] His overtures of goodwill toward the prominent soldier are also apparent in his inclusion

of İskender's son in the work. In the context of his narration of İskender's last exploits as

governor of Bosnia, he appended a small section to the chapter in celebration of Muṣṭafá Beǧ,

the old governor's son, for his efforts to retake the fortress of Banja, which had fallen recently

into Hungarian hands. [105] Idrīs acknowledged the youth and inexperience of the young

commander, but praised his intelligence and bravery. He concluded the passage with the wish

that for "countless years and the extended period of his life, his head be raised high to lofty

positions of state and faith."[106] The inclusion of Muṣṭafá—and, for that matter, any of the

Ottoman soldiers or statesmen who were mentioned in *Hasht bihisht*—was Idrīs' way of

repaying a debt to those whom he judged had helped him in his first years among the Ottomans.

At the end of the eight book of a presentation copy of the work completed in the first year of

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[104] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 603b.
[105] Ibid., 560b.
[106] *Umīd ki sālhā-yi ghayr-i maʿdūd va ʿumūrhā-yi mamdūd dar marātib-i ʿalīya-yi dīnī va dunyavī sar buland fīrāz khʷāhad būd*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 561b.

Selīm's reign, Idrīs described his rationale for the inclusion of certain men in his history of

Bāyezīd II:

> So, the number of lords, governors, and commanders of the Ghāzī sultan is greater
> than the description warranted them and the excellence of their qualities is beyond
> the capacity of clear expression. Consequently, in accordance with the injunction:
> thank those who show kindness to you and show kindness to those who thank
> you, it is necessary to praise the good name of that special group of good-fortuned
> notables who exhibited acts of kindness towards me and kept good company with
> me. And on account of the permanence of mentioning their goodness upon the
> pages of historical accounts, I would distinguish their lasting memory through
> their mention and proffer prayers on behalf of all the notable men of state and
> faith.[107]

Within a few years of his arrival in Ottoman lands, Idrīs had established the right

relationships with Bāyezīd's household and key members of the court to secure for himself a

worthy position within his new environs. Idrīs literary production and solicitation of patronage

constituted the principal mechanism by which Idrīs initiated and cultivated these relationships.

Through the composition of minor works, such as *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ʿīd* and *Risāla-yi*

khamrīya, Idrīs not only made important connections with the Ottoman sultan and his most

powerful son, but he also secured the sultan's support for a major literary project: the

composition of a dynastic history of the Ottoman house in Persian. While the production of such

a work entailed continuing material support from the dynasty, it also created opportunities for

Idrīs to cultivate patronage relationships with other leading men of Bāyezīd's court. Clearly, he

was fully conscious of this potential benefit, and so, as can be seen through his personal

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[107] *har chand taʿdād-i umarā va ḥukkām va sipahsālār-i sulṭān-i ghāzī afzūntar az ḥīṭa-yi bayān*
buvad va makārim va awṣāf-īshān bīrūn az gunjāyish-i lisān-i tibyān lā-jaram jamʿī makhṣūṣ rā
az aʿyān-i dawlat ki bar faqīr-i dāʿī ḥuqūq bi-niʿmat va ʿalāqa-yi maḥabbat va maʿrifat
muʾakkad shuda būd va bi-muqtaẓā-yi amr-i mutaḥattam-i (ashkuru li-man naʿama ʿalayka wa
anʿama ʿalá man shakaraka) sanāʾ-i jamīl-īshān lāzim mīnamūd jihat-i baqāʾ-i ẕikr-i jamīl-
īshān bar ṣaḥāyif-i akhbār takhṣīṣ-i ẕikr-īshān bi-ṭarīqa-i taẕakkur va taẕkār namūd va duʿāʾ-i
mujmalī jihat-i jamʿ-i aʿyān-i dawlat va aʿvān-i dīn va millat taqdīm farmūd, Bidlīsī, *Hasht*
Bihisht, 622a.

correspondence with İskender Pasha, he sought to exploit the inclusion of these men in his history to his own advantage.

Chapter Four: Place among the Ottomans: Idrīs and the Court of Bāyezīd II, 1506-1511

IV.1 Introduction

In the first years of his residence among the Ottomans Idrīs had made considerable progress in securing an honorable and worthy status at the court of Bāyezīd II. Not only had he successfully established profitable relations with the sultan and his high statesmen, but he also had been encouraged to write a major history of the Ottoman dynasty. This commission offered Idrīs a chance to display the full range of his stylistic abilities through the composition of a major work of prose and poetry. For the next thirty months—between early 909/mid-1503 and late 911/early 1506—Idrīs devoted his energies to producing a massive chronicle of the lives and deeds of the Ottoman sultans from the establishment of the dynasty at the end of the thirteenth century up to his own day. While working on the project, Idrīs benefited from the largesse of the sultan, yet he was also clearly aware of the greater rewards—gifts and prestigious appointments—that his work had the potential to garner. In this sense, the reception of literary efforts was of equal, or even greater, importance than the patron's initial encouragement.

Yet beyond its role in securing an honorable social status, the interaction of patronage and literary production also affected the development of an emerging Ottoman ideological framework during this period. *Hasht bihisht*, as well as a number of the other treatises that Idrīs wrote between 908/1502 and 917/1511, present political concepts that were relatively new to Ottoman readers when they were presented in the first decade of the tenth/sixteenth century. Yet, Idrīs' writing represented but one of several voices, many of which articulated important aspects of a nascent Ottoman ideology of rule. Accordingly, the broader patronage environment of Bāyezīd's court suggests that the complex interaction between literary works produced by these

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differing voices and the reception of these works—whether positive or lukewarm—at court helped inform the gradual emergence of a coherent Ottoman ideological program over time. In this environment patrons were hardly the wholly active directors of ideological discourse that we frequently assume them to be. Rather, the environment of patronage of this period suggests that the complex interplay between literary production and the broader reception of lettered patronage among other intellectuals played a much more fundamental role in the production of coherent ideological discourses.

On personal and professional levels, this patronage environment constituted a mixed blessing for Idrīs in the final years of Bāyezīd's reign. On one hand, *Hasht bihisht* was well received by Bāyezīd and certain litterateurs affiliated with the court. The work garnered for him a significant monetary reward and a secure place within the court. Moreover, in the months and years after its initial circulation, *Hasht bihisht* was emulated by a number of writers who sought to make their own mark on the nascent Ottoman historiographical tradition. By the end of the sixteenth century, the work became a mainstay of Ottoman historical writing through its use and citation by the most prominent Ottoman historians of the period. However, more immediately, Idrīs felt that his work did not garner the rewards and appointments commensurate with its contribution to the Ottoman dynasty. Idrīs lay the blame for this failure squarely on the shoulders of two high statesmen—Idrīs' early ally Müʾeyyedzāde and the grand vizier ʿAlī Pasha—whose jealousy of his talents prompted them to deny Idrīs a worthy place among the Ottomans.

IV.2 Producing Hasht Bihisht

Even if Idrīs was motivated by a desire to secure a respected place among the Ottomans, his explicit aim for writing a history focused on a celebration of Sultan Bāyezīd and his forebears

as just sultans who worked to spread the domains of Islam. Idrīs suggests that the initial

motivation for his history was informed by his flight from injustice in Iran and arrival in the one

safe place of refuge in the world—namely, Ottoman lands, where the sultan's men were

dedicated to struggling in the path of God by expanding the abode of Islam.[1] As Idrīs had been

unable to devote himself similarly to armed military expeditions, he took solace in recollecting

the prophetic tradition (ḥadīth) that suggested that a man's tongue could be an equally effective

instrument in the struggle, and resolved to write a history that would laud the deeds of the

Ottoman sultans in expanding the domains of faith.[2] In this way, despite his relatively advanced

age and physical inability, he could contribute to the struggle directly by encouraging his readers

to emulate the fine example of Ottoman rulers.

In his rationale for writing *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs emphasizes two aspects of Ottoman rule

that he would embed within the structure of his history. Specifically, he presents the Ottoman

sultans as the basic guarantors of justice among the lands of Islam, as well as the principal

proponents of Muslim expansion among contemporary rulers. Whereas much of Islamic domains

had descended into a state of discord and chaos reminiscent of the End Times, thanks to the just

rule of the Ottoman sultans, the lands of *Rūm* continued to flourish and avoided the disorder that

afflicted his homeland.[3] Moreover, their forthright efforts to expand the domains of Islam

through their activities in *ghazāʾ* further distinguished the Ottoman sultans. By the time of Idrīs'

writing at the turn of the tenth/sixteenth century, this second aspect of Ottoman rule had become

one of the most fundamental activities of the Ottoman dynasty and one of the most salient

features of its evolving self-image. Based upon Ottoman successes in conquering much of the

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[1] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 7a.
[2] Ibid, 7b.
[3] Ibid, 7a.

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Balkans, as well as the imperial seat of the Roman emperors at Constantinople, the Ottoman

dynasty had developed a reputation among contemporary Muslim rulers as the most successful

and motivated conquerors of non-Muslim lands.[4] The Ottomans sought to exploit the ideological

value of this attribution from an early date by applying *ghazāʾ*-related vocabulary to titulature

produced in official documents, coinage, and architecture.[5] Beginning in the final years of

Meḥmed II's reign and accelerating during Bāyezīd II's rule, the Ottoman court encouraged the

production of historical works,[6] all of which to varying degrees pronounced the sultans' activities

in *ghazāʾ* as a major component of an emerging Ottoman legitimating ideology.[7]

Even so, the nature of the precise relationship between patronage, literary production, and

a legitimating ideology in the Ottoman context of this period is not at all clear. While there is

little doubt that Bāyezīd and the court patronized many important historical and political works,

the direct influence patrons exerted on authors was constrained by the writing process, as well as

the multiplicity of authors, and consequently viewpoints, which the court patronized. Idrīs

worked intensely on his history for thirty months and in that time produced a draft of the work in

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[4] Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks: Imperial Diplomacy and Warfare in the Islamic World*, 93–94, 182–3.

[5] Although Colin Imber acknowledges that the earliest Ottoman inscriptions proudly proclaim the sultan's status as *mujāhid* and *ghāzī*, he stresses a late fifteenth-century shift in the term's valence, as a consequence of greater *sharᶜī*-consciousness on the part of the Ottoman ruling class, Imber, "The Ottoman Dynastic Myth," 1987.

[6] A number of modern scholars have noted and discussed the significance of historical writing among the Ottomans during the reign of Bāyezīd II, see especially Halil İnalcık, "The Rise of Ottoman Historiography," in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. P.M. Holt and Bernard Lewis (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 152–67; Victor Ménage, *Neṣhri's History of the Ottomans; the Sources and Development of the Text* (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); Yıldız, "Ottoman Historical Writing in Persian, 1400-1600"; Murat Cem Mengüç, "Histories of Bayezid I, Historians of Bayezid II: Rethinking Late Fifteenth-Century Ottoman Historiography," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 76, no. 03 (2013): 373–89.

[7] The image of the Ghāzī sultan figures prominently in all of the major Ottoman histories written before *Hasht bihisht*. See for example, Tursun Beg, *Târih-i Ebü'l-Feth*, İstanbul Fatih Cemiyeti ; 74 (Istanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1977); and Neṣri, *Cihânnümâ*.

eight books. Before its initial presentation, it is far from clear that Bāyezīd took any specific

interest in Idrīs' progress. So, while Bāyezīd did commission Idrīs in 908/1502 "to write a work

in elevated style, appointed with the marks of refinement, and pleasing to elites and common

folk," which would extol the good deeds and worthy attributes of the Ottoman house, the sultan

likely exerted little influence on the specific historical content or particular ideological positions

to be articulated in the work.[8] In this sense, Idrīs' work should be considered a product of official

patronage of the Ottoman court, but not necessarily a reflection of an official Ottoman

historiographical outlook or legitimating ideology. Indeed, the plurality of officially appointed

histories in the latter years of Bāyezīd's reign would seem to negate the possibility that the

Ottoman court in the reign of Bāyezīd espoused an officially sanctioned conception of itself.[9]

Authors certainly aimed to please their patrons, but the precise positions that would be accepted

and rewarded by the court were not clearly delineated. Consequently, Idrīs' experiences and

those of his contemporaries suggest that the complex interplay between production and reception

helped forge and refine a coherent ideological framework over time.

Idrīs' contribution to this discourse focuses on two aspects of Ottoman rule, which he

weaves throughout the eight books of his history. In fact, Idrīs embeds the main themes of

Ottoman justice and military prowess, especially in opposition to non-Muslim rulers, in the title

and narrative structure that he gave to his history. While he referred to his history of the

Ottomans as *Hasht bihisht* (The Eight Paradises), he formally entitled the work *The Eight-fold*

Attributes concerning Accounts of the Ottoman Caliphs and Caesars (al-Ṣifāt al-s̲amānīya fi

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[8] *talīfī balāghat-uslūb va taṣnīfī bi-ṣunūf-i laṭāʾif va z̲arāʾif mansūb va nazd-i khavāṣṣ va ʿavvām marghūb tartīb va tanz̲īm bāyad namūd*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 8a.
[9] In fact, at the same time Idrīs was active in writing *Hasht bihisht*, Bāyezīd encouraged the production of another major history of the Ottoman house through the commissioning of Kemālpaşazāde, Kemalpaşazade, *Tevârih-i âl-i Osman VII. defter*.

akhbār al-khulafāʾ vaʾl-qayāṣīra al-ʿuṯmānīya).[10] *The Eight-fold Attributes* refers both to the eight Ottoman sultans up to and including Idrīs' patron Sultan Bāyezīd II and the specific qualities (*ṣifāt*) that marked them as exceptionally distinguished rulers.[11] Throughout the history, Idrīs discusses in great detail the nature and number of these qualities and argues that all of the Ottoman sultans possessed them and passed them on in succession to their sons. This point is substantiated through the various worthy deeds and good works undertaken by the Ottoman sultans and enumerated and described by Idrīs in his history. In this way, Idrīs' commemoration of their deeds serves not only to establish their lasting memory (*ẕikr-i jamīl*), but also acts as a sustained argument for their possession of the caliphal and Roman imperial inheritances as manifest through their superiority in deed and disposition over other Muslim rulers.[12]

The structure that Idrīs elaborates in his history also served to reinforce these claims. Idrīs divided his history into eight books, one for each Ottoman sultan, and termed each book a phalanx (*katība*). The martial terminology of its subsections was carried further within each of the eight volumes. Each phalanx generally consists of an introduction/advanced party (*muqaddima*), prefatory remarks/vanguard (*ṭalīʿa*), and a number of stories (*dāstān*), which contain accounts of the principal military campaigns of each sultan. Adopting this structure enabled Idrīs to include a number of theoretical discussions and thematic overviews for each sultan's reign in the context of the separate prefaces and introductions, while also providing a flexible format for the elaboration of their actions and deeds in the context of the various stories of each book. He further elaborated the last two phalanxes—those devoted to Sultan Meḥmed II and Sultan Bāyezīd II—by dividing the stories between campaigns against Christian rulers,

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[10] In a panegyric poem to Prince Selīm dated 912/1507, Idrīs alludes to his recently completed history *"the eight paradises (hasht bihisht),"* Bidlīsī, *Munshaʾāt*, Esad Efendi 1888, 90a.
[11] For discussion of the special qualities of the Ottoman sultans, see chapter nine.
[12] For further consideration of this reading of *Hasht bihisht*, see chapter seven.

which Idrīs calls the left wing (*maysara*), and campaigns against Muslim rulers which he terms the right wing (*maymana*).[13] These references to battle order helped emphasize the military prowess of the Ottoman sultans. Organizing the stories around military campaigns allowed Idrīs to highlight the efforts of Ottoman sultans to expand the domains of Islam. In this respect, Idrīs' division of Meḥmed and Bāyezīd's campaigns between a left and right wing would seem to highlight unnecessarily the unsavory reality of Ottoman conquest of Muslim rulers' territories in the east. In fact, in introducing the first story of the right wing in the book on Meḥmed, Idrīs recognized this dilemma and justified Ottoman campaigns against fellow Muslim polities as an unfortunate, yet necessary requirement of just rule in the geo-political context of the mid tenth/fifteenth century. He notes that, while it was true that Meḥmed and other sultans fought against Muslim rulers, these wars were justified, as they were the consequence of rebellious and insubordinate behavior, which led to the oppression of Muslims.[14] In this way, the division between campaigns against Christian and Muslim rulers ultimately served to underscore Idrīs' principal contentions: the Ottoman sultans were not only the champions of the true faith through their efforts to expand the domains of Islam, but they were also defenders of justice through their watchful and occasionally vengeful stance against oppressive Muslim rulers. This nuancing of

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[13] In addition to the right and left wings included in the volumes on Meḥmed II and Bāyezīd II, Idris also included in his section on Meḥmed a middle guard (*qalb-i katība*), which enumerates the sultan's qualities, other contemporary rulers, the bases of his authority, and the organization of his household and army. For the organization of Bāyezīd's volume, Idris divided the main body of the volume into two discussion (*bāʿis*), the first of which detailed Bāyezīd's exploits, as elaborated by the right and left wings and the second of which was divided between two flanks (*janāḥ*), one which presented biographical entries for Bāyezīd's sons and another which presented biographical entries on high statesmen who served the sultan. For an overview of the contents of *Hasht bihisht*, see Franz Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke* (Leipzig: O. Harrassowitz, 1927); Yıldırım, "Heşt Behişt Vİİ. Ketibe," LII–LXI.

[14] Idrīs introduces the two wings in Meḥmed's volume by stating that the right wing describes battles and conflict with people of the faith, but only those of the rebellious and insubordinate faction (*dar muḥārabāt va mukādaḥāt bā ahl-i īmān ammā az ṭāʾifa-yi ahl-i baghy va ṭughyān*), Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 390b.

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the Ottoman image as warrior in the faith was a necessary consequence of the late ninth/fifteenth-century political landscape, in which the Ottomans increasingly found themselves drawn into conflicts with their Muslim neighbors in the east.

IV.3 The Initial Ottoman Reception of Hasht bihisht

Although Idrīs asserted that he completed the work in only two and one-half years, the complete writing process in fact extended over a ten-year period.[15] Based upon the relatively large number of autographed and contemporaneous extant manuscripts, it is clear that this ten-year writing period consisted of at least two distinct phases in which Idrīs composed, revised, and expanded the work.[16] In the first phase of writing, Idrīs worked intensely to produce eight books, which included the prefaces and introductions for all eight sultans, as well as all of the narrative portions of the work. This phase of production culminated in Idrīs' recitation of a portion of his history to Bāyezīd during the celebrations of *ʿīd al-aḍḥá* at the Ottoman court at the end of 911 (May 1505). It is on the basis of work produced during this period that Idrīs later proudly proclaimed that he accomplished in a mere thirty-month period a work that would normally consume thirty years.[17] In the second phase of composition, Idrīs revised the two introductions he had previously completed for the reigns of Sultan Meḥmed II and Sultan

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[15] In the introduction to *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs notes that he completed the work in two and one-half years, beginning in 908/1502, although he did not finish the conclusion to the work until after the accession of Selīm in 918/1512, *Hasht bihisht*, 8b.

[16] For a discussion of the extant manuscript copies of *Hasht bihisht*, see Appendix B.

[17] *bi-sī māh tamāmash dādam tamām / valī sī sāla kāri shud sar anjām*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 632b.

Bāyezīd II and added an introduction and verse conclusion.[18] This final stage of writing

culminated in 919/1513 with the presentation of the revised and expanded history to the new

sultan Selīm.

Although Idrīs revised and expanded his history, the first version of the work made an

immediate impact on the Ottoman cultural landscape when it circulated in early 912/mid 1506.

In a short period of time, Idrīs had gathered a wide variety of reports on Ottoman history from

both Turkish and Persian historical sources and consulted numerous living authorities to produce

a detailed history in Persian that seemed to set a new standard in Ottoman historical writing. The

achievement was certainly recognized by the Ottoman court, which awarded Idrīs 50,000 silver

aspers for the completion of *Hasht bihisht*.[19] The monetary reward for his work was significant;

the only other individuals recorded in the gift register of Bāyezīd's reign who received such large

sums were members of the royal family and primary advisers and commanders.[20] The register

includes a number of gifts for the presentation of books to the sultan, but such rewards generally

fell between 7,000-15,000 silver aspers.[21] In fact, Idrīs' reward for completing *Hasht bihisht* was

the highest monetary gift bestowed on any individual for the presentation of a literary work in

the nearly ten-year period recorded by the gift register.[22]

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[18] These changes constitute some of the most substantial differences between the two draft versions of the work (Esad Efendi 2199/2198 and Esad Efendi 2197). For further details, see Appendix B.

[19] *İnʿāmāt Defteri*, MC O.71, p. 185.

[20] Bāyezīd's married daughters regularly received gifts of 50,000 silver aspers when they came to visit the court; see for example the gift of 50,000 silver aspers given to the wife of Yahyá Pasha, *İnamat Defteri* Muallım Cevdet O.71, p. 59. On several occasions, the viziers were awarded gifts of 100,000 silver aspers; see for example the gifts distributed on 29 Jumādá I 915/14 September 1509, Ibid, p. 343.

[21] Erünsal, "Türk Edebiyatı Tarihinin Arşiv Kaynakları I: II. Bâyezid devrine ait bir inʿâmât defteri."

[22] Ibid.

Idrīs' peers immediately acknowledged the importance of his work both through imitation and overt praise. For instance, in the year Idrīs completed *Hasht bihisht*, a fellow Persian émigré, Başīrī, composed a short poem with a chronogram to commemorate the achievement: "It came into being with the date: *kitāb-i fatḥ*."[23] While the chronogram suggests that *Hasht bihisht* circulated within court circles as early as 911/1506, in the following years, it also started to influence the production of Ottoman history. Within ten years of its initial circulation, the Rumelian military judge Rüknüddīn Zeyrekzāde would encourage another Persian poet, Adā'ī Shīrāzī, to write a history of Selīm's reign by pointing to the example of *Hasht bihisht*.[24] Adā'ī's history, entitled *Shāhnāma-yi Salīm Khān*, became an influential work in its own right, as it helped to initiate the *Selīmnāma* genre within Ottoman *belles-lettres*. While Idrīs' work clearly made the most impact among other Persian émigrés with poetic inclinations, the work also influenced subsequent historical writing in Turkish. Even before Adā'ī acknowledged the importance of *Hasht bihisht* in his own work, another contemporary poet known as Bihishtī took Idrīs' work as a model and began writing a prose history of the Ottoman house in Turkish.[25] Bihishtī clearly used *Hasht bihisht* as stylistic inspiration, as well as a source for many of the historical accounts that he included in his own work.[26] Such reliance on Idrīs'

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[23] The chronogram, *Kitāb-i fatḥ* (book of conquest), refers both to the subject of Idrīs' *Hasht bihisht*, as well as to its date of completion in 911, *Dīvān-i Bāṣīrī*, Aşir Efendi 292, 280a; Kutlukhan Eren, "Basîrî ve Dîvânının Tenkidli Metni (Meḥmed b. Aḥmed b. Ebū'l-Meᶜâlî el-Murtażâ)" (M.A., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1999).

[24] Mavlānā Muhammed Adā'ī Şīrāzī, *Adā'ī-yi Şīrāzī ve Selim-nāmesi: inceleme-metin-çeviri*, ed. Abdüsselam Bilgen (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2007), 22.

[25] On the basis of evidence contained in another of Bihishtī's works, Fatma Kaytaz has concluded that Bihishtī started his chronicle after 913/1507 and completed it some time before his death in 1511/1512, Fatma Kaytaz, "Behiştî Tarihi (797-907 / 1389-1502) (Giriş, Metin, Dizin)" (Ph.D., Marmara Üniversitesi, 2011), XVIII.

[26] Both Brigitte Moser and Fatma Kaytaz have noted Bihishtī's reliance on Idrīs' history as a major source for his own chronicle, Ahmet Sinan Çelebi Behişti, *Die Chronik des Aḥmed Sinân Čelebi genannt Bihišti: eine Quelle zur Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches unter Sultan*

work was particularly apparent in those sections of Bihishtī's history that provided details regarding Ottoman interactions with Persian rulers.[27] Idrīs' integration of the nascent Ottoman historical tradition and Timurid-Turkmen historiography demonstrated the suitability of reconciling and harmonizing Ottoman history with other historical narratives and marked a significant development in Ottoman historical writing.

Beyond the impact of *Hasht bihisht* on Bihishtī's work, Idrīs' chronicle also influenced the literary expectations of subsequent histories written in Turkish. Whereas most previous historians writing in Turkish wrote in a simple style which reflected the spoken idiom of *Rūm*, Idrīs' work, in its rejection of such an approach as unworthy of the subject, called for a new type of Ottoman history which reflected the tastes and expectations of a sophisticated court culture immersed in the Perso-Arabic literary tradition.[28] While Idrīs chose to write this history in Persian, the language of his professional training, *Hasht bihisht*, in some measure, awakened certain segments of the Ottoman court to the possibility of producing histories in an elevated Turkish prose style. Idrīs' hyperliterate Persian, while lauded as a prominent marker of the sophisticated cultural capacity of the Ottoman court, seemed excessive to some of his Ottoman readers. Even major Ottoman literary figures of the latter tenth/sixteenth century who were themselves fully committed to a hyperliterate use of Persian expressed reservations about Idrīs' prose. For instance, while the late-sixteenth-century historian and litterateur Muṣṭafá ᶜĀlī

Bâyezid II., ed. Brigitte Moser, vol. 35, Beiträge zur Kenntnis Südosteuropas und des Nahen Orients (Munich: R. Trofenik, 1980), 32–34; Kaytaz, "Behiştî Tarihi," XLIV; Kaytaz, in particular, has noted the degree to which Bihishti drew on the lines of Arabic and Persian poetry originally found in *Hasht bihisht* for inclusion in his own work in Turkish, ibid., XLVI, XLVIII–XLIX, LI.

[27] Kaytaz, "Behiştî Tarihi," LIV.

[28] A contemporary chronicler to Idrīs, such as Neşrī, is emblematic of this outlook. Despite his inclusion in the Ottoman canon of historians formulated by Muṣṭafá ᶜĀlī at the end of the sixteenth century, his simple style of prose stands in stark contrast to authors such as Kemālpaşazāde, who took up the task of chronicling the Ottoman dynasty only a few years later.

applauded Idrīs as an unparalleled historian of exceptional rhetorical ability, he acknowledged

that Idrīs' use of ambiguity, metaphor, and literary devices were excessive.[29] Significantly, Idrīs'

work demonstrated the need for an equally refined and expressive treatment of Ottoman history

in Turkish. Müʾeyyedzāde recognized the limitations of Idrīs' work, as well as the potential for

Ottoman history in refined Turkish. Before Idrīs had completed *Hasht Bihisht*, the military judge

approached Sultan Bāyezīd with a proposal for a new history in Turkish and recommended one

of his students, Kemālpaşazāde, for the undertaking.[30] Bāyezīd agreed and commissioned

Kemālpaşazāde to write a history of the Ottoman house.[31] This new history of the Ottoman house

in Turkish was well received by the court; indeed, it elicited the sizable sum of 30,000 silver

aspers upon its initial presentation in Shaʿbān 916/November 1510.[32] Even so, the popularity of

Kemālpaşazāde's history—as measured by the number of extant manuscripts—paled in

comparison with Idrīs' sixteenth-century readership. Although it would not become as popular as

Hasht bihisht, the importance of Kemālpaşazāde's history was recognized in some quarters as a

transformative work within the Ottoman Turkish historiographic tradition. In contrast with his

mixed remarks on Idrīs' work, the late-sixteenth-century historian, Muṣṭafá ʿĀlī, situated

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[29] *ibhām u kināyāt ve tevriye vü tecnīsāt ve taʿbiyesi meʾmūl olan mertebelerden çoḳdur*,
Mustafa bin Ahmet Âli, *Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī's Künhü'l-Aḫbār and Its Preface according to the Leiden Manuscript*, ed. Jan Schmidt (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te İstanbul, 1987), 35–36.

[30] ʿĀşıq Çelebi implies that Idrīs had not yet finished *Hasht bihisht* when Müʾeyyedzade proposed to Sultan Bāyezīd that Kemālpaşazāde write a history in Turkish, Āşiḳ Çelebi, *Meşâʿirüʾş-Şuʿarâ*, 297.

[31] For Kemālpaşazāde's account of this commission, see Kemalpaşazade, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osmân, I. Defter*, 35–37.

[32] *İnʿāmāt Defteri*, Muallım Cevdet O.71, p. 405.

Kemālpaşazāde within the Ottoman canon and applauded the Ottoman scholar's ability "to express himself in the clear style of the day."[33]

IV.4 Turkish and Persian at the Ottoman Court

Although Müʾeyyedzāde's support of Kemālpaşazāde would become a sore point for Idrīs, his proposal was more in keeping with the evolving trajectory of Ottoman attitudes towards Turkish as a literary vehicle and language of empire. From the earliest date of their independence, the Turkish principalities of Anadolu, among whom the Ottomans numbered, embraced Turkish as a written medium of administration.[34] This use of Turkish prevailed throughout *bilād-i Rūm* (present-day central and western Anatolia), even if the diplomatic form and vocabulary of administrative documents still heavily bore the imprint of the Arabo-Persian tradition of governance.[35] This situation differed markedly from areas east of the Euphrates, which Idrīs characterized as Iranian lands.[36] In these regions, administrative practice more closely followed the established Persian linguistic tradition in governance, even if the territories in question were governed by Turkmen dynasties.[37] In some ways this situation reflected

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[33] *El-ḥaḳḳ ḫub yazmışlar ol zamānda müstaʿmel olan tibyān-i vāẓıḥla beyān etmişler*, Âli, *Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī's Künhüʾl-Aḫbār and Its Preface according to the Leiden Manuscript*, 36.

[34] Feridun M. Emecen, *İlk Osmanlılar ve Batı Anadolu Beylikler Dünyası* (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2001), 187–200.

[35] For a detailed consideration of Ottoman diplomatics, see Mübahat S Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı Belgelerinin Dili: Diplomatik* (Istanbul: Kubbealtı Akademisi Kültür ve San'at Vakfı, 1994).

[36] In a discussion of the boundaries of Qarāmān, Idrīs makes clear his geographic conception of the region: Qarāmān was the buffer between Rūm on the one hand and Iran and Syria on the other. Qarāmān extended as far as Niğde, which would suggest his placement of Adana and ʿAntab firmly within Syria. Similarly, in the east, Qarāmān extended as far as Qayṣerī, beyond which he locates Persian lands (*Īrān-zamīn*). This geographic scheme is largely congruous with the linguistic-administrative traditions of the lands described, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 370a.

[37] This was certainly true of the Aqquyunlu, but also likely the case for smaller principalities such as the Dulqadirids and even the Qaramanids. While few, if any, documents from these

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historical and demographic realities; lands east of the Euphrates had been within the abode of

Islam for centuries and were populated by native speakers of Persian from whose ranks able

administrators were drawn. *Bilād-i Rūm* represented the new lands of Islam and its first Muslims

were migrating Turks. While cities such as Bursa and Kütahya welcomed Persian speaking

émigrés, their presence in these newly Islamicized lands did not have as significant an effect

demographically as in cities such as Mārdīn (Mardin) and Āmid (Diyarbekir), where centuries of

Muslim rule helped ensure the continued use of Arabic and Persian as the languages of

administration.

Rulers in *bilād-i Rūm* were also more likely to embrace Turkish as a literary language. In

the fourteenth century many of the principalities of Anadolu patronized Turkish prose and verse.

The earliest extant mention of the Ottoman dynasty in a historical work occurs in a Turkish

mes̲nevi entitled *İskendernāme* by a poet named Aḥmedī who had originally been commissioned

to write the work by the lords of Germiyān in Kütahya.[38] In the first half of the fifteenth century,

Ottoman sultans received works in Turkish on a variety of historical and scholarly topics.[39]

Concurrent with these developments at court, Anatolian scholars and mystics began writing

religious and historical works in Turkish for popular consumption.[40] In all of these developments

the literary expression of Turkish largely reflected the spoken idiom of the place and period.

principalities survive, evidence from prose collections (*inshāʾ*) suggests the widespread use of
Persian among these polities. See for instance, *Inshāʾ,* Esad Efendi 3369.

[38] Ahmedi, *İskender-Nāme: İnceleme-Tıpkıbasım*, ed. İsmail Ünver (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu,
1983).

[39] Important early examples of scholarly works often consist of translations into Turkish of
canonical works, such as Zakarīyāʾ ibn Muḥammad Qazvīnī's *ʿAjāʾib al-makhlūqāt va gharāʾib
al-mawjūdāt*, which was translated into Turkish by Yazıcıoğlu Meḥmed for the benefit of Murād
II.

[40] The most notable of these works is perhaps the *Muḥammedīye* of Yazıcıoğlu Meḥmed. For a
discussion of this work and other fourteenth and fifteenth-century religious works in Turkish, see
Mustafa Kara, "XIV. ve XV. Yüzyıllarda Osmanlı Tolumunu Besleyen Türkçe Kitaplar,"
Uludağ Üniversitesi İlâhiyat Fakültesi Dergisi 8, no. 8 (1999): 29–58.

Perhaps as a way to distinguish his own work, Idrīs seized upon this aspect of the literary Turkish of his day, which fully celebrated a direct simplicity in expression, and criticized its suitability for celebrating the august deeds of a great dynasty.[41]

Yet even if *bilād-i Rūm* embraced Turkish as an administrative and literary language, the Ottoman court never lost touch with Persian. Beginning during the reign of Sultan Meḥmed II, the court patronized a number of historical works in Persian.[42] Such works included large universal histories, such as Shukrullāh's *Bahjat al-tavārīkh*, but also verse histories of individual Ottoman rulers, such as Muᶜālī's *Khunkārnāma* on the reign of Meḥmed II and Malik Ummī's *Shāhnāma* on the early reign of Bāyezīd II.[43] Indeed, the enthusiasm among leading statesmen of Bāyezīd's reign for histories of the Ottoman house written in Persian led Kemāl, one Turkish poet of the period, to complain in 895/1490 of the poor regard with which Turkish was held by the court. Aside from historical writing, the court also actively sought the poetry and literary works of the great Persian stylists of the day.[44] On an administrative level, Persian continued to play a limited, but important role in Ottoman governance, as all official correspondence with courts in Iran was formulated in Persian.[45] For both of these reasons then, Idrīs and his abilities were well suited for the Ottoman court.

Even so, more recent developments both in Turkish letters and within the Ottoman administration signaled a shift toward developing Turkish as a sophisticated literary vehicle and

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[41] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 8a.

[42] For an overview of Ottoman histories written in Persian, see Sara Nur Yıldız and N.Y.), "Ottoman Historical Writing in Persian, 1400-1600," in *Persian Historiography*, ed. C.P. Melville (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 436–502.

[43] For a recent discussion of these works, see ibid., 443–60.

[44] See for instance the extensive collection of Persian poetry in the library of Bāyezīd II, Magyar Tudomanyos Akademia Künyvtara Keleti Gyüjtement, Török F59.

[45] This was true of correspondence with Turkish rulers of Iranian lands. See for instance, the letters of Mawlānā Munshī discussed in Chapter Two (The Aqquyunlu Crisis of Rule) and preserved in Sarı ᶜAbdullāh Efendi, *Munshaʾāt-i fārsī*, Esad Efendi 3333.

language of empire. This shift found expression in two separate but interrelated developments.

Firstly, in the latter half of the ninth/fifteenth century, Turkish was increasingly recognized in the

central lands of Islam as a worthy vehicle of literary expression.[46] In Herat, at the court of

Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqara, ʿAlī-Shīr Navāʾī underscored the suitability of Turkish as a literary

language not only through reasoned argument in works such as *Muḥākamat-i lughatayn,* but also

in more subtle ways through the quality and popularity of his poetic production.[47] Similarly,

Mamluk sultans such as Qāyitbāy and Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī embraced Turkish during this period by

receiving both translations and original works in their preferred language. For instance, in

893/1488 Sultan Qāyitbāy received a Turkish encyclopedic work in verse on cosmography,

geography, and history by Ibrāhīm ibn Bālī entitled *Ḥikmetname*,[48] while a few years later,

Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī encouraged a Turkish translation of Firdawsī's *Shāhnāma*.[49] The popularity of

Anatolian poets, such as Aḥmed Paşa, outside of *bilād-i Rūm* also underscored the growing

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[46] The acceptability and desirability of Turkish also prevailed in early-Mughal India, yet there, in contrast to Ottoman lands, Persian eventually emerged as the predominant language of empire, Muzaffar Alam, "The Pursuit of Persian: Language in Mughal Politics," *Modern Asian Studies*, 32:2 (1998), 317-49.

[47] In fact, *Muḥākamat* argues not only for the recognition of Turkish as suitable language of literary expression, but also for its superiority over Persian.

[48] The unpublished work exists as a manuscript in the rare works library of Istanbul University (İÜ T 3290) and in the Bibliothèque nationale (Supp Turc 601 and Supp Turc 602). The work was the subject of two doctoral dissertations completed in 2003 in Turkey on the basis of the Istanbul manuscript and one other copy in a private collection: Mustafa Altun, "İbrahim İbn-i Bali`nin Hikmet-name'si (1b-149a) inceleme-metin-sözlük-dizin / Hikmat-namah of İbrahim İbn-i Bali (1b-149a) study-text-dictionary-index" (Ph.D., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2003); Ali Şeylan, "İbrahim İbn-i Bali Hikmet-Name (inceleme-metin-sözlük-dizin) (149a-300a) (2 cilt)" (Ph.D., İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2003).

[49] Zühal Kültüral and Latif Beyreli, eds., *Şerîfî Şehnâme çevirisi* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, Türk Dil Kurumu, 1999); For a more general view of Turkish at the late Mamluk court, see Barbara Flemming, "Šerīf, Sultan Ġavrī und die „Perser"," *Der Islam* 45 (1969): 81–93; Barbara Flemming, "Literary Activities in Mamluk Halls and Barracks," in *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, ed. Myriam Rosen-Ayalon (Jerusalem: Institute of Asian and African Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1977), 249–60.

acceptability of Turkish as a literary medium in the wider ecumene.[50] Within Ottoman lands,

Kemāl, the frustrated Turkish poet at the court of Bāyezīd II mentioned above, advanced claims

for the suitability and desirability of Turkish over Persian as part of his complaint regarding the

preference of Ottoman statesmen for Persian histories. At the end of his verse history of the

dynasty in Turkish, Kemāl recollects that when he initially approached his friends with his work

and proposed to present it to the sultan's viziers, they all mocked the proposal and noted that it

was well known that these viziers preferred Persian to Turkish. Even so, he retorted that he

would bring the work to the sultan, who, should he read it, would see that Turkish is as beautiful

as Persian.[51]

Secondly, growing confidence in Turkish as a sophisticated vehicle of expression

affected Ottoman chancery practice. Increasingly, but especially under the direction of Bāyezīd's

chancellor (*nişancı*) Caᶜfer Çelebi, the Ottoman chancery sought to appropriate the prestige

associated with the Persian chancery style, especially as it had developed during the Timurid

period and apply it to Turkish. Significantly, Idrīs identifies the appointment of Caᶜfer Çelebi as

chancellor (*nişancı*) as an important turning point in the development of this post. Whereas

previously the chancellorship had been held by military men, shortly before Caᶜfer Çelebi's

appointment Bāyezīd asserted the need for men of learning to occupy the position.[52] Both Idrīs

and later Ottoman litterateurs noted the excellence of Caᶜfer Çelebi's prose and recounted that

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[50] Copies of Aḥmed Pasha's divan, as well as Navāʾī's poetry were found within the Mamluk treasury of the citadel of Aleppo shortly after the Ottoman conquest of Syria. The existence of these works in Syria attests to a wider interest in Turkish poetry, at least among the Mamluk inhabitants of the palace, TSMA D. 9101.

[51] Kemāl, *Selâtîn-Nâme (1299-1490)*, ed. Necdet Öztürk, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, sa. 16 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2001), 206–211.

[52] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 615b

with his appointment to chancellor, Caᶜfer Çelebi attained the rank of vizier (*paşa*).[53] As it

gradually emerged over the course of the tenth/sixteenth century, the resulting synthesis

constituted a new imperial idiom, which developed concurrently with an emerging Ottoman

imperial identity and increasingly found expression in a distinct Ottoman historiographical

outlook.[54]

Therefore, Müʾeyyedzāde's proposal that Kemālpaşazāde compose a history in elevated

Turkish was in keeping with recent literary developments at the Ottoman court. It was also an

important indication of the desire to develop Turkish in an eloquent register comparable to the

Persian prose style represented by Idrīs' *Hasht bihisht*. In this way, the commissioning of *Hasht*

bihisht and Kemālpaşazāde's history demonstrates that the conscious cultivation of language in

lettered patronage also represented a distinct aspect of ideological debate within the court.[55]

IV.5 Criticism of Hasht Bihisht

Müʾeyyedzāde's endorsement of a Turkish history written by Kemālpaşazāde also

seemed to indicate a more pointed criticism of Idrīs' work. While in several places Idrīs

recollected the general popularity and significance of his history, such popularity was likely

confined to poetic and literary circles, which were more predisposed to embrace the hyperliterate

flare of Idrīs' writing. Clearly, positive appraisal of the work was not universal within Ottoman

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[53] Ibid.; ᶜĀşıq Çelebi records the same information in his biographical entry on Caᶜfer Çelebi, ᶜĀşiḳ Çelebi, *Meşâʿirüʾş-Şuʿarâ*, 1:455.

[54] For the development of Turkish as an imperial idiom in the tenth/sixteenth century, see Sooyong Kim, "Minding the Shop: Zati and the Making of Ottoman Poetry in the First Half of the Sixteenth Century" (Ph.D., University of Chicago, 2005); For the effects of these changes on sixteenth-century Ottoman bureaucratic practice, see Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 214–229.

[55] For more on this aspect of Ottoman historical writing, see chapter seven.

court circles. In fact, some of the most influential elements of the court leveled pointed criticisms at *Hasht bihisht*, which Idrīs interpreted as rooted in the jealousy of certain leading statesmen.

The main criticisms revolved around three aspects of the work's content. Idrīs outlines the particular points of criticism in the conclusion to *Hasht bihisht*, which he completed at the beginning of Selīm's reign, and offered an apologia on his approach. The first criticism concerned Idrīs' inclusion of historical developments in Iran that concerned the activities of its rulers. Idrīs included mention of these contemporary sultans—Timurid and Turkmen—and a summary of the political developments within Iranian lands in the introduction to each of his volumes on the Ottoman sultans. Idrīs' detractors objected to these portions of the work, as they seemed to offer praise for rulers in Iran who had fought occasionally against the Ottomans.[56] The second criticism concerned the fact that Idrīs had not completed the work insofar as he neglected to include a general preface to the history that would appropriately praise Sultan Bāyezīd. To his detractors, Idrīs' neglect seemed to hold the sultan hostage, as they claimed Idrīs purposefully left the work unfinished as a bargaining tactic for negotiating a larger reward.[57] The last criticism focused on the general style that Idrīs had employed in his history. Specifically, his critics declaimed the work for its verbosity and noted that Idrīs took every opportunity to expand his discussion of even the simplest historical occurrences.

These criticisms were significant, as they articulated some of the most salient flashpoints of the nascent Ottoman historiographical tradition. The objection to an inclusion of contemporary rulers indicated a clear conception of history's use as an instrument of ideology. If a proper understanding of history's purpose emphasized its importance in securing a lasting memory (*z̲ikr-i jamīl*) for its principal subject, any discussion of other contemporary rulers

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[56] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 633a.
[57] Ibid, 633a/b.

threatened to undermine this objective. Idrīs rejected this criticism by suggesting that the

inclusion of other rulers in his history actually accrued to the benefit of his patrons, as any

comparison between the two sets of rulers ultimately demonstrated the manifest superiority of

the Ottoman sultans.[58] More subtly, the accusation addressed the fundamental issue of the

relationship of Ottoman history to other established Muslim historical narratives. Idrīs' work—in

its style, language, and content—argued for the placement of Ottoman history within the larger

narrative framework of the Perso-Islamic historical tradition. Ottoman dynastic histories before

Idrīs—if they considered any larger context at all—situated the rule of the Ottoman sultans

within the more narrowly conceived frame of a post-Saljuq Anatolian landscape whose principal

actors were limited largely to Turkish lords and Christian princes. Such an emphasis was

projected upon the explicit legitimating discourses of these histories, which tended to emphasize

Ottoman preeminence in *ghazāʾ*, precedence within the Oghuz Turkic lineage, or inheritance of

the Saljūq legacy as the primary aspects of any ideological discourse.[59] To be sure, Idrīs certainly

included included these aspects of the Ottoman historical tradition in his narrative, especially in

the first book of the chronicle.[60] Yet, the emphasis of his legitimating discourse differed

markedly from his predecessors. In contrast, Idrīs focused on the cosmically ordained and

universally applicable signs of Ottoman superiority. Accordingly, the appropriate frame of his

Ottoman history was not post-Saljuq Anatolia, but the expansive canvas of Islamic history,

especially insofar as it related to the preeminent courts in Iran, which were fully immersed in this

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[58] Ibid.

[59] Colin Imber, "The Ottoman Dynastic Myth," *Turcica* 19 (1987): 7–27; Colin Imber, "Ideals and Legitimation in Early Ottoman History," in *Süleyman the Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World*, ed. Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (New York: Longman, 1995), 138–53.

[60] Idrīs prinicipally addresses Oghuz lineage (24b, 27a) and the Saljuq inheritance (31b) in his discursive preface to the reign of ʿOs̱mān, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*.

alternative discourse on sovereignty.[61] By rejecting any discussion of contemporary historical developments as unnecessary, Idrīs' critics seemed to endorse this more narrowly conceived framework for dynastic history.

A similar set of underlying issues was attached to the third criticism of Idrīs' work. Idrīs consciously composed his history within the tradition of Perso-Islamic history writing.[62] While *Hasht bihisht* was not the first Ottoman history in Persian, it was the first to embrace fully the hyperliterate prose style of the latest Timurid historiographical works. Ottoman histories in Turkish, with few exceptions, exhibited a clear style, which presented the actions of the Ottoman sultans in simple and largely unadorned terms.[63] Although Idrīs rejected such an approach as unworthy of the subject, the clear and simple style apparently held significant sway among certain segments of the Ottoman ruling class.

IV.6 Idrīs' Position at the Ottoman Court

In later years, Idrīs would reflect upon Müʾeyyedzāde's reaction to his work and conclude that the Ottoman statesman misjudged the value of his history and consequently punished him unjustly. He remembered these years as a period of marginalization at the court during which time Müʾeyyedzāde and the grand vizier ʿAlī Pasha "offered a few things to appease me as one gives walnuts and raisins to a child," but largely shunned him as a

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[61] For a discussion of the contours of this tradition, see chapter eight.

[62] In his preface to his history, Idrīs states that in writing his history, he hoped his work would be the equal of great Persian histories written by the likes of Juvaynī, Vaṣṣāf, Muʿīn al-Dīn Yazdī, and Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 8b.

[63] The greatest possible exception to this tendency may be the historical work of Tursun Beğ, which despite its widespread popularity in modern scholarship, was not widely known in its own day, Tursun Beg, *Târih-i Ebü'l-Feth*.

consequence of their jealousy.[64] While the various complaints that Idrīs lodged in both personal communications to the sultan as well as in verse indicate that he certainly felt slighted by their reaction, the record of his treatment at the Ottoman court presents a rather more nuanced picture.[65] During his nearly ten-year residence at Bāyezīd's court, Idrīs received a variety of monetary rewards and distinctions of rank commensurate with his status as a distinguished scholar and statesman. The discrepancy between the actual value and relative rank of these honors and Idrīs' comparison of them to little sweets given a child ultimately underscores the high esteem in which he held his own abilities and suggests that he desired a top position within the Ottoman administration.[66]

Although the Ottoman administrative hierarchy and traditions of patronage exhibited important differences from the Aqquyunlu court with which Idrīs was most familiar, the general mechanisms through which the administration operated were similar in significant ways. As with the Aqquyunlu court, the Ottoman court largely secured the loyalty and allegiance of crucial social segments during this period through the acknowledgement of certain privileges and appointments. The boundaries of these key segments were synonymous with the military and scholarly religious classes that administered the polity and provided an ideological rationale for rule. Patronage, as expressed through official appointments and periodic gifts, was widespread; in addition to the approximately 1,000 individuals directly tied to the court at this time, the

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[64] Başaran, 190. Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 633b.

[65] Idrīs complains of the poor treatment he received in the conclusion to *Hasht bihisht*, as well as in a personal letter to the sultan, which he wrote after having departed Ottoman lands on pilgrimage in 917/1511, TSMA E. 5675.

[66] Clearly, Idrīs' contemporaries considered Bāyezīd II's lavish gifts for him indicative of special favor. The contemporary poet Sehi Beğ noted that Bāyezīd showed Idrīs great interest and favor (II. Bāyezīd "sehâvette ʿadîmüʾl-misl sâhib-i hayr pâdişâhı... Idrîs Bidlîsî'yi Acem'den getürüb ʿalî himmetler ve ziyâde iltifâtlar edüb taʿyîn olunan dirlikden gayrı pâdişâhın inʿâm-ı hâssı ile mugtanim olub ganî olmuşdu) quoted in Halil İnalcık, *Şair ve Patron: Patrimonyal devlet ve sanat üzerind sosyolojik bir inceleme* [Ankara: Doğu Batı, 2003], 43.

Ottoman dynasty supported the livelihoods of many thousands more through positions that ranged from minor provincial military appointments to caretakers of mosques in nearly every major town.

In addition to these stipends, Bāyezīd's court engaged in a complex program of ceremony, one of the aims of which included the distribution of gifts to all of those constituent elements of society that were deemed essential to the Ottoman political enterprise. The diligent record-keeping exhibited by the gift registry of Bāyezīd's court—a document which covers the daily distribution of gifts over a period of ten years—ultimately stands testament to the central importance of court patronage.[67] The document, with its focus on the military and religious classes, demonstrates the high regard with which these segments of society were held. Moreover, the extensive nature of the document suggests that this program of ceremony and gift giving was consciously employed. Idrīs likely had access to this document as it was being compiled, for he includes in his description of Bāyezīd's great qualities a reference to the extent of the sultan's magnanimity. In the section in which Idrīs discusses the importance of generosity for a sultan, he cites as proof of Bāyezīd's possession of this quality the fact that in the year 909/1503—the first year recorded in the register—the sultan distributed 8.6 million Ottoman akçes as gifts (*inʿāmāt*) to the distinguished governors and scholars of his domains.[68]

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[67] This defter is preserved in Atatürk Kitaplığı, Muallım Cevdet O.71. Portions of the register were published by Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "İstanbul Saraylarına ait Muhasebe Defterleri," *Belgeler* 9 (1979): 296–380; and Mustafa Açıkgöz, "II. Bayezid Devri İnʿâmât Defteri (Muharrem-Zi'l-hicce 910/Haziran Mayıs 1504-1505" (M.A., Marmara Üniversitesi, 1996); İsmail Erünsal examined the registers entries related to poets and litterateurs, Erünsal, "Türk Edebiyatı Tarihinin Arşiv Kaynakları I: II. Bâyezid devrine ait bir inʿâmât defteri"; Hilal Kazan made extensive use of the register in her doctoral dissertation on the Ottoman court's support of craftsmen and artisans, Hilal Kazan, "XV. ve XVI. Asırlarda Osmanlı Sarayının Sanatı Himayesi" (Ph.D., Marmara Üniversitesi, 2007).

[68] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 508a.

Frequently the distribution of such gifts occurred in conjunction with larger court ceremonies. The spectacle of ceremony represented an important opportunity for the sultan to renew bonds of loyalty and assert his own power through gift giving and ceremony. In fact, the gift register, in all its chronological detail and financial specificity, can be read as a logbook of court ceremony. Not surprisingly, the principal witnesses and beneficiaries of these displays of largesse were the military and scholarly religious classes upon whom the Ottoman court depended. In this way, the arrival of a foreign ambassador marked not only an occasion for gift exchange between sovereigns, but also for distribution of gifts to various servants within the palace.[69] Similarly, the arrival of the sultan and his court in an important city such as Edirne or Bursa was commemorated by the disbursal of gifts to the prayer leaders and preachers of the city's mosques, the instructors of the madrasas, and the Sufi masters of the dervish lodges.[70] While such ceremonies were principally addressed to the servants of the court and religious classes working within Ottoman domains, other occasions called for ceremony and gift-giving for the benefit of the provincial military establishment. For instance, in the days immediately following the Battle of Çorlu, in which an aging Sultan Bāyezīd was forced to confront the open rebellion of his son Selīm, the sultan ordered the distribution of gifts to provincial military commanders who had been instrumental in securing victory and to poets who had memorialized the event through the composition of fitting chronograms.[71] Contemporary observers fully recognized the significance of these public instances of gift giving. In *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs

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[69] See for instance the festivities associated with the embassies from Alvand of the Aqquyunlu and Mengli Giray Khan in *Dhūʾl-qaʿda* 909/April 1504, *İnʿāmāt Defteri*, Atatürk Kitaplığı, O.71, pp. 50-51.
[70] See for example the gifts to the learned men of Bursa in Shaʿbān 916/ November 1510, Ibid., p. 406.
[71] Ibid., p. 457-8.

devotes an entire chapter of his volume on Bāyezīd to the pomp and circumstance that accompanied the circumcision ceremonies of several of the sultan's grandsons in Amasya.[72]

Idrīs' position at the Ottoman court during this period can be assessed through the monetary compensation that he received, as well as through the rank and honors that he was afforded. As with all other men attached to the court, his compensation derived largely from two sources: the fixed stipend associated with usufruct grants and the gifts that he received for his literary production or on other ceremonial occasions. As a courtier without an official post, Idrīs' rank largely corresponded with his general professional attributes. Consequently, throughout Bāyezīd's salary register Idrīs was known as Mawlānā Idrīs Munshī.[73] These two designations marked him among the distinguished members of the scholarly class (*mawlānā*), as well as a gifted master of prose and verse who could be employed for the composition of official correspondence (*munshī*).

Throughout his residence in Ottoman domains, Idrīs likely benefited from the regular fixed income derived from the tax revenues of a land grant (*tīmār*). Generally such grants were offered to men of the military class in exchange for military service and the provisioning of an agreed upon number of mounted armed men whose number grew in proportion with the value of the grant.[74] These land grants represented the basic compensation by which the Ottoman court distributed rewards to the men upon whom it relied in all of its major campaigns. As with a small number of poets and scholars attached to the court, Idrīs' land grants most likely did not entail military service on campaign. For learned men, the service expected in exchange for land grants often consisted of literary production or their attendance at court. Indeed, ʿĀşıq Çelebi notes that

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[72] Bidlīsī, *Hasht Bihisht*, 586b.
[73] This is Idrīs' designation for all instances of his inclusion in the gift register.
[74] Halil İnalcık, "Timar," TDVF *İA*.

Idrīs benefited from a mid-sized land grant (*ze'āmet*) outside of Sofia while he wrote his history.[75] Similarly, during the reign of Süleymān, a poet such as Ḫayālī accumulated significant wealth from land grants offered to him for his verse.[76] The precise terms of Idrīs' service are unknown, but Idrīs likely grew to consider his land grants his own property. In a letter addressed to Bāyezīd shortly after his departure on pilgrimage, he referenced his land grants (*tīmārhā va iqṭā'*) and objected to their confiscation, without which he had no means to support his family and members of his household whom he had left behind.[77] From the court's perspective, his departure signaled an end to his service and warranted the redistribution of the land grants to other worthy servants.

The other form of monetary compensation that the court offered Idrīs assumed the form of gifts. Idrīs received gifts for one of two principal reasons. The first type of gift was offered in exchange for Idrīs' presentation of a literary work. His presentation of *Hasht bihisht* precipitated his largest gift from the court, but throughout the last decade of Bāyezīd's rule, Idrīs completed a number of other works for which he received rewards valued between 7,000 and 14,000 silver aspers.[78] The other type of gift was given to Idrīs by virtue of his general status at the court. Such gifts were often distributed to members of the palace on special occasions such as during Ramaḍān. For these occasions Idrīs generally received 7,000 silver aspers, although the amount varied between 5,000 and 10,000.[79] Between these gifts and his stipend from land grants, Idrīs could rely on a sizable income with which he could establish his own household.[80]

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[75] 'Āşiḳ Çelebi, *Meşâ'irü'ş-Şu'arâ*, 297.
[76] Ibid., 1544.
[77] TSMA E. 5675.
[78] *İn'āmāt Defteri* Muallım Cevdet O.71, pp. 304, 321, 419.
[79] Ibid., pp. 229, 304, 343.
[80] In addition to Idrīs' reference to his own servants in his letter to Bāyezīd, the *İn'āmāt Defteri* indicates that Idrīs employed several men in various capacities. One entry refers to Idrīs' scribes,

Beyond these stipends and gifts, Idrīs was also distinguished in the Ottoman court through recognition of his rank and status. In contrast to most notables and functionaries who generally interacted with the court in a single clearly defined manner commensurate with their professional activity, Idrīs, by virtue of his particular talents and abilities, seems to have been simultaneously distinguished by multiple honors and titles. Reference in the gift register to Idrīs as both *mawlānā* (religious scholar) and *munshī* (prose master) signify the two principal modes of his courtly activity. This fact is reflected in the various entries in the register in which Idrīs appears. As a member of the distinguished scholarly community of Istanbul, the court honored him on those occasions in which the city's religious scholars received gifts.[81] Similarly, perhaps as a sign of his declining standing at court in the final years of Bāyezīd's reign, the register records Idrīs as the instructor in the school of the mosque of ʿAlī Pasha, the salary from which amounted to the relatively modest sum of 50 silver aspers per diem.[82] Similarly, in his capacity as a gifted formulator of official correspondence, Idrīs was also occasionally honored along with the other members of the central secretarial corps.[83]

Beyond these two status markers, Idrīs' most important designation was as a member of the *müteferriqa* (distinguished individuals attached to the court). The *müteferriqa* during the reign of Sultan Bāyezīd connoted a miscellaneous assortment of individuals marked by their common distinction as high-ranking men and women worthy of an honored place at court.[84] Consequently, the group members hailed from diverse backgrounds: the sons of European rulers

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while another distributes cash to two of Idrīs' men who were employed on a special unspecified mission on behalf of the court, Ibid., 120, 329.

[81] Ibid., 343.

[82] For at least some period around 916/1510, Idrīs was formally employed as an instructor (*müderris*) in school of the mosque ʿAlī Paşa, *İnʿāmāt Defteri*, p. 417.

[83] Ibid., 298.

[84] Erhan Afyoncu, "Müteferrika," *İA*.

held hostage by the court, Turkmen dynasts offered refuge, and the wives and children of high-ranking officials, and officers.[85] The distinction frequently carried with it a monthly stipend from the Central Treasury (ḫizāne-i ʿāmire), but more importantly it signaled membership among the core elements of the sultanic court.[86] While Idrīs does not refer to his inclusion in the group in his own writings, his placement in the gift register indicates his membership among the select group at least during some period of Bayezīd's reign. One entry, in particular, not only substantiates this point, but also provides some indication of Idrīs' relative status within the court. On 4 Ramazḍān 910/9February 1505, Sultan Bayezīd assembled all the members of the central administration and servants of the palace for a ceremony commemorating the death of his son Meḥmed. While the register is replete with condolence gifts to individuals who had lost family members—indeed Idrīs received two such gifts for the loss of his father and the loss of a son—the passing of the sultan's son marked an occasion for collective mourning, which necessitated the distribution of a gift to all the members of the court.[87] The notable absence of the grand vizier and the master of the janissary corps (yeniçeri ağası) indicate that the distribution of the gifts unfolded in a formal ceremony for all those members of the court who were physically present at the time. In accordance with Ottoman tradition, the order of gift presentation, as well as the specific value of the gift corresponded with the relative rank of the recipients.[88] In this way, the ceremony started with those viziers who were present before proceeding to the other

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[85] For a list of the müteferriqa attached to the old palace in Istanbul in the late reign of Bāyezīd II, See TSMA D. 9629, p. 6.

[86] The müteferriqa were part of the larger group within the court that was entitle to a monthly stipend (müşāhere-yi ḫorān), see for example the inclusion of müteferriqa in a register of these stipend-holders, D. 9587, p. 4

[87] For the entry on the death of his father, see İnʿāmāt Defteri, Muallım Cevdet O.71, p. 33; for the death of an unnamed son, see ibid, p. 337.

[88] All of the entries in the register follow the protocol established by Ottoman tradition as elaborated in the Qānūnnāme of Sultan Meḥmed II.

high statesmen, officers of the palace regiments, and other state and palace functionaries. Idrīs'

name and presumable rank appears among the *müteferrika*, yet the particular gift he received

corresponded to the gifts of some of the highest ranking statesmen, namely the two chief military

judges and the chancellor.[89] Idrīs' exceptional status among the *müteferriqa* likely reflected the

privileged place that he enjoyed as he wrote *Hasht bihisht* in 910/1505. Yet, the discrepancy

between his official status as *müteferriqa* and his informal recognition as one of the most

distinguished members of the court highlights the challenges Idrīs faced in securing a worthy

place among the Ottomans. On the one hand, his experience and ability marked him as one of the

most valued servants of the sultan, yet his status as a newcomer without experience and

connections within the Ottoman administrative system seemed to hold him back. The

discrepancy is significant, as it would constitute the source of Idrīs' greatest frustration in the last

years of Bāyezīd's reign. Indeed, as the subsequent record of the register indicates, by the end of

the decade, Idrīs had lost direct access to the royal court and instead plied his trade as a mid-level

instructor in one of the schools of Constantinople.[90]

IV.7 Altered Terrain, Shifting Alliances

This period of frustration for Idrīs coincided with major political developments within

Ottoman domains, which would ultimately affect succession to Bāyezīd. In some measure, Idrīs

was aware of these developments and sought to adjust his allegiances in accordance with the

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[89] Those who immediately precede and follow Idrīs are clearly members of the *müteferriqa*. Sons of the Wallachian voyvode, the son of the sultan's tutor, etc. While most of these men received more modest gifts, Idrīs was awarded the same gift as the military judges and chancellor, namely a cloak of red velvet produced in Italy, *İnᶜāmāt Defteri*, Muallım Cevdet O.71, p. 97.
[90] On 10 Shawwāl 916/10 January 1511, Idrīs is listed as an instructor in the school (*madrasa*) of ᶜAlī Pasha, *İnᶜāmāt Defteri*, Muallım Cevdet O.71, p. 417; Genç, "Acem'den Rum'a," 221.

shifting political terrain. Certainly, he capitalized upon the waning fortunes of two statesmen whom he would come to identify as his antagonists and use the opportunity afforded by their demise to escape Ottoman lands. These two statesmen were Bayezīd's grand vizier, ʿAlī Pasha, and chief military judge, Müʾeyyedzāde. Despite all the indications of a close supportive relationship, Idrīs gradually came to suspect that Müʾeyyedzāde harbored a strong jealousy towards him and, along with ʿAlī Pasha, conspired to exclude him from high office and prevent his departure for pilgrimage.

More broadly, in the years immediately following Idrīs' initial presentation of *Hasht bihisht*, the Ottoman court increasingly became immersed in a succession struggle between several of Bayezīd's adult sons. Initially the dynamics of the struggle were entirely informed by the appointment of the various princes to governorships that were deemed strategically important in the event of a succession crisis. As the Ottomans had no specified constitutional mechanism for the designation of a sultan's successor, royal contenders sought to ensure the allegiance of the most powerful and influential elements of the palace and central administration. In this case, seizure of the central treasury—and with it the ability to win the allegiance of the household regiments—often marked the most decisive development in succession struggles.[91] Consequently, in the years before a sultan's death, his sons actively vied for governorships with short and unobstructed lines of communication with Constaninople. Since Idrīs' arrival in Ottoman lands, Bāyezīd's sons engaged in complicated political maneuvers to solicit and maintain a hold on the most advantageous governorships.[92]

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[91] Halil İnalcık, "Salīm," *EI*².
[92] Hakkı Erdem Çıpa, "The Centrality of the Periphery: The Rise to Power of Selim I, 1487-1512" (Ph.D., Harvard University, 2007), 16–24.

Concurrent with these internal developments, the continued success of Shah Ismāᶜīl in his bid for power in Iran added a crucial dimension to the internal power dynamics within the Ottoman ruling classes. Selīm's ultimate success in attaining the throne derived as much from his ability to discern the ideological value of an aggressive Ottoman policy of opposition to Shah Ismāᶜīl, as from his shrewd maneuvering for strategically beneficial positions closer to the Ottoman seat of governance. Throughout the final years of his reign, Sultan Bāyezīd maintained a non-confrontational stance towards Shah Ismāᶜīl. There are several indications that the Ottoman court of Bāyezīd had little interest in fomenting animosity with Ismāᶜīl during his early reign in Tabriz. Ismāᶜīl's early successes in Iran coincided with Ottoman military engagements in the Balkans and the Aegean against the Venetians. While this war culminated in an Ottoman victory and peace accord in 908/1502, Bāyezīd continued to follow a policy of non-aggression. Several times during this period, Bāyezīd's court received Shah Ismāᶜīl's emissaries with honor and sought to defuse any political or military developments that threatened to precipitate a larger conflict.[93] Such a policy stood in direct contrast with the activities of Selīm during this period. As governor of Trebizond, Selīm's court was in close proximity to Qizilbash-controlled Iran. Beginning in 913/1507, Selīm engaged in direct military conflict with Shah Ismāᶜīl's forces.[94] By 916/1510, Selīm implemented an aggressive policy of conquest against Shah Ismāᶜīl, which resulted in his seizure of Erzincan.[95] The ideological potential of these activities readily became clear; the hawkish elements of the Ottoman ruling class were attracted to Selīm's hard stance vis-à-vis Shah Ismāᶜīl. Specifically, the janissaries, a key constituent group in the succession struggle, increasingly supported Selīm, whose future rule, so they judged, would ensure the

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[93] See for instance, the Ottoman reception of Shah Ismāᶜīl's envoy, Aḥmad Beg in 911/1505, as reflected in Bāyezīd's gift register, *İnᶜāmāt Defteri*, Muallim Cevdet O.71, p. 148.
[94] Feridun M. Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim* (Istanbul: Yitik Hazine Yayınları, 2011), 37.
[95] Çıpa, "The Centrality of the Periphery: The Rise to Power of Selim I, 1487-1512," 22–23.

greatest likelihood for an aggressive military policy from which they stood to benefit politically

and financially.

During this period of political maneuvering among the princes, Prince Aḥmed's

paramount position as Bāyezīd's likely successor gradually eroded. While he still enjoyed the

strong backing of most of the high statesmen, including the grand vizier, the chief military judge,

and the chancellor, the growing support among the janissaries and other military figures

increasingly challenged his path to the throne.[96] The ramifications of a shifting political climate

not only affected the positions of the various princes, but also potentially threatened the futures

of all those who were closely associated with a prince whose bid for sovereignty ended in failure.

For instance, a generation earlier, the scramble for the throne following the death of Sultan

Meḥmed II in 886/1481 entailed considerable chaos and led to the murder of Meḥmed's grand

vizier Qarāmānī Meḥmed Pasha.[97] Potential hazards were not limited to the highest statesman; it

is possible that Tursun Beğ, an able administrator and historian of Meḥmed's reign, presented his

history to Bāyezīd as part of a strategy to reinstate himself at court after he had supported

Bāyezīd's brother, Cem, in the succession struggle.[98]

The dangers of a poorly chosen patron were likely not lost on Idrīs, who had spent the

bulk of his professional career navigating the political intrigue and succession struggles among

the Aqquyunlu. While Idrīs certainly made clear his association with Prince Aḥmed, through the

presentation of unique works, as well as high praise in *Hasht bihisht*, he no doubt discerned the

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[96] For a discussion of the pro-Aḥmed party at the Ottoman court, see ibid., 131–8.

[97] Şehabeddin Tekindağ, "Fatih'in Ölümü Meselesi," *Tarih Dergisi* 16 (1966): 95–108; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Fatih Sultan Mehmed'in Ölümü," *Belleten* 39 (1975): 473–81.

[98] Kemalpaşazade, *Tevârîḫ-I Âl-I Osmân. VIII Defter: (transkripsiyon)*, ed. Ahmet Uğur, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, sa. 10 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1997), 20.

potential pitfalls of such an alliance and sought opportunities to hedge his bet.[99] In fact, in the

immediate wake of *Hasht bihisht*'s initial presentation at court, he sought to cultivate a

relationship with Selīm through a panegyric, which he sent to the prince. The poem laments

Idrīs' distance from the young prince, whom he suggested was the rightful inheritor of both

Roman and Persian traditions of kingship: "Sultan Selīm Shah upon the Caesarian throne / would

arrive in kingship to the rank of Anushirvan!"[100] Beyond this general articulation of Selīm's

suitability for rule, Idrīs acknowledges the complexity of the brewing succession struggle by

expressing the hope that Bāyezīd recognize Selīm's celestially mandated kingship: "O King, by

the order of your father, the refuge of the world / Attention! The king named by heaven, the Lord

of the Auspicious Conjunction (*Ṣāḥib-Qirān*) arrives."[101] The line suggests that as early as

912/1506, Idrīs was fully cognizant of the growing significance of the succession struggle and

offered his support and well wishes to Selīm.

In more practical terms, Idrīs also strengthened his relationship with the prince through

other more immediately discernible ties. In fact, one of Idrīs' sons entered formal service with

Selīm before his accession. While Idrīs' son Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed pursued a scholarly career

under the direction of several prominent scholars including Müʾeyyedzāde, another son, Ebūʾl-

Mevāhib, entered the Ottoman military establishment. By 916/1510 Ebūʾl-Mevāhib was counted

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[99] For a discussion of works that Idrīs dedicated to Aḥmed, see chapter three.
[100] *Sulṭān Salīm Shāh ki bar takht-i qayṣarī / dar salṭanat bi-rutbat-i Nūshīrvān rasad*, Bidlīsī, *Majmūʿa*, Esad Efendi 1888, 89b.
[101] *Ay shah bi-amr-i vālid gītī-panāh tu / kish nām az āsmān shah ṣāḥib-qirān rasad,* ibid, 90a. The use of the term *Ṣāḥib-Qirān* in association with Ottoman sultans was quickly gaining momentum in the first decade of the tenth/sixteenth century. While the term was employed in reference to Sultan Meḥmed II, instances of its use seem to have multiplied in the latter years of Bāyezīd's reign. By the time of Selim's accession, the term was used almost as a shorthand moniker for the new ruler. Idrīs' use of the term clearly reflected the title's growing popularity, but in the poem Idrīs hints at an underlying rationale for its deployment. In the absence of clearly articulated rules of succession, the ultimate victors certainly did appear to possess the support of a celestially ordained fortune. For further discussion of the term, see chapter eight.

among the household men-at-arms (*az jamāᶜat-i silaḥshūriyān*).[102] Clearly, he was also among those palace soldiers who favored Selīm's succession, for, two years later, he was counted among Selīm's men when the new sultan entered Constantinople in Ṣafar 918/April1512.[103] Although Idrīs was not residing in Ottoman domains at the time of Selīm's consolidation of power, his son's service to Selīm may have played a small role in the rehabilitation of Idrīs' reputation and Selīm's request that the scholar return from his place of residence in the Hijaz.[104]

Even if Idrīs' fortunes would eventually improve with the accession of Selīm, he felt increasingly isolated in the final years of Bāyezīd's reign. In a subsequent recollection of this period, he placed the blame for his misfortune on the animosity of Bāyezīd's grand vizier, ᶜAlī Pasha, and chief military judge, Müʾeyyedzāde.[105] Idrīs identified the root of this animosity in the two statesmen's jealousy and claimed that the two conspired to exclude him from any high position of state and denied him permission to undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca. Incidentally, the two leading statesmen were among the most vocal supporters of Prince Aḥmed. This fact was crucial. Political developments in 917/1511 eliminated both these men as major officers within the Ottoman administration and provided Idrīs with an opportunity to escape what he judged to be a hopeless personal situation.

The death and dismissal of Idrīs' enemies were precipitated by a complex series of concurrently unfolding interrelated events. In Dhūʾl-ḥijja 916/March 1511, a suspected disciple of Shah Ismāᶜīl named Şāhqulu fomented a rebellion among the Turkmen tribes of Anadolu.[106]

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[102] *İnᶜāmāt Defteri,* Muallım Cevdet O.71, p. 411.
[103] Mavāhib ibn Mawlānā Idrīs is included in an archival register that lists the men who accompanied Selīm to Constantinople for his enthronement, TSMA D. 2921, 8a.
[104] For details on Selīm's invitation for Idrīs to return to Ottoman lands from his residence in Mecca, see chapter five.
[105] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht,* 633a/b.
[106] Çıpa, "The Centrality of the Periphery: The Rise to Power of Selim I, 1487-1512," 24–27.

The rebellion posed a major threat to Ottoman rule in Anadolu, as it demonstrated the appeal of Shah Ismāʿīl's message among the large numbers of pastoralist nomads who, on several other occasions, had resisted Ottoman efforts to extend their administrative reach. Bāyezīd dispatched his grand vizier ʿAlī Pasha with orders to quell the rebellion in coordination with Prince Aḥmed. Although the campaign was esuccessful, in Rabīʿ II 917/July 1517, ʿAlī Pasha was killed in the culminating confrontation with Şāhqulu's supporters.[107] The loss was significant for the ensuing succession struggle, as, with the death of the grand vizier, Aḥmed lost his most powerful advocate at court. Concurrent with these developments, an aged Sultan Bāyezīd expressed the intention of abdicating his throne in favor of his son Aḥmed. This desire set all of Bāyezīd's sons in motion as they scrambled to reach Constantinople before Aḥmed. Selīm arrived in Rumili from his son Süleymān's provincial post in Kefe and began to solicit the support of Rumelian commanders. Even as Bāyezīd denied his intention to abdicate, Selīm used the opportunity to demand the provincial governorship of Silistre (Silistra, Bulgaria), which was both closer to the capital as well as his main base of military support. Bāyezīd refused and Selīm faced the main Ottoman army at Çorlu in early Jumāda II/late July 1511.[108] Selīm was defeated in the battle and retreated. However, largely as a consequence of this setback, the janissaries in Istanbul reacted to the news of Selīm's loss and sacked the houses of the most important statesmen who supported Prince Aḥmed, including Müʾeyyedzāde.[109] To appease the janissaries and reorganize the administration in the wake of ʿAlī Pasha's death, Sultan Bāyezīd dismissed Müʾeyyedzāde from his office along with a number of the other leading statesmen.[110]

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[107] Ibid, 28–30.

[108] Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 57–59.

[109] Ibid, 61–62; Çıpa, "The Centrality of the Periphery: The Rise to Power of Selim I, 1487-1512," 55–57.

[110] Ibid, 56.

The removal of Idrīs' perceived enemies opened the way for his departure from Ottoman lands. The swift moving events and reversals of fortune underscored the volatility of the political situation for all men at court. In this context, Idrīs' renewal of his pilgrimage quest also suggests a clearly calculated bid to remove himself from political entanglements whose portents promised further violence and disorder. Idrīs later characterized his departure solely in terms of the fulfillment of his long desired spiritual aim, nonetheless his departure and absence from Ottoman lands conveniently coincided with the volatile period of transition between Sultan Bāyezīd and Selīm, which resulted in the death of all of Selīm's brothers and most of his nephews.

IV.8 Disappointment and Departure

Even if Idrīs viewed his departure for the Hijaz as the fulfillment of a long desired religious obligation, he also acknowledged that his departure signified an acceptance of his failure to attain a satisfactory place among the Ottomans. On the one hand, the permission to make the pilgrimage marked the realization of a long held wish. Since his departure from Tabriz almost ten years earlier, he had made clear his intention to visit the holy cities in the Hijaz. On the other hand, the immediate circumstances that enabled the journey must have underscored a deep sense of failure for Idrīs. He had spent ten years among the Ottomans during which time he composed a major history for the dynasty, yet throughout this period he was unable to attain the sort of standing and position that he deemed commensurate with his previous experiences as one of the principal officers of a major sultanate.

Some time during his residency in the Hijaz, Idrīs reflected upon his treatment among the Ottomans and penned a letter to Bāyezīd, which enumerated his mistreatment at the hands of the

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sultan's servants.[111] The document reflects Idrīs' sense of misfortune in the final years of his residence at court, but, as with many of Idrīs' reflections upon his personal situation, the letter ultimately highlights the discrepancy between Idrīs' expectations and his actual experience. The letter establishes a narrative of Idrīs' treatment at the Ottoman court with the composition and reception of *Hasht bihisht* as its focal point. Idrīs recounts Bāyezīd's order to write a history of the Ottoman dynasty from the beginning up to the present and reiterates his strenuous efforts to complete the work in two years and eight months. On account of these efforts, he says, the lasting memory (*zikr-i jamīl*) of the Ottomans is now widespread and well renowned throughout the lands. Unfortunately, due to the jealousy of the sultan's servants, his efforts were met with unfulfilled promises. Although Idrīs does not specify the exact particulars of these promises, he indicates that the court failed to fulfill the assurances of monetary compensation and appointment to office (*iḥsān va mukāramat az mālī va jā'ī*) that were made during the writing process.[112] While Idrīs' claim belies the fact that he was rewarded handsomely for his history, his assertion suggests strongly that he expected his efforts to be recognized through appointment to high office. Instead, Idrīs claims that the work was met with the derision of high statesmen, who even went so far as to send one of the volumes of his history to Mengli Giray Khan, a ruler whom Idrīs characterizes as an ineloquent Turk.[113] As a consequence of the criticism he received, Idrīs refused to finish the preface of the history and requested to take a leave of the court in order to perform the pilgrimage. Idrīs claims that his request was denied until 917/1511,

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[111] TSMA E. 5675.

[112] TSMA E. 5675 (line 15).

[113] "To add to my sadness, they (the high statesmen) offered the book of history to some Turks who are not from among the class of eloquent ones (*balki bar ghamm-i faqīr kitāb-i tarīkh baʿżī turkān rā ki na az maslak-i bulaghā buvad bi-inʿāmāt-i ʿālīya va taraqqī-hā-yi bī-taqrīb makhṣūṣ farmūdand*)," TSMA E. 5675.

at which point he was permitted to leave, but not in accordance with the support and fanfare befitting his status.[114]

Idrīs' decision to depart Ottoman lands for the pilgrimage—although the result of his particular circumstances—is consonant with the broader pattern of scholarly mobility and independence during this period. For however much Idrīs sought to secure an honored place at the Ottoman court, he held no special allegiance to the Ottoman enterprise. After all, he had already worked for decades to advance the interests of another dynasty and within months of his departure he endeavored to cultivate a personal relationship with the Mamluk sultan through the presentation of a new work.[115] While the Ottoman dynasty likely represented a praiseworthy example of rule, Idrīs' more fundamental loyalties lay in a set of ideals concerning the implementation of a just and righteous order, which could be embraced by any Muslim court at the time. In this way, Idrīs' professional outlook mirrored the attitude assumed by most scholars of the ninth/fifteenth century who accepted positions of temporal authority. For all of these men, the multiplicity of rulers and patrons along with the possibility for movement ensured a modicum of independence of conscience and action. If better opportunities materialized elsewhere or if the demands of a ruler interfered with a scholar's worldview, the scholar could seek other opportunities to exercise his talents and seek his fortune in other lands.

During the final years of Bāyezīd's reign, Idrīs initiated communication with leading members of Shah Ismāʿīl's court in an effort to reconcile with the Qizilbash and explore the possibility of a return to his homeland. Beginning in 916/1510, Idrīs began a correspondence with several of Shah Ismāʿīl's high statesmen, including Amīr ʿAbd al-Vahhāb, Idrīs' one-time

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[114] Ibid.

[115] Bidlīsī, *Asrār ʿibādat al-ṣiyām*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Aya Sofya 1994. See chapter five for details of Idrīs stay at the Mamluk court.

colleague in the Aqquyunlu royal council and, since 912/1506, the minister of religious affairs (*shaykh al-islām*) for Shah Ismāʿīl.[116] Around this time, in a letter addressed to "some of the grandees in Iran (*bi-baʿż-i ʿuẓamā ul-ʿAjam*)," Idrīs regrets having left Tabriz: "What misfortunes have I not seen in separation from the gate of friends! / Emigration is the desire of separation; grief, the vision of separation."[117] The torment of this separation prompted him to reconcile with Ismāʿīl through offering encomia; he tells himself in the poem to: "seek refuge at the gate of the ruler of Iran Bahrām / be his well-wisher in prose and poetry."[118] More provacatively, around 917/1511, he composed a panegyric poem in praise of Ismāʿīl that celebrated the shah's recent victory over the Uzbeks in Khurāsān at the Battle of Marv in Shaʿbān 916/December 1510.[119] The poem praises Ismāʿīl as a sovereign who unites the temporal and spiritual realms.[120] He is a descendant of ʿAlī whose rule emerged under a happy celestial conjunction and whose recent triumph over the Uzbeks foreshadows future conquests.

Such sentiments as expressed in this poetry appear in stark contrast with his subsequent stance. After all, during the reign of Selīm, Idrīs was one of the most vocal critics of Shah Ismāʿīl and his activities on the Ottoman campaign against the Qizlibash in 920/1514 were critical to its success. Indeed, the mid-sixteenth-century Ottoman copyist of the poem included a marginal note expressing his surprise that Idrīs could have written such a poem in the final

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[116] One of Idrīs' prose collections contains a letter to Shaykh al-Islām Amīr ʿAbd al-Vahhāb, which Idrīs wrote in Damascus on his return to Ottoman lands from the Hijaz in late 918-early 919/early 1513. The letter mentions a three-year correspondence with members of Shah Ismāʿīl's court, which means he began this correspondence in 916/1510-1511, Bidlīsī, *Munshaʾāt*, Esad Efendi 1888, 148b-149b; Genç "Acem'den Rum'a," 214. This letter is discussed in greater detail in chapter five.

[117] *chi balā-hā ki nadīdam zi-dar-i yār-i judā / Hajr dildār-i judā ḥasrat dīdār-i judā*, Bidlīsī, *Munshaʾāt*, Esad Efendi 1888, 148a.

[118] *iltijā kun ba-dar-i sarvar-i Īrān Bahrām / kun duʿāgūy-i ū naṣr u ba-ashʿār*, Ibid.

[119] Ibid., 144a-147a.

[120] Ibid., 144a.

months of Bāyezīd's reign.[121] Ultimately, Idrīs' overtures to Shah Ismāʿīl and his leading

statesmen underscore the great ambivalence that he felt regarding the rise of Shah Ismāʿīl. There

is little doubt that he was appalled initially by the violence and destruction wrought by the

Qizilbash revolution. After all, despair at the destruction that had befallen his home prompted

him to immigrate to Ottoman lands in the wake of Shah Ismāʿīl's rise. Yet, in the years since

Shah Ismāʿīl's rise, a number of prominent religious officials and state functionaries had

reconciled their differences with Shah Ismāʿīl and joined his nascent administration.[122] The

influence of these new administrative recruits likely had a mitigating effect on the most

unpalatable aspects of Shah Ismāʿīl's early rhetoric of conquest and rule and may have warmed

Idrīs to the prospects of return home. When measured against the hopelessness with which he

viewed his future prospects in Ottoman lands during the final years of Bāyezīd's reign,

repatriation through reconciliation with Shah Ismāʿīl appealed to him on some level.

Pilgrimage to Mecca offered Idrīs the best opportunity to withdraw from the Ottoman

court—whether such withdrawal was intended to be temporary or facilitate a more permanent

move elsewhere. Throughout this period, pilgrimage was an important mechanism by which

scholars absolved themselves of their commitments to a particular patron. While sultans often

required the continuing residence of those who had received their support, they found it difficult

to deny a scholar his request to fulfill the religious obligation of pilgrimage to the holy cities.

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[121] The copyist, Meḥmed ibn Bilāl, was most likely a servant of Idrīs' son Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed (see chapter six for details on this point), and therefore well placed to know the political disposition of Idrīs. Even so, beside the poem, he writes: "They brought the head of the ruler (Muḥammad Shaybān) at the time of the discord between Sultan Bāyezīd and Sultan Selīm. From this, it is known that this panegyric had been sent from Rūm in the time of Sultan Selīm's reign, but God knows best! (*sar-i khaqan rā dar ān vaqt āvardand ki miyān-i Sulṭān Bāyazīd va Sulṭān Salīm Khān fitna'ī vāqiʿ shuda būd az īn maʿlūm shud ki īn qaṣīda az Rūm firistāda shuda ast dar zamān-i khilāfat-i Sulṭān Salīm Khān wa Allāhu aʿlam*)," Ibid., 145b.
[122] Most notable among these men was Amīr ʿAbd al-Vahhāb, Idrīs' former colleague in the Aqquyunlu administration.

Scholars were aware of this and often used the pilgrimage as a means of escape from political difficulties. For instance, Sultan Meḥmed's tutor and chief military judge, Mollā Gūrānī left for Egypt after a falling out with the sultan over the particular duties and prerogatives of his office.[123] Although Gūrānī eventually returned, this was never a foregone conclusion. In fact, a few years after Gūrānī's return, Sultan Meḥmed wrote to another scholar who had taken up residence in the Hijaz after having received the Ottoman sultan's patronage. In a letter to this scholar, named Fatḥ Allāh Shirvānī, the sultan promised the scholar spiritual and material gifts if he returned to Ottoman domains.[124] Therefore, sultans often felt obligated to entice a scholar's return before his departure. Idrīs makes clear that he expected gifts in recognition of his undertaking,[125] and, in fact, Bāyezīd's gift register includes a number of entries for scholars who were about to depart on pilgrimage.[126] Similarly, Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqara's offer to exempt Jāmī from all taxes served as an incentive to ensure the great scholar's return to Herat after his pilgrimage.[127]

Consequently, Idrīs' departure for pilgrimage signified a severing of ties with the Ottomans. The court confiscated Idrīs' usufruct grants, while Idrīs cultivated a relationship with Shah Ismāʿīl and the Mamluk sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī upon his arrival in Cairo. Such actions indicate that both parties considered his departure as a possible final farewell. In this light, Idrīs' eventual return most immediately reflects the drastically altered political landscape precipitated by the accession of Selīm, as much as it suggests any continuing commitment on Idrīs' part to

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[123] Ahmed ibn Mustafa Taşköprüzade, *al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuʿmānīyah fī ʿulamāʾ al-Dawlat al-ʿUthmānīyah*, ed. Ahmed Subhi Furat (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1985), 85.

[124] Saʿdi Çelebi Tacizade, *Fatih devrine ait münşeat mecmuası*, ed. Necâti Lugal and Adnan Erzi (Istanbul: İstanbul Matbaası, 1956), 45.

[125] TSMA E. 5675.

[126] For instance, on 15 Shaʿbān 915/28 November 1509, Mawlānā Bābak Çelebi received a gift of 10,000 silver aspers as he set out for Mecca, *İnʿāmāt Defteri*, MC O.71 p. 356.

[127] Ökten, "Jāmī (817-898/1414-1492)," 151.

the Ottoman dynasty. With all of these misgivings and uncertainties, Idrīs boarded a ship in

Jumādá II 917/September 1511 and set sail for Egypt.[128]

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[128] *İnᶜāmāt Defteri*, Muallım Cevdet O.71, p. 464.

Part III: The Return East, 1511-1520

Chapter Five: The Meccan Interlude (1511-1513)

V.1 Idrīs at the Mamluk Court

Idrīs journeyed by ship from Constantinople to Alexandria, and from there he continued

up the Nile as far as Cairo.[1] His arrival in the Mamluk capital several months before the

departure of the Egyptian pilgrimage caravan afforded Idrīs time to meet with prominent

residents of the city, including the sultan, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, and leading members of the

Mamluk court.[2] Indeed, even before his arrival in Cairo, Idrīs asserts that Qānṣūh took an interest

in news of his approach and sent a welcoming party to greet the scholar.[3]

The arrival of prominent pilgrims from Ottoman lands occasionally offered the Mamluk

sultan an opportunity to demonstrate his largesse by hosting these travelers for extended periods

in Cairo. Two years before Idrīs' journey, one of Sultan Bāyezīd's sons, Qorqud, renounced his

claim to rule and struck out for Mecca via Egypt, where he intended to devote himself entirely to

scholarly activities. The arrival of the Ottoman prince in Damietta in early 915/May 1509 created

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[1] Idrīs outlines his travel itinerary in several of his subsequent works. The first mention of his itinerary is included in the preface to *Asrār ʿibādat al-ṣiyām*, which he presented to the Mamluk sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in Ramaḍān 917/November-December 1511, see *Asrār al-ṣiyām*, Ayasofya 1994, 2b; Idrīs provides further details on this portion of his journey in *Hasht bihisht* and in another work entitled *Ibā ʿan mawāqiʿ al-wabāʾ*, which he presented to Sultan Selīm upon his return to Ottoman lands in 919/1513 (Şehid Ali Paşa 2032, 2a).

[2] In 917/1512, the Egyptian pilgrimage caravan departed Cairo on 18 Shawwāl/8 January 1512 date. Idris' departure from Constantinople in Jumādá II 917/September 1511 meant that he resided in the Mamluk capital for most of the autumn before departing for the Hijaz, Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá, 2. Auflage bearbeitet und mit Einleitung und Indices versehen von Mohamed Mostafa (Cairo: In Kommission bei F. Steiner, Wiesbaden, 1960), 4:239.

[3] In the conclusion to *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs claims that the Mamluk sultan sent a several men to greet him (*bi-samʿ-i ʿālīyash chun gasht vāṣil / ki darvīshī zi-baḥr āmad bi-sāḥil / firistāda kasān az rū-yi afżāl*), Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 634a.

a stir within the Mamluk ruling circles. On one hand, Qorqud's presence in Egypt allowed

Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī to offer protection and patronage to an Ottoman prince. On the other hand, as

noted by contemporary observers such as Ibn Iyās, Qorqud's arrival bore striking similarities to

the flight of another Ottoman prince, Cem, a generation earlier. Because the Mamluk sultan

Qāytbāy hosted Cem in the midst of the succession struggle following Meḥmed II's death in

886/1481, the Ottoman court interpreted the Mamluk protection of the fugitive Ottoman prince

as a political affront and cited this action in the list of Ottoman grievances in the buildup to war

with the Mamluks a few years later in 891/1485.[4] Qānṣūh was aware of the political implications

of Qorqud's travels, yet he estimated the ideological benefits of hosting Qorqud to outweigh the

political blowback from Bāyezīd. Over the course of the next year, the Mamluk sultan offered

the Ottoman prince a place of residence, a generous monthly stipend, ceremonial robes, horses,

golden saddles, and other gifts.[5] Throughout the year, Qānṣūh frequently feted the Ottoman

prince with public banquets around Cairo and private parties in the citadel. While the Mamluk

sultan certainly offered this patronage in the hopes of cultivating an Ottoman ally, the gifts and

ceremonies also garnered prestige for Qānṣūh as a protector of royalty and mediator among

kings. During several of the public ceremonies, the Ottoman prince showed deference to the

Mamluk sultan.[6] Similarly, the Mamluk court seized upon the ideological value of Qorqud's plea

for assistance and memorialized the Ottoman prince's visit in a number of literary works.[7] In one

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[4] Har-El, *Struggle for Domination in the Middle East*, 112.

[5] Nabil al- Tikriti, "The Ḥajj as Justifiable Self-Exile: Şehzade Korkud's Wasīlat Al-Aḥbāb (915-916/1509-1510)," *Al-Masāq* 17, no. 1 (2005): 132.

[6] Ibn Iyās notes that Qorqud kissed Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's hand and placed it on his forehead Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr fī waqā'i' al-duhūr*, 4:154; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "II'inci Bayezid'in oğullarından Sultan Korkut," *Belleten* 30, no. 120 (1966): 554; Tikriti, "The Ḥajj as Justifiable Self-Exile: Şehzade Korkud's Wasīlat Al-Aḥbāb (915-916/1509-1510)," 132.

[7] See for instance *Kawkab al-durrī*, which recounts several scholarly exchanges between Qorqud and scholars at Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's court, ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb ᶜAzzām, *Majālis al-Sulṭān al-Ghūrī:*

such work completed in 919/1513 two years after Idrīs' stay in Cairo, the Mamluk historian and

secretary, ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ ibn Khalīl al-Malāṭī, describes Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's hospitality as a sign

of the sultan's greatness and notes that the sultan "gathered about himself delegations and

seekers of mediation from the furthest corners."[8] In a list of prominent lords and kings who

sought Qānṣūh's support, ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ gave prominence of place to Qānṣūh's efforts to mediate

Qorqud's dispute with his father Bāyezīd.[9]

Qānṣūh's patronage of Idrīs unfolded along similar, albeit significantly more limited

lines. As he had done for the Ottoman prince, Qānṣūh dispatched several of his servants to greet

the travelling scholar. Idrīs adds that Qānṣūh invited him to the citadel where he personally met

with the ruler.[10] Qānṣūh bestowed upon Idrīs gifts and other beneficences and in exchange Idrīs

offered several scholarly works of his own composition.[11] Although Idrīs was in the midst of a

religious pilgrimage, he evidently desired the hospitality of the Mamluk court. In the preface to a

treatise on fasting, which Idrīs presented to Qānṣūh in Ramaḍān 917/November-December 1511,

he asserts that he composed the work as "a pretext to ascend the summit of the sultan's

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ṣafaḥāt min tārīkh Miṣr fī al-qarn al-ʿāshir al-Hijrī (al-Qāhirah: Maṭbaʿat Lajnat al-Taʾlīf wa-al-Tarjamah wa-al-Nashr, 1941).

[8] "*Ijtamʿa ʿindahu min al-wufūd waʾl-rājiyīn shafāʿtahu min aqāṣá al-mamālik*," ʿAbd al-Bāsiṭ bin Khalīl al-Ḥanafī al-Malāṭī. *Kitāb al-bustān al-nawrī al-marfūʿ li-ḥaḍrat al-sulṭān al-ghawrī*, Ayasofya 4793, 4a.

[9] In addition to Qorqud, the list includes references to Qaramanid princes (Ibn Qarāmān), including Turgutoğlu Maḥmūd Beğ (Ibn Durghud), as well as to Khalīl Beğ of the Ramazanoğulları (Khalīl bin Ramaḍān) and the two sons of Prince Aḥmed bin Bāyezīd, who sought refuge in Mamluk lands after the defeat of their father at the hands of Selim, ibid.

[10] *bi-khalvatkhāna-yi khʷud dād rāham / bi-chashm-i marḥamat karda nigāham*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 634a.

[11] In the conclusion to *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs notes that he presented several scholarly works before the wise sultan (*zi-gawhar-hā-yi ʿilmī tuḥfaʾī chand / kashīdam pīsh-i ān shāh-i khiradmand*). As a show of respect, Qānṣūh extended various beneficences and every sort of respect (*chand inʿām u har gūna iḥtirāmash / ʿazīz-i miṣr kard az iḥtirāmash*), ibid.

threshold."[12] While in Cairo, Idrīs participated in several gatherings of scholars and notables organized by the sultan. Within this context too, Idrīs claims that Qānṣūh distinguished him with many favors.[13]

V.2 Patronage and the Royal Image at the Court of Qānṣuh al-Ghawrī

While Idrīs' recollection of Qānṣūh's patronage in the conclusion to *Hasht bihisht* was likely construed to elicit an equally magnanimous response from the Ottoman sultan Selīm, the general tenor of his remarks are in accord with the patterns of patronage at the Mamluk court. In fact, Idrīs' status as a foreign and transient visitor with literary abilities in both Persian and Arabic complemented the cosmopolitan outlook of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's court. In contrast to the uncouth and boorish image of the Mamluks presented in contemporary Egyptian chronicles, the courtly life and patronage encouraged by Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī mirrored the preoccupations of contemporary royal courts, such as the Ottomans and Timurids.[14] Like Sultan Bāyezīd, the Mamluk sultan embraced a literary program in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. In addition to his own poetry in Turkish and Persian, Qānṣūh commissioned the translation of Firdawsī's

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[12] *fa-jaᶜaltu dhālika al-bāb dharīᶜatᵃⁿ liʾl-ᶜurūj ilá dhurwat aᶜtāb al-maqām al-ᶜālī*, Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Kitāb asrār al-ṣiyām*, Ayasofya 1994, 4a.

[13] "When he called for a gathering of learned men / he understood each man's ability / I was made a special companion from his general favors *chu majmaᶜ sākht az ahl-i maᶜārif / zi-qadr-i har kasī gardīd vāqif / shudam chun khāṣ az ilṭāf-i ᶜāmmash*," Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 634b.

[14] Barbara Flemming first cast light on Mamluk barracks as a loci of literary production, Barbara Flemming, "Šerīf, Sultan Ġavrī und die „Perser"," *Der Islam* 45 (1969): 81–93; More recently, Robert Irwin has examined some of the literary products of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's court to elucidate the approach to rule embraced by the Mamluk sultan, Robert Irwin, "The Political Thinking of the 'Virtuous Ruler,' Qānṣūh Al-Ghawrī," *Mamluk Studies Review* 12, no. 1 (2006): 37–49 In addition to these works, Christian Mauder's dissertation on the court life of late-Mamluk Cairo promises to add greatly to our understanding of the cultural activities of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's reign, Christian Mauder "Religion, Rulership and the Transmission of Knowledge at a late Mamluk court: The Educated Salons of Sultan Qāniṣawh al-Ghawrī (r. 1501-1516) and their Context," forthcoming Georg-August-Üniversität Göttingen Üniversität.

Shāhnama into Turkish in 913/1507 by an émigré from Diyārbakr named Sharīf Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan.[15] In works such as *Kitāb nafāʾis al-majālis al-sulṭānīya* (910/1504) and *Kitāb kawkab al-durrī* (917/1511), courtiers of the Mamluk sultan recorded and edited their recollections of Qānṣūh's learned gatherings.[16] The topics of these discussions ranged from religious and philosophical questions to historical and literary anecdotes. In all of the works, the compilers demonstrated the refinement and erudition of the sultan by underscoring the wisdom of his repartee with learned men. Consequently, Idrīs' talents as a master of eloquence and rhetoric, as well as his desire to ingratiate himself with the sultan through the dedication of literary works, would likely have been well received by Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī during a period of his reign in which sponsorship of scholars and litterateurs constituted a discernible priority for the sultan.

The cultural outlook of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's court also had important ramifications for the ideological underpinnings of the Mamluk Sultanate. As many literary works encouraged by the court were composed by Persian émigrés in Mamluk lands, they frequently reflected the broader ideological currents of the turn of the tenth/sixteenth century. In contrast to most Mamluk chronicles, which substantiated the sultan's claim to rule through his association with the Abbasid caliph, these works freely appropriated and adapted the vocabulary of sovereignty that proliferated in Persian lands after the rise of Timur. To be sure, the works produced at Qānṣūh's court still celebrated the Mamluk sultan's status as the great sultan (*al-sulṭān al-aʿẓam*) and

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[15] For Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's *dīvān*, see Mehmet Yalçın, *The Dîvân of Qânsûh Al-Ghûrî*, Studies in Turkish Culture = Türk Kültüru Incelemeleri (Istanbul: Bay, 2002); For the Turkish version of Firdawsi's Shahnama, see Kültüral and Beyreli, *Şerîfî Şehnâme çevirisi*; Jan Schmidt, "The Reception of Firdausi's Shahnama among the Ottomans," in *Shahnama Studies II the Reception of Firdausi's Shahnama*, ed. C. P. Melville and Gabrielle Rachel Van den Berg, vol. v. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 119–39; For Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's connections with Persian émigrés, see Flemming, "Šerîf, Sultan Ġavrī und die „Perser"."

[16] These two works were published in a single volume in 1941, see ʿAzzām, *Majālis al-Sulṭān al-Ghūrī*.

servitor of the Holy Cities (*khādim al-ḥarmayn al-sharīfayn*), but to these titles, the works added

grandiose claims of cosmic significance. In 910/1504, Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī

lauded Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī as the lord of conjunction (*ṣāḥib-qirān*) and commander of the faithful

(*amīr al-muʾminīn*) in the conclusion to *Nafāʾis al-majālis*.[17] A few years later in 913/1507, the

émigré Sharīf Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan declared Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī the *Ṣāḥib-Qirān* in the preface to

his translation of Firdawsī's *Shāhnama*: "This Lord of Conjunction is the soul of the world/

There is no doubting it, this soul of the world."[18] Since Timur popularized *Ṣāḥib-Qirān* as a title

to indicate the cosmic ordination of his world conquest, rulers throughout Persian lands gradually

appropriated the term for their own purposes over the course of the ninth/fifteenth century.[19]

Sharīf Ḥusayn's application of a title closely associated with rulers in Iran marked the post-

Timurid spread of its use to Egypt.[20] More significantly, the occurrence of the appellation in a

work commissioned by the court underscores the dynamics by which patronage and the

circulation of men and ideas interacted to promote the appropriation and adaptation of relatively

new vocabularies of sovereignty throughout the central lands of Islam.

Another work completed in 921/1515, a few years after Idrīs' Cairene sojourn, employed

equally innovative titles for the Mamluk sultan and offered a detailed biographical portrait of

Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī that recast his humble and servile origins in ideologically potent terms. The

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[17] "O East Wind, go once more / about the gate of the king, the Lord of Conjunction / His
majesty the sultan commander of the faithful / Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī Lord and master of Egypt
(*ayyuhā al-rīḥ al-ṣabā ruḥ bi-karra / ʿind bāb khusraw ṣāḥib qirān / ḥaḍrat al-sulṭān amīr al-
muʾminīn / qanṣawh al-ghawrī ʿazīz miṣr wa qān*)," ʿAzzām, *Majālis al-Sulṭān al-Ghūrī*, 147.
[18] *Cihānuñ cānı bu ṣāḥib-kırāndur / aña şek yok ki bu cān-ı cihāndur* (couplet 349), Kültüral and
Beyreli, *Şerîfî Şehnâme çevirisi*, 14.
[19] For a discussion of the Aqquyunlu adaptation of *Ṣāḥib-Qirān* in the 870s/1470s, see chapters
two and eight of the present study.
[20] Strictly speaking, the term is attested in the early days of the Mamluk sultan Baybars in the
mid-thirteenth century. Even so, there is little doubt that this early-sixteenth-century application
owed more to the career and legacy of Timur than any infrequent use in Mamluk lands several
centuries earlier. For more on this, see chapter eight.

work, entitled *Kitāb al-ʿuqūd al-jawharīya fīʾl-nawādir al-Ghawrīya*, assumed the same

approach as *Nafāʾis al-majālis* and *Kawkab al-durrī* by presenting the proceedings of Qānṣūh's

learned gatherings in the form of questions and replies.[21] The unnamed author decided to

compile the work after ten years of service to the sultan and organized the discussions of the

various gatherings topically: 1) on matters of faith and the prophets, 2) on kings and sultans, 3)

on the wisdom of the philosophers, and 4) on schemes and the duplicity of women.[22] Like the

works on Qānṣūh's learned gatherings, *al-ʿUqūd al-jawharīya* was conceived to demonstrate the

erudition of the sultan. Moreover, the author emphasizes Qānṣūh's divine appointment to rule as:

> the caliph of the world by right and verification, the erector of the bases of Islam
> and faith, the greatest of the kings of the age and the imam of the tenth century,
> master of the seat of fidelity in the world and the hereafter, the ruler of the banner
> of universal sovereignty, the possessor of the throne of the caliphate by merit, the
> one who strives for the attainment of the canopy of peace and security, the
> imitator of the injunction: "Surely God bids to justice and good-doing,"[23] the
> commander of the faithful and caliph of the Muslims.[24]

The list of Qānṣūh's attributes of sovereignty focuses on his suitability to assume the caliphate

by right (*ḥaqq*) and merit (*istiḥqāq*). In fact, the titles afforded Qānṣūh included appellations that,

in the context of Mamluk diplomatic protocol, were normally reserved exclusively for the

Abbasid caliph. The author substantiates Qānṣūh's claim to the caliphate on the basis of his good

deeds and through his status as the imam of the tenth century. The reference to the centennial

imamate refers to Qānṣūh's status as the renewer of the age (*mujaddid*). Indeed, the allusion to

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[21] Two of the works five planned sections are preserved in two volumes of the Ayasofya collection of the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, *al-ʿUqūd al-jawharīya fīʾl-nawādir al-ghawrīya*, Ayasofya 3312, 3313.

[22] *al-ʿUqūd al-jawharīya*, Ayasofya 3312, 4a.

[23] Qurʾān, 16:90.

[24] "*khalīfat al-arḍ biʾl-ḥaqq waʾl-taḥqīq mushayyid qawāʿid al-islām waʾl-īmān aʿẓam mulūk al-zamān imām al-miʾa al-ʿāshira ṣāḥib maqʿad ṣidq fīʾl-dunya waʾl-ākhira wālī liwāʾ al-wilāya ʿalá al-āfāq mālik sarīr al-khilāfa biʾl-istiḥqāq al-mujtahid fī naṣb sarādiq al-amn waʾl-amān al-mutamathil bi-naṣṣ inna alláh yamur biʾl-ʿadl waʾl-iḥsān amīr al-muʾminīn wa khalīfat al-muslimīn,*" *al-ʿuqūd al-jawhariyya*, Ayasofya 3312, 2b.

renewal among Qānṣūh's attributes is made explicit a few lines later, when the author echoes the famous prophetic tradition on renewal (*tajdīd*) and asks God to "make him (Qānṣūh) among the promised ones of every one hundred years who renews the faith and the tradition of the prophet."[25]

Yet even as these works attributed to Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī the loftiest titles of Islamic rule, they also necessarily sought to refute accusations of Qānṣūh's servile origins. Although, by the accession of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, the Mamluk sultanate had ruled Egypt and Syria for more than two hundred years, the slave origins of the sultans undermined its authority, especially among neighboring Turkmen rulers, for whom the prestige of a sovereign's lineage constituted a fundamental aspect of kingship.[26] While the Mamluk sultan's servile origins were frequently overlooked during periods of cordial relations, the Mamluks' status as slaves constituted an ideological liability during more contentious periods.[27] Indeed, the widespread Ottoman adoption of the term *Çerkes-i nā-kes* (ignoble Circassians; literally, Circassian nobodies) in the historiographical literature recounting Ottoman-Mamluk conflicts clearly exploited the lowly and unknown origins of Mamluk elites for purposes of propaganda.[28]

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[25] "*Ajaʿalahu (Allāh) min al-mawʿūdīn ʿalá kull miᵓa sana man yujaddid al-dīn waᵓl-sunna*." The phrasing of this invocation closely echoes the prophetic tradition relating the appointment of the centennial renewer of faith, *al-ʿUqūd al-jawharīya fīᵓl- nawādir al-ghawrīya*, Ayasofya 3312, 2b.

[26] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 173–82.

[27] Contrast for example the Ottoman letter to Sultan Īnāl upon the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and the last letter Selīm sent to Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī before the battle of Marj Dābiq in 922/1516 in Ferīdūn Beğ. *Münşeatüᵓs-selāṭīn*, 1:235, 426.

[28] This insulting moniker appears to have gained currency within Ottoman circles around the time of Selīm's conflict with Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in 922/1516. See its use in the *Selīmname*'s of Sücūdī, *Tarīḫ-i Sulṭān Selīm Ḫān*, TSMK R. 1284, 90b; İbrahim Hakkı Çuhadar, "Sucûdî'nin Selîm-nâme'si"(M.A. Erciyes Üniversitesi, 1988), 102; Keşfī called them *Çerkesân-i ḫasīs*, Keşfī, *Bāġ-i firdevs-i ġuzāt*, Esad Efendi 2147, 129a; Şefâettin Severcan, "Keşfî'nin Selim-name'si," (M.A. Erciyes Üniversitesi, 1988), 122; the insult was employed in Ottoman historical writing well into the middle of the tenth/sixteenth century, Celālzāde Muṣṭafá, *Selim-name*, 174.

In this respect, the image of Qānṣūh's origins and early life as presented in *al-ʿUqūd al-jawharīya* demonstrates a concerted effort to explain and recast the Mamluk sultan's background. The work, with its frequent citations of the sultan's speech, provides an intimate portrait of how the sultan endeavored to present his own life at court and fashion his self-image within the upper echelons of Cairene society. According to *al-ʿUqūd al-jawharīya*, Qānṣūh was born in 848/1444-1445 as one of eleven children to a lord of the Bayazayrīya (?) clan of the Qabardā tribe of northern Circassia.[29] Several aspects of the early circumstances of Qānṣūh's life are presented as clear markers of his subsequent rise in Egypt. Firstly, the author asserts the cosmic significance of his birth by comparing the meteorological events that accompanied his birth to celestial events that signaled the birth of the prophet Muḥammad.[30] Secondly, the author stresses the nobility of Qānṣūh's lineage within the context of the Circassian political order of the ninth/fifteenth century: "the bird of his soul inclined toward the land of the Circassians and descended among the Circassians in the Qabardā tribe because they are the Quraysh of the Circassians by general consensus."[31] Finally, the author introduces certain correspondences between Qānṣūh's early life and the biography of the prophet Yūsuf to at once suggest Qānṣūh's predestined greatness and mitigate the embarrassment of his sale as a slave in Egypt.[32] Consequently, in mentioning Qānṣūh's two brothers and eight sisters, the author compares

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[29] For details of Qānṣūh's familial background and early life, see ibid, 63b-64a.

[30] ibid, 51b-52b.

[31] "*māla ṭāyir rūḥihi ilá arḍ jarkas fa-nazala min jarkas fī qabīlat qabardā li-annahum quraysh al-jarkas biʾl-ittifāq*," 52b. To further substantiate the nobility of the Qabardā tribe in the context of Circassian politics, the work includes nine folios that recount the Qarbadā consolidation of power in Circassia in the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries and the succession of rule within the tribe, ibid., 54a-63b.

[32] Encomiasts of Mamluk Egypt were not the only writers to fix upon the story of the prophet Yūsuf as ideologically fertile material for literary offering to rulers of servile origin. Blain Auer has noted a similar phenomenon within the Delhi Sultanate of the sixth/twelfth century, Blain H. Auer, *Symbols of Authority in Medieval Islam : History, Religion and Muslim Legitimacy in the Delhi Sultanate* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 40–46.

Qānṣūh's father to Yūsuf's father, the prophet Yaᶜqūb, who had the same number of sons and daughters.[33] Similarly, the author divulges the great secret of Qānṣūh's purchase price of fifty dinars as a slave in Khān al-Khalīlī market and compares it to the sale of the prophet Yūsuf for half as much.[34] Like the prophet, Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī—and indeed most Mamluk sultans—arrived in Egypt in captivity to be sold into slavery. The biographical similarities between prophet and the early experiences of Mamluks in Egypt offered an appealing reference for encomiasts of Mamluks.[35] In all of these details then, the author of *al-ᶜUqūd al-jawharīya* casts the details of Qānṣūh's biography as an apologia of his humble and obscure origins and a sign of his predestined prominence.

In its departure from the removed and frequently hostile portrayal of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī presented by contemporary Mamluk chroniclers, such as Ibn Iyās, *al-ᶜUqūd al-jawharīya* offers a more intimate and ideologically self-representative view of the sultan. This image of the sultan is also in keeping with the broader currents of court panegyrics popular outside of Syria and Egypt. Timurid histories throughout the ninth/fifteenth century sought to cast Timur's birth and subsequent career as the hallmark of divinely and celestially mandated rule.[36] The principal achievements of *al-ᶜUqūd al-jawharīya* were its bold willingness to experiment with the traditional ideological foundations of the Mamluk polity and its employment of the same

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[33] *al-ᶜUqūd al-jawhariyya*, Ayasofya 3313, 63b.

[34] ibid., 64b.

[35] References to similarities between Mamluk leaders and the prophet Yusuf were relatively common. In describing Qānṣūh's nephew and future Mamluk sultan Ṭūmān Bāy, Idrīs also references the prophet Yusuf, *Hasht bihisht*, 634b.

[36] Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī. *Ẓafarnāma*. For discussions of Timur's birth as an event of celestial significance see also Melville, "Mongol and Timurid Periods," 190; Manz, "Tamerlane's Career and its Uses."

techniques of Timurid historical writing to rulers of obscure and servile origins.[37] As

substantiated by the examples of Sharīf Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan and Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad, the main

drivers of this innovation were Persian émigré courtiers who benefited from the patronage and

cosmopolitan proclivities of the Mamluk sultan. Idrīs' honored treatment by Qānṣūh and

participation in court life is emblematic of this process. Although he firmly resolved to carry on

his journey to the Holy Cities, he likely considered, if at all briefly, a longer sojourn at such a

receptive court.

V.3 To Mecca and Back Again

Despite the temptations of Qānṣūh's court, Idrīs was firmly resolved to complete the

pilgrimage in 917/1511. The Egyptian pilgrimage caravan departed from Cairo on 18 Shawwāl

917/8 January 1512 with exceptional fanfare and included some of the most distinguished

personages of the Mamluk sultanate.[38] Before his departure from Cairo, Idrīs secured a royal

decree guaranteeing his protection in Mamluk lands for the duration of his pilgrimage and

residence in the Hijaz.[39] While such decrees were routinely issued to prominent travelers within

a king's domains, the guarantee of Idrīs' safety carried added significance in 917/1511, as

several years preceding Idrīs' pilgrimage were marred by considerable dangers and violence

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[37] In fact, Timur's embrace of celestial signs as a portent of his greatness can also be interpreted as a technique to buttress his relatively undistinguished origins...

[38] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr*, 4:249.

[39] In the conclusion to *Hasht bihisht* completed shortly after his return to Ottoman lands, Idrīs notes that Qānṣūh gave him a royal writ (*ḥukm*) for protection on his travels in Mamluk lands (*ravān karda sū-yi bayt ul-ḥarāmam / humāyūn ḥukm-i kh^wud dāda ba-dastam / ki kardam muḥtaram har jā ki hastam*), Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 634b.

visited upon pilgrims as they journeyed to the Holy Land.[40] In fact, between 907/1502 and

913/1507 the Hijaz had been plagued by factional strife and conflict that routinely jeopardized

the property and lives of pilgrims traveling in the Egyptian and Syrian pilgrimage caravans.

The chaos in the Hijaz was rooted in the succession conflict that emerged with the death

of the *sharīf* of Mecca (steward of the Holy Cities), Muḥammad ibn Barakāt, in 903/1497.

Although Sharīf Muḥammad had appointed his son Barakāt as successor, Barakāt's brothers

contested the succession. Matters were made worse after Qānṣūh's rise to power in Cairo in

906/1501, when Mamluk commanders appointed to the Hijaz by the new sultan encouraged

Barakāt's rivals to seize power.[41] Over the course of the next several years, Barakāt's brothers,

with the help of several Bedouin tribes, attacked and pillaged the Syrian and Egyptian pilgrimage

caravans.[42] Matters deteriorated so much so that in the wake of a large massacre in Mecca in

908/1502, Qānṣūh forbid the participation of women in the pilgrimage.[43] Three years later in

911/1506, no one made the pilgrimage from Egypt and the hangings for the Kaʿba (*kiswa*) was

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[40] For an example of a similar decree of safe passage issued by Sultan Bāyezīd II to a Persian scholar on pilgrimage, see chapter four above and Feridun Beğ *Münşeʾāt es-selāṭīn*, Reisülküttab 892, 96a.

[41] In 906/1501, Qānṣūh's appointed pilgrimage caravan commander, Sūdūn ibn Jānībak al-ʿAjamī conferred the honorary robes of rule in Mecca on Hazzāʿ, Barakāt's brother. The episode was nearly repeated one year later in 907/1502, when the subsequent Hajj commander Aṣṭamur bestowed rule in Qānṣūh's name on another brother Aḥmad al-Jāzānī, John Lash Meloy, *Imperial Power and Maritime Trade: Mecca and Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Chicago: Published by the Middle East Documentation Center on behalf of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago, 2010), 209–211.

[42] The most destructive attacks were carried out by Aḥmad al-Jāzānī with the aid of the Banū Ibrāhīm on the Syrian and Egyptian pilgrimage caravans of 907/1502, Carl F. Petry, *Protectors or Praetorians?: The Last Mamluk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 40; Meloy, *Imperial Power and Maritime Trade*, 211.

[43] Ibn Iyās assesses the casualties from the massacre to have exceeded 700 people and notes that the Holy Cities had not witnessed such a level of discord and violence since the seizure of Mecca by the Qarmatians in the fourth/tenth century Meloy, *Imperial Power and Maritime Trade*, 212; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr*, 4:47–48.

dispatched to Mecca by sea.[44] The dangers faced by pilgrims posed a major challenge to Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī. As the servitor of the Holy Cities, securing the pilgrimage routes to Mecca constituted one of the Mamluk sultan's most fundamental duties. The failure to protect the pilgrimage caravans represented a major blow to the sultan's prestige and indeed was later cited by the Ottomans as a cause for their conflict with Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī a few years later in 922/1516.[45]

Perhaps as a consequence of the recent turmoil that afflicted the Hijaz, the Egyptian pilgrimage caravan of 917/1511 included some of the most distinguished members of Mamluk society.[46] Qānṣūh entrusted the security and leadership of the caravan to his nephew and one of his closest confidants, Ṭūmān Bāy.[47] Like Qānṣūh, Ṭūmān Bāy was born in Circassia. After Qānṣūh's establishment as a Mamluk in Egypt, he had sent for his two brothers who entered the ascendant Mamluk's service. The elder brother requested of Qānṣūh to return to Circassia to retrieve his wife and children. Although he died in Circassia, at least one of his sons, Ṭūmān Bāy, completed the journey back to Egypt and entered his uncle's service.[48] In the intervening years, Ṭūmān Bāy distinguished himself as a brave soldier and capable commander. With

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[44] Aḥmad Rashīdī, *Ḥusn al-ṣafā wa-al-ibtihāj bi-dhikr man waliya Imārat al-Ḥajj*, ed. Laylá ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Aḥmad (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1980), 148–149.

[45] Accusations of negligence in the face of brigandage (*qaṭʿ al-ṭuruq*) or the maintenance of wells along the pilgrimage routes constituted a common refrain among Ottoman historical sources that sought to cast the Mamluks as unfit for rule. These complaints were first recorded in Neşrī's chronicle in relation to the reign of Meḥmed II. With the escalating antagonism between the Ottomans and Mamluks in 922/1516, claims of Mamluk negligence escalated and found expression in the Ottoman victory notices sent in the wake of the conquest of Egypt, as well as in the subsequent Ottoman historical writing on Selīm's conquests.

[46] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr*, 249.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Although it was common knowledge that Ṭūmān Bāy was Qānṣūh's nephew, the circumstances of his arrival in Egypt were not widely circulated. *al-ʿUqūd al-jawhariyya* is the only source that mentions the story of Ṭūmān Bāy's journey to accompany his uncle in Cairo, *al-ʿUqūd al-jawhariyya*, Ayasofya 3313, 64a.

Qānṣūh's consolidation of power in 906/1501, he emerged as one of the major leaders of the new regime and was appointed to the rank of *al-dawādār al-kabīr* (one of the highest military-administrative posts in the late-Mamluk era).[49] As a consequence of Idrīs' warm reception at Qānṣūh's court, Idrīs also enjoyed the company of the sultan's nephew on the road, whom he likened to the prophet Yūsuf for his embodiment of blessed qualities.[50] He remarks that over the course of the pilgrimage the Mamluk commander bestowed on him every sort of beneficence and eased his journey along the way.[51]

Idrīs' arrival in Mecca permitted him to fulfill his long held desire to perform the pilgrimage. Once in Mecca, Idrīs met scholars and Sufis from across Islamic domains and engaged in a period of scholarly exchange and literary production that lasted for more than one year.[52] During this period, Idrīs reconnected with mystical matters he had first considered as his father's student in Tabriz in 876/1471-2, but had largely abandoned during the intervening decades, when so much of his energies were devoted to court service for the Aqquyunlu and Ottomans.[53] Most importantly, he rekindled his interest in the mystical work of Maḥmūd Shabistarī through scholarly interactions with other pilgrims. While in Mecca, Idrīs met a scholar from Khurāsān who had brought a copy of Shabistarī's *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn*. The two scholars bonded over reading the work together and the experience inspired Idrīs to write a commentary on the great Sufi's epistle.[54]

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[49] Carl F. Petry, *Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamlūk Sultans Al-Ashrāf Qāytbāy and Qanṣūh Al-Ghawrī in Egypt* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), 142–145.
[50] *Chu Yūsuf bī naẓīr az ḥusn-i akhlāq*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 634a.
[51] *Namūda dar ḥaqam ṣad gūna iḥsān/ shuda dushvārī rah bar man āsān*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 634a.
[52] Idrīs mentions that he resided in Mecca for one year in the conclusion to *Hasht Bihisht*. Bidlīsī, *Hasht Bihisht*, 634b.
[53] Bidlīsī, *Ḥaqq al-mubīn*, Ayasofya 2338, 4a.
[54] Ibid., 4b.

The intimate exchange between Idrīs and the Khurāsāni scholar was emblematic of a much broader set of exchanges in which Idrīs participated during his year in the Hijaz. By 917/1511, Idrīs had reached the age of fifty-six lunar years and was recognized by his peers as a learned scholar and capable teacher. Not surprisingly then, he attracted the attention of younger students in the Holy Land who hoped to benefit from his erudition and experience. One such student was ʿAbd al-Ṣamad Diyārbakrī, a future judge in the Ottoman administration of Egypt and the author of an important Turkish history of Egypt under the Ottomans.[55] ʿAbd al-Ṣamad met Idrīs in Taif during the fruit harvest in the summer of 1512 (918) and was particularly impressed by his reputation for learning among pilgrims from *Rūm* and Persian lands.[56] Year-round residents of Mecca frequently sought the cooler temperatures of the mountainous region of Taif during the hotter months of the year and Idrīs and ʿAbd al-Ṣamad likely passed the summer together studying in the mountains outside of Mecca.[57]

In addition to teaching and studying with other scholars, Idrīs also recommended work on *Hasht bihisht*. Although the main body of the work had been completed and presented to Bāyezīd in 911/1506, Idrīs did not compose an introduction or conclusion for his history before its circulation. The lack of an introduction was a cause for some criticism from certain quarters of the court, yet Idrīs defended those criticisms by pointing out that he had composed and completed the work to the specifications of the sultan. Even so, he desired to include an introduction and used his relative seclusion in the mountains around Mecca as an opportunity to

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[55] Benjamin Lellouch has brought the importance of this Ottoman historian to modern scholarly attention in Benjamin Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Egypte: historiens et conquérants au XVIe siècle* (Louvain: Peeters, 2006).

[56] In his history, ʿAbd al-Ṣamad mentions that he met Idrīs in Taif at the time of the fruit harvest, ʿAbd al-Ṣamad Diyārbakrī. *Tercüme en-nüzhe es-seniyye fī ẕikriʾl-ḫulefā veʾl-mülūkiʾl-mıṣriyye*, British Library, Add. 7846, 7b. Taif's fruit harvest occurs in summer.

[57] According to ʿAbd al-Ṣamad, Idrīs declared the mountain air around Taif to be superior to the summer pastures (*yaylaq*) outside of Tabriz, Ibid., 7b-8a.

return to his *magnum opus*.[58] His decision to take up work on *Hasht bihisht* was likely

encouraged by the interest it garnered from other scholars in Mecca. The pilgrimage facilitated

the circulation of scholarly works, as pilgrims often brought books from their homeland to be

shared and copied by others from far-flung lands. In a letter to Sultan Bāyezīd written from

Mecca, Idrīs defended his history in response to the criticisms of courtiers and remarked that

even in Mecca "a number of scholars copied the book and would bring it to India and other

places, even though the book was missing an introduction and conclusion."[59]

Although it appears that the Indian scholars copied the history without the introduction,

Idrīs finished this section of the work in the latter part of 918/1512 before he left Mecca to return

to Ottoman lands.[60] The introduction that Idrīs composed for *Hasht bihisht* presented a

distillation of his thinking on kingship and history as the two concepts related to the place of the

Ottoman house within a broad narrative of Islamic history.[61] Immediately following the

invocation (following *ammā baᶜd*), Idrīs presents an explanation for the necessity of kingship

(*khilāfat*) in the world as a direct consequence of the cosmological structure of God's creation of

the universe. The section defines the two possible types of kingship as rule by force without

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[58] ᶜAbd al-Ṣamad notes that while residing in Taif, Idrīs was writing a history of the Ottomans
(*ol tārīḫde anda bir kāmil ve fāżıl kimse vardı Āl-i ᶜOsmān'ın tārīḫin yazardı adına Mevlānā
İdrīs derlerdi*), Diyārbakrī, *Tercüme en-nüzhe*, 7b.

[59] *Dar Makka-yi sharīfa chand kas ān kitāb-i hasht bihisht rā istiktāb namūda bi-mamālik-i Hind
va ghayrihi naql mī-khʷāhand va kitāb bī dībācha va khātima nāqiṣ ast*, TSMA E.5675. The
copies that Idrīs mentions were likely made in the end of 917 or the beginning of 918 before the
majority of the pilgrims returned to their homelands.

[60] One of the manuscript copies of *Hasht bihisht* in the Ayasofya collection of the Süleymaniye
Library includes the introduction of the history in Idrīs' hand. The colophon states that the
introduction was completed while Idrīs was in Mecca in 918/1512 (*kutiba wa kunt bi-makka al-
musharrafa sharrafahu allāh taᶜālá wa anā muʾallif al-kitāb aḥqar al-faqīr awāqil al-warī Idrīs
ibn Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Bidlīsī aṣlaḥa Allāh aᶜmālahu bi-sana thamān ᶜashar wa tisᶜamiʾa*),
Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Ayasofya 3541, 14a.

[61] The introduction can be considered Idrīs' latest distillation in the sense that some of his
ideas—particularly those on kingship—evolved from concepts previously presented in other
works. For further discussion of this point, see chapter nine.

reference to God's prescripts and rule in accordance with the blessed virtues and sacred tradition.[62] This portion of the introduction is followed by a section detailing with the circumstances of the work's composition and two introductory discourses. The first minor discourse (*muqaddima-yi ṣughrá*) focuses on the nature and purpose of history as a branch of learning by situating history within the broader epistemological fields of knowledge of circumstances of events in time (*maʿrifat-i aḥvāl-i ḥavādis̱-i zamānīya*) and bodies of knowledge concerned with discourse and rhetoric (*ʿilm-i muḥādarāt*).[63] The second major discourse (*muqaddima-yi kubrá*) presents an argument for the superiority of the Ottoman house both with respect to contemporary rulers, as well as in relation to all preceding dynasties since the four rightly guided caliphs in the earliest days of Islamic history.[64] In all, the introduction, and indeed the entire body of *Hasht bihisht*, argues for the special place of the Ottomans by articulating their role as ideal kings (*khalīfa-yi raḥmānī*) on the basis of the historical record of their good deeds in expanding the abode of Islam and administering justice.

While Idrīs' newfound commitment to *Hasht bihisht* was likely encouraged by the interest in his work on the part of scholars in Mecca, political developments within Ottoman lands also rekindled hope of a vindicating return to the Ottoman court. In the months immediately following Idrīs' departure from Constantinople in Jumādá II 917/September 1511, Selīm renewed his campaign for succession to Bāyezīd's throne. With the support of the janissaries, Bāyezīd was forced to abdicate in favor of Selīm—and to the detriment of Aḥmed

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[62] For a more detailed discussion of these concepts, see chapter nine.

[63] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 11b. For a more detailed discussion of Bidlīsī's understanding of history as a discipline and body of knowledge, see chapter seven below.

[64] Ibid., 14b.

and Bāyezīd's other sons.[65] On 7 Ṣafar 918/24 April 1512, Selīm entered Constantinople in triumph and assumed sovereign authority.[66] Bāyezīd intended to retire to family holdings in Dimetoka, but died under mysterious circumstances en route.[67] Selīm's brothers, especially Aḥmed, opposed the transfer of power and rose in open rebellion. Over the course of the following thirteen months, Selīm consolidated his authority by facing and defeating Aḥmed in battle and executing all male relatives with a claim to the sultanate.[68]

News of these developments spread relatively slowly to Mamluk lands. An Ottoman envoy arrived in Cairo with the announcement of Selīm's accession and the death of Bāyezīd on Thursday, 1 Jumādá I 918/15 July 1512, four months after Selīm's accession.[69] Selīm's official announcement did not arrive in the Hijaz until some time later, perhaps in late summer of 1512 (Jumādá II 918), around the time of Idrīs' possible return to Mecca from Taif. As a consequence of the slow spread of the official announcement, rumors of the new sultan's accession may have

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[65] On Selīm's rise to power after his defeat at the hands of Bāyezīd II at Çorlu in August 1511, see Çıpa, "The Centrality of the Periphery: The Rise to Power of Selim I, 1487-1512," 58–60; and Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 62-64.

[66] Çıpa, "The Centrality of the Periphery: The Rise to Power of Selim I, 1487-1512," 61.

[67] Erdem Çıpa stresses Bāyezīd II's reluctance to abdicate in favor of Selīm, as well as the possibility of foul play in the aging sultan's death on the part of Selīm's supporters ibid., 62–67; Çıpa's interpretation stands in contrast to previous Turkish scholarship, which unanimously absolved Selīm of any wrongdoing in his father's death, Uluçay, M. Çağatay, "Yavuz Sultan Selim nasıl padişah oldu?," *Tarih Dergisi* 9 (1954): 3–90; Selâhattin Tansel, *Yavuz Sultan Selim* (Ankara: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1969), 308–310; Ahmet Uğur, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 2. baskı., vol. no. 2, Erciyes Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü yayınları no. 2 (Kayseri: Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 1992), 36; More recently, Emecen has largely confirmed the conclusions of traditional Turkish scholarship without reference to Çıpa's argument Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 64-70.

[68] Selīm defeated his brother Aḥmed at the Battle of Yenişehir on 8 Ṣafar 919/15 April 1513, almost exactly one year after his accession in Constantinople. He elminated his remaining rivals to the throne with the execution of Prince ʿOs̱mān bin Aḥmed and Prince Muṣṭafá bin Murād in Rabīʿ I 919/May 1513 Çıpa, "The Centrality of the Periphery: The Rise to Power of Selim I, 1487-1512," 70.

[69] Ibn Iyās, *Badā'iʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr*, 269.

circulated in Mecca even before the arrival of the Ottoman envoy.[70] In subsequent reminiscences of the event, Idrīs notes that the Ottoman envoy arrived in Mecca with alms for the populace to the general elation of the city.[71] The news was also likely a cause for anxiety on Idrīs' part, as Selīm's feelings towards the absent scholar remained unclear. In fact, Idrīs claims that he greeted the news as an answer to his prayers, although he worried that the new sultan forgot of his existence during his pilgrimage.[72] Idrīs' fears were only assuaged a few months later, when a special messenger arrived from Selīm with gifts for Idrīs and an invitation to return to the court.[73] Notwithstanding this concern and his subsequent relief, Idrīs likely faced a more fundamental challenge as a result of Selīm's invitation. Over the course of the preceding three years, Idrīs had struck up a correspondence with leading members of Shah Ismāᶜīl's court. While he had received no clear indication of a welcoming return, Selīm's invitation now forced Idrīs to decide whether to repatriate to his homeland without his family, who had remained in Constantinople during his pilgrimage, or to return to Ottoman lands.

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[70] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 635a.

[71] Ibid.

[72] "From a corner I heard of the victory of the king/ and offered a prayer of thanks to God/ for once more God gave us our desire (*man az gunjī shanīdam nuṣrat-i shāh / fuzūdam bar duᶜā al-shukru li-lláh / ki bārī yak murād-i mā khudā dād*)." A few lines later, Idrīs wonders if he has been forgotten by Selim: "I said to myself: of course you are forgotten (*ba-khʷud guftam tu'ī albatta mansī*)." Ibid.

[73] In his verse conclusion to *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs differentiates the announcement of Selīm's accession from the arrival of the messenger for Idrīs through the placement of the latter event under a separate section heading. The section heading can be interpreted as a passage of some time based upon circumstantial evidence. Ibn Iyās' mention of Selīm's accession in Jumādá I 918/July 1512 suggests that news of the Ottoman succession would have reached Mecca by late summer. In several places, Idrīs mentions that he hastened to return to Ottoman lands, but based upon his decision to avoid Egypt due to the outbreak of the plague, he cannot have left the city before Muḥarram 919, nearly four months after news of Selīm's accession reached Mecca. If Idrīs did indeed hasten to return, he likely received an invitation some time after the initial news of Selīm's accession.

During Idrīs' return journey to Ottoman lands, his activities were largely motivated by several contradictory concerns. On the one hand, he continued to cultivate his ascetic sensibility through study and contemplation. On the other hand, he remained fully immersed in worldly matters; during his return journey he sought to extract himself from his previous overtures to Shah Ismāʿīl while endeavoring to secure a prominent place at the Ottoman court through the preparation of a literary work. Although Idrīs initially intended to return to Constantinople by ship via Alexandria, his travel plans changed when he received word of the outbreak of plague in Egypt shortly after his departure from Mecca.[74] As a consequence, Idrīs decided to return to Ottoman domains by land via Syria.[75] Traversing the alternate land route took much longer than the sea voyage from Alexandria and in fact, Idrīs delayed his return further by lingering in Syria and Qarāmān before pressing on to Edirne at the end of 919/late 1512.[76]

In Damascus and Aleppo, Idrīs met prominent scholars and Sufis and discussed the moral and spiritual implications of avoiding the plague outbreak in Egypt. The discussions inspired him to compose a work on the subject, *al-Ibā ʿan mawāqiʿ al-wabāʾ* (*Avoidance of Places of Disease*), which he presented to the new sultan Selīm upon his arrival at court. Although *al-Ibāʾ* focuses on pietistic and mystical techniques for confronting disease, like most of Idrīs' literary production, the work was conceived as a means to curry favor as well: "I offered this

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[74] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr*, 4:298.

[75] Idrīs explains his decision to take the longer land route back to Ottoman lands in his treatise on the plague, Bidlīsī, *al-Ibāʾ ʿan mawāqiʿ al-wabāʾ*, Şehid Ali Paşa 2032, 2a.

[76] Idrīs' arrival to the Ottoman court can be dated based on his presence in Konya at the completion of *al-ibāʾ* in Rajab 919/September 1513 and the autographed completion of a presentation copy of *Hasht bihisht* before the end of 919/Feb 1514. For Idrīs' colophon of *al-ibāʾ*, see Bidlīsī, *al-Ibāʾ ʿan mawāqiʿ al-wabāʾ*, Şehid Ali Paşa 2032, 33b. For Idrīs' colophon for the presentation copy of *Hasht bihisht*, see Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 636a. In fact two presentation copies of *Hasht bihihst* were completed shortly after Idrīs' return to Selim's court. The other extant copy is preserved in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Hazine 1655, 668b.

transcendental offering as a gift to the servants of his threshold, the generous and merciful king. And I created it as a means to [obtain] the favorable disposition of the coat tails of favor and affection from that compassionate and sympathetic lord (*khudāvandigār*)."[77]

Idrīs' efforts to induce Selīm's compassion and sympathy were essential to his successful return to court. His departure from Ottoman lands in 917/1511 marked a significant rupture with many of the key men at court and the subsequent correspondence that Idrīs sent from Mecca not only made clear his sense of mistreatment by the sultan's men, but also leveled serious accusations of misconduct against some of Bāyezīd's most trusted advisers.[78] While Selīm's accession initiated certain changes to the upper ranks of the court, Idrīs likely did not know the extent of these changes as he traveled through Syria. Perhaps for this reason, he also sought to strike a conciliatory tone in his correspondence with Selīm. In reply to Selīm's invitation to return to court, Idrīs also composed a letter of apology (*maᶜẕirat-nāma*) to the new sultan during his return journey.[79] The letter expressed Idrīs' regret for remaining away from court for so long and reiterated his joy at receiving the news of Selīm's desire for his return.

Idrīs also prepared for his return by corresponding with one of Selīm's newly appointed officials. Before setting out from Mecca, Idrīs replied to a personal letter sent by the recently reappointed chancellor Caᶜfer Çelebi. Caᶜfer Çelebi's reappointment occurred within the larger context of a reshuffling among the highest positions at court. As many of the most prominent statesmen of the latter years of Bāyezīd's reign supported Selīm's rival, Aḥmed, the new sultan made a number of significant changes in personnel after his accession in the spring of 918/1512.

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[77] *ahdaytu hādhahi al-hadīya al-ghaybiyya tuḥfat*^*an* *li-khuddām ᶜatabahi al-sulṭān al-karīm al-raᵓufa wa ṣayyartuhā wasīla li-ᶜaṭf adhyāl al-luṭf waᵓl-ᶜuṭūfa min dhālika khudāvandigār al-mushfiq al-ᶜaṭūf*, Bidlīsī, *al-ibāᵓ*, Şehid Ali Paşa 2032, 3a.
[78] For details of this letter, see chapter two above. TSMA E. 5675.
[79] Bidlīsī, *Munshaᵓāt*, Esad Efendi 1888, 89a.

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In fact, over the course of 918/1512, Selīm made new appointments to the grand vizierate, the military judgeships of Rumili and Anadolu, and the finance directorship. Qoca Muṣafá Pasha, who had been appointed grand vizier in the wake of the janissary uprising in 917/1511, was executed by Selīm's order on 14 Ramaẓān 918/23 November 1512 and replaced by Hersekzāde Aḥmed Pasha. Similarly, the military judge of Rumili, Mollā Ḫalīl ibn Maḥmūd, who was also appointed in the wake of the janissary disturbances, died in office in 918/1512, while the military judge of Anadolu, Görez Seyyid Qarāmānī was also dismissed at the beginning of Selīm's reign.[80] In most of these cases, Selīm replaced these men with experienced veterans.[81] This desire for experience likely informed Selīm's appointment of Caᶜfer Çelebi, despite his previous support for Selīm's chief rival, Aḥmed, in the succession struggle of 917/1511. The appointment was a welcome sign for Idrīs, who, in his letter to Caᶜfer Çelebi recalled their friendship, lauded the powerful statesman, and expressed his joy at the news that he would again be counted among the well-wishers of the Ottoman dynasty.[82]

In addition to this correspondence with leading members of Selīm's regime, on his return journey to the Ottoman court, Idrīs also corresponded with Amīr ᶜAbd al-Vahhāb, the minister of religious affairs for Shah Ismāᶜīl. As mentioned in Chapter Four, Idrīs, during his darkest days of isolation in Constantinople at the end of Bāyezīd's reign, initiated a correspondence with several of Shah Ismāᶜīl's grandees to explore the possibility of his repatriation in Iran. Such negotiations unfolded over the course of three years between 916/1510 and 919/1513, yet remained unresolved at the time of Selīm's accession and invitation to Idrīs. Consequently, while in

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[80] On the death of Mollā Ḫalīl, see Mecdī, *Hadā'iq al-shaqā'iq*, ed. Abdülkadir Özcan (Istanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1989), 324; On the dismissal of Görez Seyyid Qarāmānī, see ibid., 314.
[81] For instance, Qoca Muṣṭafá Pasha was replaced by his predecessor in office, Hersekzāde Aḥmed Paşa.
[82] Bidlīsī, *Munshāʾāt*, Esad Efendi 1888, 230a-231a.

Damascus on his return journey to Selīm's court, Idrīs penned a letter to Amīr ᶜAbd al-Vahhāb that expressed his enthusiasm for Shah Ismāᶜīl, even as it sought to minimize any expectations of Idrīs' imminent return to Tabriz. Accordingly, the letter dwelt upon the initial unresponsiveness of Shah Ismāᶜīl's statesmen, as well as the difficult conditions that would delay Idrīs' repatriation:

> As the expectation of favor and compassion is promised, I supplicate the following: in the well-trodden trail of sincerity and the attainment of the true desired end, I have striven on the path of soliciting meetings and correspondence with the lords of faith and government and those who trouble themselves with the good of the realm and community, while they displayed great negligence and a lack of concern in replying to my letters to them during three successive years. Despite embarking upon trials of body and property, I was shown no attention by them in the succeeding time. And yet, when the contents of the high letter appeared with the desire for my return to them, in truth, the ear of obedience heard. At all times, the desired things are immediately burdened by the secret indulgence and compassion [shown toward] servants, because there is no other compulsion to consider service to other masters. Now, due to fate, in the skirt of natural haste, I contend with the thought of procrastination and delay. And perfidious time stirs up the wondrous dusts of an excitable discord. I hope that the general veil of the sorrow of remaining distant and exiled shall be raised up through the lofty efforts of servants and by the blowing breaths of the invitations of a conclusive response.[83]

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[83] *fa-ammā ānchi muntaẓar az luṭf va marāḥim maᶜhūd-ast īn iltimās ast ki bi-ṭarīqa-yi muvājaha yā murāsala bā arbāb-i dīn va dawlat va mutakallifān-i maṣāliḥ-i mulk va millat saᶜy va ijtihād-i faqīrān rā dar rāh-i ikhlāṣ va idrāk-i maṭlūb-i ḥaqīqī va musāhalat-i bisyār va bī iltifātī ki dar muddat-i sih sāl-i mutavālī dar javāb-i murāsalat-i faqīrān bar khavāṭir-i ᶜaliyya munkashif sāzand ki bā vujūd-i irtikāb-i mukhāṭarāt ve maḥẕūrāt-i nafsī va mālī faqīrān az ān-javānib darīn awqāt-i mutavālī bi-hīch vajh tavajjuh va iltifāti ẓāhir nashud va ānchi dar żimn-i maktūb-i ᶜālī az muraghghabāt-i tavajjuh bi-ān-javānib ẓāhir būda va al-ḥaqq bi-samᶜ-i iṭāᶜat shanūda shud hamagī muraghghabāt bi-mujarrad-i shafaqat va mihrbānī-yi nihānī-yi khuddām maḥmūl dāsht chirā ki hīch muʾakkidī-yi dīgar az khidmat-i sāyir-i ḥażarāt malḥūẓ nashud ḥāliyā jihat-i taqdīr dar dāmin-i istiᶜjāl-i ṭabīᶜī bā taʾammul-i tasvīf va tawqīf dar āvikht va zamāna-yi ghaddār nīz fī-mā bayn-i dīda-yi ārzū va rukhsār-i maqṣūd ᶜajab-i gard va ghubār-i fitna-angīzī bar angīkht umīd ki bi-himam-i ᶜalīya-yi khuddām va az hubūb-i anfās-i daᶜavāt-i ijābat-anjām hijāb-i ᶜām-i ghamām-i mubāᶜadat va hijrān marfūᶜ shavad va nadā-yi dilgushā-yi dakhalūhā bi-salām az nihānkhāna-yi ghayb-i gush-i jān-i mushtaqān rā masmūᶜ gardad,* Bidlīsī, *Munshaʾāt*, Esad Efendi 1888, 149a/b

Idrīs' polite demurral of the shah's interest in his return may have been motivated as much by the personal considerations as by a preference for Selīm over Ismāᶜīl. After all, Idrīs left his family in Ottoman domains when he departed for the pilgrimage. Two of his sons—Ebūᵓl-Fażl Meḥmed and Ebūᵓl-Mevāhib—had entered Ottoman service by 917/1511. Under these circumstances, a return to Tabriz would have constituted an equally difficult personal trial. Yet, beyond these personal considerations, Selīm's invitation to Idrīs was likely appealing; upon his arrival in Ottoman lands in 919/1513, he was immediately welcomed into the inner circle of of Selīm's trusted advisers.

Even as Idrīs made these preparations for a political comeback at the Ottoman court, he remained committed to exploring his inner life through contemplation of mystical matters and cultivation of an ascetic sensibility. Idrīs' passage through Qarāmān on his return to court no doubt encouraged this contemplative disposition. Even before he set foot in Qarāmān, Idrīs regarded the region as the historical dwelling place of wise and holy men. In portions of *Hasht bihisht* completed before his departure for pilgrimage, Idrīs described the area as the best part of the ancient domains of the Greeks.[84] In addition to the quality of its land and climate, Qarāmān was distinguished in ancient times as "the resting place of divine philosophers and wise Greeks. And in the time of the kings of the people of faith, it became the fixed place of the pillars of the verifiers and deifiers of the Muslim faith."[85] In large measure, the region deserved this reputation for learning and holiness on account of the many holy men who made its principal city, Konya, their home. Indeed, in describing Konya in *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs asserts that 12,000 saints were

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[84] *Mamlakat-i Qarāmān dar qadīm al-zamān aṭyab-i bilād-i barrī-yi Yūnān būda*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 369b.
[85] *Qabl az ẓuhūr-i islām-i lā-yuzāl ārāmgāh-i ḥakīmān al-ilāhī va dānāyān-i yūnānī būda va dar zamān-i salāṭīn-i ahl-i īmān mustaqarr-i asāṭīn-i muhaqqiqān va mutaᵓallihān-i kīsh-i musalmānī shuda*, ibid, 370a.

buried in the city.[86] Idrīs catalogs a number of these saints by starting with the most famous

resident of Konya, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Balkhī (d. 672/1273), whom he refers to as Mawlā-yi

Rūm.[87]

In addition to Rūmī, Idrīs reserved equal praise for Rūmī's contemporary resident of

Konya, Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad Qūnawī (d. 673/1274). Idrīs' high regard for Qūnawī stemmed

from the learned saint's seminal position within the tradition of Sufi learning as it developed

after the death of Ibn al-ʿArabī in 638/1240. Qūnawī was one of the closest disciples and son-in-

law of Ibn al-ʿArabī and became the greatest exegete of his master's mystical thought through

his careful and clear explication of Ibn al-ʿArabī's teachings in rational and philosophical

terms.[88] In fact, the clarity of Qūnawī's thought rendered his works essential tools for most

students of Sufism as they sought to access the central tenets of Ibn al-ʿArabī's teachings.[89]

While in Konya, Idrīs spent forty days in mystical contemplation beside the tomb of Ṣadr al-Dīn

Qūnawī and credits this experience with unlocking some of the secrets of Shabistari's *Ḥaqq al-*

yaqīn:[90]

> When the realities of the ends and gnosis full of benefits of the book *Ḥaqq al-*
> *yaqīn* happened upon the path and gilded way of Shaykh Qūnawī, I sought the aid

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[86] Ibid.

[87] In addition to Rūmī, he mentions Rūmī's father Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad, his son, Sulṭān Valad, Ḥusām al-Dīn, as well as his followers Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Zarkūb, Shams al-Dīn, and Sayyid Burhān al-Dīn, Ibid, 370b.

[88] For Qūnawī's role in the transmission of Ibn al-ʿArabi's ideas, see William C. Chittick, "The Last Will and Testament of Ibn ʿArabi's Foremost Disciple and Some Notes on Its Author," *Sophia Perennis* 4 (1978): 43–58; William C. Chittick, "Sadr Al-Din Qunawi on the Oneness of Being," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (1981): 171–84; Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn 'Arabī*, trans. Peter Kingsley (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 230–233; Richard Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man : Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

[89] For Qūnawī's impact on theosophical discussions of *khilāfa,* see chapter nine.

[90] *Va muddat-i arbaʿīnī bi-mujāvarat va mulāzamat-i mazār-i muqaddas va istifāża az taṣānīf va āṯār-i anfās-i anfas-i...Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Isḥaq-i Qūnavī,* Bidlīsī*, Ḥaqq al-mubīn*, Ayasofya 2338, 5b.

of the holy spirit of that shaykh of the lords of intelligence in editing and investigating the terms and meanings of that book. And praise be to God that in the rose garden, which is the advent of the blossoms of mystical meanings, through the key of the transcendent hidden realm (*miftāḥ al-ghayb*) of divine guidance, the gates of perplexing problems and the locked bolts of knotty matters of that book were opened.[91]

Idrīs' statement makes clear that through reading and contemplating Qūnawī's most famous work, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb*, he came to a clearer understanding of Shabistari's *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn*. The incident is significant, insofar as it establishes the interconnected nature of Qūnawī and Shabistarī's thought in the minds of tenth/sixteenth-century learned men and the uses to which their work could be put for unraveling the intricacies of Ibn al-ʿArabī's teachings.

Idrīs' consideration of Shabistarī's work continued as he traveled on from Konya. While still in Qarāmān, Idrīs stopped in the town of Aqṣehir, where he was reunited with a former teacher of Sufism named Bābā Niʿmatullāh Nakhjavānī. Bābā Niʿmatullāh was one of the learned Sufis associated with the Naqshbandī order in Āẕarbāyjān during the Aqquyunlu period. Idrīs had studied Sufism with Niʿmatullāh, most likely in Tabriz. Following the death of Sultan Yaʿqūb's nephew Aḥmad ibn Ughurlu Muḥammad in 903/1497, Niʿmatullāh escaped the political violence and disorder that engulfed Āẕarbāyjān by immigrating to the small Qarāmānī city of Aqṣehir.[92] Once settled in this city, the Sufi master became particularly renowned for his

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[91] *Chun ḥaqāyiq-i maqāṣid va maʿārif-i pur favāyid-i kitāb-i* Ḥaqq al-yaqīn *bar manhaj va bi-maẕhab-i muẕahhab-i shaykh qūnavī ittifāq uftāda har āyina dar taṣḥīḥ va tanqīḥ-i alfāẓ va maʿānī-yi ān kitāb az rūḥ-i muqaddas-i ān shaykh-i arbāb-i albāb istiʿāna namūd va bi-ḥamd allāh taʿālá va yumn-i tawfīqihi dar ān gul-zamīn ki mawrid-i vurūd-i vurūd-i maʿānī az fuyūż-i rabbānī ast bi-miftāḥ al-ghayb-i tawfīq abvāb-i mushkilāt va maghālīq-i aqfāl-i muʿżilāt-i ān kitāb gushāda shud*, ibid, 5b-6a.

[92] Idrīs met with Bābā Niʿmat Allāh in 919/1513 after a period of fifteen years separation, Bidlīsī, *Ḥaqq al-mubīn*, Ayasofya 2338, 6a. This would suggest they last saw one another in 904/1498, while Idrīs still resided in Tabriz. Sultan Aḥmad bin Ughurlu Muḥammad died in Rabīʿ II 903/December 1497.

renunciation of worldly matters and complete absorption in an ascetic life.[93] Idrīs' high regard for Niᶜmatullāh and his decision to spend some time in Akşehir comparing copies of Shabistari's *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn* highlights the fluid Sufi affiliations Idrīs embraced. Despite his early upbringing beside Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh, and the lifelong regard he showed the ninth/fifteenth-century Shiᶜī *mahdī*, Idrīs freely solicited the mystical expertise of Sunni-oriented Naqshbandī Sufi masters. Moreover, this period of study, and indeed all of his ascetic activities on his return journey, stand in stark contrast to his careful preparations for a successful return to court life.

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[93] The first observation that Taşköprüzade makes in his entry for Bābā Niᶜmat Allāh is that the Sufi used to conceal himself ("*wa kāna yukhfī nafsahu*"), Taşköprüzade, *al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuʿmānīyah fī ʿulamāʾ al-Dawlat al-ʿUthmānīyah*, 356.

Chapter Six: Return to the East (1514-1520)

VI.1 Idrīs in Edirne and the Preparations for War

Idrīs returned to an Ottoman royal court completely transformed by the political turmoil of the preceding two years. In contrast to Bāyezīd's reluctance to confront the threats posed by Shah Ismāʿīl, Selīm had risen to power largely through the support of military constituencies for whom aggressive martial policies represented the best opportunities for material advancement.[1] Idrīs certainly noticed the stark divergence between Bāyezīd's pacific policy and the energetic stance of the new sultan, for in the revised version of *Hasht bihisht* that he presented to Selīm, he lauded the sultan's interest and willingness to take the field against his enemies and contrasted it with the young sultan's father, who stood for saintly virtues of nonaggression and ultimately a rejection of worldly matters.[2] In fact, even before Selīm completely secured the throne through the elimination of his male relatives, he considered launching campaigns against the Knights of

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[1] In addition to the support of the janissaries, Çıpa points out the critical support for Selīm's cause provided by Rumelian troops, Çıpa, "The Centrality of the Periphery: The Rise to Power of Selim I, 1487-1512."

[2] Idrīs describes Bāyezīd's character and outlook in his final year as sovereign as: "In the image of a king, but rather like Pīr-i Bisṭām / in piety and humility, by nature and name / he suffered hardships in the path of Truth / in order for a Bāyezīd to obtain the rewards of a Sultan / He abandoned all property and possessions / and entrusted dominion and wealth to deputies. (*bi-ṣūrat-i shah valī chun pīr-i bisṭām / bi-zuhd u maskanat ham khulq u ham nām / bi-rāh-i ḥaqq riyāżathā kashīdī / ki yābad ajr-i sulṭān bāyazīdī / firāghat kard az amvāl u asbāb / sipurd ū mulk u dārāʾi ba-navvāb*). He contrasts this with Selīm's exemplary display of the four virtues of equipoise (courage, righteousness, wisdom, and justice), and in particular his reputation for embarking on the time-honored path of *jihād*, even during his father's reign: "In his father's life, in the custom of his forebears / through his efforts the struggle became customary again. (*dar ayyām-i pidar bar rasm-i ajdād / jihād az jahd-i ū shud bāz muʿtād*), Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 624b.

St. John at Rhodes or Shah Ismāʿīl in Iran.[3] Selīm's express desire to embark on military

campaigns garnered for him an early reputation as a sultan set on the idea of conquest. For this

martial enthusiasm, several panegyrists writing in the first years of Selīm's reign celebrated the

sultan as a celestially appointed world conqueror through the application of the term *Ṣaḥib-*

Qirān. Idrīs' own son, Ebū°l-Fażl Meḥmed, described Selīm in these terms in a celebratory

epistle on Selīm's entry to Constantinople, which he personally presented to the new sultan on 18

Ṣafar 918/4 May 1512, just ten days after Selīm's entry to Constantinople.[4] A few months later,

on 9 Jumādá I 918/22 July 1512, an unnamed courtier used the same term in the preface to a

panegyric (*qaṣīda*) celebrating Selīm's accession.[5]

    Idrīs also sought to present the new sultan with literary gifts upon his arrival at Selīm's

court in Edirne. In addition to *Risālat al-ibāʾ ʿan mawāqiʿ al-wabāʾ* (*Epistle on Avoiding Places*

of Plague), Idrīs also presented a new version of *Hasht bihisht* with a verse conclusion that

described Selīm's rise to power, which he began to write in Mecca shortly after receiving the

news of Selīm's accession.[6] This new version of Idrīs' history incorporated the conclusion and

the introduction that he had completed in Mecca with a number of other revisions he made to the

first version of the work that had circulated in the last decade of Bāyezīd's reign. Within a few

months of his return, at least two presentation copies of this new version were prepared under

Idrīs' supervision and offered to the sultan.[7]

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[3] As evidenced by a geomancer's prognostication prepared before Prince Aḥmed's defeat, Selīm considered launching campaigns against either the Knights of St. John or Shah Ismāʿīl. The geomancer advocated action against Prince Aḥmed, TSMA E. 6673.
[4] Ebū°l-Fażl Meḥmed Efendi. *Inshāʾ*, FY 906, 68a.
[5] *Qaṣīda-yi Sulṭān Salīm*, Hacı Selim Ağa 560, 2b.
[6] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Nuruosmaniye 3209.
[7] Idrīs signed one of these copies, which is now preserved in Nuruosmaniye Library (nr. 3209), in 919/1513, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 636a. The colophon of the other copy (Hazine 1655)

More generally, the heady expansionist environment suited well Idrīs' appeal as an expert on 'eastern matters' and helped facilitate the successful rehabilitation of his court career. Although Idrīs' writings are largely silent on his role in advocating an Ottoman campaign against Shah Ismāᶜīl, Celālzāde Muṣṭafá and ᶜĀşıq Çelebi, both writing a few decades later, assert the influential advisory role Idrīs assumed within Selīm's closest circle. Celālzāde Muṣṭafá mentions Idrīs and Ḥalīmī Çelebi as the two scholars whose opinion Selīm sought as he contemplated a campaign against the Qizilbash.[8] As the sultan's tutor from his days as governor in Trabzon, Ḥalīmī Çelebi assumed a prominent role during Selīm's reign until his death in 922/1516. Celālzāde, in his narrative of Selīm's consultation with the two scholars, highlights this aspect of their well-established relationship by mentioning the effective advice Ḥalīmī Çelebi offered.[9] In contrast, the weight of Idrīs' counsel rested on his reputation as the author of a major history of the Ottoman house and his thorough understanding of events in Iran based upon his first-hand experiences.[10] Indeed, according to ᶜĀşıq Çelebi, the basic dynamics of this intimate council prevailed throughout the upcoming Ottoman campaign. In addition to Ḥalīmī Çelebi and Idrīs, ᶜĀşıq Çelebi also included Selīm's chancellor, Tācīzāde Caᶜfer Çelebi, in the tight circle of advisers who regularly met with the sultan on campaign.[11]

According to Idrīs' later narration, Selīm's interest in seeking the scholars' advice stemmed from his concern for legitimating military action in Muslim domains. Idrīs notes that

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indicates that it was copied in 919/1513 on the basis of the Nuruosmaniye manuscript (nr.3209), TSMK Hazine 1655, 668b.

[8] Mustafa Çelebi Celâlzade, *Selim-nâme*, ed. Ahmet Uğur and Mustafa Çuhadar (Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1997), 127–128.

[9] Specifically, Celālzāde prefaces Ḥalīmī Çelebi's direct speech to the sultan with reference to the scholar's service to Selīm during his days as governor in Trabzon, ibid., 129.

[10] Ibid., 127-129.

[11] *Ḥattā Sefer-i Erdebil'de ve ᶜazīmet-i Şāh İsmāᵓīl'de (sic) ekser-i evkāt Monlā İdrīs ve Ḥalīmī Çelebi ve Caᶜfer Çelebi-i (sic) merḥūm pādşāh ile çār-ᶜunṣur gibi hem-ᶜinān ḥarf-zenān ve bezle-gūyān muṣāḥabet-künān giderler imiş*, Āşiḳ Çelebi, *Meşâᶜirüᵓş-Şuᶜarâ*, 1:453.

Selīm called two separate meetings to discuss the possibility of an eastern campaign. First, Selīm

called his military commanders and sought to enlist their support for the cause by explaining the

political threat that the Qizilbash posed to Ottoman control of Anadolu. Subsequently, Selīm met

with scholars and clerics to request their sanctioning of a campaign against the Qizilbash.[12]

This solicitation of a religious opinion to substantiate royal policy constituted a distinct

tradition of Ottoman rule, especially with respect to potentially controversial actions. As early as

the middle of the eighth/fourteenth century, Ottoman sultans sought formal religious opinions

(*fatwa/fatāwá*) prior to launching campaigns against other Muslim rulers.[13] The tradition was

clearly established by the reign of Murād II one century later when he obtained five formal

religious opinions—formulated by Egyptian scholars from each of the four principal Sunni

juridical traditions—to initiate hostilities against Ibrāhīm Beǧ, the lord of Qarāmān.[14] Two

decades later, when Sultan Meḥmed II sought to abrogate a peace treaty offered by his grand

vizier, Maḥmūd Pasha, to the Bosnian king, he sought and obtained an opinion that sanctioned

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[12] Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, Emanet Hazinesi 1423, 73a. Kırlangıç, 122.

[13] According to Neşri, Murād I (r.1362-1389) requested a fatwa (istiftâ idüp) before embarking on a campaign in Anadolu, Neşri, *Cihânnümâ*, 88.

[14] The religious opinions were written by some of the most prominent scholars of the ninth/fifteenth century, namely the Shāfiᶜī scholar Ibn Ḥajar al-ᶜAsqalānī (d.852/1448), the Ḥanafī scholars Saᶜd al-Dīn al-Dayrī (867/1462) and ᶜAbd al-Salām al-Baghdādī, the Mālikī scholar Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Tūnisī (d.853/1449), and the Ḥanbalī scholar Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Baghdādī (d.857/1453). İsmail Uzunçarşılı found a copy of these religious opinions in the Topkapı Palace Museum Archive and included its facsimile in his 1937 article on Karamanoğlu İbrahim Beǧ's pious endowment deed without reference to the document's shelfmark, Uzunçarşılı, İsmail Hakkı, "Karamanoğulları Devrî Vesikalarından İbrahim Beyin Karaman İmareti Vakfiyesi," *Belleten* 1 (1937): 57–143; On the basis of this facsimile, Ramazan Boyacıoğlu translated the document into Turkish, Ramazan Boyacıoğlu, "Osmanoğullarının Karamanoğlu İbrahim Bey aleyine aldığı Fetvalar," in *Pax Ottomana: studies in memoriam, Prof. Dr. Nejat Göyünç*, ed. Kemal Çiçek (Ankara: Sota ;Yeni Turkiye, 2001), 641–57 In 2013, I found the document in the Topkapı Palace Museum Archive under shelfmark E. 6467.

disregarding formal agreements with unbelievers.[15] The obvious political ends to which these

opinions were put discomfited a number of scholars during Meḥmed II and Bāyezīd II's reigns,

yet their importance as ideological tools capable of shaping 'public' and 'international' opinion

rendered their use vital to Ottoman sultans, especially during periods when they sought to initiate

hostilities against other Muslim rulers.[16]

For this reason, Selīm called a second meeting in Constantinople in which he asked the

scholars and clerics associated with the court for a religious opinion sanctioning a campaign

against Shah Ismāᶜīl. Idrīs states that the religious leaders put forward various ideas on the

matter as it related to religious and logical principles.[17] The consensus that emerged from this

discussion was drawn up by a scholar named Ḥamza Efendi—known as Saru Görez—and laid

out a line of reasoning that called for the eradication of Shah Ismāᶜīl's supporters for the threat

that they posed to the entire community of Muslims.[18] Specifically, the document cited reports of

Qizilbash offenses to the faith and depredations against learned and pious men, and concluded

that the Qizilbash and any who were inclined to their cause were unbelievers (*kāfirler*) and

apostates (*mülhidler*) whose killing was licit.[19] The opinion went further and argued that the

Qizilbash threat was more serious and despicable (*eşedd ve eqbaḥ*) than that of normal

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[15] Neşri, *Cihânnümâ*, 336–7; Theoharis Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs: The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelovic (1453-1474)* (Leiden ;Boston: Brill, 2001).

[16] On scholars' reluctance to rubber stamp policy, see R.C. Repp's translation of a letter by Mollā Gürānī to Sultan Bāyezīd, in which the scholar recounts his refusal to issue religious opinions for the benefit of Sultan Mehmed II's last grand vizier, Qarāmānī Meḥmed Pasha, Repp, *The Müfti of Istanbul*, 144–146 For the original letter, see TSMA E.5429.

[17] Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma* Emanet Hazinesi 1423, 73b.

[18] The document is preserved at the Topkapı Palace Museum Archive (E.6401). Şehabeddin Tekindağ published this document in his 1967 article on Selīm's eastern campaigns, M. C. Şehabeddin Tekindağ, "Yeni Kaynak ve Vesikaların ışığı altında Yavuz Sultan Selim'in İran Seferi," *Tarih Dergisi* 22 (1967): 49–78.

[19] Ibid., 55.

unbelievers.[20] This last point, which stressed the importance of confronting the Qizilbash above

waging war against unbelievers, became the major principle that the Ottomans touted to justify

prioritizing a campaign against Shah Ismāᶜīl. Notwithstanding Idrīs' friendly communications

with Shah Ismāᶜīl's court as late as 919/1513, Idrīs reiterated this point in his subsequent

narration of the scholars' meeting: "The destruction of this iniquitous faction and the eradication

of this group of shameless apostates is more important for this powerful sultan than war with the

unbelievers and struggling against the Franks and Tatars."[21] Essentially, this principle constituted

a basic reworking of the frequently cited *casus belli* for Ottoman sultans in their conflicts with

other Muslim rulers. In previous conflicts, scholars argued that iniquity visited upon Muslims

within the domains of Islam took precedence over the expansion of those domains.[22] The new

opinion followed from this basic principle but went one step further by characterizing Selīm's

enemies as apostates and unbelievers. The campaign to establish a potent ideological platform

for war against Shah Ismāᶜīl was also wide-ranging. Around this time, the Ottoman jurist

Kemālpaşazāde penned two treatises on heresy and apostasy that were clearly aimed at

addressing the Qizilbash threat.[23] In addition to the scholars in Ottoman lands who signed on to

Ḥamza Efendi's religious opinion, there is some evidence to suggest that the Ottomans sought

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[20] Ibid.

[21] *Bar sulṭān-i qādir va vālī-i qāhir rafᶜ va dafᶜ-i īn ṭāyifa-yi sitamkār va qalᶜ va qamᶜ-i īn firqa-yi malāḥida-yi fujjār aqdam va ahamm az muḥāraba-yi kuffār va ghazā va jihād-i farang va tātār ast*, Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 73b.

[22] Neşri records an adage purportedly enunciated by scholars during the reign of Murād I: "war against the unbelievers-except in cases of a general levy is only incumbent upon the community as a whole. However, thwarting iniquities upon believers is incumbent upon every Muslim. (*Küffara gazâ nefîr-i âmm olmasa farz-ı kifayedür, ammâ mü'minlerden mezâlimi defᶜ itmek farz-ı ayndur*)," "Neşri, *Cihânnümâ*, 88.

[23] Tekindağ includes an edition of one of these short treatises in his article on Selīm's Iran campaign, Tekindağ, "Yavuz Sultan Selim'in İran Seferi," 77-78. Kemālpaşazāde authored another treatise on the meaning of heresy (*zandaqa*). There are many copies of this work in Süleymaniye Library, see for example, Kemālpaşazāde, *al-Risālat al-maᶜmūla fī taṣḥīḥ lafẓ al-zindīq wa tawḍīḥ maᶜnāhi al-daqīq*, Şehid Ali Paşa 1708, 28a-32a.

and obtained similar religious opinions from 'foreign' scholars living abroad. For instance, in a

letter written after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 923/1517 and addressed to a prominent

Persian émigré at Selīm's court named Ḥakīm Shāh Muḥammad Qazvīnī, the former Aqquyunlu

secretary Fażl Allāh Khunjī-Iṣfahānī referred to his own religious opinion on the question of war

against the Qizilbash:

> Because my religious opinion [contained] in a *qaṣīda*, which was sent in the
> company of Mawlānā Kh^wāja, is rationally argued, the struggle against the
> unbelievers of the red sect [Qizilbash] is more virtuous than the struggle against
> the Frankish, Georgian, and Russian unbelievers, because they (the Qizilbash)
> have appeared in the midst of Muslim domains. Furthermore, the scholars of
> Transoxiana, Khurāsān, Rūm, Egypt, and the Hijaz are in agreement with me on
> this religious opinion.[24]

This intellectual support for the Ottoman campaign was clearly appreciated in Ottoman ruling

circles. Indeed, Idrīs was certainly aware of the value of broad support from 'foreign' scholars,

for he included portions of Khunjī-Iṣfahānī's panegyric poem (*qaṣīda*) in his work on Selīm's

reign and prefaced its inclusion by remarking that "a number of petitions from the scholars,

dervishes, and aggrieved people of Iran arrived at the gate of justice's refuge, the sultan of

Sulaymanic stature, requesting the elimination of the evil of those merciless tyrants."[25] The

perception that the Ottomans acted at the request of and in concert with scholars throughout

Islamic domains constituted an important point of propaganda during the various eastern

campaigns Selīm launched between 920/1514 and 923/1517. In fact, these efforts to coopt the

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[24] *Chun fatvá-yi īn faqīr-i ḥaqīr dar qaṣīdaʾī ki dar ṣuḥbat-i jināb mawlānā kh^wāja firistāda shuda būd nāṭiq ast bidān jihād bā kuffār-i ṭāyifa-yi surkh afżal ast az jihād bā kuffār-i afranj va gurj va rūs zīrā ki dar vasaṭ-i bilād-i islām paydā shuda and va ʿulamā-i mā-varāʾ al-nahr va khurāsān va rūm va miṣr va ḥijāz bā īn faqīr darīn fatvá muttafiq and.* TSMA E.8334.
[25] *Va bā vujūd-i īn jumla-yi bavāʿis̱ ʿarż-dāsht-hā az ʿulamā va fuqarā va mutaẓallimān-i diyār-i ʿajam jihat-i dafʿ-i sharr-i ān ẓalama-yi bī amān va taraḥḥum avval^an va ākhir^an bi-dargāh-i maʿdalat-panāh-i sulṭān-i sulaymān-makān rasīda būd*, Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 74b. Kırlangıç, 125.

indigenous scholarly classes of the lands that they conquered remained an essential feature of the Ottoman eastern strategy during this period.

In this respect, Idrīs offered an important potential service to Selīm. His political, scholarly, and personal connections in Diyārbakr and Āẕarbāyjān could be marshaled to persuade military commanders and local notables to join the Ottoman cause against Shah Ismāʿīl. Indeed, over the course of the following eighteen months, Idrīs' efforts were dedicated primarily to recruiting and organizing opposition to Shah Ismāʿīl across his homeland.

VI.2 Chāldirān and Its Aftermath

Selīm's efforts to rally support for a campaign against Shah Ismāʿīl gathered steam in the early months of 1514, and on 23 Muḥarram 920/19 March 1514, the Ottoman army left Edirne to head east. Selīm ordered that both the Rumelian and Anadolu provincial cavalry join the royal household units on the campaign. The assembly of approximately 60,000 soldiers marked the first time since the reign of Sultan Meḥmed II that the entire Ottoman army took the field with the sultan as commander.[26] Yet, the mobilization also signaled the renewal of Ottoman hostilities with powerful eastern polities. The campaign marked the third time in as many generations that the Ottoman Sultanate came into direct conflict with one of its major eastern neighbors.[27] The ensuing campaign resulted in a great confrontation between Ottoman and Qizilbash forces at Chāldirān on 2 Rajab 920/23 August 1514 in Āẕarbāyjān and initiated a process of Ottoman

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[26] Feridun Emecen estimates approximately 50,000-60,000 Ottoman troops participated in the campaign, Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 107, 120.

[27] In 878/1473, Meḥmed II defeated the Aqquyunlu ruler Uzun Ḥasan at the Battle of Başkent/Otlukbeli. For details of this campaign, see Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 116–123; Between 890-896/1485-1491, Bāyezīd II waged a protracted war against the Mamluks that ended largely in a stalemate. For details on this conflict, see Har-El, *Struggle for Domination in the Middle East*.

eastern expansion that continued throughout Selīm's reign. The significance of the battle was considerable; the battle and its aftermath completely altered the age-old geo-cultural conception of Iran. As a consequence of Selīm's campaigns, lands east of the Euphrates River—the traditional border of *Īrān-zamīn*—were permanently incorporated into the Ottoman realm.

The battle was a resounding success for the Ottoman forces. By the end of the daylong engagement, Shah Ismāʿīl and all of his forces were in complete flight. The shah's camp and many distinguished members of his court had fallen into Ottoman hands.[28] In the days following the battle, the Ottoman camp made plans to capture Shah Ismāʿīl and the escaped Qizilbash both by sending troops in pursuit and by establishing contacts with military commanders in western Iran who would be predisposed to the Ottoman cause. For instance, Ottoman secretaries penned royal decrees to Rustam Beg, the ruler of Luristān, demanding that he make every effort to pursue and kill the fleeing Qizilbash.[29] Efforts to reach out to local power brokers were in fact wide-ranging. In particular, Shah Ismāʿīl's lieutenants had dispossessed many of the Kurdish lords of Diyārbakr and Āẕarbāyjān in the years immediately preceding Chāldirān. The advent of Ottoman forces in Āẕarbāyjān upended the administrative arrangements Shah Ismāʿīl had established and offered the Kurdish lords the opportunity to reestablish autonomous rule over their ancestral lands.[30] Within days of the battle, Selīm responded to Kurdish requests to intervene on their behalf to thwart the harassment of one of Shah Ismāʿīl's men, Zāhid Beg, who was incidentally also a Kurd. Selīm ordered Zāhid to desist from his harassment and promised the petitioners to appoint one of his own servants (*dārūgha az ghulāmān*) to aid them in their

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[28] For a detailed description and analysis of the battle, see Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 118–45.
[29] Feridun Bey, *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn*, 392.
[30] On relations between Shah Ismāʿīl and Kurdish lords in the first decade of Shah Ismāʿīl's reign, see Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: On the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan* (Utrecht: Rijksuniversiteit, 1978), 140–141.

struggle.[31] This early involvement in the messy struggle for local power in the region would become one of the major driving forces behind the complex series of political and military events that would lead to the Ottoman annexation of Diyārbakr in 921/1515. As a scholar and statesman with considerable connections to many of the military commanders and notables, Idrīs offered Selīm the possibility of an influential voice as the Ottomans sought to rally support for their struggle against the Qizilbash.

The outcome of Chāldirān also encouraged Ottoman efforts to seize and annex Tabriz, the seat of political power in western Iran since the Ilkhanids in the eighth/fourteenth century. In the days following the battle, the Ottoman army advanced as far as Khuy, where it halted and planned its onward advance to Tabriz.[32] On 9 Rajab 920/29 August 1520, Selīm ordered his grand vizier Dukākīnzāde Aḥmed Pasha, the Rumili finance director Pīrī Pasha, and the *sekbān başı* along with 500 men to proceed in advance of the army to Tabriz and secure the city from the threat posed by the fleeing Qizilbash.[33] In addition to these men, Selīm ordered Idrīs to join this advance party and help secure the city. Although no other contemporary source acknowledges his participation in this mission, Idrīs provides many details in his account in his *Salīmshāhnāma*, and emphasizes his role as the sultan's man most capable of influencing the notables of Tabriz.[34]

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[31] The 1274 edition of Ferīdūn's *Münşeʾāt* renders the title *vārūgha*. This is almost certainly a copyist's error for *dārūgha* (governor), Ferīdūn Beğ, *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn*, 1:391; For information on the role of the *dārūgha* in post-Mongol Iran, see Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, 1:319–323.

[32] Idrīs mentions that in the days following the battle the army advanced as far as Khuy, where Selīm ordered an advance party to hasten to Tabriz, Bidlīsī. *Salīmshāhnāma*, 103b; İdrîs Bitlîsî, *İdrîs-i Bidlîsî Selim Şah-nâme*, trans. Hicabi Kırlangıç (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2001), 195.

[33] Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," in *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn* (Istanbul: Dāruʾṭ-ṭibāʿatiʾl-ʿāmire, 1274), 1:463.

[34] Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 133a.

The mission of the advance party consisted of several objectives, each of which corresponded to the professional competencies and social standings of the three principal leaders. One of the primary concerns of the Ottoman leadership was that the fleeing Qizilbash troops would pillage Tabriz before the arrival of the Ottoman army.[35] This threat undermined the Ottoman policy of portraying their campaign as a righteous cause that would benefit the community of Muslims in Āẕarbāyjān. Moreover, if the Qizilbash thoroughly sacked the city before the arrival of the Ottoman army, there would be few Qizilbash spoils to be distributed among the sultan's troops. For this reason, Selīm's decision to dispatch his grand vizier along with 500 household troops signaled a clear commitment to preserve law and order within Tabriz during this delicate period of political uncertainty. Similarly, the desire to secure and appraise Shah Ismāʿīl's valuables and treasury informed Selīm's appointment of the most senior financial officer of the sultanate, Pīrī Pasha. In fact, appointing finance officers to help secure unprotected cities became the *modus operandi* during Selīm's reign. In addition to this mission, Selīm appointed similar advance parties to secure Aleppo, Damascus, and Cairo in the wake of Ottoman victories over the Mamluks in 922/1516-1517.[36] Idrīs participated in the mission in order to secure the support of Tabriz's urban notables for the Ottoman cause. He relates that after

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[35] This concern was explicitly stated in Selim's first decrees to the populace of Tabriz; Idrīs also reiterates this concern in his account of the campaign: *va dāʿiya bi-nahżat bi-shahr-i Tabrīz namūd ki ān mamlakat rā az fitrat-i qizilbāshān-i bar gashta rūzgār va az kharābi-yi īshān dar ḥīn-i qarār bi-farār maḥfūż farmāyad*, Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 103b.

[36] Days after the Ottoman victories at Marj Dābiq and Raydanīya, Selīm appointed men to secure the treasuries and citadels of Aleppo and Cairo, Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," 1:480, 485. Shortly after Selīm's departure from Aleppo on 18 Shaʿbān 922/15 September 1516, he appointed an advance party led by the vizier Yūnus Pasha, the Anadolu finance officer Meḥmed Çelebi, and the former Mamluk governor of Aleppo, Khayr Beg. Like the Tabriz advance party, this party consisted of military commanders and financial officers, as well as a prominent notable with ties to the newly conquered area. Similarly, the advance party was charged with securing the city and its treasury, Kabīr ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Qāẓīzāda, *Ghazavāt-i Salīm Khān*, Hacı Selim Ağa 825, 86a-87a.

the departure of their party from the Ottoman camp at Khoy, they reached Tabriz on a forced march from Marand on Thursday night 12 Rajab 920/31 August 1520.[37] The arrival in Tabriz on the eve of Friday prayer services was particularly fortuitous, as the advance party was able to secure the city and ensure that the Friday sermon was offered in Selīm's name. Moreover, the arrival before Friday prayers offered Idrīs the opportunity to address the populace of Tabriz in the Naṣrīya mosque. As Idrīs later recounted, the chance to address the entire congregation of Tabriz was particularly significant, as it permitted him to explain to the congregation the sultan's attributes.[38] In verses recounting his activities, Idrīs recalls his sleeplessness on the eve of his sermon at Friday prayers, and proclaims that "I ordered a meeting of the honored notables and scholars in the Friday Mosque/ I presented the message of salutation to the people of Islam from the Sultan of Faith / Glad tidings to the people of Unity: I brought the struggle to the apostates!"[39]

In addition to his own oratory, Idrīs was equipped with two decrees from Sultan Selīm addressed to the notables of Tabriz, especially the judge of the city, Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad and Shah Ismāᶜīl's minister of religious affairs, Amīr ᶜAbd al-Vahhāb.[40] Idrīs likely knew both of

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[37] Idrīs states they arrived in the city on the night of Jumᶜa (Friday), Bidlīsī. Zayl-i Hasht Bihisht. Emanet Hazinesi 1423, 103b; İdrîs Bitlîsî, *İdrîs-i Bidlîsî Selim Şah-nâme*, 196; As the days of the week in the Islamic calendar begin at sundown, the advance party arrived on Thursday, 31 August 1520, two days after Selim ordered the advance party to depart for Tabriz according to Haydar Çelebi, Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," 1:463.

[38] In fact, the occasion was a cause of sleepnessness for Idrīs on the eve of this significant event; he writes in verse: "As I was ordered to the service of the faith / my eyes that night found no sleep / for on the morrow as the one to offer the sermon / on the titles of the sultan, I had been appointed (*marā khidmat-i dīn chu maʾmūr būd / nayārast chashmam dar ān shab ghunūd / ki fardā chu khuṭba bi-khwānad khaṭīb / zi-alqāb-i sulṭān bi-yāyad naṣīb*)," Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 104b.

[39] *Namūdam bi-jāmiᶜ yakī maḥfilī / zi-ashrāf u har ᶜālim ᶜālī / rasāndam zi-sulṭān-i dīn īn payghām / ki bar ahl-i islām bādā salām / bishārat bi-arbāb-i tawḥīd / ki bā ahl-i ilḥād kardam jihād*, ibid.

[40] Ferīdūn Beğ, *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn*, 390–1.

these men from his decades of residence in Tabriz. Certainly, he knew Amīr ʿAbd al-Vahhāb, as they were both colleagues at Sultan Yaʿqūb's court in the 1480s, and correspondents as late as Idrīs' return to Ottoman lands from the Hijaz in 919/1513. As a high-ranking religious official in Tabriz and an early skeptic of Shah Ismāʿīl's political career, ʿAbd al-Vahhāb and other notables like him offered Idrīs the best chance to persuade the populace of the Ottomans' just and righteous intentions. The letters that the advance party carried notified the city's inhabitants of the Ottoman victory at Chāldirān and Selīm's approach. They ordered populace to accept Ottoman rule and obey Dukākīnzāde Aḥmed Pasha's orders in the absence of Sultan Selīm.[41] The letters and Idrīs' overtures were successful, at least in the short term; the advance party secured the city and awaited the arrival of the sultan without major incident.[42]

Selīm's arrival and the Ottoman army's residence in and around Tabriz was marked by the traditional Islamic signs of sovereignty. Foremost among these signs were the inclusion of the sovereign's name in the Friday sermon (*khuṭba*) and the issuance of coin currency under the authority of the sovereign (*sikka*). More generally, Selīm also endeavored to demonstrate his authority as ruler through the administration of justice in Tabriz. Several of the Ottoman contemporary accounts emphasize the time that the sultan spent hearing petitions and issuing rulings for the benefit of the general populace from his camp outside the city walls at Surkh Āb.[43] These efforts, in particular, were clearly intended to impress favorably the local populace, but they also demonstrated Ottoman claims to sovereign rule over Tabriz, and by extension, Āẕarbāyjān.

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[41] Ferīdūn Beğ, *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn*, 1:390–1.
[42] Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 104a.
[43] Keşfī notes that Selīm dispensed justice and gifts upon the populace at Surkh-Āb (*iẓhār-i ʿadl ü dād-i ʿosmānī ve luṭf u iḥsān-i ḫāqānī qılub*), Keşfī, *Bāġ-i firdevs-i ġuzāt*, Esad Efendi 2147, 48b; One such ruling was subsequently included in Ferīdūn Beğ's collection of official documents; see Ferīdūn Beğ, *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn*, 1:391–2.

Despite displaying these signs of sovereignty, the conquest of Āzarbāyjān could not be

realized fully without a prolonged commitment to eliminating Shah Ismāʿīl's continuing political

threat to the region. Even so, pursuing Shah Ismāʿīl in the waning weeks of summer proved

unrealistic, especially as the Ottoman army was recovering from the demands of a long march

across Asia Minor followed by the major battle at Chāldirān. Consequently, the Ottoman

leadership contemplated the benefits of resting in Tabriz for the winter before pursuing the

Qizilbash in the following spring. The debate on this question consumed the energies of the

Ottoman leadership for most of its time in Tabriz. Idrīs asserts that he and the sultan, in addition

to a handful of advisers, favored remaining in Tabriz, while the vast majority of the military

commanders and the rank and file of the army opposed them in favor of returning to Istanbul.[44]

Most of the contemporary Ottoman sources emphasize the opposition's concern for the lack of

suitable supplies for the army around Tabriz in their arguments for a return to Istanbul.[45] Indeed,

Tabriz likely suffered from a lack of foodstuffs and other essential materials; the region had been

devastated by decades of strife. Even so, the opposition was likely also motivated by the

pronounced desire on the part of the household units, especially the janissaries, to return to their

homes in Constantinople and Galata.[46] In fact, Selīm's ultimate decision to winter in Amasya,

and not Constantinople, may have contributed to the janissary disturbances that plagued the

Ottoman winter camp in Muḥarram 921/February 1515 and informed his decision to return to

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[44] Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 107b; İdrîs Bitlîsî, *İdrîs-i Bidlîsî Selim Şah-nâme*, 205.
[45] Keşfî, *Bāğ-i firdevsi-i ġuzāt*, Hacı Selim Ağa 825, 52a; Sücūdī, *Tārīḫ-i Sulṭān Selīm Ḫān*, TSMK R. 1284, 25a; Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 105b-106a.
[46] Keşfî states explicitly that the troops desired to return to their homes in Galata and Constantinople and petitioned the leading statesmen to bring the matter before Selīm, Keşfi, *Bāğ-i firdevs-i ġuzāt*, 51b-52a.

Constantinople after a short spring campaign in 921/1515.[47] Idrīs, for his part, clearly interpreted the arguments of the opposition as motivated by their personal concerns for comfort. In his account of the debates in Tabriz, he dismisses concerns about the paucity of supplies around Tabriz and suggests that those who opposed staying were accustomed to "passing most of their time in calm and self-indulgence and throughout their lives ceaselessly conditioned their natural disposition for base desires and carnal pleasures."[48] Despite Idrīs' advocacy for wintering in Tabriz, the weight of opposition proved too great. On 23 Rajab 920/12 September 1514, just five days after the army's arrival in Tabriz, Selīm ordered the army to prepare to evacuate the city and return west.[49]

VI.3 Mission to Kurdistān

Although the Ottoman army was destined for winter quarters in Amasya, Idrīs was charged with a mission in the opposite direction shortly after the departure of the army from Tabriz.[50] Over the course of the following eighteen months, Idrīs traveled between Tabriz and Āmid and met with Kurdish military commanders and local notables to negotiate an alliance with the Ottoman sultanate for the conquest of Diyārbakr. Although marked by considerable hardship, the mission, in some ways, marked the pinnacle of his professional career; his activities

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[47] Feridun Emecen also shares this interpretation of the Janissary uprising in Amasya and the subsequently abbreviated campaign of 921/1515, Emecen, *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, 154–6.
[48] *Rūzgār-i bisyār bi-da'at va tan-āsānī guzarānīda bāshand va 'umrī bi-irtikāb-i bid'at va kāmrānī-i zindagānī ṭab'iyat-i khʷud -kām rā lā-yuzāl bi-mushtahayāt-i nafsānī va lazzat-i jismānī mu'avvad va mu'tād gardānīda*, Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 105b.
[49] Idrīs notes that on 23 Rajab/13 September Selīm decided to evacuate Tabriz (Kırlangıç, 202). On the following day, the artisans and skilled craftsmen of the city were ordered to migrate to Istanbul. The army departed the city on 25 Rajab/15 September.
[50] Idrīs specifies that he departed the Ottoman camp shortly after its departure from Tabriz, Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 119b; İdrîs Bitlîsî, *İdrîs-i Bidlîsî Selim Şah-nâme*, 237.

between Rajab 920/September 1514 and Rabīᶜ II 922/May 1516 uniquely contributed to the Ottoman conquest of the region.

Idrīs' mission evolved considerably over the following eighteen months. Initially, he was charged with distributing the sultan's decrees and honors to Kurdish military commanders and gathering intelligence on developments within Iran.[51] The positive reception of Idrīs' overtures motivated Selīm to appoint Idrīs as an informal leader over these new subjects through a decree issued in Muḥarram 921/March 1515.[52] Under the new order, Idrīs acted as attaché to the Kurdish units, who were ordered to act in concert with Ottoman troops to realize the conquest of Diyārbakr. Despite several setbacks along the way, the arrangement succeeded, for in Shaᶜbān 921/September 1515, Āmid, the former Aqquyunlu capital and largest city in the region, was in Ottoman hands and the remnants of the Qizilbash were in full retreat.[53] Once again, as a consequence of these developments, Idrīs' role evolved. Upon receiving the news of the conquest of Āmid, Selīm issued blank titles of investiture to Idrīs and the Ottoman commander in Diyārbakr, Bıyıqlı Meḥmed Pasha, and asked the two leaders to appoint appropriate and worthy men to the thirty districts that had been delineated by the sultan and his finance director in Constantinople.[54] This distribution of lands established the basic outlines for the Ottoman administration of Diyārbakr in the tenth/sixteenth century. Specifically, those areas that had been governed traditionally by Kurdish lords were granted a high degree of autonomy, while the rest

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[51] In a report to Selīm composed around Muḥarram 921/March 1515, Idrīs reiterates his objectives: to travel among the Kurds and distribute honors (*tashrīfāt*), deliver orders (*aḥkām*), and report on developments to the court (*ishārat-i humāyūn bi-tablīgh-i akhbār-i īn-javānib shuda būd*), TSMA E. 8333/2.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 133a.
[54] In a report he sent to Selīm shortly before the city's conquest in Shaᶜbān 921/September 1515, Idrīs suggests the need to reward leaders of the Ottoman-Kurdish coalition who were sent to relieve the populace of Āmid, TSMA E. 1019. On the division of the conquered province, see Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," 1:471.

of the province—mainly to the west and north of Āmid—was divided into traditional districts and included in the Ottoman land surveys conducted during the final years of Selīm's reign.[55]

In some ways, Diyārbakr was primed for these vast political shifts. Since the early ninth/fifteenth century the Kurdish lords around Lake Van had exercised considerable autonomy by offering their allegiance to the Aqquyunlu and Qaraquyunlu, as the two Turkmen confederations fought over summer and winter pastures in Armanīya and Diyārbakr.[56] Uzun Ḥasan's emergence as the sole authority in western Iran led to the loss of this autonomy, yet the final chaotic decades of Aqquyunlu rule offered the Kurdish lords the chance to reassert themselves. Shah Ismāʿīl's conquests of Diyārbakr in the first decade of the sixteenth century upended the Kurdish lords' autonomy once again. Initially, most of these lords offered obeisance to Shah Ismāʿīl and continued to enjoy their self-governing privileges; however, the standing of many of these lords was significantly altered in 913/1507-8 at the instigation of Shah Ismāʿīl's viceroy of Diyārbakr, Ustajlu Muḥammad Khan. In that year, sixteen Kurdish lords presented themselves before Shah Ismāʿīl to renew their allegiance.[57] Ustajlu Muḥammad Khan persuaded Shah Ismāʿīl to imprison the Kurdish lords and appoint trusted Qizilbash leaders to rule in their stead.[58] Between this betrayal and the Battle of Chāldirān, most of these Kurdish lords were imprisoned or on the run. Not surprisingly, as a consequence of the Ottoman victory over the

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[55] For details on this point, see below.
[56] Sönmez, "An Acem Statesman," 64; Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 98, 110–112.
[57] The *Sharafnāma* includes Sharaf al-Dīn of Bidlīs, Malik Khalīl of Ḥiṣnkayfā, Shāh ʿAlī Bukhtī of Jazīra, Mīr Dāvud of Ḥīzān, and ʿAlī Beg Sāsūnī in addition to eleven unnamed lords as the party of Kurdish lords who offered allegiance to Shah Ismāʿīl in his winter camp at Khoy, Sharaf Khān Bidlīsī, *Schéref-Nâmeh*, 1:410; According to Roger Savory, Shah Ismāʿīl passed the winter of 913/1507-8 in Khoy, where he received Sharaf al-Dīn's submission, Savory, "The Consolidation of Ṣafawid Power in Persia," 76.
[58] Shah Ismāʿīl entrusted Amīr Sharaf al-Dīn to Amīr Khan Mawṣillu, Chāyān Sulṭān was given Bidlīs to conquer, Dīv Sulṭān Rūmlu was assigned to Ḥakkārī, and Yakān Beg Qurchibashi Takalu was sent to Jazīra, Sharaf Khān Bidlīsī, *Schéref-Nâmeh*, 1:411.

Qizilbash, many of these same lords maneuvered to reassert their authority in their ancestral lands. For this reason, an Ottoman alliance with these local military commanders appealed to Selīm. The Ottoman departure from Tabriz was intended to be temporary, and an alliance with these local military commanders would prove beneficial in the coming year's campaign in Āzarbāyjān.

Clearly, many of the Kurdish lords were predisposed to such an alliance. While the army was still in Tabriz, one of these lords, Amīr Sharaf al-Dīn, the Rūzhakī chieftain and former lord of Bidlīs, approached the Ottoman camp in order to offer his allegiance to Selīm.[59] Sharaf al-Dīn's overtures were particularly significant, as he was well connected through marital and familial ties with many of the leading Kurdish lords to the south and east of Lake Van. Moreover, Sharaf al-Dīn's father had been a close friend and patron of Idrīs' father Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī, especially after Ḥusām al-Dīn returned to Bidlīs from his years of study with Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh in Sūliqān.[60] These connections between Sharaf al-Dīn and leading Kurdish lords, as well as with Idrīs, rendered an alliance with the former lord of Bidlīs invaluable to the Ottomans as they planned a future campaign against Shah Ismāʿīl in Āzarbāyjān. Even before the Ottoman army left Tabriz, Selīm sought to capitalize on his alliance with the prominent Kurdish lord. In a letter carried by Idrīs to one of Sharaf al-Dīn's allies, Amīr Dāvud, lord of Ḥīzān, Selīm mentioned his new alliance with Sharaf al-Dīn and ordered Amīr Dāvud to aid Sharaf al-Dīn in his bid to reclaim Bidlīs.[61]

Between Idrīs' departure from the Ottoman army in the middle of Rajab/September and the onset of winter, he followed a circuitous route from Urmīya to Bidlīs that passed by many of

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[59] This detail is included in an Ottoman decree to another Kurdish lord, Amīr Dāvud of Ḥīzān, from the Ottoman camp at Tabriz, Ferīdūn Beğ, *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn*, 1:392–3.
[60] See chapter one for specific details on this relationship.
[61] Ferīdūn Beğ, *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn*, 1:392–393.

the strongholds of the Kurdish lords who had been oppressed by Shah Ismāᶜīl. The journey was certainly arduous; in addition to the heavy snows that regularly envelop the mountainous region beginning in the autumn, Idrīs and his small party had to contend with the harassment of Qizilbash agents and Kurdish bandits.[62] Indeed, while Idrīs was among the Brādūst Kurds in Urmīya, Shah Ismāᶜīl sent a messenger to him who informed him of the shah's recapture of Tabriz and invited him to offer his allegiance. In one of his reports to Selīm, Idrīs states that he was able to thwart this overture, since at that time he enjoyed the hospitality and protection of the Brādūst lords.[63] Idrīs' negotiations with these lords proceeded productively, as he secured from them promises to join forces with the Mukrī Kurds around Suldūz and Sayyid Amīr of Sūrān in order to fight the Qizilbash. From Urmīya, Idrīs continued on to ᶜImādīya, where he met with Sulṭān-Ḥusayn, the leader of the Bahādīnān, and to Jazīra-yi ᶜUmarīya, where he met with Shāh ᶜAlī of the Bukhtān.[64] Both of these lords had been imprisoned by Shah Ismāᶜīl in 913/1507-8 and readily agreed to offer allegiance to Selīm. Idrīs notes in one of his reports that the sultan's name was proclaimed in the Friday sermon of these cities.[65]

Idrīs' early efforts to mobilize these Kurdish lords caused considerable problems for Shah Ismāᶜīl as he sought to reestablish his authority in Āzarbāyjān after the departure of the Ottoman army. In one of his reports, Idrīs notes that the Brādūst and their allies repulsed a large Qizilbash force under the newly appointed viceroy (*vakīl-i salṭana*) Chāyān Sulṭān.[66] Shortly thereafter, the Kurds attacked Shah Ismāᶜīl and his entourage while the young ruler was on a hunting

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[62] Idrīs mentions these troubles in a report he submitted to Selim in Muharram 921/March 1515, TSMA E. 8333/2.
[63] Ibid. Idrīs also alludes to this episode in his later narrative account of his mission in *Salīmshāhnāma.*
[64] TSMA E. 8333/2.
[65] TSMA E. 8333/2 (line 53). Bidlīsī. *Salīmshāhnāma*, 133a.
[66] TSMA E. 8333/2 (lines 55-57).

expedition between Marāgha and Suldūz. According to Idrīs' report, the Kurds killed 500 of the

shah's pesonal guard (*qurchi*) and almost killed Ismāʿīl himself, who barely managed his escape

back to Tabriz.[67] Similarly, the Ottoman alliances with the Sūrān and Bukhtī tribes also yielded

results on the battlefield. After Idrīs' visits to ʿImādīya and Jazīra, Sulṭān-Ḥusayn and Shāh ʿAlī

led raids on Arbīl and Mosul, while Malik Khalīl led an unsuccessful assault on the Qizilbash

force garrisoned at his ancestral home in Ḥiṣnkayfā.[68] Lastly, in the middle of winter, Sharaf al-

Dīn led a daring raid against Shah Ismāʿīl's Pāzūkī allies north of Bidlīs and killed a number of

their leaders.[69] While none of these military activities were intended to lead to the complete

overthrow of Shah Ismāʿīl's regime, they were likely conceived as skirmishing maneuvers meant

to harass and demoralize Shah Ismāʿīl's forces before the return of the Ottoman army in the

following spring.

Although all of these activities were likely intended in preparation for a large Ottoman

offensive, several critical developments within the main Ottoman camp in the intervening

months since its departure from Tabriz undermined its ability to conduct large scale operations in

921/1515. First, the Ottoman army's return journey to Amasya was fraught with significant

hardships. Despite conducting successful raids against Qizilbash and Georgian-controlled

territory, the Ottoman army had significant difficulties obtaining sufficient supplies. The scarcity

of foodstuffs was evidently widespread. Even as the Ottoman army approached Erzurum,

Selīm's agents who were sent to requisition and purchase supplies from a local lord returned

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[67] TSMA E. 8333/2 (lines 59-62).

[68] Idrīs mentions Malik Khalīl's activities in TSMA E. 8333/2 (lines 106-116). He includes details of this action and the activities of Sulṭān-Ḥusayn and Shāh ʿAlī in *Salīmshāhnāma* (TSMK Emanet Hazinesi 1423, 133a).

[69] In the report Idrīs mentions that a number of relatives of Khālid Beg were killed, including his brother Rustam Beg, two of his sons, and his paternal cousin, TSMA E. 8333/2 (lines 87-106).

empty-handed.[70] The consequences of this difficult autumn journey back to Rūmīya were significant; in the span of less than two months, more than 1,000 men died and more than 100,000 transport animals perished.[71] The hardships of the road likely contributed to the mounting discontent within Selīm's army. While the janissaries and other household units had petitioned the sultan to abandon Tabriz, they were unable to spend the winter at home in Galata and Constantinople. All of these hardships, and the mounting rumors of an upcoming campaign in the spring, doubtlessly contributed to the janissary uprising that rocked the Ottoman winter camp in Amasya on 8 Muḥarram 921/22 February 1515.[72] The uprising included an assault on the quarters of Selīm's grand vizier, of the finance director, and of the chief military judge of Rumili, and led to considerable political fallout. In the following weeks, Selīm stabbed and killed his grand vizier in the midst of a council meeting and dismissed his chancellor and finance director of Anadolu for their purported role in instigating the unrest.[73] More importantly, the toll of these hardships undermined the fighting ability of Selīm's army to such an extent that the sultan modified the upcoming campaign's objectives. Rather than return to Āzarbāyjān with the whole army, Selīm sent smaller units to conquer Kamākh (Kemah), a fortress in the vicinity of Erzurum, and subdue ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla, the Dulqadirid Turkmen lord of Albistān (Elbistan), who had allied himself with Shah Ismāʿīl. While the realization of both these missions advanced Ottoman strategic objectives in the region—and were grandly lauded as major achievements in later historical writing—these conquests did little to harm directly Shah Ismāʿīl in Tabriz.[74]

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[70] See Selim's order to Sevindik Beğ with the request for supplies and Sevindik Beğ's apologetic reply that he could proffer none, Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," 1:393–4.
[71] Ibid., 1:464.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] For Idrīs narrative account of these victories, see Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 113b-119a, 123a-125b.

Moreover, shortly after ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla's defeat and execution in late 29 Rabīʿ I 920/mid May 1515, Selīm ordered the entire army to withdraw to Constantinople.[75]

It is unlikely that Idrīs and the Kurdish lords understood the gravity of the situation within the Ottoman royal camp in the late winter and spring of 1515. Throughout the autumn and winter, Idrīs sent several reports to the Ottoman royal camp without receiving replies and further instructions.[76] Finally, in the middle of Muḥarram 921/early March 1515, Idrīs, while residing in Bidlīs, received an order addressed to the Kurdish lords whom he had recruited to the Ottoman cause.[77] The order, which was likely issued shortly before the disturbances in Amasya, was particularly ill timed, as it seems to have encouraged Idrīs' efforts to consolidate a Kurdish coalition and initiate hostilities against the Qizilbash at the same time that Selīm was beginning to modify his military objectives in the wake of the janissary uprising. While the precise contents of the order are unknown, it seems likely that it included instructions for organizing the upcoming summer campaign, for around this same time, and possibly as a consequence of this order, Idrīs convened a meeting of twenty-five Kurdish lords to coordinate the spring offensive.[78]

The arrival of spring initiated a burst of military activity among the Kurdish lords. Most importantly, the coalition faced a considerable threat from Qizilbash forces advancing on Bidlīs and Akhlāṭ (Ahlat). Kurd Beğ, the former Qizilbash governor of the area, organized an army of 5,000 troops from the combined forces of the former Qizilbash governors and Kurdish allies north of Lake Van, including the former governors of Arjīsh (Erciş, Turkey) and Adiljavāz

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[75] Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," 1:465.
[76] TSMA E.8333/2 (lines 13-15).
[77] TSMA E.8333/2 (line 15).
[78] We know about the existence of these orders from Idrīs' report written in reply. After sending many unanswered reports, "In thanks to God Almighty, in the middle of Muḥarram (late February 1515), royal orders arrived to some of the lords of Kurdistan along with gifts/ *bi-ḥamd illáh taʿālá dar avāsiṭ-i muḥarram farāmīn-i muṭāʿa bi-baʿẓ-i umarā-yi Kurdistān bā tashrīfāt yāft*," TSMA E.8333/2 (line 15).

(Adılcevaz, Turkey), the Kurdish lords of the Pājūkī tribe, and the sons of Khālid Beğ, whose father had been executed by Selīm in the immediate wake of Chāldirān.[79] In response to this advance, Idrīs gathered a Kurdish force of 4,000 men from Bidlīs, Ḥīzān, Muks, Shirvān, and Sāsūn to meet the advancing Kurd Beğ's army outside of Arjīsh. The Kurdish troops surprised and routed completely the Qizilbash force and returned toward Bidlīs burdened with copious booty.[80]

While still on the road to Bidlīs, a new order arrived to Idrīs from Selīm. The order requested Idrīs to gather the Kurdish forces and advance to Chapākhjūr (Bingöl, Turkey),[81] where they were to await the arrival of Bıyıqlı Meḥmed, the former royal equerry (*mīrāḫūr*) and current Ottoman commander (*beğlerbeği*) in Bāyburd, before continuing on together to confront the Qizilbash forces besieging Āmid.[82] At the same time, the order also specified that the main Ottoman army was heading west to engage the forces of ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla. On the one hand, the order was well received among the Kurdish lords, for it signaled Selīm's acceptance of a strategic objective shared by the Kurds. In the wake of Chāldirān, the populace of Āmid had risen against the Qizilbash garrison and successfully expelled Shah Ismāʿīl's troops from the

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[79] In his report to Selim written in early summer 921/1515, Idrīs details the size of the Qizilbash force and the names of the principal leaders: Kurd Beğ, Abūʾl-Fatḥ Valad Ḥajjī Beg, Muḥammad Beg the brother of Khālid Beg, and his son, and Deli Khalīfa, TSMA E. 8333/3 (line 12); For Idrīs' subsequently written narrative account of the confrontation, see Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 128a.

[80] While Idrīs does not include the size of the Kurdish force in *Zayl-i Hasht Bihisht*, he specifies that an army of 4,000 Kurdish troops assembled to confront the Qizilbash advance in his report to Selim written in the summer of 921/1515, TSMA E. 8333/3 (line 11-12).

[81] Abū Bakr Ṭihrānī renders this town Chapākhjūr in his chronicle, Tihrani, *Kitab-i Diyarbakriyya*, 230, 418-9, while Idrīs calls it Chapājūr in his reports to Selīm, TSMA E. 8333/2.

[82] *Dar ḥīn-i ʿawd dar Bidlīs bar ḥasb-i farmān-i humāyūn jamʿ rā bi-mulāzamat va khidmat-i amīr-i umarā al-kirām Muḥammad Beg bi-mawżiʿ-i Chapājūr jihat-i maṣlaḥat-i Amid-i maḥrūsa va rafʿ-i muḥāṣirān va mufsidān-i ānjā ʿāzim sākht*, E. 8333/3 (lines14-15). Bıyıqlı Mehmed was appointed commander in Bāyburd on 5 Ramaḍān 920/23 October 1514 as the Ottoman army made its way to its winter quarters in Amasya, Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," 1:464

city. Since that time, the city had been besieged by these same troops and sought relief from the

Ottoman army. In Idrīs' reply to this order, he underscored the strategic significance of securing

the city by suggesting that Āmid represented "the key to the conquest of the region."[83] Moreover,

in his subsequent recollections on the campaign, he attributed this sentiment to the Kurdish lords

in his company who viewed Āmid as "the key to the conquest of Iran and the capital of the

Bayandur lords and kings."[84] Yet, on the other hand, the order seems to have disquieted the

Kurdish lords, who, in light of the recent Qizilbash offensive from the direction of Āẕarbāyjān,

were weary of committing all of their forces to a campaign in Diyārbakr, especially in

consideration of the Ottoman pivot westward against ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla. As a consequence of this

order, the Kurdish lords asked Idrīs to accompany a delegation of Kurdish leaders to the sultan in

order to communicate personally the gravity of the situation on the eastern front.[85] As this party

arrived in Kīghī (Kığı, Turkey), they were met by one of Idrīs' messengers, who was returning

from the Ottoman royal camp with news of the Ottoman defeat of the Dulqadirid ruler ʿAlāʾ al-

Dawla and Selīm's decision to return with the Ottoman army to Constantinople.[86] As these new

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[83] *Kilīd-i fatḥ-i bilād ast*. TSMA E.8333/3 (line 24).
[84] *Āmid-i maḥrūsa ki kilīd-i futūḥ-i mamālik-i Īrānī ast va pā-yi takht-i mulūk va salāṭīn-i Bāyandur-khānī*, Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 130a. Hoca Saʿdeddīn directly translated this line into his Ottoman history written in the latter half of the sixteenth century, Hoca Saʿdeddīn, *Tācüʾt-tevārīḫ*, 2:308.
[85] According to Idrīs' account in *Salīmshāhnāma*, the Kurdish lords appointed Idrīs, in recognition of his friendship and ties of common descent, along with a number of delegates as emissaries on an unspecified mission to Selīm's camp. Ḫoca Saʿdeddīn suggests that this mission was intended to request Ottoman reinforcements for joint military activities with the Kurds in Diyārbakr and Āẕarbāyjān, Sadeddin, *Tācüʾt-tevārīḫ*, 2:308.
[86] *Chun bi-navāḥī-yi Kīghī ittifāq-i nuzūl va vuṣūl uftād firistāda-yi faqīr bā javāb-i ʿarẓ-dāsht az bārgāh-i jahān-panāh rasīd va khabar-i tavajjuh-i humāyūn bi-surʿat-i tamām bi-jānib-i dāriʾl-khilāfa rasānīd*, Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 131b.

developments further threatened the position of the Kurdish lords, Idrīs and his party decided to
return to Bidlīs to inform the Kurdish lords and formulate a new course of action.[87]

Clearly, the news of Selīm's decision to return home in the middle of a summer
campaign came as a shock to Idrīs and his Kurdish allies. Throughout the autumn and winter
Idrīs had furnished Selīm and the Ottoman leadership with detailed accounts of Shah Ismāʿīl's
troubles in reestablishing control throughout Iran in the wake of Chāldirān. In one such report
written around late Muḥarram 921/March 1515, Idrīs informed Selīm of Bābur's declaration of
independence from Shah Ismāʿīl and his seizure of most of Khurāsān.[88] Similarly, another
Timurid prince, Muḥammad Mīrzā, the son of Badīʿ al-Zamān ibn Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqara, had
claimed Astarābād as his own, while the Qizilbash were in flight from Khurāsān, Kirmān, Sīstān,
and ʿIrāq. [89] This favorable state of affairs certainly increased the prospects for a successful
campaign in the summer of 921/1515, and contributed to Idrīs' confusion at hearing news of the
Ottoman withdrawal. Perhaps for this reason, in a subsequent report completed around Rabīʿ
II/late May-early June, Idrīs voiced his dismay at hearing the news of the Ottoman retreat to
Constantinople: "in succession, reports were mentioned and became known of the return of the
royal camp to its residence in Constantinople. I, in the midst of this loyal group [of Kurds],
became confused and surprised."[90] The news was particularly disheartening as it exposed the
Kurdish lords to a potential Qizilbash offensive without the support of the Ottoman army. As
Idrīs observed, the Kurdish lords were particularly vulnerable as they had thrown off their

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[87] Saʿdeddīn, *Tācüʾt-tevārīḫ*, 2:308.
[88] TSMA E.8333/2 (lines 23).
[89] TSMA E.8333/2 (line 28-29).
[90] *Bar sabīl-i tavātur khabar-i ʿawdat va surʿat-i nahżat-i navvāb-i kāmyāb bi-mustaqarr-i sarīr-i khilāfat maẕkūr va mashhūr shud va īn banda-yi kamīna miyān-i jamʿī az muvāfiqān va munāfiʿān sharmanda va ḥayrān mānd*, E.8333/3 (line 17-18).

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deceptive shows of fealty (*mudārā*) to Shah Ismāʿīl and initiated hostilities.[91] Not surprisingly, the news of the Ottoman withdrawal also threatened to collapse the coalition that Idrīs had worked hard to assemble.

As a consequence of these unsettling developments, the Kurdish lords decided to appoint Idrīs and Sharaf al-Dīn's chief adviser (*vazīr*), Muḥammad Āghā, as emissaries to Bıyıqlı Meḥmed in the hope that the two men could secure reassurances and material support from the Ottoman forces.[92] The two men traveled to Bāyburd in the summer of 921/1515, where they presented the Kurdish lords' concerns to the Ottoman commander. Bıyıqlı Meḥmed summarized the concerns of these men as related by Muḥammad Āghā in a subsequent petition that he sent to Selīm. According to the petition, the Kurds, in accordance with Selīm's orders had fought the Qizilbash, and, after hearing the news of the defeat of ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla, had hoped that the Ottoman army would head east to renew its campaign against Shah Ismāʿīl.[93] Since this did not happen, the Kurdish lords were left vulnerable to Qizilbash overtures for reconciliation with the Qizilbash forces under the command of Chāyān Sulṭān.[94] Bıyıqlı Meḥmed requested means to reassure the Kurdish leaders and specified that Idrīs and Muḥammad Āghā would remain in his company until his messenger, the *timar defterdarı,* Ḫoca Niẓāmeddīn ʿAlī, returned with the sultan's order.[95]

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[91] Ibid.

[92] Idrīs includes this detail in E.8333/3 (line 21-22). Bıyıqlı Meḥmed corroborates this account in his petition to Selīm from the summer of 921/1515, TSMA E.5858.

[93] *Evvel kelimātları bu oldı ki müddet-i medīddir ki devletlü Ḫüdāvendigār Ḥaẕretlerinin uğuruna hükm-i şerīfleri mucibince Qızılbaş melāʿini ile ceng ve cedāl defʿātile pençe bölük ademlerini qırub memleketlerine ġāret etdüğü bu umīde ki devlet ve saʿādet ile ʿAlāʾüʾd-devle'yi feth etdikden sonra bu diyārun ʿacizini ve mesākini ehl-i küfr elinden ḫalāṣ aldılar idi*, TSMA E.5858 (lines 4-8).

[94] TSMA E.5858 (lines 16-17).

[95] TSMA E.5858 (lines 30-33).

Niẓāmeddīn set out from Bāyburd (Bayburt, Turkey) in late Jumādá II 921/early August 1515 and traveled by post-horse to Istanbul. His arrival at the Ottoman court coincided with a number of significant developments within the upper echelons of the Ottoman leadership. In particular, beginning on 3 Rajab/13 August, Selīm sought to resolve the dissension within the Ottoman ranks that had led to the janissary uprising in Amasya earlier in the year. For the next week, Selīm engaged in an investigation and a complex negotiation with the janissaries to determine the principal instigators of the Amasya uprising. By 10 Rajab/20 August, Selīm had ordered the execution of one of his viziers, İskender Pasha; one of his military judges, Tācīzāde Caᶜfer Çelebi; and a number of other palace officials. These political developments, combined with the fallout from a large fire in the central market (*bedestān*) on 15 Rajab/25 August, delayed Niẓāmeddīn from resolving his mission. Despite the efforts of the grand vizier, Pīrī Pasha, to bring Bıyıqlı Meḥmed's petition to the attention of the royal council on 10 Rajab/20 August, Selīm did not turn his attention to resolving the matter until Thursday, 20 Rajab/30 August. In recognition of the Kurdish plea for reinforcements, Selīm appointed Ṣādī Beğ, the Ottoman commander of Rūmīya, along with five provincial commanders to meet the combined forces of Bıyıqlı Meḥmed and the Kurds for the relief of Āmid.[96]

Niẓāmeddīn arrived in Bāyburd in early Shaᶜbān/mid September with news of Selīm's decision.[97] The promise of reinforcements must have been satisfactory to Muḥammad Āghā and

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[96] Bidlīsī. *Salīmshāhnāma*, 132a. According to Ḥaydar Çelebi, Selīm appointed the commander of Rūmīya (the edition mistakenly states the commander of Rumili), along with the provincial commanders of Sīvās, Qayṣeri, Qırşehir (Kırşehir, Turkey), and 2,000 men from among the forces of Şehsüvaroğlu, the recently appointed Ottoman governor of the newly conquered Dulqadirid domains, Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," 1:468.

[97] According to Idrīs, Niẓāmeddīn traveled by post-horse between Bayburd and Constantinople and back in the span of forty days (Bidīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 132a). If, as is suggested by Ḥaydar Çelebi's account, Niẓāmeddīn spent ten days in Constantinople between 10 Rajab/20 August and 20 Rajab/30 August (Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme, 1:468), this would suggest that Niẓāmeddīn

the other Kurdish delegates, as Niẓāmeddin's return set off a flurry of activity in preparation for the campaign to relieve Āmid. Bıyıqlı Meḥmed readied his troops and set out for the appointed meeting place by the middle of Shaʿbān/latter half of September.[98] On the way to the agreed-upon meeting place, Bıyıqlı Meḥmed's forces engaged and defeated at Chapākjūr a large Qizilbash force sent from Āzarbāyjān to reinforce the besiegers at Āmid.[99] Meanwhile, Idrīs traveled to Chamīshkazak (Çemişgezek), Mardīs, and Chapākhjūr, and sent messengers to Bidlīs, Ḥiṣnkayfā (Hasankeyf, Turkey), Ḥīzān, Jazīra-yi ʿUmarīya (Cezire, Turkey), and Sāsūn in order to inform the various Kurdish lords of the new course of action.[100] The combined Ottoman-Kurdish army, once assembled, advanced to within five-days march of Āmid, at which point the Qizilbash besiegers learned of their approach, lifted the siege, and fled in the direction of Mārdīn.[101] In late Shaʿbān/early October, the Ottoman-Kurdish army entered Āmid.[102] Over the course of the following winter and spring, Bıyıqlı Meḥmed's troops would press the Qizilbash

covered the distance between Bāyburd and Constantinople in fifteen days—he left Bāyburd in late Jumādá II/early August, spent ten days in Constantinople between 10 Rajab/20 August and 20 Rajab/30 August, and returned to Bāyburd in early Shaʿbān/mid-September after another fifteen-day journey. This rate of travel is perhaps reasonable. In his geographical work, *al-Iʿlān al-ʿibād fī aʿlām al-bilād*, completed a few years after Niẓāmeddin's mission, Muṣṭafá ibn ʿAlī el-Muvaqqit records the distance between Constantinople and Erzincan as 617 miles and notes that a horse could travel twenty-eight miles per day in daylight. This view suggests that the Constantinople-Erzincan journey could be accomplished in approximately twenty-two days, Yavuz Unat, "Mustafa İbn Ali el-Muvakkit ve İ'lâm el-'İbâd fî A'lâm el-Bilâd (Şehirler Aleminde Mesafelerin Bildirimi) Adlı Risâlesi," *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies* 7, no. 10 (2004): 27, 37. Niẓāmeddin's fifteen-day journey between Constantinople and Bāyburd is therefore reasonable, especially in consideration of the fact that he traveled by post-horse.
[98] Idrīs, in a report written to Selim shortly before the relief of Āmid, states that Bıyıqlı Meḥmed left with his forces from Bāyburd in the middle of Shaʿbān/early September to meet Şādī Beğ and the other Ottoman reinforcements (*dar muntaṣif-i Shaʿbān pāshā bīglarbīgī bi-mūjib-i farmān tavajjuh farmud va bi-umarā va asākir-i Ẕuʾl-Qadir va Qayṣariyya va Sivās va ghayrihim ʿammā qarīb ba-ham payvasta*), TSMA E. 1019 (lines 35-36).
[99] Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, Emanet Hazinesi 1423, 132a.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid., 133a.

forces in the region, capture the city of Mārdīn, and decisively defeat the remaining Qizilbash troops under the command of Qara Khan Ustajlu at a pitched battle at Qoçḥiṣār (Kızıltepe) in Rabīᶜ II 922/May 1516.[103]

The conquest of Diyārbakr was significant. In a matter of eighteen months, the Ottoman forces, with the cooperation of the Kurdish lords, had greatly expanded Ottoman domains east of the Euphrates. For the first time in its history, the Ottoman Sultanate endeavored to govern lands, for which Islamic cultural and administrative heritage extended temporally to the first Arab conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries. While all Ottoman conquests, whether of Christian populations in the Balkans or Turkmen rulers in Anatolia, involved recognition and cooptation of local elites through the extension of privileges and the confirmation of rank, the conquests of Diyārbakr, as well as Syria and Egypt in the coming years, necessitated a more pronounced accommodation of the local Muslim notables. After all, in many cases these notables had enjoyed privileges under successive dynasties for centuries. Ottoman claims to conquer for the sake of justice for the Muslim community could only be fully substantiated through the confirmation of the time-honored rights of this community's leaders. Moreover, both the local military and learned elites had important contributions to make to the new Ottoman administration of these lands. Ottoman governance in Diyārbakr, Syria, and Egypt was fraught with a number of military and political challenges throughout the 1510s and 1520s. In many cases, the Ottoman solution to these challenges relied on the assistance of the local elites who had been recruited to the Ottoman cause in the earliest days following the conquest of these territories.

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[103] Idrīs describes this battle in one of his reports to Selīm (TSMA E. 8333/1).

VI.4 Ottoman Administrative Arrangements in Diyārbakr

According to Ḥaydar Çelebi, the chief secretary of the Ottoman royal council during

Selīm's reign, the Ottoman sultan and his court in Constantinople greeted the news of the relief

of Āmid with considerable activity. On 27 Ramazḍān 921/4 November 1515, the day after the

Ottoman messenger Küçük Aḥmed arrived from Āmid with the victory notice, Selīm divided the

newly constituted province of Diyārbakr into twenty-three districts (*sancak*) and appointed

Bıyıqlı Meḥmed the supreme commander (*beğlerbeği*) of the province with a right to 1.5 million

Ottoman aspers in tax revenue from the district of Āmid. On 3 Shawwāl/9 November 1515,

Selīm bestowed upon Idrīs a gift of 2,000 florins and promoted Küçük Aḥmed, the bearer of the

good tidings, to the rank of district commander (*sancak beği*) in Ḥārpūt (Elazığ, Turkey),[104] one

of the newly formed administrative districts in Diyārbakr.[105] Küçük Aḥmed waited in

Constantinople for eleven more days, during which time the chancery drew up the titles of

investiture for the newly appointed district commanders of Diyārbakr. On 12 Shawwāl/18

November, as Küçük Aḥmed was about to return to Diyārbakr with the titles of investiture in

hand, Selīm altered his decision and recalled the messenger. Selīm took the orders from Küçük

Aḥmed, invited the chancellor and the chief secretary to the council, and ordered both of them to

prepare thirty new documents consisting of twenty-three titles of investiture (*berāt*) and seven

treaties (*istimāletnāme*) with Kurdish lords that confirmed their pre-existing rights within their

ancestral lands. In contrast to the previously prepared documents, the particular beneficiaries of

these new titles of investiture were to remain unspecified. In the order to Idrīs that accompanied

these documents, the sultan instructed his adviser to collaborate with Bıyıqlı Meḥmed and to

appoint worthy men as district commanders and prepare for them titles of investiture in the style

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[104] Rendered Kharput in Tihrani, *Kitab-i Diyarbakriyya.*
[105] Barkan, "H. 933-934 (M. 1527-1528) Mali Yılına âit bir bütçe örneği," 306.

befitting their status.[106] Similarly, Idrīs and Bıyıqlı Meḥmed were to proceed along similar lines in recognizing the pre-existing rights of the Kurdish lords.[107]

The order gave the two men extensive authority to establish the basic contours of Ottoman administration in Diyārbakr. The establishment of these relations with the Kurdish lords followed a similar pattern to the relationships that the Ottomans established with Christian temporal and religious authorities in the Balkans as they exerted authority in southeastern Europe during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Frequently, the Ottomans successfully coopted the military and religious elites of these newly conquered areas through the recognition of pre-conquest privileges and the bestowal of hereditary prebends (*tīmār*) that both acknowledged ancestral property claims and initiated a modicum of integration with the new Ottoman administrative order, such as it existed.[108] This approach had the advantage of demonstrating an acceptance of a leader's pre-existing status within his own domain, even as it eroded gradually the leader's independence by establishing a fixed and formal relationship with the Ottoman sultan. The matter that Selīm left to Idrīs and Bıyıqlı Meḥmed was therefore significant. The two men were instructed to determine which Kurdish leaders were worthy of a formal recognition of status, what rights and privileges should be recognized, and where these rights and privileges should exist.

The two statesmen divided the province into two types of administrative units that corresponded to the two types of documents that they were tasked with formulating and

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[106] "It is necessary that the affairs of the province which are to be conferred to every commander be conferred in whatever appropriate manner and that the titles of investiture be composed in a style befitting the titles and ranks of those commanders (*gerekdir ki ol cānibde her beğe tevcīh olunan vilāyetin ahvālı ne vecihle tevcīh olunub ve ol beğlerin elqābı ve meqādiri ne üslūb ile olmaq münāsib ise berātları inşā olunub yazıveresiz*), Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 140b.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Halil İnalcık, "The Status of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch under the Ottomans," *Turcica* 21–23 (1991): 409.

distributing. In the central and western areas of Diyārbakr, the Ottomans would exert more or

less direct administrative control through the appointment of district commanders (*sancak beği*)

who, in most cases, were appointed to these positions from within the Ottoman military class.

According to an Ottoman cadastral survey completed in 924/1518, the Ottomans established

regular districts in Āmid, Mārdīn, ʿArabkir (Arapgır, Turkey), Kīghī, Ḫārpūt, Erghānī, Siverek,

Rūhā (Şanlıurfa, Turkey), Aqçaqalʿa (Akçakale), Çermik, Sincar, and Chamīshkazak.[109] Among

these locales, only Chamīshkazak was the ancestral seat of a Kurdish lord who directly assisted

the Ottomans in the campaign to relieve Āmid. As Selīm's order to Idrīs stipulated, Bıyıqlı

Meḥmed and Idrīs bestowed these districts upon worthy men within the Ottoman ranks.

Moreover, the order instructed Idrīs that "copies of the titles, which are individually written, and

the value of the corresponding usufruct grants should be recorded in a register and sent to my

Sublime Port so that it may be preserved here and its particulars be known and understood."[110]

In places farther east, Bıyıqlı Meḥmed and Idrīs generally recognized the status and

independence of the Kurdish lords. These areas corresponded with the territories of the most

powerful Kurdish lords who joined the Ottoman Diyārbakr campaign in 921/1515. While there is

no record of which lords received one of the seven treaties that Selīm sent to Idrīs, in all

likelihood, these special arrangements accrued to the benefit of the most powerful Kurdish lords

in Bidlīs, ʿImādīya, Ḥiṣnkayfā, Jazīra-yi ʿUmarīya, Ḥīzān, Hakkārī, and Sāsūn. As with the

appointment of district commanders, the order to Idrīs left to his discretion the task of identifying

the particular recipients of these special treaties:

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[109] BOA TT.d.64.

[110] *Ve mufaṣṣelᵉⁿ ol yazılan berevātın ṣūretleri ve tīmārın miqdārlarını daḫi ber-ṣūret-i defter idüb südde-yi saʿādetime daḫi irsāl idesiz ki bunda daḫi ḥıfẓ olunub her ḥuṣūṣ mefhūm ve maʿlūm ola,*" Bidlīsī. *Salīmshāhnāma*, 140b.

Aside from the titles of investiture, blank papers with the sultanic seal were sent for the lords who require special treaties (*istimāletnāmeler*). Each of these should be composed in whatever manner is appropriate for the dispatch of a special treaty and be sent along with the gifts. You should register, along with the copies of the titles of investiture, in what manner the special treaties and gifts were administered and send [this register] to my court.[111]

In the years that followed this bestowal of autonomy, the Ottomans extended privileges to a larger number of Kurdish lords and formalized their semi-autonomous status. According to an Ottoman register prepared in 923/1517, the number of Kurdish commanders affiliated with the Ottoman Sultanate included, along with the rulers of Bidlīs, Ḥīzān, Ḥiṣnkayfā, Jazīra-yi ʿUmarīya, and Sāsūn, twenty-two other Kurdish lords.[112] A decade later, in 933/1527, Süleymān confirmed the status of these Kurdish lords through the issuance of an edict that specified their privileges, including the right to hereditary succession. Except in instances when a Kurdish lord failed to report for a military campaign, the Ottomans had no authority to interfere in the governance of these territories.[113]

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[111] *Ve ol berevātdan ġayrī istimāletnāmeler gönderilmek lāzım olan begler içün daḫi nişānlü beyāż kāġıdlar irsāl olundu anlar daḫi her biri ne vecihle istimāletnāme gönderilmek münāsib ise inşā olunub inʿāmlar ile bile irsāl oluna ve anların mufaṣṣelᵉⁿ ṣūretlerin ve inʿāmda ne vecihle riʿāyet olunduqların ol berevāt ṣūretleri ile bile defter idüb dergāh-i cihān-penāhime irsāl edesiz*, Ibid.

[112] The register is now preserved at the Topkapı Palace Museum Archive (D. 9772). Ömer Lütfi Barkan published the contents of the register in 1954, and suggested that the register was created in the early part of Süleymān's reign, Barkan, "H. 933-934 (M. 1527-1528) Mali Yılına âit bir bütçe örneği"; More recently, Enver Çakar has shown that the register has a *terminus post quem* of Rabīʿ I 923/April 1517 and a *terminus ante quem* of Dhūʾl-Qaʿda 923/December 1517, on the basis of known appointment dates and death dates of men mentioned in the register, Enver Çakar, "XVI. Yüzyılda Şam Beylerbeyliğinin idarî taksimatı," *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 13, no. 1 (2003): 357, n.49.

[113] For further discussion of these two documents as they relate to the Kurdish lords, see Sönmez, "An Acem Statesman," 93–95; and Martin van Bruinessen, "The Ottoman Conquest of Diyarbekir and the Administrative Organization of the Province in the 16th and 17th Centuries," in *Evliya Çelebi in Diyarbekir: The Relevant Section of The Seyahatname*, ed. Martin van Bruinessen and Boeschoten (Leiden ;New York: E.J. Brill, 1988), 13–28.

Even within areas of the province directly administered by the Selīm's appointed district commanders, the Ottomans confirmed the rights and status of the pre-existing local military elites. In the first cadastral survey of Āmid completed in 924/1518, the new Ottoman administration was careful to acknowledge the privileged place of important Aqquyunlu chieftains. The register confirmed the special status of at least two Aqquyunlu notables through their appointment to sizable usufruct grants (zeʿāmet).[114] Similarly, one of the lesser Kurdish chieftains in Āmid was installed in his ancestral lands.[115] For the Kurdish nomadic tribes within the district, the Ottoman compilers of the register examined and confirmed the service and tax stipulations that they had been granted previously by the Aqquyunlu ruler Uzun Ḥasan.[116]

VI.5 Idrīs and the Ottoman Conquest of Mamluk Syria and Egypt

Idrīs' role in the incorporation of Diyārbakr within Ottoman domains constituted his greatest and most lasting accomplishment of statecraft in his long and varied career. The mission garnered for him generous gifts from the sultan—although such gifts paled in comparison with Bıyıqlı Meḥmed's rewards—and reunited him with the royal camp, where he again assumed a role as trusted adviser to Selīm during the Ottoman campaigns against the Mamluks in Syria and Egypt. Despite this apparent notoriety and place of honor in the sultan's immediate company, during his eight months with Selīm in Mamluk lands, Idrīs gradually became frustrated with his

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[114] The notables in question were Ughlan Khalīl, a member of the Bayandur clan, who received a *zeʿāmet* of 25,000 Ottoman aspers; and Farrukhshād Beg ibn Sulaymān Beg, the son of a leading Turkmen clan leader in the reign of Sultan Yaʿqūb, who received a zaʿamat valued at 40,500 Ottoman aspers, M. Mehdi İlhan, *Amid (Diyarbakır): 1518 Detailed Register* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2000), 439, 593.

[115] *Biʾl-tamām nāḥiya-yi maẕkūra bi- khʷud rā tīmār dāda shud ʿan qadīm ham ulkā-yi ū būda*, ibid., 576.

[116] See for example, the arrangement agreed upon for the the Būjiyān tribe (p.153) and the Baṣiyān tribe (p. 172), ibid., 153, 172.

inability to guide the sultan toward what he viewed as a prudent military strategy and a just administrative policy. As in the past, his repeated and vociferous assertions of his own views undermined his relations with Selīm's other top statesmen to the point that the sultan's continued collaboration with Idrīs became untenable. The situation deteriorated to the extent that Selīm ordered Idrīs to return to Constantinople separately from the royal camp in Jumādá II 923/July 1517.[117] This exile would be Idrīs' last. In the final three years of his life, he devoted himself to a new work of history that would both celebrate Selīm's accomplishments and serve as an apologia, memoir, and legacy for its author.

When Idrīs joined Selīm's royal camp in Shawwāl 922/November 1516, the Ottoman army had just reached Damascus after having defeated the main Mamluk army outside Aleppo on 25 Rajab 922/24 August 1516.[118] The immediate circumstances that led to an Ottoman confrontation with the Mamluks likely surprised Idrīs as he resided in Diyārbakr in 922/1516. Indeed, in the winter before the Ottoman-Mamluk confrontation, Selīm signalled every intention of directing the campaign of 922/1516 against Shah Ismāʿīl in western Iran and not against the Mamluks. In Shawwāl 921/November 1515, Selīm ordered the Ottoman commander of Qarāmān with all of the provincial cavalry of the province and one of the household cavalry regiments (ʿulūfeciler) to head to Diyārbakr to reinforce Bıyıqlı Meḥmed's troops.[119] Two months later, at the end of Dhūʾl-ḥijja/late-January 1516, he ordered the Anadolu provincial cavalry to assemble at Qırşehir and the provincial cavalry of Rumili to wait at Sivas.[120] In Rabīʿ I 922/May 1516, he

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[117] Idrīs returned to Constantinople with the Ottoman fleet. Ḥaydar Çelebi notes that Selim gave his admiral, Caʿfer Ağa permission to depart Alexandria on 25 Jumāda II 923, Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," 1:455.

[118] Idrīs rejoined Selīm's camp no later than 25 Shawwāl 922/20 November 1516, as on that date Selim sought Idrīs counsel, ibid., 1:481.

[119] Ibid., 472.

[120] Ibid., 484.

ordered his grand vizier, Sinān Pasha, to proceed to Diyārbakr with the commanders of Rumili, Anadolu, and Qarāmān, and 3,000 janissaries and other household troops.[121] When Selīm departed from Istanbul on 4 Jumādá I 922/5 June 1516, his aim seemed to be a campaign against Shah Ismāʿīl's forces in Diyārbakr and beyond.[122]

Yet shortly after the departure of the army from Constantinople, Selīm's priorities changed drastically. His direction of Ottoman forces to Diyārbakr in the previous winter and spring was likely intended to confront and decisively defeat Shah Ismāʿīl's commander in the province, Qara Khan, who, over the course of the preceding winter, had gathered a sizable force and was threatening Bıyıqlı Meḥmed's position in Āmid. During the spring and into the summer, Bıyıqlı Meḥmed launched a campaign against Qara Khan, which culminated in a decisive Qizilbash defeat near Qoçḥiṣār in Rabīʿ I 922/May 1516. A messenger bearing this news of victory greeted the main Ottoman army under Sinān Pasha's command as it entered Aqşehir (Akşehir) on 20 Rabīʿ II 922/22 May 1516 before he continued on to Selīm.[123] Bıyıqlı Meḥmed's victory likely altered Selīm's calculus. No longer would the entire Ottoman army be required for operations in Diyārbakr. Moreover, political developments in relation to the Mamluks began to alter Selīm's priorities. Throughout the spring and summer, Selīm corresponded regularly with Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, who, in the spring of 922/1516, ordered the entire Mamluk army to advance

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[121] Ibid., 486.

[122] For instance Qāżīzāda, who was travelling with the main Ottoman army at this time, notes that the army departed Constantinople on 4 Jumādá I 922/5 June 1516. Shortly thereafter, while the army was still in Üsküdar, news arrived of the approach of the Mamluk army towards Aleppo. It is possible that Selīm changed his plans around this time, Qāżīzāda, *Ghazavāt-i Sulṭān Salīm*, Hacı Selim Ağa 825, 23b.

[123] Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," 1:477.

north from Cairo to the environs of Aleppo.[124] This Mamluk advance likely alarmed Selīm who

feared that Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī had entered into an alliance with Shah Ismāʿīl and would threaten

the Ottoman rear in the event of a campaign in western Iran.[125] By the late summer, Selīm

recalled the Ottoman army from its mission to Diyārbakr and ordered it to meet him near

Albistān.[126] The order clearly signalled a change in strategic objectives and was followed shortly

by a terse message to the Mamluk sultan, which was penned in Turkish, ignored all diplomatic

protocol, and foreshadowed an Ottoman-Mamluk conflict.[127]

    After meeting the Ottoman army, Selīm advanced south and seized the Mamluk

fortresses at Bihisnī and ʿAyntab before engaging the main Mamluk army outside Aleppo at

Marj Dābiq on 25 Rajab 922/24 August 1516.[128] The decisive Ottoman victory, in which Qānṣūh

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[124] On 8 Rabīʿ I 922/11 April 1516, Selīm received a report from Şehsüvaroğlu that Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī planned to head to Aleppo, ibid., 1:476; The mamluk sultan did not depart from Cairo 21 Rabīʿ II/23 May 1516, Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr*, 5:42.

[125] Bacqué-Grammont provides a thorough discussion of the background to Ottoman-Mamluk relations after the rise of Shah Ismāʿīl. He points to the late Ottoman departure from Constantinople in June 1516 as evidence of Selīm's intentions to campaign in Syria, where a winter in the field would not be as trying as one passed in Āzarbāyjān, Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont, *Les Ottomans, les Safavides et leurs voisins : contribution à l'histoire des relations internationales dans l'orient islamique de 1514 à 1524* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1987), 193–4 Of course, such considerations can be accounted for if Selīm's primary objective, as suggested by the winter and spring troop movements, was Diyārbakr, a more geographically proximate and temperate province.

[126] Selīm met the rest of the army under Sinān Pasha's command near Albistān on 23 Jumādá II 922/23 July 1516, Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," 1:478.

[127] To my knowledge, this message, in the form of an order, is the only extant official correspondence between Ottoman and Mamluk sultans written in Turkish. Not only does the message dispense with the customary diplomatic protocol of royal correspondence in Arabic, but it is formulated as an order from Selim to Qānṣūḥ al-Ghawrī: "Qānṣūḥ al-Ghawrī (May God set right his affairs), upon the arrival of the world-obeying lofty writ and the binding honorable order, should know the following... (*Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī aṣlaḥa Allāh shaʾnahu tevqīʿ-i refīʿ-i cihān-muṭāʿ va ḥükm-i şerif-i vācibüʾl-inqiyād veʾl-ittibāʿ vāṣil olıcaq maʿlūm ola ki...*). The order is dated the middle of Rajab 922/mid-August 1516, two weeks before the battle of Marj Dābiq, and was likely intended as a rallying call for the Ottoman troops in the form of an insult to the Mamluk sultan, ibid., 1:426–7.

[128] Ibid., 478–9.

al-Ghawrī and a large number of Mamluk commanders were killed, opened Syria and Egypt to Ottoman conquest. In the months following this battle, Selīm and the high Ottoman statesmen were fully consumed with the task of establishing a new course of action that would address various demanding military and administrative priorities. For even as the Ottomans worked to expel the remaining Mamluk forces and establish an administration in Syria and Egypt in 922-923/1516-1517, the prospect of yet another campaign to finish off Shah Ismāᶜīl frequently loomed in deliberations of state. In all of these matters, Idrīs offered his services as councillor to Selīm.

Since his resounding success in Kurdistan, Idrīs enjoyed the considerable trust and gratitude of Selīm. Yet, as in the past, such recognition as Idrīs received remained largely informal. He would remain a trusted adviser of Selīm, but not, it seems, in an *ex officio* capacity. In his order addressed to Idrīs in Shawwāl 921/November 1515 regarding the division of Diyārbakr, Selīm mentioned that he sent the scholar 2,000 florins, several fur cloaks, and a sword with a gold-plated sheath as gifts in excess of his normal stipend.[129] While the bestowal of these luxurious gifts demonstrated the sultan's appreciation, there is no indication in the order that Idrīs had been honored through the appointment to a formal post. In contrast, at the same time that Idrīs was awarded these gifts, Bıyıqlı Meḥmed, Idrīs' primary Ottoman collaborator on this mission, was appointed as the Ottoman commander and governor of the province of Diyārbakr and given more than 1.5 million silver aspers.[130] The discrepancy between the rewards

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[129] Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 140b. 2,000 Florins was approximately 110,000 silver aspers in 1509, see Halil Sahillioğlu "Akçe," DİA. Ḥaydar Çelebi also mentions the particular gifts bestowed upon Idrīs in his entry for 13 Shawwāl 921/19 November 1515, ibid., 1:472.
[130] ibid., 1:471; The value of his usufruct grants in Āmid amounted to 1.2 million silver aspers, while his grants in the district of Mārdīn exceeded 1 million silver aspers. On Āmid, see İlhan, *Amid (Diyarbakır)*, 35; On Mārdīn, see Necat Göyünç, *XVI. yüzyılda Mardin Sancağı* (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1969), 151.

offered to Idrīs and Bıyıḳlı Meḥmed may be rooted in the separate professional backgrounds of the two men; as a scholar, the appointment of Idrīs to a governorship was likely inappropriate. Even so, there is little evidence in the sources from Selīm's reign that Idrīs was appointed to any formal post in recognition of his service.[131]

Despite the silence of contemporary sources, there is one source from the reign of Süleymān that suggests Idrīs' appointment as judge of the province of Diyārbakr. In his biographical entry on Idrīs' son Ebū'l-Fażl Meḥmed, ᶜĀşıq Çelebi asserts that he personally saw the title of investiture for Idrīs' appointment to the judgeship of Diyārbakr. Along with the appointment, Idrīs was awarded 2,000 gold coins, a red cloak, and sword with bejeweled sheath. Certainly, ᶜĀşıq Çelebi's account appears authoritative.[132] The specific gifts that he mentions are some of the exact same gifts that were specificied in the royal edict to Idrīs of Shawwāl 921/November 1515, which Idrīs subsequently included in his historical narrative.[133] Unlike ᶜĀşıq Çelebi's assertion, this document offers no indication of Idrīs' appointment to any judicial position. Perhaps on the basis of ᶜĀşıq Çelebi's testimony, beginning in the seventeenth century, Idrīs was remembered as the first appointee to the short-lived military judgeship of the Arab and Persian provinces (ᶜArab ve ᶜAcem Qāḍī-ᶜaskeri). In his biographical dictionary completed in 1044/1634-5, Nevᶜīzāde includes a reference to Idrīs' appointment to this office in his entry on

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[131] In fact, the ambiguous nature of Idrīs' duties in Diyarbakr led to conflict between Bıyıḳlı Meḥmed and Idrīs. Despite Bıyıḳlı Meḥmed's ostensible leadership role on the Ottoman campaign, he complained that Idrīs' informal ties with the Kurdish lords undermined his authority, so much so that in the spring of 922/1516, he requested of Selīm that either he or Idrīs must be recalled from Diyārbakr, Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 147a.

[132] ᶜĀşiḳ Çelebi, *Meşâ'irü'ş-Şu'arâ: Inceleme, Metin*, ed. Filiz Kılıç (Istanbul: İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010), 2:189.

[133] Cf. Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 140b.

the life of Idrīs' son, Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed.[134] According to Nevʿīzāde, when Selīm conquered

Aleppo after the defeat of the Mamluks at Marj Dābiq in 922/1516, he made Idrīs the *ᶜArab ve*

ᶜAcem Qāḍī-ᶜaskeri during his residence in Diyārbakr. Following Idrīs, the position passed to the

judge of Āmid, ᶜAbd al-Ḥayy. In 923/1516-7, Meḥmed Şāh Fenārī was offered the post, the

status of which was elevated at that time to membership in the royal council along with the

military judges of Rumili and Anadolu.[135] Nevʿīzāde's account, written more than one hundred

years after the events it describes, suggests that the military judgeship of these new provinces

was initially created after the conquest of Aleppo and bestowed upon Idrīs. Only with the

appointment of Meḥmed Şāh—a scholar from a distinguished lineage of learned men who held

prominent judicial positions within Ottoman lands—was the new military judgeship afforded a

high rank through participation in the royal council along with the other military judges.[136] If this

account is accurate, then Idrīs—if he held such a position at all—only held the judgeship briefly

some time after Shawwāl 921/November 1515 and before his reunion with Selīm in Damascus in

late Shawwāl 922/November 1516.[137] In all likelihood, the office that Nevʿīzāde describes as the

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[134] On the completion date of Nevʿīzāde's biographical dictionary, see Abdülkadir Özcan's prefatory remarks in Nevizade Atayi, *Şakaik-i nuᶜmaniyye ve zeyilleri*, 2 (Ḥadāʾiq al-Shaqāʾiq fī takmilat al-Shaqāʾiq), vi; For Nevʿīzāde's entry on Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed, see ibid., 2 (Ḥadāʾiq al-Shaqāʾiq fī takmilat al-Shaqāʾiq):188–90.

[135] *Sulṭān Selīm-i Qadīm Ḥażretleri fetḥ-i diyār-i Ḥaleb ve tesḫīr-i bilād-i ᶜarab eyledikde Mollā Idrīs marḥūmu Diyār Bakr'de sākin olmaq üzere ᶜArab ve ᶜAjam Qāḍī-ᶜaskeri itmişler idi baᶜdehü ol manṣıb-ı celīl Āmid Qāḍısı ᶜAbd al-Ḥayy Çelebi'ye tevcīh olundu dokuz yüz yirmi üç tārīḫinde iqlīm-i Mıṣır fetḥinden sonra Memālik-i ᶜArab'a vusᶜat gelüb manṣıb mezbūr mustaqıll-ı ṣadāret ve üç qāḍī-ᶜasker ile dīvān-ı pādişāhī pür zīnet olmaq münāsib görülmekle İstanbul Qāḍısı Meḥmed Şāh Fenari'ye verilmiş idi*, Nevizade Atayi, *Şakaik-i nuᶜmaniyye ve zeyilleri*, 2 (Ḥadāʾiq al-Shaqāʾiq fī takmilat al-Shaqāʾiq):189.

[136] Taşköprüzade, *al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuʿmānīyah fī ʿulamāʾ al-Dawlat al-ʿUthmānīyah*, 383; Mecdi, *Ḥadāʾiq al-shaqāʾiq*, 387.

[137] In Selīm's order (*ḥukm*) to Idrīs dated mid-Shawwāl 921/mid-November 1515, Idrīs is afforded the diplomatic protocol of an honored scholar without any reference to a position as judge (*qāḍī*), Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 140a. For examples of diplomatic protocol for judges in the sixteenth-century Ottoman context, see Ferīdūn Beğ *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn*, 2v. (Istanbul:

military judgeship of the Arab and Persian provinces was in fact a more limited position, the duties of which were confined solely to Diyārbakr. In this case, Idrīs held the office of judge of Diyārbakr as an executive office once Bıyıqlı Meḥmed Pasha, the Ottoman commander of the province, had been called to join the main Ottoman army on the eve of its confrontation with the Mamluks in Syria. Such a possibility also explains Nevᶜīzāde's association of this office with ᶜAbd al-Ḥayy, likely a native of Āmid who held no great administrative or judicial power.[138] If Idrīs held this position, neither he nor his son deemed it worthy of any special mention in the *Salīmshāhnāma*.

The absence of this detail in the contemporary accounts of Selīm's reign is all the more surprising, as a few of these sources, most notably Ḥaydar Çelebi's *Rūznāme* and Qāżīzāda's *Ghazavāt-ı Sulṭān Salīm*, provide detailed records of the appointments and dismissals of top statesmen. Indeed, Qāżīzāda's chronicle does mention the appointment of a military judge to the newly conquered provinces, but it is the appointment of Meḥmed Şāh Fenārī in Muḥarram 924/January 1518, and not Idrīs' appointment two years earlier.[139] In fact, in the account, Qāżīzāda seems to indicate that Meḥmed Şāh Fenārī was the first man appointed to such a position. The section of his history that recounts Meḥmed Şah Fenāri's appointment focuses on

Dāruᵓṭ-ṭibāᶜatiᵓl-ᶜāmire, 1274), 1:11; Ḥaydar Çelebi mentions that Selīm consulted with Idrīs on 25 Shawwāl 922/20 November 1516, approximately one month after Selīm's arrival in Damascus, Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," in *Münşeᵓātüᵓs-selāṭīn* (Istanbul: Dāruᵓṭ-ṭibāᶜatiᵓl-ᶜāmire, 1274), 1:481.

[138] None of the sixteenth-century Ottoman biographical dictionaries of notable scholars mention ᶜAbd al-Ḥayy. This would seem to suggest that he lived and worked mostly outside of Ottoman lands and never fully entered the Ottoman judicial administrative hierarchy.

[139] We can surmise that the appointment occurred in mid-Muḥarram 924/late January 1518, as it came shortly in the wake of Pīrī Pasha's appointment to the grand vizierate, which Qāżīzāda dated 14 Muḥarram 924/26 January 1518, Qāżīzāda, *Ghazavāt-i Sulṭān Salīm*, Selim Ağa 825, 211a, 212a. Ḥaydar Çelebi offers the date of 13 Muḥarram 924/25 January 1518 for Pīrī Pasha's appointment, Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," 1:495.

the general poor state of administrative and judicial affairs into which Diyārbakr, Syria, and

Egypt had fallen through years of mismanagement under Mamluk and Qizilbash rule:

> At that time [at the appointment of Pīrī Pasha to the grand vizierate on 14
> Muḥarram 924], the sultan ordered the perfecting of the aims of the path
> of vicegerency and kingship in order to relieve the affairs of mankind and
> make tranquil the buffeting of the seas of time on account of the
> necessities of sacred tradition and precedent.... all of the lands of the Arabs
> and the best part of the lands of Iran were snatched away from the disgrace
> of the oppressors governing through enmity in that land. He (Selīm) turned
> the reigns toward the aid of the majestic and honorable sacred tradition
> and the halter of governance toward the succor of the pure community,
> which had been weakened in that country from the oppression of those
> rulers without authority and full of perfidy.[140]

In light of this state of affairs, Selīm consulted with the learned men around him. They suggested

Meḥmed Şāh Fenārī, the current judge of Constantinople, whom Selīm appointed to the post of

supreme judge of the Arab and Persian lands.[141] As further indication that this position

constituted a new office, Qāżīzāda clarified Meḥmed Şāh Fenārī's responsibilities:

> The aforementioned eminence, refuge of the judgeship likewise
> bestows the high offices of judgeships, teaching, and issuing
> religious opinions upon the lords of learning and worthiness and
> the masters of guidance on the path to salvation in accordance with
> the requirements of knowledge and faith and in the scope of
> wisdom and justice. He exerts himself to the utmost in the
> construction and upkeep of buildings of the common good in terms
> of mosques, schools, and dervish lodges. He presents his own

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[140] *Dar īn vilā ki ḥażrat-i aᶜlá takmīl-i maqāṣid-i maslak-i khilāfat va salṭanat rā jihat-i taraffuh-i aḥvāl-i anām va āsūdagī-yi talāṭum-i biḥār-i ayyām ḥasb-i ījāb al-sharᶜ va iqtiżāʾ-i taqdīm farmūda būdand...va ᶜarṣa-yi mulk-i ᶜarab tamāmᵃⁿ va anfas va anfaᶜ-i mamālik-i mulk-i Īrān-i ᶜAjam rā bi-ḥīṭa-yi taskhīr az malām-i ẓullām-i vulāt-i ᶜudāt-i ān diyār rahānīda būd ᶜinān bi-iᶜānat-i sharīᶜat-i sharīfa-yi gharrā va zimām-i riᶜāyat bi-ighās̲at-i milla-yi munīfa-yi bayżā (?) ki dar ān diyār az ẓalīma-yi ḥukkām bī-iᶜtibār ghaddār-i bisyār żaᶜīf va khʷār shuda būd mutaᶜaṭṭif gardānīdand*, Qāżīzāde, *Ghazavāt-i Sulṭān Salīm*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Selim Ağa 825, 212b-213a.

[141] *Lā jaram ḥażrat-i aᶜlá ṣadārat va qażāʾ-i qużāt-i mamālik-i ᶜarab va ᶜajam bi-mushārun ilayh tafvīż farmūd*, ibid., 213b. Taşköprüzāde mentions that he was promoted to this position from the judgeship of Constantinople, Taşköprüzade, *al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuᶜmānīyah fī ʿulamāʾ al-Dawlat al-ʿUthmānīyah*, 383.

> thankful efforts in the disputes among Muslims in accordance with
> what God and faith require.[142]

Throughout the sixteenth century, scholars and historians continued to associate Meḥmed Şāh Fenārī with this military judgeship, but not Idrīs.[143] Like Qāżīzāda, Muṣṭafá ᶜĀlī seemed to suggest that Meḥmed Şāh Fenārī was in fact the first appointment to a military judgeship of the newly conquered territories.[144] Yet, as a consequence of Nevᶜīzade's remark recorded in the middle of the seventeenth century and Idrīs' general renown as an important scholar and statesman, a strong tradition of Idrīs as military judge developed, and, indeed, persists today in modern scholarship.

Any doubt regarding Idrīs' *ex officio* role in the Ottoman court must be set in relation to the considerable informal weight that his advice carried with Selīm during the campaign in Syria and Egypt. In his own narrative account, Idrīs mentions that he was recalled from Diyārbakr while Selīm was residing in Damascus so that the sultan could benefit from his counsel.[145] Over the course of the following weeks, Idrīs was frequently in Selīm's intimate company, during which time he undoubtedly had many opportunities to influence Selīm's plans for action. Indeed, Ḥaydar Çelebi notes specifically that on 25 Shawwāl 922/20 November 1516 "Selīm called

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[142] *Va ḥażrat-i ṣadārat-panāh-i mushārʳᵘ ilayh nīz az iqtiżā-yi ᶜilm va diyānat va az faḥva-yi dānish va ḥaqqānīyat manāṣib-i ᶜaliyya-yi qużāt va tadrīs va iftā rā bi-arbāb-i ᶜilm va istiḥqāq va aṣḥāb-i hidāyat ᶜalá al-iṭlāq tafvīż mī-farmūd va dar taᶜmīr va tarvīj-i biqāᶜ al-khayr az masājid va madāris va khānaqāhāt bi-aqṣa al-ghāya va al-nihāyāt-i ihtimām mabẕūl mī dāsht va dar faṣl-i qażāyā-yi muslimīn ḥasabamā huwá muqtaḍá al-ḥaqq wa al-dīn masāᶜī-yi mashkūr bi-taqdīm mī rasānīd*, Qāżīzāda, *Ghazavāt-i Sulṭān Selīm*, Hacı Selim Ağa 825, 214a.

[143] Taşköprüzade associates the position with Meḥmed Şāh Fenārī, but not Idrīs, Aḥmad ibn Muṣṭafá Taşköprüzade, *al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuᶜmānīya*, 314, 383; Hoca Saᶜdeddīn also is silent on Idrīs' tenure in this office in his biographical entry for him, Sadeddin, *Tācüʾt-tevārīḫ*, 2:566–7.

[144] *kadıaskerleri izdiham olmağla talibine rahat ve huzurdan dûr olduklarına binaen, kadı-i leşker üç olmak hususı ki buyuruldı, mevlana-yı mezbura vilayet-i Arab ve Acem kadıaskerliği reva görüldi*, Gelibolulu Muṣṭafá ᶜÂlī, *Kayseri Raşid Efendi Kütüphanesi'ndeki 901 ve 920 No.'lu Nüshalara Göre Kitâbu't-Târīḫ-i Künhu'l-Aḫbâr*, ed. Ahmet Uğur (Kayseri, Turkey: Erciyes Üniversitesi, 1997), 1216–7.

[145] Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 147a.

Sinān Pasha and Mawlānā Idrīs. He planned, and sought the advice of these two and they discussed the affairs of the eastern lands."[146] Two days later, the reports of Idrīs and the Diyārbakr *timar defterdarı* were recorded for the benefit of the royal council.[147] Idrīs's counsel and testimony on eastern lands likely offered a firsthand perspective on the political and military situation in western Iran as Selīm considered his future course of action.

Although the Ottomans had defeated the main Mamluk army and occupied Aleppo and Damascus, in the late autumn of 922/1516, an Ottoman offensive into Egypt was by no means a foregone conclusion. In the weeks and months after Marj Dābiq, the remnants of the Mamluk army retreated to Damascus and subsequently Cairo. In the middle of Ramaḍān/October, Ṭūmānbāy was installed as sultan in Cairo and began organizing a Mamluk defense of southern Syria outside of Gaza. During this period, the Ottoman camp debated its future course of action. In fact, it was not until 8 Dhūʾl-qaʿda 922/2 December 1516, almost two weeks after Selīm's consultation with Idrīs that the sultan decided to press on to Egypt.[148]

Throughout these deliberations, Idrīs advocated a return east and the conquest of Iran. In the *Salīmshāhnāma*, Idrīs emphasizes the many meetings of the sultan's trusted men and recalls in some detail one particular exchange that underscored his general views, even as he chose to express them in veiled rhetorical terms.

> In the midst of the conversations of the servants of the sultan who were permitted to offer speeches and engage in debate, these elegant words were mentioned: 'In the words of the eloquent men around the world it became prevalent [to say] that the heavenly garden of the world is three parts: the Ghūṭa gardens of Damascus, the Sughd of Samarqand, and the Naw-Bāb of Fārs.' This audacious pitiful servant put forward the notion that if Isfahan were also counted among the levels of heaven, it would not be unjust. The wise Sultan attributed this remark to a love

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[146] Sinān Paşa ile Mevlānā İdris daʿvet idüb tedbīr ve meşveret idüb diyār-ı şarq ahvālın söyleşdiler, Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," 1:481.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.

of one's country, an exaggeration of the laudable attributes of that land, and the desire to persuade the sultan to conquer Iran, which was always being mentioned by the expressive tongue of this most insignificant of servants, so he ordered me to expound on this speech and establish the evidence and proof [of its veracity].[149]

Idrīs' defense of his position emphasized the fact that many learned scholars hail from the region and that the area possessed fine water—better than in Damascus—and lush gardens. He ended his praise with the hope that Selīm conquer the region.[150] The inclusion of this anecdote immediately preceding his account of Selīm's deliberations on the conquest of Egypt suggests that Idrīs advocated for the conquest of Iran, even as the Ottoman army was immersed in a campaign in Syria. This unwavering call for an Ottoman conquest of Iran is also perceptible throughout his reports to Selīm written a few years earlier. His continual push for Ottoman involvement in Iran likely emanated from his personal attachment to his homeland and what he judged as the deplorable condition into which it had fallen over the preceding twenty years. In the Ottoman dynasty, the justice and fair administration of which he extolled throughout his historical writings, Idrīs recognized an idealized order, which, if applied to his homeland in Iran, had the potential to set right the decades of misrule during the last years of the Aqquyunlu regime and the reign of Shah Ismāʿīl.

Not surprisingly, Idrīs' advocacy, at times, assumed a metaphorical literary tone. This, too, was in keeping with his general outlook. Indeed, in his introduction to *Hasht bihisht*, he

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[149] *Dar asnāʾ baʿżī az bandagān-i mulāzim-i rikāb ki qābil-i khiṭāb va qābil bi-suʾāl va javāb dar har bāb būda īn kalima-yi faṣīḥa rā mutazakkar shudand dar kalām-i bulaghā-i jahān jārī shuda ki jannat al-dunyā suls Ghūṭat-i Dimashq va Sughd-i Samarqand va naw-bāb Fars va īn banda-yi ḥaqīr gustākhāna bi-mawqif ʿarż rasānīda ki agar miyān-i ṭabaqāt-i jannāt khiṭṭa-yi Iṣfahān rā ham maʿdūd mī namūd az ittiṣāf-i inṣāf baʿīd namī buvad avvalan khudāvandigār-i dānā ḥaml-i īn kalām bar ḥubb-i awṭān va iṭrāʾ-i maḥāmid-i ān buldān va targhīb-i mizāj-i sulṭānī bi-taftīḥ-i mamālik-i Īrān ki hamīsha maʿhūd-i zikr-i lisān-i bayān-i īn kamtarīn-i bandagān būd va banda-yi khʷud rā bi basṭ-i īn bayān va iqāmat-i dalīl va burhān maʾmūr dāshtand*, Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 158a.
[150] Ibid.

lauded the study of history as the most complete branch of the science of rhetoric, which he understood as the modes of polite and persuasive speech in the refined gatherings of kings and learned men. In keeping with this view, Idrīs' repartee on the relative virtues of Damascus and Isfahan presented a clear opportunity to reiterate his advocacy of an Ottoman return to the east. History on a grand scale also provided a lens through which Idrīs observed the Mamluk efforts to form a defensive front in the deserts outside Gaza. In his analysis of these efforts, Idrīs suggests that the Mamluk forces in Egypt drew misplaced inspiration for their activities from the historic failures of the Chinggisid khan Hülegü in the thirteenth century and Timur in the fourteenth century to conquer Egypt after having seized Syria.[151] Despite the world-conquering reputations of these rulers, the Mamluks thwarted their advance into Egypt and quickly recovered Syria once the invading armies had withdrawn. While Idrīs dismissed these thoughts as groundless, for many witnesses of the unfolding events in Syria, contemporary witnesses of the events unfolding in Syria drew parallels between Selīm and the great conquerors of the past. Indeed, Ibn Iyās, in relating Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's departure from Cairo to face Selīm, recalled the procession of al-Ẓāhir Barqūq as he exited the city to confront Timur more than one century earlier.[152] Since the beginning of his reign, Selīm had been associated with Timur's most widely used title, *Ṣāḥib-Qirān* (Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction). Now, as his deeds seemed to assume greater cosmic significance, the chorus of panegyricists and chroniclers who applied the moniker to Selīm grew significantly.

Certain segments of the local scholarly community in Damascus began casting Selīm and his deeds in similarly grandiose terms. In a treatise written in Ṣafar 923/February-March 1517 to persuade the Damascene learned community of the virtue and justice of the new Ottoman order,

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[151] Ibid., 158b.

[152] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr*, 5:37.

ᶜAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Lakhmī al-Ishbilī began his account of Selīm's reign with the assertion

that the Ottoman ruler was in fact the renewer of the faith (*mujaddid*) whom God had promised

to send at the beginning of each new century.[153] Similarly, on the first Friday after the Ottoman

occupation of Damascus, the Shāfiᶜī judge of Damascus, Walī al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Farfūr,

delivered the sermon in the Umayyad Mosque in which he lauded the Ottoman sultan and

declared him the rightful protector of the Holy Cities (*khādim al-ḥaramayn*).[154] As in the brief

Ottoman occupation of Tabriz in 920/1514, the recruitment of local notables to the Ottoman

cause constituted an important component of the Ottoman strategy to legitimize and effect rule in

these newly conquered cities. As Idrīs had done in Tabriz in the wake of the Ottoman conquest,

the Ottomans, through the Friday sermons of Ibn al-Farfūr, sought to communicate their vision

of rule to the general populace of Damascus. Throughout the first year of the Ottoman presence

in the city, Ibn al-Farfūr regularly delivered the Friday sermon in the Umayyad Mosque.[155]

Perhaps partly in recognition of his regular pronouncement of Ottoman legitimating priorities in

his sermons, Ibn al-Farfūr was rewarded with the chief judgeship of Damascus when Selīm

wintered in the city in 923-924/1516-1518.[156]

Despite Idrīs and Ibn al-Farfūr's positive portrayal of the new Ottoman order, the early

days of Ottoman rule in Syria were far from ideal. In fact, the support of these local notables was

especially necessary during the early stages of the Ottoman occupation of Syria, as the first

weeks of Ottoman rule in Damascus wrought considerable disorder. For the Damascenes, the

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[153] ᶜAlī ibn Muḥammad al- Ishbīlī, *al-Durr al-muṣān fī sīrat al-Muẓaffar Salīm Khān* (Cairo: ᶜĪsá al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1962), 1.
[154] Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat al-Khillān fī ḥawadith al-zamān : taʾrīkh Miṣr wa-al-Shām* (al-Qāhirah : al-Muʾassasah al-Miṣrīyah al-ʾĀmmah lil-Taʾālīf wa-al-Tarjamah wa-al-Ṭibāʾah wa-al-Nashr, 1962), 2:33.
[155] Ibid., 2:37, 68.
[156] Ibn Ṭūlūn mentions that Ibn al-Farfūr was appointed judge on Friday, 8 Ṣafar 924/18 February 1518, after rumors spread that the scholar had become a Ḥanafī, ibid., 2:82.

defeat of the Mamluks at Marj Dābiq initiated a chaotic period in which the retreating Mamluk army pillaged the city.[157] With the withdrawal of Mamluk forces in advance of the Ottoman arrival, the city fell into a state of complete disorder, during which time roving bands looted many areas of the city.[158] The arrival of Ottoman forces thwarted these mobs considerably, but the Ottoman troops who were billeted in the homes of Damascenes, in turn, pillaged and ransacked many of the homes to which they were posted.[159] The reverberations of these disturbances were registered even in Egypt, where the Mamluk historian Ibn Iyās noted the arrival of notable Damascenes fleeing their homes for the relative security of Cairo.[160]

The Ottoman advance on Egypt in Dhūʾl-qaʿda 922/January 1517 precipitated even greater chaos. Although the Ottomans resoundingly defeated Ṭūmānbāy at the Battle of Raydānīya on Thursday, 29 Dhūʾl-ḥijja 922/22 January 1517, Selīm could not secure the city from his own marauding soldiers for several weeks and from the remaining Mamluk troops for another few months.[161] According to Ibn Iyās, in the early days after Raydānīya, Ottoman troops pillaged the homes of Mamluks and the public granaries and killed in the streets anyone whom they suspected of being a Mamluk. Despite the issuance of daily proclamations assuring the public of security, the Ottoman troops apparently ignored the directive and continued to plunder the city. During this time, Ottoman and Mamluk forces engaged in pitched battles on the streets

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[157] Muhammad Adnan Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus in the Sixteenth Century* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1982), 3.

[158] ibid., 5; Bakhit's assessment is based largely on Ibn Ṭūlūn's testimony, Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat Al-Khillān Fī Ḥawadith Al-Zamān*, 2:27–28.

[159] Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 11; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat Al-Khillān Fī Ḥawadith Al-Zamān*, 2:34.

[160] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr*, 5:106.

[161] For a discussion of the dating of the Battle of Raydānīya, see Benjamin Lellouch, "La politique mamlouke de Selīm Ier," in *La Conquête ottomane de l'Égypte (1517) : Arrière-plan, impact, échos*, ed. Benjamin Lellouch and Nicolas Michel (Boston, Leide: Brill, 2013), 169, n18.

of Cairo and Selīm was unable to fully subdue Ṭūmānbay until Rabīᶜ I 923, three months after his arrival in Cairo.

Early efforts of the Ottomans to establish a judicial administration in the city proved equally chaotic. Within the first two weeks of Muḥarram 923/late-January 1517, Selīm appointed an Ottoman judge to see to the judicial affairs of Cairo. This judge, who was known as the judge of the Arabs (*qāḍī al-ᶜarab*), established himself in the Ṣāliḥīya school, dismissed the Mamluk appointed deputy judges and witnesses, and closed access to all other courts in the city.[162] Ibn Iyās notes that as a consquence of this policy the judicial administration of the city ground to a halt and "the people lost their rights and the exercise of religious rulings were disturbed in those days." [163] The Ottoman judge quickly developed a reputation for incompetence, as he "was more ignorant than a donkey. He was not competent in any matters concerning religious rulings."[164] Moreover, Egyptian observers criticized the Ottoman court procedures as fundamentally corrupt and unjust. In particular, Ibn Iyās denounced the Ottoman practice of compensating judges through fees levied on those with business at the court. The imposition of an entirely Ottoman approach to judicial affairs did not last long. Within one month of this disastrous effort to impose Ottoman procedures on Egyptians, Selīm backed down from this position. On 11 Ṣafar 923/4 March 1517, he called the four chief judges of Egypt who had been his prisoners since their capture in the wake of Marj Dābiq, bestowed robes of honor on them, and reinstated them to their offices in Egypt.[165]

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[162] Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiᶜ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiᶜ al-duhūr*, 5:165.
[163] *Fa-ḍāᶜat ᶜalá al-nās ḥuqūquhā wa-aḍṭarabat aḥwāl al-sharīᶜa fī hādhahi al-ayyām*, ibid.
[164] *wa-kāna al-qāḍī alladhī qarrarahu Ibn ᶜUthmān yuḥkam fī al-Ṣāliḥīya ajhal min ḥimār wa-laysa yadrī shayʾan fī al-aḥkām al-sharᶜīya*, ibid.
[165] Ibid.; Ḥaydar Çelebi corroborates Ibn Iyās' account, as he mentions that Selim met with the ᶜAbbāsi Caliph and the four judges of Egypt on 11 Ṣafar 923, Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," 1:487.

As an eyewitness to many of these tumultous developments, Idrīs became dismayed and eventually outraged by what he perceived as Ottoman injustices in Syria and Egypt. According to Idrīs' son, Ebū'l-Fażl Meḥmed, two incidents in Cairo catalyzed Idrīs' frustration and prompted him to write a scathing criticism of the Ottoman administration of Mamluk lands. While the two incidents likely provided the immediate impetus for Idrīs to publicize his condemnatory views, the wider context of disorder and chaos wrought in Syria and Egypt in the wake of the Ottoman conquests likely provided substantial motivation as well. The first incident concerned the Ottoman appraisal and accounting of the wealth and property of Mamluk households. In particular, Ebū'l-Fażl Meḥmed recalls his father's outrage at the plundering of the Mamluk residences of Cairo. Specifically, the Ottoman finance officers appointed a Mamluk-era civilian functionary as translator to aid them in their work. On the pretext of confiscating Mamluk property, this translator encouraged the Ottomans to enter the private dwellings of former Mamluks and plunder their belongings, which greatly disturbed the notables and scholars of Cairo. To make matters worse, the Ottoman finance director of Anadolu, Dīzdārzāde Meḥmed Çelebi, investigated the issue and absolved the guilty parties of any wrongdoing.[166] While Ebū'l-Fażl Meḥmed lays the primary blame for the incident on the Mamluk functionary who encouraged the pillaging, clearly Idrīs was also outraged by the conduct of one of the most senior Ottoman statesmen.

The second incident concerned the Ottoman reappointment of the Mamluk-era judges. In particular, Idrīs objected to the behavior of the most senior Ottoman judge, Zeyrekzāde Rükneddīn, the military judge of *Rumili*, whom Ebū'l-Fażl Meḥmed described as a man renowned "for avarice, scheming for status, and a paucity of compassion for the

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[166] For the account of this incident and Dīzdārzāde Meḥmed Çelebi's complicity, see Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 173a.

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downtrodden."[167] Sometime after the reappointment of the four judges, Zeyrekzāde solicited a bribe of 10,000 gold florins from the newly reappointed Shāfiʿī judge of Egypt, Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ṭawīl and similar bribes from the other three judges.[168] Although Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed notes that it was common practice during the Mamluk era to offer payment to the sultan's treasury at the time of a judicial appointment, he adds that "this occurrence, in contravention of the *sharīʿa*, also increased the complaints and sense of injustice felt by the learned and notable men of Cairo."[169] In view of these complaints, Idrīs decided to bring these matters to the attention of the sultan.

Idrīs voiced his objections to these incidents within a work that Selīm commissioned him to prepare while in Egypt. Specifically, Selīm asked for a Persian translation of the fourteenth-century Arabic zoological work of Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Damīrī (d. 808/1405) entitled *Ḥayat al-ḥayawān*.[170] Within the context of this translation Idrīs included a panegyric on Selīm's conquest of Egypt that also expressed Idrīs' objections to the Ottoman administrative policies in the newly conquered lands.[171] The first and second halves of the poem juxtapose the celebration of Selīm's qualities as a conquering ruler and the administrative mismanagement and corruption produced in the wake of these conquests. On one hand, Selīm is "a king who conquers from the world from end to end / with the dominion-conquering sword it [fell to] the world-grasping hand."[172] Yet despite such power, he has inadvertently ruled unwisely: "Why in your age is

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[167] *Va bi-ḥubb-i mālva jalb-i minvāl va qillat-i raʾfat bar-ʿajaza-yi żaʿīf al-ḥāl mawṣūf mī namūd*, ibid.

[168] Ibid., 173b.

[169] *Īn ḥādisa-yi ghayr-i mashrūʿ nīz żamīma-yi shakwá va taẓallum-i ʿulamā va sādāt va mashāyikh-i ān bilād shuda*, ibid.

[170] The author's presentation of this copy can be found in Topkapı Sarayı Palace Museum, Bidlīsī, *Khavāṣṣ al-ḥayawān*. TSMK Hazine 1665.

[171] The poem, known as *al-qasīda al-miṣriyya*, is also included in *Zayl-i hasht bihisht*. Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 173b-176b.

[172] *Shāhī ki fatḥ kunad jumla-yi mashriq u maghrib / bi tīgh-i mulk-sitān u bi-dast-i gītī-dār*, ibid., 175a.

knowledge trampled under the foot of ignorance / Why is wisdom abased, as you are the

Alexander of the age?"[173] Within the latter half of the poem, Idrīs presents several criticisms of

Ottoman efforts to administer Mamluk lands and accuses the Ottoman administration of

perpetuating the injustices of the Mamluks, especially through the sale of religious appointments:

> The aggrievances, which were the custom of the ignoble Circassians,
> Why, in your age, are they multiplied in this land?
>
> How do you entrust the righteous path to the hands of faithless ones
> Who sell religion and buy the world?
>
> I ask those occupants of religious offices
> O Pious One, is it lawful to sell religious posts?[174]

Not only did Idrīs accuse the sultan's deputies of gross misconduct, but the complaint also

undermined the legitimacy of the entire Ottoman enterprise in Syria and Egypt. In the poem,

Idrīs expressed the hope that he could set right his conflict with Selīm's servants, if only he could

obtain a private audience with the sultan.[175] Despite such hope, he viewed the chances of such an

audience unlikely and at the end of the poem he used his old age as a pretext to request

permission to retire from sultanic service.[176] The serious allegations leveled against the sultan for

negligence and against his administrators for corruption suggest either the robust confidence

Idrīs felt in his position as trusted adviser to Selīm or the complete resignation of a man who

resolved to withdraw from political life after his views had been rejected. Few other advisers had

the confidence to publicly criticize not only a sultan's servants, but also the sovereign himself.

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[173] *Chirā dar dawr-i tū ᶜilm-ast zīr-i pāya zi-jahl / chu tū Sikandar-i vaqtī chirāst ḥikmat khwār*,
Ibid., 175b.

[174] *Maẓālimī ki būd rasm-i jarkas-i nā-kas / Chirā dar dawr-i tu afzūn shavad dar īn aqṭār /
chigūna sharᶜ sipārī bi-dast-i bī-dīnān / ki dīn furūshī va dunyā kharī namūda shiᶜār*, ibid.,
175b.

[175] *Rijā-yi man yakāyak rasad bi-samᶜ-i sharīf / sazā-yi shāh tafaḥḥuṣ ṭarīq-i banda shumār*,
ibid., 175b.

[176] Ibid., 176b.

This confidence, bordering on hubris, suggests that Idrīs genuinely felt that he had the authority and rapport with Selīm to set the matter right should he be given a private audience with the sultan. Alternatively, the public expression of Idrīs' condemnatory views may also be interpreted as the parting shot of a man whose political career was finished.

No doubt the circulation of Idrīs' grievances caused considerable discomfort within the upper echelons of the Ottoman court. Although Selīm offered Idrīs 1,000 gold florins for the completion of *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān*, Idrīs rejected the gift out of fear that its acceptance without the top ministers' knowledge would lead to considerable hardship for him.[177] Instead, Idrīs reiterated his request for an audience with the sultan. The ministers felt compelled to comply and the poem was read to Selīm in the presence of the viziers, military judges, and finance directors. Although Selīm was outraged by the conduct of his servants, he was equally perturbed with Idrīs for the exaggerated claims leveled in the poem, the rejection of the sultan's gift, and the insistence on obtaining an audience. In the wake of this meeting, Idrīs resolved that he had no other recourse but to completely withdraw from sultanic service.[178] This resignation entailed a complete separation from the court. Rather than return to Ottoman lands in the company of the sultan and his entourage, Idrīs returned almost immediately. On 25 Jumādá II 923, Idrīs boarded one of the ships of the Ottoman fleet anchored at Alexandria and returned to Constantinople.[179]

Before Idrīs' departure from sultanic service, he performed one final duty, the record of which the Ottoman chancellor Feridūn Beğ subsequently included in his collection of Ottoman royal correspondence in the latter half of the sixteenth century. In the middle of Jumādá II

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[177] Ibid., 177a.

[178] The details of this incident are related in *Salīmshāhnāma*, ibid., 176a.

[179] Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed mentions that his father returned to Constantinople with the Ottoman fleet. Ḥaydar Çelebi notes that the Ottoman admiral, Caʿfer Ağa, departed for Constantinople on 25 Jumādá II 923/15 July 1517, Ḥaydar Çelebi, "Rūznāme," 1:491.

923/early July 1517, he completed the victory proclamation that explained and justified the Ottoman conquest of Mamluk domains to the Shirvānshāh. The lengthy epistle described the Ottoman military campaigns from the siege of Kamākh in 921/1515 to the conquest of Egypt in 923/1517 and justified these activities in terms of the requisite duties of the vicegerency of God (*khilāfat-i raḥmānī*).[180] Although ostensibly a clear statement of Ottoman ideology, the announcement was also a highly individualized document, as it prominently featured Idrīs' preferred titulature and concept of sovereignty. He had employed the title since his earlier days as a secretary in the Aqquyunlu chancery, and, upon his immigration to Ottoman lands, consistently deployed the moniker and its underlying concept in a number of works, including *Hasht bihisht*, that he dedicated to members of the Ottoman royal family.[181] Selīm's decision to appoint Idrīs to compose this letter appears at odds with his near simultaneus censure of the aging scholar's most recent criticisms of leading statesmen. In this sense, this last professional act fairly encapsulates one of the primary characteristics of his professional career; even as he was recognized in the highest strata of the Ottoman court as a talented rhetorician capable of formulating the most effective statements of political ideology, his tendency to claim the aesthetic or moral high ground, criticize colleagues, and foment enmity and envy hampered him throughout his career in Ottoman lands.

VI.6 Idrīs' Salīmshāhnāma and Legacy

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[180] Ferīdūn Beğ, *Münşeʾāt es-selāṭīn*, 1:438.
[181] For a detailed discussion of *khilāfat-i raḥmānī*, see chapter nine.

The affair in Egypt marked the end of Idrīs' political career, but not his literary one. In the final years of his life, Idrīs devoted his energies to recording the events of Selīm's reign and his role in them. Although he was unable to complete the work before his death on 7 Dhūʾl-ḥijja 926/18 November 1520, his son Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed took up the task of editing his father's manuscript and circulated the work in the early reign of Selīm's grandson and namesake, Selīm II (r. 1566-1574).

Idrīs conceived of writing a history of Selīm's reign from a desire to continue the celebration of the deeds of the Ottoman dynasts into the reign of the current sultan. More immediately, Idrīs states that he was inspired to take up this project by three émigrés to Ottoman lands, who had recently gained renown for their own works recounting Selīm's reign. The first was ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-ʿAbbāsī, an Egyptian scholar famed for his knowledge of prophetic traditions and the literary arts who joined Selīm's court after the conquest of Egypt.[182] Although his history of Selīm is no longer extant, Idrīs mentions that ʿAbd al-Raḥīm wrote a chronicle of Selīm's deeds in Arabic. The second author whom Idrīs mentioned was Qāżī ʿAbd al-Kabīr al-Laṭīfī, who wrote a work in Persian that detailed Selīm's conquests of Arab lands. Qāżī ʿAbd al-Kabīr al-Laṭīfī had been employed as the superintendent of the Ṣafavī endowment at Ardabīl. After his capture at Chāldirān, he found employment within the Ottoman secretarial corps through the support of the finance director of *Anadolu*, Muḥyī al-Dīn Meḥmed Çelebi. Qāżī ʿAbd al-Kabīr participated in the Ottoman campaigns in Syria and Egypt, during which time he assisted in early Ottoman efforts to survey Syria. Shortly after Selīm's return to Ottoman lands in 924/1518, Qāżī ʿAbd al-Kabīr presented his history of Selīm's Arab campaigns. The last émigré whom Idrīs singles out as a source of inspiration was Muḥammad Adāʾī Shīrāzī, who wrote a

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[182] Taşköprüzade, *al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuʿmānīyah fī ʿulamāʾ al-Dawlat al-ʿUthmānīyah*, 411.

Persian verse history of Selīm's reign. Idrīs' citation of these three authors reflects the dynamic and self-aware climate of historiographical production during this brief period of monumental change within the Ottoman Sultanate. After all, not only were these authors writing histories in the immediate wake of the events that they described, but they did so in conversation and competition with one another.

Beyond these explicitly acknowledged sources of inspiration, Idrīs likely conceived of his last project as an apologia and memoir of his activities on behalf of Selīm. In contrast to the other histories of the sovereign that circulated, Idrīs' narrative is filled with references to his own biography and activities. His narrative of Selīm's reign frequently shifts between the activities within the Ottoman court and his own activities on behalf of the sultan in Kurdistan and Diyārbakr. The inclusion of these autobiographical details contrasts markedly with the majority of contemporary histories of Selīm's reign. Certainly, this difference can be explained by the crucial role that Idrīs played in many of these events, yet, in the immediate context of Idrīs' exile from court, the defensive tone and lengthy expositions of his motives suggest that he also sought to defend his own reputation by clarifying his involvement in a number of messy affairs of state. In this way, the work serves not only as a testament to the lasting memory of the conquering ruler, but also as the final record of a man who played a central role in the Ottoman conquests of eastern lands, even while he occasionally opposed the specific Ottoman policies that were implemented there.

Despite these professional and personal motivations, Idrīs' work was never fully realized in his own lifetime. Two months after the death of Selīm and the accession of the sultan's only son Süleymān, Idrīs died in Constantinople on 7 Dhū°l-Ḥijja 926/15 November 1520 at the age of sixty-three, and was buried beside the mosque that his wife Zaynab Khātūn had constructed in

Eyüp outside the city walls. Although Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed does not record the cause of his

father's death, it is possible that Idrīs was one of the victims of the plague outbreak that affected

Constantinople throughout the autumn of 926/1520.[183]

At the time of Idrīs' death, Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed was engaged in royal business in Syria,

where he was responsible for formulating the first Ottoman dynastic law codes for several Syrian

districts. His mission in Syria at the time of his father's death threatened the preservation of

Idrīs' literary legacy, since, as a consequence of his absence from Constantinople, Idrīs' papers,

according to Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed, became dispersed.[184] In the preface to his father's history of

Selīm, Meḥmed notes that he spent several years trying to recover his father's personal records

and present them to Süleymān.[185] Indeed, this later period, one generation after Idrīs' death, was

crucial to the lasting literary legacy of Idrīs in Ottoman lands. For while his work had been well

known in his own day, it may well have receded to the margins of Ottoman historical

consciousness, if not for Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed's efforts in the reign of Süleymān. Between

952/1545 and 976/1568, a scribe named Meḥmed ibn Bilāl, likely working in the employ of

Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed, produced four copies of *Hasht bihisht* from one of Idrīs' personal copies

and reproduced a compendium of Idrīs' treatises, lesser known works, and correspondence.[186] In

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[183] Nükhet Varlık notes that outbreaks of the plague usually began in August and persisted into the late autumn or early winter. She also notes that Venetian report referenced the continued persitence of the plague in Constantinople into November 1520, Nükhet Varlik, "Disease and Empire: A History of Plague Epidemics in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire (1453-1600)," 2008, 74.

[184] Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, Emanet Hazinesi 1423, 47b.

[185] Ibid., 47b-48a.

[186] I speculate that Meḥmed ibn Bilāl was a servant of Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed based upon the relatively unique access that he had to Idrīs' papers. In addition to the four copies of *Hasht bihisht* that he produced (Berlin Ms. Orient no. 3179 (copied in 968/1560), İÜ F 619 (copied in 967-968/1560-1561), Ms. 11, Dānishgāh-i Adabiyāt-i Tabrīz (copied in 968/1560), and Halet Efendi İlavesi 191 (copied in 976/1568-1569)), he also produced the compendium of Idrīs' work (Esad Efendi 1888), the contents of which include rare and, in some cases, unique copies of

the last years of his own life, Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed gathered what materials of Idrīs' unfinished history that he could locate, edited the work, and presented it to Süleymān's son and successor, the newly enthroned sultan Selīm II (r. 974-982/1566-1574).

Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed's efforts to memorialize his father's work were part of a larger nostalgic interest among Ottoman elites in the reign of Selīm II. In the intervening decades, the reign of Süleymān had altered many of the features of Ottoman state and society, yet for many of the aging functionaries of the Ottoman court, the transformative events of their youth during Selīm's reign marked a watershed moment in the history of the Ottoman dynasty.[187] Selīm's eastern conquests had reoriented the Ottoman polity. For the first time in its history, the Ottoman Sultanate governed a majority Muslim population and began to articulate a conception of rule befitting its leader's status as the preeminent ruler of Islam. In this context, it is little wonder that Ebūʾl-Faẕl Meḥmed and his colleagues, in some measure, reaffirmed the significance of Idrīs and his work. After all, Idrīs' political activities and literary production concerned the very political transformations and ideological reorientations that this aging generation fondly recollected. Although such reaffirmation frequently belied the volatile and disappointing relationship Idrīs endured with many of the men at the Ottoman court, the sentiment was not altogether unfitting. Afterall, even if Idrīs never fully felt at home among the Ottomans, he, more than many, had performed a critical role in shaping and recording the the monumental developments of his time.

Idrīs' work. Moreover, during this period, Meḥmed ibn Bilāl was also active in copying the original works of Ebūʾl-Fażl Meḥmed; see, for instance, Ebūʾl-Meḥmed Efendi, *Munteḫab ve muḫteṣar Vaṣṣāf tarīḫi tercümesi* (Ali Emiri Tarih 619) copied in Dhūʾl-ḥijja 952/February 1545, the same year in which he copied Idrīs' compendium (Esad Efendi 1888). See Appendix B for further details.

[187] Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 183–5.

Part IV: History and Kingship at the Turn of the Sixteenth Century

Chapter Seven: Idrīs on History

VII.1 Introduction

Idrīs' historical work developed against the backdrop of a century-long debate about the nature of historical inquiry and its place among the sciences as conceived by Muslim scholars. The debate unfolded across a vast geographic space—between Cairo and Herat—and consumed the energies of a number of scholars writing in Arabic and Persian. While the motivations and perspectives of the various scholars differed, the terms and parameters of the debate remained remarkably fixed and focused: What is history? How should it be defined linguistically and practically? Is history a science? If so, what kind of a science is it? How should its aims, problems, and proper spheres of inquiry be defined? Although the scholars who considered these questions frequently arrived at different conclusions, they all firmly agreed that, in contrast to previous doubt regarding the status of history, historical inquiry did indeed constitute a distinct science requiring its own particular method. More broadly, the debate unfolded in parallel with a general restructuring of knowledge among Muslim encyclopedists, who ultimately came to accept the arguments for the place of history within the classification of the sciences. Idrīs participated in this debate by engaging these questions in the introduction to his dynastic history of the Ottoman house, *Hasht bihisht*. In contrast to the other participants in the debate, he argued for history's status as the preeminent literary science. Yet more fundamentally, Idrīs' theoretical consideration of history's place among the sciences deeply affected his own outlook as he took up the task of presenting his history to his patrons and defending his work in the light of pointed criticism. More than an abstraction, Idrīs' consideration of the meaning and proper expression of

history had a discernible impact on his life and works that highlights the personal stakes involved in intellectual debate.

Despite the existence of this fifteenth-century debate on history, contemporary scholarship has largely overlooked its significance as a major development within the Islamic historiographical tradition. The oversight stems from two separate tendencies within modern approaches to Islamic historiography. Firstly, modern scholarship continues to emphasize the significance of earlier periods in Islamic historiography and marginalize later developments. Secondly, modern scholars, as a consequence of the vast historical literature produced by Muslims over centuries, tend to examine and synthesize Islamic historical thought within individual linguistic traditions, specifically Arabic, Persian, or Turkish.

The tendency to favor earlier periods is largely a consequence of the development of the field in the twentieth century. Whether with respect to literature, the religious traditions, or the cultural implications of travel, modern scholars have framed discussions of intellectual phenomena with reference to a 'Classical period' ending, at the latest, in the mid-thirteenth century, during which the various Islamic cultural traditions purportedly developed and matured.[1] Although recent scholarship in a number of sub-fields within Islamic history has criticized this approach and sought to redress the imbalance through detailed studies of the period after the mid-thirteenth century, this tendency persists with respect to the study of Islamic

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[1] Houari Touati explicitly embraced this approach with respect to exploring the contours of travel as an intellectual endeavor within Islam. He concludes that after the twelfth century "the construction of Islam became definitively fixed in structures and representations that it retained up to the period of colonial conquest. To the extent that there was nothing left to elaborate or construct, the voyage—as a literary practice—lost the efficacy with which it had been credited in the formative period, making it one of Islam's major intellectual acts. It is understandable that, under these conditions, the founders of Islamic knowledge should have traveled more than their later counterparts. Having almost nothing left to invent, the latter progressively abandoned the voyage," *Islam and Travel in the Middle Ages*, 265–6.

historiography.[2] In the twentieth century, most scholars of Islamic historiography characterized historical writing after the thirteenth century as a reflection of a more general societal decadence that undermined the value of historiography as an area of intellectual inquiry.[3] While more recent efforts to engage Islamic historiography have emphasized the evolving and varied nature of the enterprise, in some instances this approach serves only to reconfirm the impression of decadence after the thirteenth century. In this regard, Tarif Khalidi's work on Arabic historiography is representative of both these trends. In some respects, his *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* presents a more nuanced approach to Islamic historiography by examining the subject as the product of the particular cultural climates that informed its development.[4] Premised on the notion that historical writing in all cultures and at all times is "peculiarly susceptible to surrounding climates of ideas and beliefs,"[5] Khalidi identifies four major points of view that informed the development of Arabic historiography between the eighth and fourteenth centuries. However, because he associates the last stage in this development with the rise of the politically minded court historian, who seemed to abandon the philosophical underpinnings that had previously dignified history in favor of a sycophantic catalog of rulers' great deeds, Khalidi's approach ultimately confirms earlier scholars' impressions of later centuries as

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[2] For example, with respect to Arabic literature, see Thomas Bauer, "In Search of 'Post-Classical Literature': A Review Article," *Mamluk Studies Review* 11:2 (2007): 137–67; with respect to ḥadīth scholarship, see Garrett Davidson, "Carrying on the Tradition: An Intellectual and Social History of Post-Canonical Hadith Transmission."

[3] See for instance the remarks of H.A.R. Gibb and Gustave E. von Grunebaum. H.A.R. Gibb, "Taʾrīkh," EI. Gustave E. von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam; a Study in Cultural Orientation*, 2d ed (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 282–3.

[4] Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Aspects of this approach are also apparent in his more recent general survey of Arabic/Islamic historiography in Tarif Khalidi, Prasenjit Duara, and Viren Murthy, "Premodern Arabic/Islamic Historical Writing," in *Companion to Global Historical Thought* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 78–91.

[5] Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, 232.

essentially decadent.[6] Even if other contemporary historians disavow themselves of this

conclusion, the most recent syntheses of Islamic historiography frequently neglect to consider its

development past the fifteenth century.[7]

Moreover, the tendency to divide Islamic historiography between its Arabic and Persian

expressions creates an understanding of the historical tradition as two separate dialectics divided

by language.[8] Yet, as the record of Idrīs' scholarly activity demonstrates, historians and scholars

were deeply immersed in the literary traditions of both Arabic and Persian. After all, Idrīs was

educated in both languages within the widest possible range of scholarly pursuits.[9] Similarly, his

composition of works in the two languages stressed his life-long commitment to producing

scholarship in both linguistic traditions. The ease with which he moved between Arabic and

Persian was, in fact, a commonplace. Many scholars from this period were completely fluent

readers and writers of both Arabic and Persian, so the boundaries of historical inquiry were not

delimited by a single tradition. For instance, the sixteenth-century Ottoman historian Muṣṭafá

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[6] For instance, in his assessment of the general disposition of the historian of this period, Khalidi writes, "As in earlier ages the historians were in their majority drawn from the ranks of religious scholars and the senior bureaucracy. Nor was there anything new in the self-importance felt by the 'ulama' or their elevated opinion of their role in history. What was new was the high profile that these classes had acquired or been given: as propagandists for the state, as regular recipients of state largesse or beneficiaries of private endowments, as frequent employees on state business, as public preachers," ibid., 200.

[7] Chase F Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, *Themes in Islamic History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); A notable exception in this regard is C. P. (Charles Peter) Melville, ed., *Persian Historiography*, vol. 10, A History of Persian Literature (London ;New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012).

[8] A notable exception in this regard is Konrad Hirschler, "Islam: The Arabic and Persian Traditions, Eleventh-Fifteenth Centuries," in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing. Volume 3, 1400-1800*, ed. José Rabasa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[9] On Idrīs' education and intellectual outlook, see chapter one of the present study. On the broader scholarly curriculum of fifteenth-century Iran, see Maria Eva Subtelny and Anas B. Khalidov, "The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning in Timurid Iran in the Light of the Sunni Revival under Shāh-Rukh," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115, no. 2 (April 1, 1995): 210–36.

ᶜĀlī authored thirty-eight works in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish[10] and cites 130 works in Arabic and Persian as sources for his world history in Turkish, *Künhüʾl-aḫbār*.[11] By extension, modern considerations of Islamic historical thought should follow Muṣṭafá ᶜĀlī's approach; the wide-ranging interaction between Arabic *and* Persian historical thought since the tenth century—and Turkish historiography, as well, beginning in the fifteenth century—constituted a fundamental aspect of the development of Islamic historiography as a vibrant cultural tradition until the rise of national historiographies in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[12]

VII.2 Defining History in the Fifteenth Century

Beginning in the late fourteenth century, historians writing in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish regularly included commentaries on the purpose and benefits of history among the prefatory remarks of their chronicles. While inclusion of such reflections was by no means a new development,[13] the frequency and widespread nature of the phenomenon, in the very least, suggests a resurgence during this period. For the most part, such remarks remained disparate, wide-ranging, and disconnected from any unified discourse. In this regard, Ibn Khaldūn's monumental work on the underlying forces that drive historical events, although not completely

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[10] Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)*, Princeton Studies on the Near East (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1986), 333–6.

[11] Âli, *Künhüʾl-aḫbār* (Istanbul: Takvimhane-yi Amire, 1277), 1:17–19.

[12] On the rise of an Arab nationalist historiography, see Alexis Wick, "Modern Historiography - Arab World," in *Companion to Global Historical Thought*, ed. Prasenjit Duara and Viren Murthy (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 308–20; For the same phenomenon in Iran, see Farzin Vejdani, "Purveyors of the Past: Iranian Historians and Nationalist Historiography, 1900-1941" (Ph.D., Yale University, 2009).

[13] For instance, the thirteenth-century historian, Ibn al-Athīr offers his readers a discussion of the worldly and other-worldly benefits of history in his introduction to his universal history, 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil Fī Al-Tāʾrikh*, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1997), 1:9–11.

ignored in the fifteenth century,[14] failed to elicit prolonged and careful consideration by his

contemporaries in Mamluk Egypt or further afield, and is perhaps therefore indicative of the

disconnected nature of these sorts of historical reflections.[15] In Persian lands, in the introduction

to his history of Timur, Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī postulated the etymological origins of history

(*taʾrīkh*) in Syriac, defended its study as an honorable branch of knowledge as substantiated by

Quranic revelation, pointed to some of its worldly and otherworldly benefits, and compared

various dating systems.[16] A generation later, Mīr Khwānd, a historian working in the Herat of

Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqara, offered a lengthy section in the introduction to his world history on the

benefits of history.[17] Shortly thereafter, the Aqquyunlu historian and colleague of Idrīs, Fażlullāh

Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, inspired perhaps by Yazdī, offered an apologia for history in his introduction to

the history of Sultan Yaʿqūb, detailed its benefits and aims, and specified his own contribution to

the tradition.[18] At the turn of the sixteenth century, the Egyptian polymath Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī

likewise contributed to the burgeoning discourse through his own treatise on the subject entitled

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[14] For instance, al-Sakhāwī, in his biographical entry for Ibn Khaldūn, notes the high regard with which al-Maqrīzī held the Muqaddima, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsiʿ* (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1966), 4:147.

[15] In a later context, namely the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the eighteenth century, the *Muqaddima* enjoyed a renaissance through the engagment of historians such as Naʿīma with Ibn Khaldūn's ideas, Cornell Fleischer, "Royal Authority, Dynastic Cyclism, and 'Ibn Khaldûnism' in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Letters," in *Ibn Khaldun and Islamic Ideology*, ed. Bruce Lawrence (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984), 46–68.

[16] Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī, *Ẓafarnāma*, 1:23–24; For an analysis of how this discussion fits within Yazdī's larger historical project, see İlker Evrim Binbaş, "Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī," 236–242.

[17] Muḥammad ibn Khāvandshāh Mīr Khʷānd, *Tārīkh-i rawżat al-ṣafā* (Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi Pīrūz, 1338), 1:9–13.

[18] Fażl Allāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Tārīkh-i ʿālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, 80–96; Charles Melville analyzes the latter portions of this section in Charles Melville, "The Historian at Work," in *Persian Historiography*, ed. Charles Melville, A History of Persian Literature, vol. X (London ; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 64–67.

al-Shamārīkh fī ʿilm al-tarīkh.[19] Even in the nascent Ottoman historiographical context, historians occasionally sought to elaborate the benefits of history in limited ways. For instance, during the reign of Sultan Bāyezīd, the Ottoman historian Neşrī suggests the fundamental importance of knowledge of history for kings.[20]

Concurrent with these disparate reflections, throughout the fifteenth century, a more limited and focused discourse about the meaning and purpose of history unfolded among five scholars writing in Arabic and Persian. These historians, most of whom had indirect scholarly connections to one another, developed a formal approach to locating and defining history within the traditional classification of the sciences (*taqsīm al-ʿulūm*). Even as their particular audiences varied, their analogous formal approaches to discussing history addressed a similar concern for examining the epistemological underpinnings of their subject. Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ījī, a little known student of the great fourteenth-century theologian ʿAḍūḍ al-Dīn al-Ījī, was the first scholar to undertake this rigourous approach to defining history in prefatory chapters that he included in a larger historical work in Arabic. One generation later, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, the Timurid historian of Shāhrukh's court, followed this rigorous approach through discussions that he included in a number of his Persian historical works written between 817/1414 and his death in 833/1430.[21] A generation later, Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Kāfiyajī (d. 879/1474), an émigré from Anadolu who had settled in Cairo, followed in the intellectual footsteps of these two scholars and situated history among the religious sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-sharʿīya*) in a short monograph entitled

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[19] Suyūṭī, *al-Šamârîkh fî 'ilm al-ta'rîḫ: Die Dattelrispen über die Wissenschaft der Chronologie ...*, ed. Christian Friedrich Seybold (Leiden, E.J.: Brill, 1894).
[20] Neşri, *Cihânnümâ*, 4.
[21] Felix Tauer found the inclusion of Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's discussion of history in the introduction to three of the Timurid historian's works, Felix Tauer, "Hâfizi Abrû sur l'historiographie," in *Mélanges d'orientalisme offerts à Henri Massé à l'occasion de son 75ème anniversaire.* (Tehran: Imprimerie de l'Université de Téhéran, 1963), 10.

Mukhtaṣar fī ʿilm al-taʾrīkh (*Digest on the Science of History*).[22] A few years later, the

prominent Egyptian scholar of *ḥadīth* (traditions of the prophet Muḥammad) Shams al-Dīn al-

Sakhāwī (d.902/1497) composed his own monograph on the subject, in which he sought to

defend the suitability of history for study against the accusations of theologians for whom its

necessity as a religiously sanctioned body of knowledge remained dubious.[23] Finally, Idrīs

explored the positions articulated by these earlier historians in his introduction to *Hasht bihisht*,

which he completed in 918/1512.[24]

Although Muslim scholars had written history since the first centuries of Islam,

widespread disagreement remained regarding its nature as a body of knowledge and true

relationship to the other sciences. The disagreement stemmed largely from the classification

system for the sciences that had been worked out over the centuries. Islamic philosophers, such

as al-Fārābī (d.339/950) and Ibn Sīnā (d.428/1037)—known as Avicenna in European sources—

undertook the first rigorous efforts to classify the sciences in the tenth century through an

adaptation of the Aristotelian system of knowledge. Both al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā developed a

system of classification, the precepts, problems, and conclusions of which could be formulated

on the basis of human reason (*al-ʿaql*).[25] In this way, they both agreed with Aristotle and the

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[22] Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān Kāfiyajī, *Al-Mukhtaṣar fī ʿilm al-taʾrīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn ʿIzz al-Dīn, al-Ṭabʿah 1 (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1990).

[23] Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Sakhāwī, *al-Iʿlān biʾl-tawbīkh li-man dhamma al-taʾrīkh* (*The Pronouncement of Reproach to Those Who Defame History*), ed. Franz Rosenthal (Baghdad, 1963); Franz Rosenthal noted the importance of both Kāfiyajī and Sakhāwi's work on historiography and published their monographs in translation in Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography,* 2nd rev. ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968).

[24] The earliest copy of *Hasht bihisht*'s introduction is contained in an autographed copy produced while Idrīs was on pilgrimage in Mecca in 918/1512, Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Ayasofya 3541, 1b-14a. For details of the production history of the introduction, see chapter five of the present study.

[25] Fārābī., *Iḥṣāʾ al-ʿulūm*, ed. ʿUthmān Amīn (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjlū al-Miṣrīyah, 1968); Ibn Sīna, *Tisʿ rasāʾil fī al-ḥikmah wa-al-ṭabīʿiyat* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿah Hindīyah bi-al-Mūsiki, 1908).

subsequent Hellenistic tradition that history could not be considered a science as its concern with individual occurrences in time precluded the possibility of any universal judgment.[26] Yet the emphasis on human reason as the source of theoretical and practical knowledge posed a challenge to Muslim scholars as it failed to incorporate the well-developed Islamic traditions of learning that were derived from and dependent upon Muḥammad's revelation. To resolve this problem, scholars developed a bifurcated system of knowledge that differentiated between rational and revealed/transmitted sciences.[27] Along these lines, at the end of the tenth century, al-Khwārazmī, in his *Keys of the Sciences* (*Mafātīḥ al-ʿulūm*), divided knowledge between "the sciences of religious tradition and what is joined to them from among the Arabic sciences, and secondly the sciences of the foreign lands of the Greeks and other peoples."[28] Although cast in terms of an anthropological distinction between indigenous and foreign learning, the system articulated by al-Khwārazmī largely corresponded to the basic division between rational (*ʿaqlī/ḥikmī*) and transmitted or revealed (*naqlī/ghayr ḥikmī*) sciences as expounded by most subsequent scholars, including Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d.606/1210), Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d.710/1311), and Ibn Khaldūn (d.1406).[29] In most of these schemes, history, if mentioned in the

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[26] Muhsin Mahdi discusses this point in some detail, see Muhsin Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History: A Study in the Philosophic Foundation of the Science of Culture* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1957), 138–9.

[27] For a discussion of the development and harmonization of this bifurcated system, see Gerhard Endress and Abdou Filali-Ansary, *Organizing Knowledge: Encyclopaedic Activities in the Pre-Eighteenth Century Islamic World* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006).

[28] *Iḥdāhumā al-ʿulūm al-sharīʿa wa mā yaqtarin bihā min al-ʿulūm al-ʿarabīya waʾl-thāniyya li-ʿulūm al-ʿajam min al-yūnāniyīn wa ghayrihim min al-umam*, ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Muḥammad Khwārizmī, *Mafātīḥ Al-ʿulūm*, ed. ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Muḥammad ʿAbd (Cairo: Dār al-Nahḍah al-ʿArabīyah, 1978), 5.

[29] Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar Rāzī, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿulūm, ya, Ḥadāyiq al-anwār fī ḥaqāyiq al-asrār: maʿrūf bih Kitāb-i Sittīnī*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Tasbīḥī (Tehran: Kitābkhānah-ʾi Asadī, 1346), 3; Shīrāzī, *Durrat al-tāj li-ghurat al-Dībaj*, ed. Muḥammad Mishkāt (Tehran: Chāpkhānah-i Majlis, 1317), 1:71–72; 1332-1406 Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*, ed. Étienne Quatremère (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān, 1970), 2:385.

classification system at all, was usually accorded an auxiliary function among certain branches of the religious sciences. Moreover, perhaps as a consequence of the disparate subject matter and concern for particulars that characterized historical inquiry, Muslim encyclopedists had little to say about its purpose.[30]

Consequently, the rigorous considerations of history's place in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries addressed a fundamental concern for historians to legitimize their craft within the wider context of Islamic learning. If history was a necessary and independent branch of learning, historians had to define its topic (*masʾala*), purpose (*gharaḍ/ghāyat*), and proper subject (*mawḍūᶜ*). Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ījī initially developed the formal approach to examining these issues in 783/1381-1382 in a short universal history entitled *Tuḥfat al-faqīr ilá ṣāḥib al-sarīr* (*The Gift of the Poor One to the Master of the Throne*). This approach was subsequently modified by Ḥāfiẓ Abrū in the 810s/1410s, then adapted with small modifications by al-Kāfiyajī, al-Sakhāwī, and Idrīs over the next 100 years. Al-Ījī's major contribution was to apply the precise and exacting vocabulary of philosophical theology and the etiquette of disputation (*adab al-baḥth*)—perhaps derived from his teacher ᶜAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī—to defining the science of history. Accordingly, his work offers a definition of history as science through clear statements of its object (*mawḍūᶜ*), purpose (*gharaḍ*), benefits (*fawāʾid*), and principles (*mabādiʾ*). For al-Ījī the science of history is "the acquaintance with conditions of the world that have been transmitted provided with (an indication of) the times (when they took place), inasfar as they constitute items of information (*ḫabar mâ*)."[31] More fundamentally, in a subsequent chapter (chapter two), al-Ījī takes up the question of defining history, or more properly dating

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[30] For instance, al-Khwārazmī provides no definition for history, and instead merely catalogs the reigns of rulers throughout the world, al-Khwārizmī, *Mafātīḥ al-ᶜulūm*, 97.

[31] Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography.*, 2d rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 205.

(*taʾrīkh*) and defines it in a strict linguistic sense as "the indication of time," and in a practical sense as the designation of time for the purpose of defining the relative position between two occurrences.[32] Its object is created things, especially humankind, and the effects of their activities in the world, while its purpose is study of the conditions of outstanding individuals (*aʿyān*), by which al-Ījī means foremost religious scholars. Al-Ījī's adaptation of the technical terminology of philosophical theology was directed toward establishing history firmly within the classification of the sciences. To this end, in the first chapter of the work, al-Ījī presents a discussion of the sciences based upon a trifold division along religious (*al-ʿulūm al-sharʿīya*), philosophical (*al-ʿulūm al-ḥikmīya*), and literary lines (*al-ʿulūm al-adabīya*).[33] History is one of the subsidiary literary sciences; it is a subset of the science of historical information (*ʿilm al-akhbār*), which, in its consideration of historical events without regard to time, is a broader category than history, properly speaking, which is concerned with past events "accompanied by a fixation of the periods of time, expressed in months and years, that have elapsed between those conditions and (certain) major happenings."[34]

Whereas the general purpose and tenor of al-Ījī's discourse was primarily concerned with religious history and the scholars who studied it, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's concern with history focused more thoroughly on rulers and political events. Even so, he clearly drew upon Ījī's discursive method. Like Ījī, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū distinguishes between history, or more properly dating (*taʾrīkh*), and the science of history (*ʿilm-i taʾrīkh*). With respect to a definition of history/dating, he defines the term in a strict linguistic sense (*dar lughat*) as the expression of time (*taʿrīf-i vaqt*)

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[32] Ibid., 207.
[33] Ibid., 206.
[34] Ibid., 206–7.

and in a broader practical sense (*dar iṣṭilāḥ*) as the fixed designation of time periods to events.[35] With respect to the science of history, he sought to establish a definition through an exposition of its quiddity (*māhiyyat*), purpose (*ghāyat*), and subject (*mawḍūᶜ*). As with al-Ījī's work, the application of philosophical terminology to defining history afforded Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's craft the scientific rigor that history had frequently lacked in earlier inventories of the sciences. Ḥāfiẓ Abrū was conscious of this possibility, for he begins his exposition on the science of history with the proposition that all sciences are defined in terms of their quiddity, purpose and substrata.[36] As this is the case, he asserts that history's subject consists of "the events of the realm of generation and decay through investigation of which one discovers in what regard and at what time they occurred."[37] However, as a science (*ᶜilm*), its quiddity is knowledge (*maᶜrifat*) of those past events—whether they concern social or natural phenomena—that occurred in the realm of generation and decay.[38] Yet this definition of history's quiddity precluded the possibility that it could offer its practitioner any universal judgment. For this reason, the purpose of history was consideration and reflection upon that knowledge, through which a historian could discern the appropriate course for future action.[39] The relationship between historical phenomena, reflection, and future action was a frequently purported benefit of history since at least the eleventh-century

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[35] Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Jughrāfiyā-yi Ḥafiẓ Abrū: mushtamil bar jughrāfiyā-yi taʾrīkhī-i diyār-i 'Arab, Maghrib, Andalus, Miṣr va Shām*, 1st ed., ed. Ṣādiq Sajjādī (Tehran: Bunyān, 1996), 73.
[36] Ibid., 76.
[37] *Ammā mawḍūᶜ-i ᶜilm-i taʾrīkh ḥavādis̱-i ᶜālam-i kawn va fasād ast az ān ruy ki dar silsila-yi imkān bar chi vajh va dar chi vaqt ṣudūr yāfta and*, Ibid., 76.
[38] *Māhiyyat-i ᶜilm-i taʾrīkh maᶜrifat-i ahvāl-i ᶜālam-i kawn va fasād ast az ḥavādis-i ayyām-i māżiyya va qurūn-i sālifa va umam-i sābiqa va ānifa va asās va inqilāᶜ-i manāzil va mudun va aṣqāᶜ va biqāᶜ-i qarība va baᶜīda va āsār-i ᶜulvī az ẓuhūr-i khasf va zalāzil va ḥudūs-i ẕavvāt-i aznāb va shuhub va ṣavāᶜiq va ruᶜūd va burūq va aḥvāl-i īshān va ānchi ᶜajīb va gharīb bāshad ki har yak bar chi vajh va dar kudām vaqt nāzil va ḥādis shuda ast*, Ibid.
[39] *Ammā ᶜillat-i ghāʾī-yi taʾrīkh iᶜtibār va istibṣār va inzār va iḥzār ast az dānistan-i taghyīrāt-i duval va maᶜrifat-i tabdīlāt-i milal va niḥal tā bar ḥasanāt iqdām va az sayyiʾāt ijtināb va inḥiẕār namāyad*, Ibid.

historian Ibn Miskawayh's assertion that knowledge of history provided an alternative type of experience in worldly matters for its students.[40] Yet Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's assertion that this relationship constituted the fundamental purpose of history as a body of knowledge lent historical inquiry a new level of rigor. In fact, this conception of history's purpose closely resembles the purpose of Ibn Khaldūn's self-proclaimed new science of culture (ᶜilm al-ᶜumrān) as he outlined it in the *Muqaddima*.[41] Whereas Ibn Khaldūn sought to move beyond history by establishing a science that would uncover the underlying forces that informed historical developments through rational consideration of historical occurrences, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, a contemporary of Ibn Khaldūn, arrived at a similar conclusion, yet maintained that such an objective was in fact the proper purpose of history.[42] In other words, Ibn Khaldūn's science of culture remained for Ḥāfiẓ Abrū the appropriate conception of history as a scientific enterprise.

This formal approach of al-Ījī and Ḥāfiẓ Abrū to defining history in linguistic and practical terms and identifying its purpose and subject as a body of knowledge remained a basic feature of the subsequent considerations of history in the fifteenth century. However, whereas Ḥāfiẓ Abrū sought to define history as a science whose benefits primarily accrued to kings seeking counsel, the reflections of al-Kāfiyajī and al-Sakhāwī in the middle of the fifteenth century tended toward al-Ījī's emphasis and stressed the necessity of history for the religious sciences. Both of these Egyptian scholars undertook their considerations of history in an effort to remedy their forebears' exclusion of historiography from the necessary branches of learning. Al-Kāfiyajī writes that although the ancients were able to dispense with a codification of history,

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[40] Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, ed. Leone Caetani (Leiden: E. J. Brill ; Printed for the Trustees of "E. J. W. Gibb Memorial,," 1909), 1–2; Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, 170–6.
[41] Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*, 60–62.
[42] Muhsin Mahdi deals with this aspect of Ibn Khaldūn's thought, see especially Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History*, 71, 288–9.

this neglect does not suggest that history should be excluded from the classification of the sciences. Rather, he writes, "it is a science just like the other codified sciences, such as jurisprudence, grammar, style, and the like. It is, therefore, needed just like the other branches of learning."[43] Similarly, al-Sakhāwī defended history against those religious scholars (ʿulamāʾ) who found fault with history and historians by showing its proven instructiveness and proclaiming its status among the fundamental branches of learning.[44] While a defense of history's status as science (ʿilm) constituted the primary objective of al-Kāfiyajī and al-Sakhāwī's discourse, like Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, the two Egyptian scholars initiated their discussion of history through an exploration of the concept in its linguistic and practical senses. Because they sought to defend history's status as science, they also codified the study of history through a definition of its subject (mawḍūʿ) and problems (masāʾil). All three scholars agreed that history's subject concerned past events in the realm of generation and decay, yet unlike Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, neither of the Egyptian historians attributed to the science of history an ability to elucidate underlying causes for events as they unfolded in time. For al-Kāfiyajī, history's subject was remarkable events, while al-Sakhāwī identified its subject as man and time.[45] However, even as they denied history an ability to pronounce universal judgments, they argued for its basic necessity within the framework of Islamic learning. In particular, al-Kāfiyajī went so far as to

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[43] *Innahu ʿilm ka-sāʾir al-ʿulūm al-mudawwana kaʾl-fiqh waʾl-naḥw waʾl-bayān wa ghayr dhālika fa thubita al-iḥtiyāj ilayh ka-mā thubita al-iḥtiyāj ilá mā ʿadāhu min al-ʿulūmī*, al-Kāfiyajī, *al-Mukhtaṣar fī ʿilm al-taʾrīkh*, 66; Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 252.

[44] *fa-aradtu... wa-an uẓhara mā fīhi min al-fawāʾid al-maʾthūrāt wa ushhara kawnahu min al-uṣūl al-muʿtabarāt*, al-Sakhāwī, *al-Iʿlān biʾl-tawbīkh li-man dhamma al-taʾrīkh*, 6; For Rosenthal's translation, see Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 270.

[45] Kāfiyajī, *Al-Mukhtaṣar fī ʿilm al-taʾrīkh*, 65; Sakhāwī, *al-Iʿlān biʾl-tawbīkh li-man dhamma al-taʾrīkh*, 7.

argue for history's status as a joint obligation of the Islamic community (*farḍ al-kifāya*).[46] Similarly, al-Sakhāwī argued for the obligatory nature of some aspects of history and acknowledged the fact that some scholars categorized history as a communal obligation.[47] As such, both men couched their considerations of history's benefits in terms of its necessity in confirming the basic facts upon which the conclusions of jurisprudence and other religious sciences were based.

The differences between the positions taken by al-Ījī, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, and the two Egyptian scholars largely derived from the varying audiences the authors had in mind as they framed their remarks on the science of history. While all four of the scholars recognized the alternate positions of the others as valid, they emphasized certain aspects of history in accordance with their particular intellectual and professional proclivities. As such, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, who wrote his chronicle for a Timurid courtly audience, stressed those aspects of history that would accrue to the benefit of kings. History, for Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, was the science *par excellence* for formulating political counsel and deciding future policy. Alternatively, the other three scholars' immersion in the scholarly scene of their day motivated them to frame their remarks on history in religious and jurisprudential terms.

Idrīs' particular approach to discussing history's meaning and purpose clearly reflects the broader currents in Islamic historiography exemplified by these four earlier scholars. Indeed, as a consequence of his particular education and travels, Idrīs was possibly familiar with the specific ideas on history expounded by al-Ījī, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, al-Kāfiyajī, and al-Sakhāwī. Althought al-Ījī's

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[46] He writes: "knowledge of [history] is necessary as a community duty, like the necessity of the other sciences, for it establishes the chronology of the whole course of the universe in the best possible manner (*wa-innahu wājib ʿilmuhu ʿalá sabīl al-kifāya ka-wujūb sāʾir al-ʿulūm li-ḍabṭ zamn al-mabdaʾ waʾl-maʿād wa-mā baynahumā ʿalá aḥsan mā yakūn*),"Kāfiyajī, *Al-Mukhtaṣar fī ʿilm al-taʾrīkh*, 66–67.
[47] Sakhāwī, *al-Iʿlān biʾl-tawbīkh li-man dhamma al-taʾrīkh*, 47; ibid., 263.

work is now known only in a single manuscript copy, there are some indications that, in the

fifteenth century at least, it enjoyed geographically broad circulation. Despite its author's

generally unrenowned status, the Ottoman court kept one copy of his *Tuḥfat al-faqīr* in the

palace library at the turn of the sixteenth century.[48] It is entirely possible that Idrīs came across

the work while writing his chronicle during the reign of Bāyezīd II. He certainly would have

been familiar with Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's histories of Timur and Shāhrukh, as these works constituted

some of the most important sources for historians of this period. In fact, even at the end of the

sixteenth century, the Ottoman historian Muṣṭafá ʿĀlī reserved special praise for Ḥāfiẓ Abrū

within his enumeration of Timurid-era historians.[49] Idrīs, with his pronounced interest in Timurid

history, likely studied Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's works.[50] His connections to the Egyptian scholars are also

apparent. Al-Kāfiyajī's work on history gained a modicum of popularity, both in Egypt and in

Ottoman lands. Al-Sakhāwī, who lived and worked primarily in Cairo, mentions al-Kāfiyajī's

treatise in his own work on history.[51] Similarly, like Ījī's *Tuḥfat al-faqīr*, the inclusion of two

references to al-Kāfiyajī's treatise in the inventory of Bāyezīd II's library compiled in 909/1503

attests to the circulation of the work in Ottoman lands during the years of Idrīs' residence at

Bāyezīd's court.[52] Most significantly, Idrīs began to compose his own ideas on history shortly

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[48] Török F59, 93b.

[49] Âli, *Künhüʾl-aḫbār*, 19.

[50] Charle Melville situates Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's work within one of the two major strands of Persian historical writing that were most frequently emulated and acknowledged, Charles Melville, "The Historian at Work," 99.

[51] Sakhāwī, *al-Iʿlān biʾl-tawbīkh li-man dhamma al-taʾrīkh*, 36–37; Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 318.

[52] The inventory records the titles of the two separate manuscripts as *al-Mukhtaṣar al-mufīd fī ʿilm al-taʾrīkh*, MS Budapest, Török F 59, 94a, 95a. These two manuscripts are currently located in the Ayasofya collection of the Süleymaniye Library. Both works were completed in al-Kāfiyajī's lifetime in 864/1460 and 868/1464. Moreover, both include the seal of Sultan Bāyezīd II, Muḥyi al-Dīn al-Kāfiyajī, *Kitāb al-Mukhtaṣar al-mufīd fī ʿilm al-taʾrīkh*. MS, Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya 4438 and Ayasofya 3403.

after he spent several months in Cairo on his way to Mecca for pilgrimage in 917/1511.[53] As an

itinerant scholar of some renown who had himself recently completed a major dynastic history of

the Ottomans, Idrīs' participation in the learned debates hosted by the Mamluk sultan Qānṣūh al-

Ghawrī likely touched upon his own work and ideas on history.[54] In this context, the historical

thought of al-Kāfiyajī and al-Sakhāwī would have represented important points of discussion for

Idrīs' Egyptian interlocutors.

Not surprisingly then, when Idrīs sat down to write the introduction to *Hasht bihisht*

while residing in Mecca in 918/1512, he included a discussion of the meaning and

epistemological place of history that engaged the works of these earlier scholars in several

respects. Like his immediate forebears, Idrīs sought to dignify history by locating it within the

broad classification of the sciences. Although he departed from the rigorous formal efforts to

define history's problem, purpose, and subject, he reproduced aspects of these definitions in a

new format. Idrīs organized his discussion of history around three separate discourses (*abvāb*)

that defined history, located it among the sciences, and defended its status as a necessary and

desirable branch of learning for both courtly audiences and religious scholars.

The first discourse (*fatḥ al-bāb-i avval*) presents an abbreviated discussion of history's

definition in both its linguistic and practical sense and establishes its relationship to the other

bodies of knowledge that are concerned with temporal occurrences.[55] In this way, Idrīs followed

in the intellectual path of the four earlier historians by defining history linguistically as the

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[53] Idrīs states that he completed the introduction in Mecca in 918/1512 in an autographed copy of *Hasht bihisht*, Ayasofya 3541, 14a. For details on his production of the introduction, see chapter five of the present study.

[54] On the cosmopolitan environment of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's court, see chapter five of the present study. For an example of the learned gatherings hosted by the Mamluk sultan, see ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb ᶜAzzām, *Majālis al-Sulṭān al-Ghūrī: ṣafaḥāt min taʾrīkh Miṣr fī al-qarn al-ᶜāshir al-Hijrī* (al-Qāhirah: Maṭbaᶜat Lajnat al-Taʾlīf wa-al-Tarjamah wa-al-Nashr, 1941).

[55] Idrīs Bidlīsī. *Hasht bihisht*, 11b.

expression of time. However he departed from these scholars, insofar as his characterization of the practical definition (*ism-i rasmī*) of history focused on developing an understanding of the science of history (*ʿilm-i taʾrīkh*). Here, Idrīs inclines toward the more modest claims of al-Ījī and the two Egyptian scholars and concludes that the science of history is "a science through knowledge (*maʿrifat*) of which the conditions of temporal occurrences are obtained."[56] By focusing on history as knowledge, Idrīs deemphasized Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's strong assertion that history contained the possibility for insight into the underlying forces that inform events. While in later discourses Idrīs acknowledges this aspect of history, his primary definition of the science reproduces a more traditional understanding.

Even if this more traditional understanding of history seems to limit its claim as a veritable science capable of making universal judgments, Idrīs distinguishes history by characterizing it as the loftiest branch of the Arabic sciences (*ʿulūm-i ʿarabīya*). In the beginning of the second discourse, Idrīs situates history among the twelve Arabic sciences that consist of a hierarchical ordering of bodies of knowledge concerned with language.[57] The lower sciences in this category concern more basic aspects of language: knowledge of speech, conjugation, etymology, grammar, meaning, and syntax. These basic linguistic building blocks constitute the basis upon which the more advanced Arabic sciences are elaborated. Consequently, the upper branches, which include poetry, prose writing, prosody, rhyme, and epistolography, are only accessible through mastery of the more basic sciences. Idrīs locates history as a branch of the culminating linguistic science, which he identifies as the rhetorical sciences (*ʿilm-i muḥāẓarāt*).[58] For Idrīs, rhetoric was primarily concerned with investigating the modes of discourse and dialog

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[56] *va ammā taʿrīf-i ism-i rasmī-i ʿilm-i taʾrīkh ānki ʿilmi ast ki bi-ān maʿrifat-i aḥvāl-i ḥavādis̱-i zamānīya ḥāṣil shavad*, ibid.
[57] ibid.
[58] ibid.

within the polite gathering of refined notables. It constitutes the summation of the Arabic

sciences, because, by their varied nature, conversations taken up at polite gatherings require a

refined handling of a vast array of subjects. Indeed, in Idrīs' estimation, only through mastery of

rhetoric can one be described as a fully eloquent and virtuous master of language. In this

understanding of rhetoric, history represented the most complete application of the science.[59]

Idrīs' third discourse on history argues for its necessity for men concerned with both

worldly and otherworldly matters. Specifically, Idrīs sought to establish the necessity of history

on the basis of revelation and reason, and argued for its preeminent status among both religious

scholars and statesmen. He organized the discourse around two proofs and seven addresses

(khiṭābat). The proofs establish knowledge of dating and history as a fundamental aspect of both

citied society and the religious law, while the seven addresses develop these arguments by

examining the specific benefits that accrue to statesmen and pious individuals who concerned

themselves with acquiring knowledge of the subject.[60]

In contrast to his immediate forebears, Idrīs emphasized history's significance to both

courtly and scholarly audiences. Moreover, his emphasis on the relationship between history and

rhetoric marked a distinct shift from the earlier conversations that sought to define history in

relation to practical philosophy or the religious sciences. More generally, the example of Idrīs'

work and the fifteenth-century ideas on history that he drew upon also reflected broader

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[59] In this regard, Idrīs writes: "It is verified that perfection of rhetoric cannot be accomplished
without obtaining the science of history, because, we consider that if [the science of history] is a
branch of rhetoric, then rhetoric is more general than history and if it is a section and part of
rhetoric, we consider knowledge of history necessary for rhetoric, because it is the most
complete section and part of rhetoric / *muḥaqqaq ast ki takmīl-i ʿilm-i muḥāẓarāt bī taḥṣīl-i ʿilm-
i taʾrīkh muyassar nabāshad chirā ki ʿilm-i maẕkūr rā agar farʿ-i muḥāẓarāt iʿtibār kunīm ki
muḥāẓarāt aʿamm ast va agar qism va ẓarbī az ān ʿadd kunīm chirā ki atamm-i aqsām va ẓurūb-
i ān ʿilm-i taʾrīkh ast al-batta bi-maʿrifat-i taʾrīkh ān rā iḥtiyāj ast*," ibid., 12a.
[60] Ibid., 12a-14b.

conversations in scholarly circles about the structure of knowledge. Beginning in the fourteenth

century, Muslim scholars began to produce encyclopedias on the sciences with renewed vigor.[61]

Some of these enormous projects produced detailed information on specific branches of

knowledge, such as al-Qalqashandī's (d. 821/1418) fourteen-volume work on epistolography

entitled *Ṣubḥ al-aᶜshá* or al-Damīrī's (d. 808/1405) zoological survey, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān*.[62]

More radically, certain strains within the encyclopedism movement endeavored to restructure

completely the metaphysical underpinnings of Islamic learning as conceived by philosophers,

jurists, and Sufis. In this way, ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī's (d. 858/1454) *al-Fawāʾiḥ al-miskīya*

and Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka's (d. 835/1432) treatises on lettrism presented an occult challenge both to

the traditional division of the sciences, as well as to its metaphysical presuppositions.[63] In this

climate of encyclopedism, historians examined the epistemological underpinnings of their craft

with renewed rigor and vitality. For even as they worked to elevate the standing of their

intellectual pursuits within the wider pantheon of learning, ultimately they also participated in

these much broader conversations on ordering knowledge. Indeed, the efficacy of these

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[61] Elias Muhanna, "Why Was the Fourteenth Century a Century of Arabic Encyclopaedism?," in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Jason König and Woolf (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 343–56.

[62] Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Qalqashandī, *Kitāb Ṣubḥ al-aʿshá*, 14 vols. (al-Qāhirah: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Amīrīyah, 1331); Muḥammad ibn Mūsá Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān al-kubrá*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ, al-Ṭabʿah 1, 4 vols. (Dimashq: Dār al-Bashāʾir, 2005); for a recent assessment of this encyclopedic impulse, see Maaike van Berkel, "Opening up a World of Knowledge: Mamluk Encyclopaedias," in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Jason König and Grege Woolf (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 356–75.

[63] On the role of ᶜAbd al-Raḥmán al-Bisṭāmī in this movement, see Cornell H. Fleischer, "Ancient Wisdom and New Science: Prophecies at the Ottoman Court in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *Falnama: The Book of Omens*, ed. Massumeh Farhad and Bağcı (London: Thames and Hudson, 2009), 232–43; on the role of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka, see Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "The Occult Challenge to Messianism and Philosophy in Early Timurid Iran: Ibn Turka's Lettrism as a New Metaphysics," in *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam*, ed. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 247–76.

historians' contentions is reflected in the acceptance of their arguments by subsequent encyclopedists of the sciences. In fact, the two most popular sixteenth-century Ottoman classifications of the sciences adopted the formal approach to defining history as worked out in the fifteenth-century debate on the matter.[64]

VII.3 Defining and Defending the Canon of Accustomed Historical Writing at the Ottoman Court

As Idrīs composed *Hasht bihisht*, he actively incorporated his theoretical understanding of history into his writing. As such, he fully embraced the notion of history's status as the preeminent Arabic (linguistic) science and endeavored to produce a work of history that not only would recount the past deeds of Ottoman sultans, but also serve as a model of style and taste for its audience. In this way, he hoped to offer a nascent Ottoman court culture the fully developed chancery style (*inshāʾ*) of historical writing, the status of which had prevailed as the preeminent approach to Persian historical writing since the latter decades of the sixth/twelfth century. Idrīs' insistence on expressing historical accounts in the florid and luxuriant language of Persian chanceries was not universally embraced by his Ottoman audience when he presented his history to Sultan Bāyezīd II in 911/1506. In fact, the ambivalent response highlighted a shifting stylistic and linguistic terrain within Ottoman domains in the first decades of the tenth/sixteenth century.[65] Although Idrīs' approach received criticism in the immediate reception of *Hasht bihisht*, his literary views on historical writing would ultimately become accepted within the Ottoman historiographic tradition.

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[64] Aḥmad ibn Muṣṭafá Taşköprüzade, Kāmil Bakrī, and ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Abū al -Nūr, *Miftāḥ al-saʿādah wa-miṣbāḥ al-siyādah fī mawḍūʿāt al-ʿulūm /* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīthah,, 1968), 1:251; Nev'i Efendi, *Ilimlerin özü: Netayic el-Fünun/*, ed. Ömer Tolgay (Istanbul: Insan Yayinlari, 1995), 85.

[65] For further discussion of the features of this terrain, see chapter four in the present study.

The chancery style to which Idrīs subscribed reflected his professional outlook as a state secretary in both the Aqquyunlu and Ottoman courts. Since the rise of historical writing in Persian in the tenth century, the involvement of chancery officials in the production of dynastic chronicles had constituted a prominent feature within the historiographical tradition. These officials brought their professional attributes as masters of refined expression to the activity of writing history. One of the basic features of this chancery style concerned what Julie Scott Meisami has termed a 'poeticization of prose.' Specifically, historical accounts increasingly incorporated poetic features, such as "parallelism of members (often with internal rhymes), and the use of figures of speech, especially metaphor and tropes."[66] In addition to promoting this poetic aspect of historical prose writing, historians also sought to bolster the didactic credentials of their narratives by interpolating quotations from a variety of authoritative sources, including the Quran, ḥadīth (sayings of the prophet Muḥammad), proverbs, and poetry.[67] While this style coexisted with a simpler approach to historical narrative in the first centuries of historical writing in Persian, by the Ilkhanid period in the latter half of the thirteenth century, the chancery style completely dominated the historiographical landscape. In addition to this general context, Idrīs' espousal of this style was also conditioned by his twenty years of service in the Aqquyunlu chancery, during which time he developed his own reputation as a master stylist whose composition of hyperliterate sultanic rescripts and missives were lauded for their seamless integration of the full range of rhetorical technique. Not surprisingly then, in his approach to writing history at the Ottoman court in the first decade of the tenth/sixteenth century, Idrīs not only accepted the literary parameters imposed by this chancery style, but strove to leave his own

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[66] Julie Scott Meisami, "History as Literature," in *Persian Historiography*, ed. Charles Melville, A History of Persian Literature, vol. X (London ; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 21.
[67] Ibid.

mark on the tradition as well. In his explanation for why he wrote a dynastic history of the

Ottoman house, he states that he focused on producing "a work of eloquent style and a

composition of appropriate elegance and wit appealing to the elite and common people, which

would be able to inform on virtuous actions and the great conquests of the warriors in the faith

and astonish the views of the eloquent masters of the age."[68] The explicit intention of the work

was therefore two-fold: to serve as a record of past events and to exemplify the attributes of fine

literary expression. But beyond these goals, Idrīs hoped that his work would rival those of the

most highly regarded historians of the preceding three centuries. Here too, Idrīs explicitly stated

his objective, namely, that his chronicle would be considered a supplement to and an equal of the

finest histories of the Ilkhanid and Timurid courts, including the works of Juvaynī, Vaṣṣāf,

Muʿīn al-Dīn Yazdī, and Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī.[69] The remark is revealing, not only because it

enumerates Idrīs' stylistic models, but also because it suggests a keen desire to situate his own

work within a specified canon of Persian historical literature.[70] In this sense, Idrīs' mission was

to transport the best literary qualities of this canon to new geographic and historiographic terrain

through its application in an Ottoman context.

The effects of this outlook can be seen in all of the historiographical work that Idrīs

undertook among the Ottomans. His works make frequent reference to the authoritative sources

and varied epistemological perspectives embraced by practitioners of the chancery style of

historical writing. Indeed, in addition to regular citation of Quranic verses, prophetic traditions,

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[68] *Taʾlīfī balāghat-uslūb va taṣnīfī bi-ṣunūf-i laṭāyif va ẓarāyif mansūb va nazd-i khavāṣṣ va ʿavāmm marghūb tartīb va tanẓīm bāyad namūd ki mukhabbir az maḥāsin-i karīma va futūḥāt-i ʿaẓīma-yi aslāf-i mujāhadat-shaʿār va muḥayyir-i anẓār-i balāgha-yi faṣīḥ-guftār-i ruzgār tavānad būd*, Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 8a.

[69] Ibid., 8b.

[70] In fact, Charles Melville has singled out Juvaynī, Vaṣṣāf, and Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī as three of the four historians most frequently cited as models for subsequent historical writing in Persian, Melville, "The Historian at Work," 99.

and celebrated lines of poetry, he frequently grounds his historical observations within distinct

philosophical, astrological, or mystical frameworks that either explain the structure of historical

phenomena or motivated his readers to assume an ethical stance.[71] This variegated approach to

writing history creates a patchwork of sacred references, literary allusions, and conceptual

expositions that Idrīs used to substantiate, elaborate, and embellish his narrative.

Despite the diverse assortment of references, Idrīs' historical work maintained a coherent

focus through its repeated and explicit claim to laud the Ottoman dynasts as the greatest rulers of

Islamic history.[72] This understanding of history as praise reflected both the specific patronage

environment in which he moved, as well as the general mode in which the chancery style of

historiography was most frequently expressed. In fact, throughout his literary and historical

works, Idrīs references and elaborates a single historical and literary concept that describes the

interrelated dimensions of events in history, historiographical production, and courtly patronage.

The concept, referred to most frequently by Idrīs as *zikr-i jamīl*, refers to the lasting renown of an

individual's actions in the world and the memorialization of those actions in prose or verse. Idrīs

regularly deployed the term throughout his nearly twenty years of historical writing in Ottoman

lands. The concept plays a central role in the panegyric that Idrīs used as a vehicle to propose

writing *Hasht bihisht* in 908/1502.[73] In the introduction and in several significant places in his

history, Idrīs returns to the concept to elaborate its various dimensions. Finally, in the last years

of his life, when he returned to writing the history of Selīm's reign, he recast *zikr-i jamīl* as the

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[71] Chapter nine of the present study explores Idrīs' use of philosophical and mystical frameworks in *Hasht bihisht* in relation to his political thought.

[72] One of the two introductions of *Hasht bihisht* treats explicity the reasons for the superiority of the Ottoman sultans, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 14b-17a.

[73] Chapter three of the present study discusses this panegyric. Bidlīsī, *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ᶜīd*, Ayasofya, 3203, 25a.

central distinguishing characteristic of the Ottoman dynasty and used the concept to explain the rise of historical writing in Ottoman lands.

In some ways, Idrīs' embrace of the concept simply highlights the extent to which his work was grounded in the broader conventions of the Persian literary tradition. Since the resurgence of Persian court poetry in the fourth/tenth century, poets focused on the immortalizing aspect of their verse as one of its greatest benefits for their patrons. In the sixth/twelfth century, Niẓāmī ʿArūżī, the secretary and poet of the Ghurid court, prominently featured the concept in *Chahār Maqāla*, his four discourses on a king's indispensible men. In the second discourse on the importance of poets, after an anecdote on the power of poetry to prompt great deeds, Niẓāmī ʿArūżī concludes: "a king cannot dispense with a good poet, who shall conduce to the immortality of his name, and shall record his fame in *diwáns* and books."[74] More than simple flattery, the praise of panegyrics thus elevated the poet's task to immortalization of his patron.[75] In fact, poetry, since it remains lodged in men's minds for time immemorial, represents a sounder and more secure edifice upon which kings could construct their legacy. As Niẓāmī ʿArūżī suggests by contrasting Maḥmūd Ghaznavī's palaces with the poet ʿUnṣurī's verse, the legacy conferred by poetry far outlasts any physical monument: "How many a palace did great Mahmúd raise / At whose tall towers the Moon did stand and gaze / Whereof one brick remaineth not in place / Though still re-echo ʿUnṣurī's sweet lays."[76] In recognition of this fact, kings who sought immortality were obliged to remunerate their poets. As the fourteenth-century

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[74] Niẓāmī ʿArūżī, *Chahār Maqāla (The Four Discourses) of Nidhámí-i ʿArúḍí-i Samarqandí*, trans. Edward Granville Browne (London: Published by the Trustees of the EJW Gibb Memorial, 1978), 45.

[75] Julie Scott Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 47.

[76] Niẓāmī ʿArūżī, *Chahār Maqāla (The Four Discourses) of Nidhámí-i ʿArúḍí-i Samarqandí*, 48.

poet, Ḥāfiẓ, reminds his reader: "The poet exalts your noble deeds to the skies / Do not begrudge him his stipend and travelling provisions. / Since you seek good repute, let me say this: / Do not begrudge silver and gold as the price of discourse."[77]

But beyond immortality for the patron and remuneration for the poet, ẕikr-i jamīl offered a similar renown for the poet and his verse. In the introduction to the *Gulistān*, Saʿdī references ẕikr-i jamīl once in relation to his patron's powers. In fact, he attributes directly "the good things people say about Saʿdī (ẕikr-i jamīl-i Saʿdī) and the renown of his poetry that has spread across the face of the earth" to the favorable glances and praise that he has received from his patron.[78] In contrast to later uses of the term by historians, ẕikr-i jamīl, for Saʿdī, referred simply to the good reputation and renown of his work in his own day.[79] Such a temporally delimited understanding of the term does not suggest that Saʿdī ignored the lasting quality of literature. In fact, according to his preface, his initial inspiration to write the *Gulistān* was prompted by the thought that, despite the beauty of garden flowers, their impermanence rendered them unworthy of attachment. In contrast, he proposed to write a book called *Rose Garden*, "upon the leaves of which the chill wind of autumn will make no inroad and the springtime harmony of which the vicissitudes of time will never transform into the stridency of autumn."[80]

As Persian historical writing assumed greater literary and poetic aspirations with the development of the chancery style, historians adapted the poetic and literary uses of a lasting

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[77] Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 45; *Makārim-i tu bi āfāq mī barad shāʿir / Az ū vaẕīfa u zād-i safar darīgh madār / Chu ẕikr-i khayr ṭalab mī kunī sukhan īn ast / Ki dar bahā-yi sukhan sīm u zar darīgh madār* (Ghazal no. 247), Ḥāfiẓ, *Dīvān-i Khvājah Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥāfiẓ Shīrāzī*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī and Qāsim Ghanī (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-i Zavvār, 1950), 168.

[78] Saʿdī, *The Gulistan (Rose Garden) of Saʿdi*, trans. W. M. (Wheeler McIntosh) Thackston (Bethesda, Md: Ibex Publishers, 2008), 3.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid., 7.

renown to the task of writing and presenting history. All of the valences of *ẕikr-i jamīl* were included in historians' discussions of the relationship between history and a lasting renown. The Ilkhanid historian Rashīd al-Dīn includes an anecdote from the reign of the Ilkhanid khan Ghazan that suggests the Chingissid ruler's keen understanding of the impermanence of the world and the importance of undertaking laudable deeds for the sake of a lasting memory.[81] Substantially, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū devotes a considerable portion of his introduction to expounding on the concept as one of the major benefits of history (*ẕikr-i favāʾid-i dānistan-i taʾrīkh*). Clearly, the Timurid historian drew on the conceptual and historical examples of earlier poets, such as Niẓāmī ʿArūżī and Saʿdī, as his literary references occasionally drew directly from their works.[82] Yet, for Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, the best guarantor of a lasting renown is historical writing, for it is the single phenomenon capable of rescuing for man a glimpse of his own past. His discussion focuses on two of the aspects of a lasting renown initially articulated by the earlier poets. The first concerned the ability of history to immortalize a patron, while the second aspect reminded patrons of the importance of remunerating historians.

   Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's exposition on the benefits of a lasting renown begins with the observation that since all worldy exertions are rendered impermanent, the recording of good and charitable deeds becomes desirable. Indeed, he writes: "After the lapse of life, [the quest for dominion] offers no benefit and the name of renowned rulers and prosperous kings, which is the auditor of life's account of the best part of living and is the disseminator of the permanence of everyone, having passed to the earth with the pen of perdition, remains only by means of recording history

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[81] On this anecdote, see Judith Pfeiffer, "Conversion to Islam among the Ilkhans in Muslim Narrative Traditions: The Case of Aḥmad Teguder" (Ph.D., The University of Chicago, 2003), 320–4.
[82] For instance, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū refers to the example of ʿUnṣurī's role in spreading the fame of Maḥmūd of Ghazna cited by Niẓāmī ʿArūżī, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Jughrāfiyā*, 1:82.

and writing on the folia of time and the daily account book of day and night."[83] For Ḥāfiẓ Abrū,

history, through the promise of a lasting renown, offers man a second life after his death.[84] Yet,

beyond a superficial immortalization of a patron, the recording of a ruler's deeds stimulated the

virtue of readers of history, since the frequent perusal of good and bad deeds helped inform plans

for future action, as the memory of good deeds and the recollection of actions devoid of

praiseworthy morals played a prominent role in the councils of kings.[85]

    While Ḥāfiẓ Abrū recognized the traditional status of the poet and his panegyric in the

acquisition of a lasting renown, he added the historian and his chronicle as equally essential

conduits for securing permanent fame. Consequently, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū references the well-known

relationship between Sultan Maḥmūd of Ghazna and the poets Firdawsī and ʿUnṣurī, yet he also

mentions the role of the secretary and historian Abūʾl-Fatḥ ʿUtbī in securing for the Ghaznavid

ruler a lasting renown.[86] In fact, it is only as a consequence to these litterateurs' efforts that

Sultan Maḥmūd was remembered at all, as "no one brings to mind those kings, during whose

reigns people of talent did not thrive and attend to describing their circumstances, their

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[83] *baʿd az iqtiża-yi ʿumr fāʾida nadād va nām-i pādishāhān-i nāmdār va khusravān-i kāmkār ki mustawfī dakhl va kharj-i ḥayāt sar jumla-yi majmūʿ-i ʿumr va bāzir-i baqā-yi har yak bi qalam-i fanā bi-zamīn kashīda bi vāsiṭa-yi sabt-i taʾrīkh va taḥrīr bar rū-yi awrāq-i rūzgār va rūznāma-yi layl va nahār bāqī mānda*, ibid., 1:80.

[84] He writes: "permanent fame and future mention is a second life (*ṣīt-i bāqī va zikr-i mukhallad ḥayāt-i sānī ast*)," ibid., 1:81.

[85] Specifically, he states: "the mention of that which they expended in the acquisition of a good name, is the perfume of censers in councils, as the stories of groups, which were devoid of blessed virtues, receive the ridicule and admonition of the onlookers in order to console the wise and vigilant and direct the good and fortunate away from that course of action, as well as strive to suppress a lack of laudable and illustrious deeds and establish noble and high-minded structures. *Zikr-i ānān ki dar kasb-i nīk nāmī kūshīda and bakhūr-i majāmir-i majālis ast va ḥikāyat-i gurūhī ki az akhlāq-i ḥamīda ʿāṭil būda and sukhrat va ʿibrat-i nuzzār tā khirdmand-i hūshyār bidān taʾsī kunad va nīkbakht-i dawlat yār az īn ijtināb namāyad va bi tarṣīṣ-i quṣūr-i maḥāmid va maʾāsir va tashyīd-i abniya-yi maʿālī va makārim kushad*," Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Jughrāfiyā-yi Ḥāfiẓ Abrū*, 1: 80.

[86] Ibid., 1:82.

achievements and their conquests (*ghazavāt*); so no mention is made of their feats and accomplishments."[87] Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's implication is clear: if a ruler does not encourage the recording of his accomplishments, he will be forgotten. To further substantiate this notion, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū points to the "even greater prosperity and acquired glory, nobility, reverence, and respect" that historians found through the patronage of the Abbasid caliphs and the high status of historians afforded by the ancient rulers of Persia.[88] In contrast to the vast sums spent on armies and the construction of marvellous buildings, both of which deteriorate with time, the work of a scribe and his reed pen can be purchased for much less, and his work product lasts forever.[89]

Perhaps because *ẕikr-i jamīl* could play potentially a role in a literatteur's solicitation of patronage, Idrīs fully embraced the concept in his personal letters, panegyric poems, and historical writing from the moment he arrived in Ottoman lands in 908/1502. As a new arrival at court with few personal connections, Idrīs necessarily relied on his reputation as a skilled poet and author to obtain the attention of Bāyezīd II and the other leading men of the court. Accordingly, by reminding his audience of the importance of a poet and historian in securing a lasting renown, he employed the well-established conventions of a literary device as a more immediate tool for obtaining patronage. Consequently, in one of the earliest panegyrics that Idrīs dedicated to the Ottoman sultan, he claims to have fixed the good reputation (*ẕikr-i jamīl*) of Bāyezīd in his mind and requests the opportunity to produce a work in praise of the Ottoman sultan and his forebears.[90] While *Hasht bihisht* certainly spread the good reputation of the Ottoman rulers, Idrīs also used his composition of the chronicle as a vehicle to leverage the

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[87] *Va pādishāhānī ki ahl-i faẓl dar ayyām-i īshān ravājī nayāfta and va bi sharḥ-i ḥālāt va maqāmāt va ghazavāt-i īshān iʿtināʾī nanamūda kasī ki īshān yād na-yārad va az maʿālī va masāʿī-yi īshān ẕikr nakunad,*

[88] Ibid., 1:83.

[89] Ibid., 1:84.

[90] Bidlīsī, *Munāẕara-yi rūza va ʿīd*, 25a/b.

support of other leading statesmen. While writing the history, Idrīs, in personal correspondence to İskender Pasha, not only reminded the well-placed governor of their friendship, but also proclaimed that he would spread the former vizier's good reputation in his forthcoming history of the Ottoman dynasty by prominently featuring his deeds in many of the chapters concerning Bāyezīd's reign.[91] This promise of a lasting literary renown for patrons and supporters was part of Idrīs' general strategy to make friends and allies in the upper echelons of the Ottoman court. Indeed, in contrast to most Ottoman histories before the sixteenth century, *Hasht bihisht* includes a great many details on the principal officers and statesmen who served Bāyezīd. While his record of these offices and men ultimately serves to aggrandize the sultan—who, as a patron of such numerous and skilled commanders, scholars, and administrators, is proclaimed a truly great ruler—the inclusion of this catalog in Idrīs' history also demonstrates his effort to preserve their lasting renown. In much the same way that Idrīs reminded İskender Pasha of the good service that he offered, at the end of his section of Bāyezīd's officers, he included a note in one of the presentation copies of the chronicle that explained his selection criteria for inclusion in his history: only those men who had shown personal kindness or favors to him were mentioned.[92]

But if a lasting renown and appropriate patronage constituted the stock-in-trade of historians and the rulers whom they celebrated, Idrīs occasionally felt that the rewards he received for lauding the Ottoman house were not commensurate with his lasting achievement. After suffering several years of neglect at court, he obtained permission to undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca in 917/1511. According to Idrīs' formal complaint, not only did the court fail to outfit him for this journey in a manner befitting his status, but it also seized and

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[91] Bidlīsī, *Majmūᶜa*. Esad Efendi 1888, 141a.
[92] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 622a.

redistributed his usufruct grants within six days of his departure.[93] Not surprisingly, the concept

of a lasting memory and the duties of a patron to his historian figure in Idrīs'complaint: "Truly,

by which rule of the *sharīʿa* or kingly politesse (*murūvvat-i salṭanat*) is it right to repay a debt in

this manner to one who, for ten years of his precious life, has labored to resurrect the good

mention and spread the worthy deeds of this house?"[94] So, beyond the deployment of *ẕikr-i jamīl*

as simply an abstract literary convention, Idrīs consistently employed the concept to mediate his

interactions with Bāyezīd II and the leading Ottoman statesmen.

Idrīs' practical application of *ẕikr-i jamīl* in his negotiations with the Ottoman court does

not suggest that he viewed the concept as devoid of theoretical significance. On the contrary,

ẕikr-i jamīl figures prominently both as a conceptual component of his understanding of history's

benefits and as a distinguishing feature of the Ottoman dynasty. Within Idrīs' exposition on the

meaning and nature of the science of history, he presents seven discourses that enumerate the

benefits of knowing history. While the first four of these benefits concern the potential of history

to help individuals secure a heavenly reward, the last three address the benefits of history for

rulers. *Ẕikr-i jamīl* features in one of Idrīs' discourses on history's benefit for kings, in which he

posits its capacity to motivate rulers to develop and act upon ethical habits. For Idrīs, reading

histories, which relate the laudable affairs of past people, helps incline one's moral disposition

towards the good. In this way, a ruler, in his youth, is inspired to emulate the great actions of his

predecessors, while throughout his reign he will be disposed towards leaving a fitting legacy, as

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[93] TSMA E. 5675, lines 25-29.
[94] *Al-ḥaqq kasī ki dah sāl awqāt-i ʿumr-i ʿazīz-i kh^wud rā ṣarf-i iḥyā-yi ẕikr va nashr-i ās̱ār-i karīma-yi ān khānadān karda chunīn mujāzāt namūdan dar kudām qānūn-i sharīʿat va murūvvat-i salṭanat ravā bāshad*, TSMA E. 5675, lines 30-31.

an understanding of the "permanence of the end promotes the amassing of an abundant reward, legacy, lasting renown (ẕikr-i jamīl), and due receipt of praise."[95]

The connection between a lasting renown, reading history, and the cultivation of ethical habits was significant for Idrīs and the broader aims of his historical project. Throughout his various works, he insists that the Ottoman sultans hold the divinely appointed vicegerency of the world (khilāfat-i raḥmānī) through their possession and display of the blessed virtues (akhlāq-i ḥamīda).[96] From father to son, the Ottoman sultans have passed on these virtues and have consequently reigned as vicegerents. While the vicegerency of the world accrued to the glory of each ruler individually and the dynasty collectively, the upbringing of honest and ethical sons constituted an aspect of a ruler's lasting renown. In his introduction to the reign of Bāyezīd I, Idrīs offers an exegesis of a Quranic verse that, in part, elaborates the connection between ethical conduct and a lasting renown. The verse reminds man that wealth and children are only of value in worldly life, while good deeds are better in God's judgment.[97] Idrīs explores the implications of this verse by analyzing the benefits of wealth, children and good deeds. He concludes that when one's descendants are brought up possessed of dignity and virtue, "the ripe fruit trees bear fruit for harvest from the permanence of the fortune of the house and the accomplishment of the good deeds of the dynasty. And in the succession of ages and periods, the persistence of lasting renown and excellent virtue grows and gains strength."[98] For the primary subject of Idrīs'

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[95] *Dar mulk baqāʾ-i ʿuqbá mawjib-i iddikhār-i ajar-i jazīl va istibqāʾ-i ẕikr-i jamīl va istīfāʾ-i madḥ va sanā shavad*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 14a.

[96] For further discussion of this point, see chapter eight.

[97] The verse is from *surat al-kahf*: "Wealth and sons are the adornment of the present world, but the abiding things, the deeds of righteousness, are better with God in reward, and better in hope," (18:46).

[98] *Bi-ān tartīb ashjār-i mīva-dār yanāviʿ-i asmār az ibqā-yi dawlat-i khānadān va istiqāmat-i maṣāliḥ-i dūdmān istismār va ijtinā namāyad va bi-talāḥuq-i advār va taʿāqub-i aʿṣār istidāmat-i ẕikr-i jamīl va faẓl-i nabīl istiksār va iqtinā farmāyad*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 168b.

history, the Ottoman dynasty, the implication is clear; in addition to the wealth and the record of the good deeds that they have amassed, the unbroken patrilineal succession of one virtuous ruler with another constituted an aspect of the dynasty's lasting renown.

More fundamentally, Idrīs deployed the concept of *ẕikr-i jamīl* to define a sultan's proper sphere of activity and exhort him to promote good in the world. In the preface to his introductory section on the charitable institutions that Meḥmed II endowed in his lifetime, Idrīs distinguishes two methods "to establish the preservation of one's trace in this worthless world."[99] The first path, appropriate to men of profound insight (*arbāb-i lubāb*), is the preservation of the human soul through the aid of gnosis, since knowledge is the fountainhead of the water of life.[100] The second path is obtaining a lasting renown (*taḥṣīl-i ẕikr-i jamīl*) and perfecting the blessed habits (*takmīl-i malakāt-i ḥamīda*). The path is appropriate for kings and notables, "because for the kings of the world, the path of God's acceptance and the way of perfecting the bliss of the two abodes in the age of power and ability is through promoting the causes of obedience to the Quranic injunction: 'Surely God bids to justice and good-doing.'"[101]

Yet if good-doing was the basic material which kings used to construct their legacy, rulers were restricted to two types of lasting edifices. At the end of his life, Idrīs, in his introduction to his history of Selīm's reign, returned to the theme of *ẕikr-i jamīl* to distinguish the Ottoman dynasty from all contemporary rulers. In this context, he remarks that, for kings, a lasting renown is secured either through the construction of charitable institutions in their name—such as mosques, schools, and soup kitchens—or through the patronage of literary works

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[99] *Istiqrār va istimrār-i baqā-yi āṧār darīn jahān-i bī-iᶜtibār bi-du ṭarīq tawfīq ast*, ibid, 375a.
[100] Ibid.
[101] *Chirā ki khusravān-i jahān rā ṭarīq-i taḥṣīl-i riżā-yi raḥmānī va rāh-i takmīl-i saᶜādat-i dārayn dar zamān-i quvvat va tavān bi-tarbiyat-i asbāb-i iẕᶜān-i amr va ḥukm-i inna Allāha yaᵓmuru biᵓl-ᶜadli wa al-iḥsān*, Ibid. Bidlīsī's Quranic reference is to *Surat al-naḥl*, 90.

that describe the good deeds of its patron.[102] Since physical structures have a tendency to

deteriorate over time, a legacy preserved in literature is the firmest and best manner to obtain a

lasting renown.[103] For Idrīs, the Ottomans were without equal among the rulers of Islam in

establishing the profits of a lasting memory, as they endowed numerous charitable institutions

and patronized scholars and literatteurs from the far reaches of Islamic lands, who "sent epistles

and panegyrics, and epic poems of rhyming couplets to their court detailing their deeds in verse

and prose in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish."[104] In this manner, according to Idrīs, *zikr-i jamīl*

contributed to the development of an Ottoman historiographical tradition. By virtue of the good

deeds of the Ottoman sultans, skilled poets and writers throughout the world were motived to

memorialize the Ottoman dynasty in the three literary languages of the central domains of Islam,

namely Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. The widespread praise and multilingual appeal of these

historical works stood as testament to the greatness of the dynasty. Yet, in Idrīs' estimation, it

was not until the completion of his *Hasht bihisht* that the Ottoman house was appropriately

memorialized. The reason for this shortcoming was that before *Hasht bihsiht,* "there had been

absolutely no deserving and worthy work in the canon of accustomed historical writing (*ba-

qānūn-i taʾrīkh-i muʿtād*) that had informed its reader of their innumerable exploits and

commendable acts."[105] This canon of accustomed historical writing necessarily reflected a

chancery style, which could employ the full range of rhetorical technique to memorialize

Ottoman expansion of Islamic lands and articulate its ideal administration. In this sense, Idrīs

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[102] Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 18b-19b.
[103] Ibid, 19b.
[104] *Va fuṣaḥā-yi balāghat-shiʿār va bulaghā-yi barāʿat-ās̱ār bi-naẓm u nas̱r muʿtabarāt-i ʿarabī va fārsī va turkī az aṭrāf-i ʿālam khuṣūṣan az bilād-i ʿarab va ʿajam rasāʾil va qaṣāʾid va mas̱naviyāt bi-dargāh-i ʿālī-yi īshān āvarda and,* ibid, 19b.
[105] *Līkan muṭlaqᵃⁿ taʾlīfī lāyiq va kitābī rāyiq ki mukhbir az as̱ār-i maʾas̱ir va maḥāmid bī-shumār-i īshān būda bāshad ba-qānūn-i taʾrīkh-i muʿtād ittifāq nayaftāda,* ibid.

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clearly conceived of his work as revolutionary. He had brought the best method of expressing

historical knowledge in the chancery style favored throughout Persian lands to a new cultural

space, where the Ottoman dynasty was in the midst of developing an innovative imperial idiom,

which at once expressed itself through unprecedented conquest of new lands, widespread

construction of useful and charitable institutions, and the enthusiastic patronage of lasting

literature.

Despite the self-congratulatory terms in which Idrīs assessed his own work, as discussed

in chapter four, the initial reception of *Hash bihisht* in this nascent Ottoman imperial context was

decidedly mixed. Although his work was lauded by a number of other Persian émigrés residing

in Ottoman lands in the immediate wake of its presentation, several prominent Ottoman officials

pronounced a more skeptical assessment.[106] The objections of Sultan Bāyezīd's grand vizier, ᶜAlī

Pasha, and his chief military judge, Müʾeyyedzāde ᶜAbdurraḥmān, assumed several forms, but

focused on three interrelated issues of narrative scope, style, and language.[107]

First, the two statesmen claimed that as Idrīs' history included long narrative sections on

foreign rulers who were the contemporaries of the Ottoman sultans, his work had the unfortunate

effect of praising his patrons' rivals. Idrīs recorded this criticism in the conclusion to his history,

which he completed six years after the work's initial presentation, and sought to defend his

narrative approach. Specifically, he writes: "One of its faults they explained thus: / that I

recorded praise of enemies / that I wrote the eulogy of the emperors of Iran / through manifold

deceptions and tall tales / As most of these are enemies of this house / How are they deserving

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[106] For details on the early supporters of *Hasht bihisht*, see chapter four.
[107] For details of the initial reception of *Hasht bihisht*, see chapter four.

mention and discussion?"[108] The basis of their criticism concerned Idrīs' inclusion of separate

sections within the introduction to each of his books on the reign of a single Ottoman sultan, in

which he related events pertaining to contemporary rulers in Iran. This approach, in the context

of the preexisting Ottoman historiographic tradition, appeared to Idrīs' audience an affront to the

dignity of his patrons. Most Ottoman chronicles that predated Idrīs' work focused on the history

of the dynasty by maintaining a pronounced narrative focus on the individual sultan's conquests

and campaigns.[109] Those few chronicles that situated the Ottomans within the framework of

universal history argued for the privileged place of the dynasty by narrating its history as the

culminating event in the grand narrative of world history.[110] In both cases, if the chronicles

considered contemporaries of the Ottoman sultans, they clearly emphasized their subsidiary role

in the narrative.[111] Idrīs' decision to devote specific sections to contemporary rulers appeared to

undermine his express purpose of praising his patrons. Yet, Idrīs defended his approach as a

consequence of two rhetorical strategies. First, he argued for the inclusion of these sections, as

the chaotic and destructive events they described ultimately served to substantiate the status of

the Ottoman sultans as the preeminent rulers in Islamic domains. Secondly, he wished to

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[108] *Yakī naqsash chunīn kardand taqrīr / ki madḥ-i dushmanān rā karda taḥrīr / sanā-yi khusravān-i mulk-i Īrān / nivishta ū bi-ṣad nayrang u dastān / chu aksar dushman-i īn khānadān and / kujā shāyista-yi zikr u bayān and*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 633a.

[109] See for example, Aşıkpaşazade, *Die Altosmanische Chronik Des ʿAşıkpaşazade*, ed. Friedrich Giese (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1928); Neşri, *Cihânnümâ: 6. Kısım: Osmanlı Tarihi (687-890/1288-1485): Giriş, Metin, Kronoloji, Dizin, Tıpkıbasım*, ed. Necdet Öztürk (Istanbul: Çamlıca, 2008).

[110] See for example Ahmedi, *İskender-Nāme: İnceleme-Tıpkıbasım*, ed. İsmail Ünver (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 1983); or Shukr-Allāh, *Bahjat al-tavārīkh*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya 2990.

[111] One notable exception in this regard is *Khunkārnāma* of Muʿālī, the latter half of which details the struggles between the Aqquyunlu and Qaraquyunlu in detail, Sara Nur Yıldız and N.Y.), "Ottoman Historical Writing in Persian, 1400-1600," in *Persian Historiography*, ed. C.P. Melville (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 453–4.

establish the extent of both the friendship and enmity that existed between each Ottoman sultan and his contemporaries.[112]

This criticism of Idrīs' narrative scope was partially the consequence of the second criticism, namely, the gongoristic nature of his prose. As Idrīs later recounted, the Ottoman officials claimed: "One of its faults is verbosity and prolixity / such that the scribe's reed was unequal to its length / On every particular topic, it showed / excessive explanation and deception in recounting."[113] This criticism of style cut to the core of Idrīs' approach to historical writing. In fact, what his critics saw as prolixity, Idrīs understood as the proper expression of historical accounts. In the introduction to *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs identified his work as the first history of the Ottoman house to deal with the subject suitably. While he recognized that a number of chronicles had been written previously in Turkish, he largely dismissed them, as their authors had simply "produced compositions in an abridged and summary manner."[114] Moreover, they failed to treat their subject in appropriate terms: "In the manner of legends, [their works] were devoid of eloquence and elegance of meaning and sweetness and ripeness of expression; rather they brought, unverified accounts of the conquests of warrior kings and the fate of unbelievers."[115] Idrīs' counter-criticism of Turkish chronicles was derived from his clear conception of the proper relationship between rhetorical eloquence and historical narrative. In defending his approach, he explained clearly what he meant:

> As the histories of great rulers
> Are of a single sort since the time of Adam,

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[112] Bidlīsī. *Hasht Bihisht*. 633a.

[113] *yakī naqṣash buvad taṭvīl u iṭnāb / ki qāṣir shud zi-ṭūlash kilk-i kuttāb / bi har yak maqṣad-i juzvī zi-akhbār / namūda basṭ u takhyīlāt bisyār*, ibid.

[114] *Taʾlīfāt bar sabīl-i ījāz va ikhtiṣār karda and*, ibid., 8a.

[115] *Ammā dar asālīb-i afsān-hā-yi khālī az fasāḥat va malāḥat-i maʿná va ʿazūbat va ruṭūbat-i lafẓ va guftār balki ʿārī az taṣḥīḥ akhbār-i futūḥāt-i shāhān-i ghāzī va sar-guẕasht-i kuffār āvarda and*, ibid.

They are not limited to the mere recounting of events
Rather every sort of work may be joined to them

What is eloquence? The practice of speech
In accordance with the need of every situation

Sometimes the eloquent one, through the beauty of expression
Says much with few words

But sometimes, in praise and description
He makes one a hundred-fold by description

As the history of rulers are of this sort,
The aim of its prolixity is a lasting renown (*ẕikr-i jamīl*).[116]

In these verses, Idrīs draws on his understanding of history as the broadest and most complete

expression of rhetoric to defend his exhaustive approach to historical writing. For Idrīs, the best

histories were those that served as models of expression through their mastery of the widest array

of rhetorical and literary artifice. In this sense, Idrīs judged accusations of prolixity not as point

of criticism, but rather as a mark of his mastery of the tradition.

The final criticism, although not explicitly stated by Idrīs, concerned the two Ottoman

statesmen's reservations regarding Idrīs' use of Persian for the composition of a dynastic history

of the Ottoman sultans. Idrīs' advocacy of a literary approach to historical writing struck a chord

with Müʾeyyedzāde, an initial supporter of Idrīs who eventually became one of his two most

vocal critics. For even as the military judge criticized Idrīs for his bombastic prose, he

recognized that treatments of Ottoman history in Turkish would benefit from the application of

the chancery style. To this end, even as Idrīs was composing *Hasht bihisht* for Sultan Bāyezīd,

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[116] *Chu taʾrīkh-i salāṭīn-i muᶜaẓẓam / buvad bar yak nasaq az ᶜahd-i Ādam / nabāsha munḥaṣir bar mahż-i akhbār / shavad maqrūn bi-ān har gūna ās̱ār / balāghat chīst ijrā-yi kalāmī / bi-vafq-i iqtiżā dar har maqāmī / kunad gāhī balīgh az ḥusn-i guftār / bi-lafẓ-i andakī maᶜnā-yi bisyār / valī gāhi kunad dar madḥ u awṣāf / zi vaṣṣāfī yakī rā ṣad bi-ażᶜāf / chu taʾrīkh-i salāṭīn z-īn qabīl ast / gharaż z-iṭnāb-i ān ẕikr-i jamīl ast*, ibid., 633a.

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Müʾeyyedzāde approached the sultan to elicit his support for the production of another history of

the dynasty in an elevated Turkish register. As a consequence of the proposal, Sultan Bāyezīd

encouraged one of Müʾeyyedzāde's most promising students, Kemālpaşazāde, to write a work

that "should be resplendent of expression and style in the fashion of Turkish discourse for the

general benefit of the elite and common people."[117] While Kemālpaşazāde's history would not

become as popular as *Hasht bihisht*, its importance as a transformative work within the Ottoman

Turkish historiographical tradition was recognized even in the tenth/sixteenth century. The late-

sixteenth-century historian Muṣṭafá ʿĀlī situated both Idrīs and Kemālpaşazāde within the

Ottoman canon and applauded the latter scholar's ability "to express himself in the clear style of

the day."[118] In this indirect manner, the implicit criticism of Idrīs' work for its use of Persian

contributed to the establishment of a chancery style of historical writing in Turkish that would

come to dominate the Ottoman historiographical scene in the tenth/sixteenth century.

There is perhaps no greater evidence of this contention than the form that Ottoman

histories assume after *Hasht bihisht*. Not only was Idrīs' work placed within the Ottoman

historical canon, but, throughout the sixteenth century, Ottoman historians sought to emulate his

style. The language of this style ultimately became the high register Ottoman Turkish that

constituted the imperial idiom of Süleymān's reign, yet the attributes of this approach remained

remarkably faithful to the Persian chancery style that Idrīs had helped introduce in the first two

decades of the sixteenth century. Whether scholars or secretaries, Ottoman historians

overwhelmingly accepted the literary parameters and conventions of the chancery style and

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[117] *Ḫavāṣṣ ve ʿavāmma nefʿi ʿāmm olmaġiçun türkī maḳālın minvalı üzere röşen-i taʿbīr ve taḥbīr oluna*, Kemalpaşazade, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osmân, I. Defter*, ed. Şerafettin Turan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1970), 37.
[118] *El-ḥaḳḳ ḫub yazmışlar ol zamānda müstaʿmel olan tibyān-i vāẓıḥla beyān etmişler*, Âli, *Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī's Künhü'l-Aḫbār and Its Preface according to the Leiden Manuscript*, 36.

sought to compose works of history in Turkish that conformed to the canon of accustomed

historical writing, which Idrīs championed in his work. Ottoman histories in Turkish increasingly

deployed the full range of rhetorical technique of the chancery style through frequent citation of

the authoritative sacred, poetic, and historical references found in Persian histories. Not

surprisingly, after Idrīs, *zikr-i jamīl* appears regularly in the introductions to Ottoman histories,

as their authors deployed the concept to justify and explain the aims of their particular projects.

In fact, some of the most prominent Ottoman historians of the subesequent generations,

including Celalzade Muṣṭafá, his brother Ṣāliḥ Çelebi, Hoca Saʿdeddin, and Muṣṭafá ʿĀlī, all

discussed the historical and literary concept in the introductions to their Ottoman histories.[119]

While it is likely the case that these authors had Saʿdī's *Gulistān* in mind as much as Idrīs' *Hasht*

bihisht, the widespread acceptance of the concept reflects the near universal embrace of the

chancery style in Ottoman historical writing in the tenth/sixteenth century.

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[119] The varied uses to which these four historians put the concept of a lasting renown could, in its own right, form a separate study. Ṣāliḥ Çelebi, Hoca Saʿdeddin and Muṣṭafá ʿĀlī all discuss *zikr-i jamīl* in their introductions, Ṣāliḥ Çelebi, *Taʾrīḫ-i Sulṭān Süleymān*, Universitatsbibliothek Leipzig B. or. 012, 3b; Ḫoca Saʿdeddīn, *Tācüʾt-tevārīḫ*, 1:7; and Muṣṭafá ʿĀlī, *Künhüʾl-aḫbār* (Istanbul: Takvimhane-yi Amire, 1277), 1:7–8; Although Celālzāde Muṣṭafá does not explicitly refer to *zikr-i jamīl*, his slightly different formulation, a lasting name (*baqā-yi nām*) addresses the same underlying concept, and in fact, is found in the earlier literature, Mustafa Çelebi Celalzade, *Geschichte Sultan Süleymān Ḳānūnīs von 1520 bis 1557, oder, Ṭabaḳāt ül-Memālik ve Derecāt ül-Mesālik*, ed. Petra Kappert, In Facsimile herausgegeben nach der Handschrift Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz Ms. or. quart. 1961, mit Varianten der Handschriften Wien, Nationalbibliothek H.O. 41, Istanbul, Ayasofya 3206, Fatih 4423, Universite Ktph. T.Y. 5997, Indices, einer Biographie des Autors sowie Untersuchungen zur osmanischen Historiographie des 16. Jahrhunderts / (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1981), 9a.

Chapter Eight: The Timurid Vocabulary of Sovereignty

VIII.1 Introduction

If Idrīs' ideas on historical writing reflected the expansive tradition of the Persian

chancery style generally, and the more narrowly observable fifteenth-century debate on history

specifically, his thinking on sovereignty also drew equally from the broader currents on kingship,

as well as from his more immediate intellectual interests and preoccupations. In a broad sense,

his political thought was conditioned by a particular tradition of sovereignty, which had its

origins in the career of Timur, was developed through the competing claims of his descendants,

and was adapted ultimately to courts throughout the central lands of Islam. In this way, the

Timurid expression of sovereignty became a pronounced feature of kingship for all of the major

polities throughout the central Islamic lands in the sixteenth century. Yet the articulation and

spread of this conception of sovereignty was not the product of some amorphous and abstract

intellectual process. In many instances the adaptation of the Timurid conception of kingship can

be traced through the movement of scholars and statesmen from one court to another and the

adaptation of a new vocabulary of sovereignty to ever wider political contexts. The chaotic

political landscape of the fifteenth century, which witnessed the rapid expansion and devolution

of competing princely courts and independent polities, certainly contributed to the frequent

movement of scholars, secretaries, and statesmen across Islamic lands. Often, such men found

productive outlets for their intellectual and literary talents in the chanceries, administrative

offices, and learned court gatherings of their new or temporary homes, and in this manner helped

mold and spread a common discourse rooted in a vocabulary of sovereignty first pioneered in

Timurid courts. Indeed, Idrīs is clearly representative of this process. He first adopted elements

of Timurid sovereignty while working in the Aqquyunlu chancery in the 1480s, and later adapted

them to the Ottoman context of the early sixteenth century, where they were absorbed, reformulated, and reintroduced to new effect in a distinctly Ottoman project of imperial definition.

More narrowly, Idrīs' mature thinking on sovereignty also reflected his earlier education and the intellectual circles in which he moved as a young man. Specifically, Idrīs' introduction to Sufism under the instruction of his father conditioned his particular conception of the cosmic role of the ideal ruler, while his association with Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī, the preeminent scholar of western Iran, offered opportunities to consider the philosophical underpinnings of kingship. From his father's Nūrbakhshī background Idrīs absorbed a concern for the celestial ordination of a divinely appointed ruler of spiritual and corporeal domains. Similarly, he accepted Davānī's insistence on the ideal ruler's embodiment of philosophically sanctioned attributes and actively incorporated this dimension of kingship in his expositions on the greatness of Ottoman sultans. While in a broad sense, these epistemological perspectives—astrological, mystical, and philosophical—were well established within the Timurid discourse on sovereignty by the time of Idrīs' birth in 861/1457, their specific iterations in Idrīs' mature thinking among the Ottomans demonstrate his efforts to undergird the Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty with robust philosophical and mystical positions.

VIII.2 Sovereignty under Timur

The life and career of Timur offers a productive starting point for a discussion of sovereignty in late medieval Islam, especially because Timur's efforts to legitimize his political activities and conquests drew upon the most salient features of rule in Islamic lands as conceived since the advent of the Mongols in the thirteenth century. Moreover, his synthesis of these

existing legitimating traditions, when overlaid with the legendary aspects of his own career, constituted a powerful and appealing new political dispensation that came to dominate discourses on sovereignty for several centuries over a vast territorial expanse that extended from southeastern Europe to south and central Asia.

Over the course of his conquests, Timur faced several considerable challenges in his claim to rule. Most significantly, his origins within the lineage of a respected, yet minor branch of the Barlas tribe disqualified him from serious consideration to rule within either the Turko-Mongolian or Islamic traditions to which he was socially bound.[1] Although by the middle of the eighth/fourteenth century the Ilkhanid dynasty had all but completely unraveled, the prestige of a Chinggisid lineage still constituted the only legitimate exercise of sovereign power and acceptable claim to the title of khan.[2] Indeed, throughout the middle and latter fourteenth century, non-Chinggisid warlords (*qarachu*) who managed to consolidate power frequently exercised authority solely through the nominal appointment of Chinggisid khans.[3] Within Islamic traditions of political authority, Timur's background posed equally insurmountable difficulties. Since the dissolution of the Abbasid caliphate at the hands of Hülegü Khan in 656/1258, a universally accepted Islamic conception of rule remained contested. In order to address these ideological challenges to his political authority, Timur developed several policies

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[1] On Timur's orgins, see Beatrice Forbes Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 45; For a detailed discussion of Timur's purported genealogy with reference to near contemporary sources and modern scholarship, see John E. Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," in *Intellectual Studies on Islam: Essays Written in Honor of Martin B. Dickson*, ed. Michel M. Mazzaoui and Vera B. Moreen (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 85–101.

[2] Beatrice Forbes Manz, "Tamerlane and the Symbolism of Sovereignty," *Iranian Studies* 21, no. 1/2 (January 1, 1988): 105; Beatrice Forbes Manz, "Tamerlane's Career and Its Uses," *Journal of World History* 13, no. 1 (2002): 3.

[3] For examples of other non-Chinggisid warlords appointing figurehead khans, see Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," 103.

over the course of his lifetime that were directed alternatively toward Chinggisid and Islamic

political frameworks. At all times, these policies remained flexible and adaptable to Timur's

particular circumstances. In other words, not all of these policies were operable at all times and

in equal force. In fact, modern scholars have widely accepted John Woods' suggestion that

Timur's claims to sovereignty can be differentiated broadly with reference to two periods, which

correspond to the earlier circumstances of his career between 761/1360 and 782/1381 and a later

period between 782/1381 and his death in 807/1405.[4]

In the earlier period of Timur's reign, the conqueror relied on several interrelated policies

that emphasized his role as protector of the Chaghatayid appanage khanate. Specifically, Timur

frequently proclaimed his fealty to Chinggis Khan's formulation of Mongol customary law—the

yasa—and administered his growing domains in staunch accordance with the code.[5] Yet the

exercise of sovereign power by a non-Chinggisid warlord still posed a significant problem. To

accommodate this deficiency, between 771/1370 and 805/1402, Timur appointed and recognized

two descendants of Chinggis Khan through the Ögedeiyid line as figurehead khans, yet

continued to exercise *de facto* power in his capacity as a commander (*amīr*).[6] Concurrently,

Timur sought to strengthen his ties with the legacy of Chinggis Khan through several marriages

between himself and his male descendants with Chaghatayid, Ögedeiyid, and Jochid princesses.

He capitalized on these alliances through the adoption of the title *kuragān* (imperial son-in-law)

and proclaimed its significance on the documents, coins, and literary works that his court

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[4] Ibid., 100.
[5] Ibid., 100–101.
[6] Manz, "Tamerlane and the Symbolism of Sovereignty," 106; Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," 101–2.

produced.[7] Whereas in the earlier period of Timur's reign, the purpose of these legitimating strategies seemed primarily fixed upon asserting his authority as protector of the Ulus Chaghatay in Turkestan and Transoxiana, during the latter part of his career, these same policies were increasingly deployed to bolster claims to reestablish the entire Chinggisid political ecumene across Eurasia.[8]

Concurrent with these strategies of Chinggisid accommodation, Timur also developed policies to burnish his credentials as a ruler within an Islamic framework. With the expansion of Timur's ambitions to encompass all Iranian lands once ruled by the Ilkhanids, he deployed symbols and terminology that resonated in an Islamic context. In 782/1381, before setting out on the conquest of Khurāsān, he sought and obtained the endorsement of two renowned religious figures of the region.[9] In this campaign and those that followed throughout Iran, Timur asserted that he conquered in the name of the emperor of Islam (*pādishāh-i Islām*)—his Ögedeiyid figurehead leader—without reference to Chinggisid traditions.[10] Notwithstanding the widespread destruction wrought by these campaigns and the broad condemnation that they elicited from Muslim scholars, Timur sought to present his conquests as a reconstitution of the broad temporal authority exercised in Islamic lands by the Muslim Ilkhanid rulers of the early fourteenth century. In the final years of his reign, Timur's conquests brought him into greater contact and eventually conflict with the Ottoman sultan Bāyezīd I (r. 791-805/1389-1402), who, as the victor over the Crusader army at Nicopolis in 798/1396, began to assert with newfound confidence his

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[7] Mano Eiji first emphasized the importance of the title küregan for Timur in Mano Eiji, "Amir Timur Kuragan -- Timur ke no keifu to Timur no tachiba," *Toyosho-Kenkyu* 34.4 (1976): 110; The point is echoed by Beatrice Manze in Manz, "Tamerlane and the Symbolism of Sovereignty," 110; and John Woods in Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," 99.

[8] Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," 106–109.

[9] Ibid., 105.

[10] Ibid.

status within Islamic lands as an exemplary warrior of the faith (*ghāzī*).[11] Perhaps in ideological

response to these developments, Timur sought to cast his campaigns in India in 799/1397 as a

great conquest on behalf of Islam in the historical and literary mold of the great warrior of the

faith (*ghāzī*) Sultan Maḥmūd of Ghazna.[12] In a work initially produced and presented to Timur

around 802/1400, Ghiyās̱ al-Dīn ᶜAlī Yazdī celebrated Timur as *ghāzī* and recounted the

conqueror's speech on the outset of the campaign in which he condemned the false faith of the

ostensible Muslim rulers of Delhi who, in reality, had succumbed to the idolatry of their

subjects.[13]

Beyond these policies geared toward Chinggisid and Islamic modes of legitimacy, Timur

possibly cultivated a third aspect of legitimation in his final years of life. By the beginning of the

ninth/fifteenth century, the extent of his conquests and the grandeur of his monumental

construction projects offered a record of his rule that presented its own legitimating logic.[14] After

all, Timur had personally conducted successful raids and conquests across a geographic expanse

that ranged from the Russian steppe to the Gangetic plains of northern India, and from the

Mediterranean to the borderlands of China. His resounding successes, like the great conquests of

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[11] Cihan Yüksel Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks: Imperial Diplomacy and Warfare in the Islamic World* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 81–82.

[12] Michele Bernardini, *Memoire et propagande à l'epoque timouride* (Paris: Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, 2008), 79–80.

[13] Ibid., 97–99; There is some dispute in modern scholarship regarding the date of completion of *Rūznāma-yi Ghazavāt-i Hindūstān*. Bernardini suggests that the work was initially completed around 1400 and only presented to Shāhrukh in 1415. Although he does not explicitly substantiate this position, his view is presumably based upon the chronicle's narrative end date of 1399, ibid., 91, 93; In contrast, John Woods is inclined to suggest that the work was completed in 1415, yet substantially incorporated material from a no longer extant, similarly titled work by Qāżī Naṣīr al-Dīn ᶜUmar, John E. Woods, "The Rise of Tīmūrid Historiography," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 43 (1987): 83, 84. In either case, we may tentatively suggest that the image of *ghazā* as preserved in the extant version of the *Rūznāma-yi Ghazavāt-i Hindūstān* reflects the political and ideological climate shortly after his return from northern India.

[14] Manz, "Tamerlane's Career and Its Uses," 4.

earlier centuries, seemed to indicate divine favor. And, indeed Timur sought to exploit the ideological potential of such a possibility with the adaptation of the term *Ṣāḥib-Qirān* as his primary moniker.[15] In the final years, such successes and the ideological weight that they carried were likely sufficient on their own to legitimate his claim to independent sovereign rule. After the death of Timur's second figurehead khan, Sulṭān-Maḥmūd, in 805/1402, Timur declined to appoint a successor and appeared to rule solely in his own name.[16] This last mode of legitimation—one which celebrated rather than obscured his humble origins and pointed to his subsequent successes as a mark of cosmic and divine favor—would become increasingly significant for Timur's descendants when they began to compete among themselves for sovereign authority after his death in 807/1405. In this context, descent from Timur alone constituted sufficient grounds for sovereign rule.

VIII.3 Sovereignty under the early Timurids

In the twenty-five years following Timur's death in 807/1405, two political and religious developments altered the framework of sovereignty established during the reign of the conqueror. The first development concerned the succession struggle among Timur's descendants and its impact on Timur's model of sovereignty. The second development concerned the broader and older search for alternative Islamic political structures that originated in the dissolution of the Abbasid caliphate, and temporarily coalesced around a number of millenarian movements in the 1420s, which modern scholarship has characterized as a distinct messianic challenge to the

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[15] The title *Ṣāḥib-Qirān* is used throughout Shāmī's chronicle of Timur completed before the ruler's death, Shāmī. Niẓām al-Dīn, *Histoire des conquêtes de Tamerlan*; For the place of Shāmī's work in the broader context of Timurid historiography, see Woods, "The Rise of Tīmūrid Historiography," 85–87.
[16] Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," 114.

political order.[17] Throughout this period, the Chinggisid and Islamic ideologies synthesized by Timur remained in force, yet their emphases and specific expressions evolved to accommodate the new realities imposed by these political and religious developments.

The fragility of Timur's political project was most immediately exposed by the succession struggle that erupted among his descendants, and only came to a fully satisfactory end with the consolidation of power by Timur's youngest son Shāhrukh in 821/1418. Although most of the Turkic military elite within Timur's core domains supported one of his descendants in the wake of his death, there was no broadly agreed upon constitutional mechanism to regulate succession.[18] In his lifetime, Timur had favored succession through the line of his son Jahāngīr (d. 777/1376) by designating Muḥammad-Sulṭān ibn Jahāngīr (d. 805/1403) as heir, and later, after Muḥammad-Sulṭān's death, through the designation of Pīr Muḥammad ibn Jahāngīr (d. 809/1407).[19] While prestige of lineage likely informed Timur's designation of these young princes, their inexperience and weak position as governors of remote provinces undermined any effective claim to rule.[20] Moreover, in keeping with Turko-Mongol dynastic traditions, Timur had granted his sons and grandsons large appanages from which they could form effective bases

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[17] Messianic challenge is a term favored by Evrim Binbaş, see Binbaş, "Sharaf al-Dīn ᶜAlī Yazdī," 140; More broadly, the concept of a messianic challenge to political authority may be observed in a number of religio-political movements of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. For a discussion of the religious and social conditions that helped give rise to these movements, see Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nūrbakhshīya between Medieval and Modern Islam*, Studies in Comparative Religion (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 31–41.

[18] Binbaş, "Sharaf al-Dīn ᶜAlī Yazdī," 323–7.

[19] Beatrice Forbes Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 16–17.

[20] The two brothers were the sons of Jahāngīr and Bakht Malik Āghā, a Chinggisid princess, Woods, *The Timurid Dynasty*, 29; Beatrice Manz points to Pīr Muḥammad's appointment as governor in Kabul and Multan as a factor in his inability to develop an effective following after Timur's death, Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran*, 17.

of power and assert their own independent authority.[21] The resulting struggle played out over the following thirteen years and resulted in the deaths of several Timurid princes.

During this period of conflict, the various princely households of Timur's descendants established competing courts that produced their own ideological rationale for sovereign rule. Such competition was quickly reflected in the administrative and literary products of these courts. One of the most active courts in this regard, and one that would have a significant effect on subsequent expressions of Timurid sovereignty, centered in Shiraz. From this city, Mīrzā Iskandar ibn ᶜUmar-Shaykh governed and briefly challenged his uncle Shāhrukh's claims to preeminence between 812/1409 and 817/1414.[22] In the first instance, Mīrzā Iskandar's ideology of sovereignty was informed by the intellectual luminaries that his patronage attracted: Sufis, such as Shāh Niᶜmatallah Valī; theologians, such as Sayyid Sharīf Jurjanī; lettrists, such as Ṣāᵓin al-Dīn Turka; and astrologers, such as Jamshīd Kāshī.[23] Such patronage encouraged varied scholarly products, including astronomical tracts, treatises on the nature of God's unity (*ᶜilm-i tawḥīd*), and expositions on the science of letters (*ᶜilm-i ḥurūf*).[24] Mīrzā Iskandar deployed the

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[21] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 20; Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 36; Binbaş, "Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī," 181.

[22] On Mīrzā Iskandar's brief rule and cultural activities, see Jean Aubin, "Le mécénat timouride a Chiraz," *Studia Islamica*, no. 8 (January 1, 1957): 71–88; Priscilla P. Soucek, "Eskandar B. ʾOmar Šayx B. Timur: A Biography," *Oriente Moderno*, ns, 15 (76), no. 2 (January 1, 1996): 73–87; İlker Evrim Binbaş, "Timurid Experimentation with Eschatological Absolutism: Mīrzā Iskandar, Shāh Niᶜmatullāh Walī, and Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī in 815/1412," in *Unity in Diversity : Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam*, ed. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 277–303.

[23] For reference to these intellectuals at the court of Mīrzā Iskandar, see Jean Aubin, "Le mécénat timouride a Chiraz," *Studia Islamica*, no. 8 (January 1, 1957): 71–88.

[24] On astronomical texts produced for Mīrzā Iskandar, see Soucek, "Eskandar B. ʾOmar Šayx B. Timur," 83; Sharīf Jurjānī and Niᶜmatullāh Valī both produced works on *ᶜilm-i tawḥīd* at Mīrzā Iskandar's invitation. For a discussion of these works, see Binbaş, "Timurid Experimentation with Eschatological Absolutism: Mīrzā Iskandar, Shāh Niᶜmat Allāh Walī, and Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī in 815/1412," 281–90; Mattew Melvin-Koushki speculates that Ṣāᵓin al-Dīn Turka's *Risālat-i ḥurūf* was produced at the prince's request, Matthew S. Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest

presuppositions, vocabulary, and conclusions of these varied intellectual traditions to form a

synthesized and coherent claim to sovereignty in the preface to his own astronomical work

entitled *Jāmiᶜ-i sulṭānī*.[25] In the preface, Mīrzā Iskandar observes that God invested the secrets of

terrestrial and celestial dominion within human beings and confirmed their external and internal

perfection and fortune through the conjunction of their births with celestial events made

intelligible through horoscopes. Moreover, He endowed their bodies as repositories of divine and

natural marks, and taught them, in the instance of Adam, to comprehend all of the divine

attributes through mastery of which they may rise to the status of God's vicegerent of creation.[26]

This vision of man's place in the cosmos draws upon mystical, lettrist, and astrological

cosmologies, and, when applied to the question of rule in the world, substantiates Mīrzā

Iskandar's claim to possess the robe of the formal and spiritual caliphate (*khilᶜat-i khilāfat-i ṣūrī*

va maᶜnavī).[27]

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for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin Al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and
Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran" (Ph.D., Yale University, 2012), 89; Matthew
Melvin-Koushki and Orkhan Mir-Kasimov, "The Occult Challenge to Messianism and
Philosophy in Early Timurid Iran: Ibn Turka's Lettrism as a New Metaphysics," in *Unity in
Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam* (Leiden;
Boston: Brill, 2014), 253.

[25] All that remains extant from this work is the preface, which is contained in a single manuscript
of Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī's prose collection (Cambridge University Library Ms. H. (5)), and
was published in Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī, *Munshaʾāt-i nivishta-yi Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī*, ed. Īraj
Afshār (Tehran: Surayyā, 1388), 207–211; Jean Aubin first brought this work to modern
scholarly attention in Aubin, "Le mécénat timouride a Chiraz"; Evrim Binbaş pointed to the
innovative discourse on sovereignty contained in the preface in Binbaş, "Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī
Yazdī," 219–20; and in Binbaş, "Timurid Experimentation with Eschatological Absolutism:
Mīrzā Iskandar, Shāh Niᶜmatullāh Walī, and Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī in 815/1412," 291–93.

[26] Binbaş, "Timurid Experimentation with Eschatological Absolutism: Mīrzā Iskandar, Shāh
Niᶜmatullāh Walī, and Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī in 815/1412," 291; Yazdī, *Munshaʾāt-i nivishta-yi
Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī*, 208.

[27] Binbaş, "Timurid Experimentation with Eschatological Absolutism: Mīrzā Iskandar, Shāh
Niᶜmatullāh Walī, and Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī in 815/1412," 291; Yazdī, *Munshaʾāt-i nivishta-yi
Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī*, 209.

Around this same time, historians associated with Iskandar's court further underscored the political implications of the Timurid prince's claim through the composition of at least two historical works that dealt heavily in the themes treated by Iskandar in *Jāmiᶜ-i sulṭānī*. Muᶜīn al-Dīn Naṭanzī, in an untitled work commonly known as *Iskandar-Anonymous (The Synoptic History of Iskandar)*,[28] proclaims his patron's superiority in governance over his uncle Shāhrukh and elevates Iskandar's status to that of a philosopher-king who had mastered every art and science and surrounded himself with the greatest luminaries of the day, including Shams al-Dīn Jazarī, Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī, and Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka.[29] In dynastic terms, the work substantiated Iskandar's succession by elaborating his deeds, which had surpassed the unprecedented achievements of his grandfather Timur and father ᶜUmar-Shaykh.[30] More forcefully, in a subsequent iteration of the work produced for Shāhrukh, Muᶜīn al-Dīn Naṭanzī infused his history with potent religio-political references and eschatological terminology. In the earliest recension of his history, *Muntakhab-i tavārīkh-i muᶜīnī*, he argues for Iskandar's rightful claim to rule through the existence of a formal pact (*ᶜahdnāma*) offered by Timur to Iskandar, which modern scholars such as Priscilla Soucek and Evrim Binbaş have viewed as an allusion to the

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[28] John E. Woods, "The Rise of Tīmūrid Historiography," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 43 (1987): 89; Binbaş, "Sharaf al-Dīn ᶜAlī Yazdī," 204–5.

[29] Binbaş, "Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī," 216; Evrim Binbaş has pointed to the close association of these luminaries as constitutive of a fifteenth-century Republic of Letters in the central lands of Islam, ibid., 39–40; Francis Richard first brought scholarly attention to the association of these intellectuals with his publication of a letter of Qivām al-Dīn Muḥammad Yazdī to Mīrzā Iskandar, in which he provides details on this group and its willingness to join the Timurid prince's court, Francis Richard, "Un témoignage inexploité concernant le mécénat d'Eskandar Solṭān à Eṣfahān," *Oriente Moderno* n.s. 15 (1996): 45–72.

[30] W. M. Thackston, trans., "Anonymous Synoptic Account of the Timurid House," in *Album Prefaces and Other Documents on the History of Calligraphers and Painters* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 91.

Shīʿī concept of *naṣṣ*.[31] Certainly such an interpretation is possible, especially since Naṭanzī in other places is quite clear on the profoundly unique status of Iskandar, whom he proclaims the messiah of the End Times (*mahdī-yi ākhir-i zamān*).[32] Over the course of the fifteenth century, the ascription of messianic titles to temporal rulers would become one of the basic features of sovereignty. More immediately, Naṭanzī's discourse on Iskandar and the other similar claims put forward by the scholarly and historical works produced in Shiraz between 812/1409 and 817/1414 had an immediate effect on the wider discourse on sovereignty among other Timurid princes.

In this regard, a similar ideological program developed concurrently within the court of Iskandar's uncle, Shāhrukh, who was consolidating his rule in Khurāsān during this period. Around the time that Iskandar adopted the title of sultan, Shāhrukh's court aspired to even greater claims of sovereignty. In 820/1417, the Ḥanafī jurist, Jalāl al-Dīn Qāyinī completed a political treatise dedicated to Shāhrukh in which he proclaimed his patron the *mujaddid* of the ninth century of the Hijra.[33] In large measure the basis for this attribution rested upon Shāhrukh's assumption of power in the beginning of the century and his decision to abrogate the traditions of Chinggis Khan and implement the *sharīʿa* in full force. Claims of Shāhrukh's preeminent status as the renewer of the faith and protector of the *sharīʿa* would become hallmark themes in the early Timurid historiographical tradition as it developed under the aegis of Shāhrukh's thirty-

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[31] Soucek, "Eskandar B. 'Omar Šayx B. Timur," 76; Binbaş, "Timurid Experimentation with Eschatological Absolutism: Mīrzā Iskandar, Shāh Niʿmatullāh Walī, and Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī in 815/1412," 298.

[32] Muʿīn al-Dīn Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab al-tavārīkh-i Muʿīnī, Extraits du Muntakhab al-tavarikh-i mu'ini (anonyme d'Iskandar)*, ed. Jean Aubin (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-i Khayyām, 1336), 433; Binbaş, "Timurid Experimentation with Eschatological Absolutism: Mīrzā Iskandar, Shāh Niʿmatullāh Walī, and Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī in 815/1412," 298.

[33] Subtelny and Khalidov, "The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning in Timurid Iran in the Light of the Sunni Revival under Shāh-Rukh," 212; Binbaş, "Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī," 339–40.

year reign. In fact, the two most prominent historians of the period—Ḥāfiẓ Abrū and Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī—both deployed the concept of religious renewal as a prominent aspect of their praise of Shāhrukh.[34]

Although Mīrzā Iskandar's claims to the caliphate and Shāhrukh's counter claims to religious renewal (*tajdīd*) were clearly fueled by the dynastic rivalry between the two aspirants to Timur's legacy, the adaptation of terminology grounded in Islamic tradition also reflected developments within the socio-religious context of the period, in general and the first decades of the fifteenth century in particular. Between the dissolution of the Ilkhanid dynasty in the mid-fourteenth century and the rise of the Ottoman, Safavid, Mughal, and Uzbek empires in the early sixteenth century, a significant number of radical pietistic movements sought to transform the political order of the Islamic East. Modern scholarship has understood the prevalence and potency of such movements as constitutive of a Messianic Age, during which time lines between religious and political authority were blurred beyond distinction and, in the words of Shahzad Bashir, Islamic societies undertook a "search for alternative structures of legitimation undergirding the relationship between the rulers and the ruled."[35] Before the dissolution of the Ilkhanids, political authority in Islamic lands was largely predicated on a theoretical concept of universal kingship—whether Abbasid or Ilkhanid—which legitimized claims to rule through a king's preeminent royal genealogical lineage. The absence of suitable candidates with such lineages as a viable political option from the fourteenth century onwards heightened the appeal of messianic missions, which were frequently substantiated by a deliverer's claims to spiritual and temporal authority on the basis of direct divine appointment. But even if these appeals rested

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[34] On Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, see Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 104; On Yazdī, see Binbaş, "Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī," 339.

[35] Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions*, 31.

ultimately on such divine support, messianic messengers also burnished prominent religious and spiritual lineages that bolstered their prestige. Whether as descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad (*sayyid*) and his nephew and son-in-law ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib or as hereditary heirs of renowned Sufi masters, several of the most successful messianic figures of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries enhanced their appeal with reference to prestigious lineages. During this period four messianic figures, Fażl Allāh Astarābādī, Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh, Muḥammad ibn Falāḥ, and Ḥaydar ibn Junayd all claimed *sayyid* status as they offered their followers radical visions of a new order. This messianic discourse, once it entered the political arena, also became an appealing mode of legitimation for temporal rulers. Since such a discourse offered a powerful alternative to authority based on prestige of royal genealogy, aspects of the messianic message appealed especially to rulers without particularly distinguished royal lineages.

If the 150 years after the dissolution of the Ilkhanids was generally susceptible to a messianic appeal, the decade after Shāhrukh's consolidation of power in 821/1418 was particularly charged with heightened eschatological expectation fueled by radical Sufis and occultists. As discussed in chapter one, in 826/1423, the leader of the *Kubravīya*, Isḥāq Khuttalānī proclaimed one of his disciples, Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh, the expected *mahdī*, who would usher in a period of peace and justice before the Day of Judgment.[36] The political implications of such an announcement were immediately apparent to Shāhrukh, who ordered the arrest of those involved. Shāhrukh's governor executed Khuttalānī and sent Nūrbakhsh to Herat where Shāhrukh had him imprisoned. Although these developments may have alarmed Shāhrukh, his close escape from an assassination attempt in 830/1427 elicited a much more

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[36] Ibid., 45.

comprehensive response.[37] In the days following the incident, the attempted assassin was

connected with the Hurufi movement of Fażlallah Astarābādī, who had been executed at the

order of Shāhrukh's brother Mīrānshāh in 796/1394 for innovation in matters of the faith. The

connection of the attempted assassin with a messianic movement sent a shock wave through

Shāhrukh's court. Indeed, Evrim Binbaş has pointed to this assassination attempt as a watershed

moment in the Timurid ruler's reign, as it crystalized the threat posed by the messianic challenge

and precipitated a heavy-handed response that led to the expulsion or intimidation of a wide

array of Sufis, intellectuals, and occultists.[38]

Yet beyond these policies, the rise in prominence of radical messianic movements may

have fueled an ideological response from Shāhrukh and the princely courts of his sons. Maria

Subtelny has characterized Shāhrukh's reign as a period of Sunni revival.[39] Certainly, many

aspects of his reign seemed to signal a return to *sharᶜī* policies; his professed abrogation of the

Chinggisid *yasa*, implementation of the *sharīᶜa,* and the patronage of Sunni scholars and

institutions indicate a shift from his father Timur's policies of proclaiming the preeminence of

Chinggisid traditions. However, in many respects, not least in reference to issues of sovereign

authority, Shāhrukh and his sons continued to deploy an eclectic array of legitimating

vocabularies, some of which freely engaged with the political discourses propounded by the

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[37] İlker Evrim Binbaş, "The Anatomy of a Regicide Attempt: Shāhrukh, the Ḥurūfīs, and the Timurid Intellectuals in 830/1426-27," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 23, no. 3 (2013): 391–428.

[38] İlker Evrim Binbaş, "The Anatomy of a Regicide Attempt: Shāhrukh, the Ḥurūfīs, and the Timurid Intellectuals in 830/1426-27," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 23, no. 3 (2013): 391–428.

[39] Maria Eva Subtelny, "The Cult of 'Abdullah Anṣārī under the Timurids," in *Gott Ist Schön Und Er Liebt Die Schönheit – God Is Beautiful and He Loves Beauty*, ed. Alma Giese and J. Christoph Bürgel (Bern: Peter Lang, 1994), 377–406; Subtelny and Khalidov, "The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning in Timurid Iran in the Light of the Sunni Revival under Shāh-Rukh"; Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 24–28.

radical Sufis and messianic deliverers of the 1420s. Most significantly, the Timurid family

mausoleum in Samarqand, Gūr-i Amīr, contains two inscriptions on nephrite jade that proclaim

the family's descent from both Chinggis Khan and ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.[40] Specifically, the

inscriptions, which were some time after 1425, associates Alan-Qo'a, a purported ancestor of

both Chinggis Khan and the Barlas tribe from which Timur descended, with the Virgin Mary and

openly declares that the divine light by which she miraculously conceived was a descendant of

ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.[41] As John Woods has suggested, this claim, despite its lack of historicity,

"manifests a kind of spiritual reality when seen in the context of similar efforts throughout the

central Islamic lands to reconcile Mongol and Semitic traditions."[42] The emphasis of the

inscription on a miraculous Timurid descent from ʿAlī demonstrates a concerted effort to

associate the Timurid house with the most prominent lineage of post-Abbasid Islamic

legitimating discourse. In its emphasis on the role of direct divine intervention and association of

Timur with ʿAlī, the rationale and message of the inscription drew freely upon two of the most

fundamental aspects of the messianic challenge posed by men such as Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh

and the Ḥurūfīs. Given the broader religio-political context in which Ulugh Beg commissioned

the cenotaph and its inscription, we may perhaps view this example of Timurid legitimating

ideology as a response to the messianic revolts of the 1420s.

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[40] These inscriptions were first published in A.A. Semenov, "Nadpisi na nadgrobiyakh Timura i ego potomkov v Gur-i Emire," *Epigrafika Vostoka* 2, 3 (1949 1948): 49–62, 45–54; and in Turkish translation, A.K. İnan, *Makaleler ve İncelemeler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1969), 587–610.

[41] John Woods first brought scholarly attention to the significance of this aspect of the inscriptions, Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," 85–87; Denise Aigle provided further analysis and translated the inscriptions into French, Denise Aigle, "Les transformations d'un mythe d'origine : l'exemple de Gengis Khan et de Tamerlan," *Revue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 89–90 (2000): 151–68; Most recently, Azfar Moin analyzed the inscription in relation to Timurid associations with ʿAlī, Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, 37–39.

[42] Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," 87.

VIII.4 Historical Writing and the New Vocabulary of Sovereignty

The dynastic and religious developments of the first decades of the fifteenth century encouraged Timurid discourses on rule that focused upon legitimating strategies that offered alternatives to narrowly defined royal genealogical lineages. The concepts that were developed emphasized the role of divine sanction and drew upon a wider religious climate charged with eschatological expectation. In such an environment, the invocation of miraculous and cosmic events became an acceptable and even necessary strategy for substantiating rule. Such strategies also coalesced around several titles, which, although not inventions of the early fifteenth century, took on new significance and eventually wide acceptance in the political discourses of the fifteenth century. In this way, terms such as *Ṣāḥib-qirān* and *mujaddid*, both of which predate Timurid usage even in a political context, gained broad currency as terms of political rhetoric only with their application and adaptation by Timurid courts in the first decades of the fifteenth century. Certainly, the activities of the hyperliterate scholars, secretaries, and statesmen associated with these courts encouraged their adaptation in ever-wider political contexts. But on another level, this new vocabulary of sovereignty resonated because the ideas for which it stood offered a compelling discourse for rulers to justify and explain their rule in the absence of traditionally accepted legitimating criteria.

VIII.4.1 Ṣāḥib-Qirān

The term *ṣāḥib-qirān* initially gained some currency in the panegyric Persian poetry of the eleventh century. Conceptually, *ṣāḥib-qirān*, as descriptor of a ruler's attributes, referred to the celestial fortune that he enjoyed through the auspicious coincidence of his birth and a major

planetary conjunction. In its concern for celestial ordination of a ruler, the term and concept

likely predate the Islamic period, and indeed several modern scholars point to similar concepts in

pre-Islamic Persia and speculate that the Arabicized expression that gained currency in eleventh-

century Ghaznavid poetry was in fact a calque from Middle Persian.[43] In particular, Masʿūd-i

Saʿd-i Salmānī and Farrukhī, both renowned poets associated with the Ghaznavid court,

occasionally referenced the term in their panegyric poetry.[44] One generation later, the term

gained currency in the Saljuq context of Khurāsān and Transoxiana, where Muʿizzī and Sūzanī

frequently referenced *Ṣāḥib-Qirān* in their praise of several Saljuq rulers and governors.[45]

During the twelfth century, use of the term in poetry was not limited to eastern Iran; by the latter

half of the century renowned Persian poets in Āẕarbāyjān, such as Khāqānī and Niẓāmī, used the

term in reference to the Saljuq sultan Tughril II.[46]

The use of *Ṣāḥib-qirān* in the poetry of both eastern and western Iran likely affected the

Persian historiographical tradition from at least the beginning of the thirteenth century. Indeed,

two historians writing at opposite ends of the Turko-Persian cultural zone at almost the same

time deployed the term among the lofty attributes of their respective patrons. One of the

historians, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Rāvandī (fl. 603/1207), presented his work *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr wa*

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[43] Chann, "Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction," 94; A.S. Melikian-Chivani, "The Iranian Bazm in Early Persian Sources," in *Banquets d'Orient*, ed. Rika Bernus-Taylor and Bernus-Taylor Bernus-Taylor (Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'étude de la civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 1992), 95–118.

[44] Masʿūd-i Saʿd-i Salmānī uses *Ṣāḥib-Qirān* in praise of Sultan Maḥmūd of Ghazna. See for example, Masʿūd-i Saʿd Salmānī, *Dīvān*, ed. Rashīd Yāsamī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Pīrūz, 1339 [1960]), 4, 36. Farrukhī praises Maḥmūd's son and heir Masʿūd by the same title, Farrukhī Sīstānī, *Dīvān-i Farrukhī Sīstānī*, ed. Muḥammad Dabīr Siyāqī (Tehran: Iqbāl, 1335), 392;

[45] Dihkhudā, "Ṣāḥib-qirān," *Lughatnāma*.

[46] Khāqānī uses the term in reference to Abū al-Muẓaffar Jalāl al-Dīn Shirvānshāh: Khāqānī, *Dīvān Badīl ibn ʿAlī Najjār Khāqānī Shirvānī*, ed. Żiyāʾ al-Dīn Sajjādī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Zavvār, 1338/1959), 32. Niẓāmī uses it in praise of Tughril Arslān in *Khusraw u Shīrīn*: Niẓāmī Ganjavī, *Khuraw va Shīrīn,* ed. Ḥusayn Pizhmān Bakhtiyārī (Tehran: Ibn Sīnā, 1343 [1964]), 15.

ayāt al-surūr to the Saljuq sultan of Rūm Kay Khusraw I, upon his accession in 600/1204.[47]

Rāvandī, who hailed from Kāshān and studied Ḥanafī jurisprudence in Hamadan, began writing a history of the Great Saljuqs in 599/1202. As the period of his writing corresponded with the rapid dissolution of the Great Saljuqs, Rāvandī had difficulty finding an appropriate patron once his work was completed. Only after his arrival in Konya and the accession of Kay Khusraw in 600/1204 did he find a suitable environment in which to present his work and laud his patron as the Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction of every land (*ṣāḥib-qirān-i har diyār*).[48] Like Rāvandī, another litterateur Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥasan Niẓāmī (fl. 602/1206) only completed his history, *Tāj al-maʾāsir*, after similar reversals in the fortunes of his planned patrons. Ḥasan Niẓāmī was originally from Nīshāpūr, where, according to the fourteenth-century historian Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī (d. after 740/1339-1340), he was born to the well-renowned author of the *Chahār maqāla*, Niẓāmī ʿArūżī Samarqandī.[49] After departing his hometown to seek literary fame, he found a place at the Ghurid court of Muʿizz al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Sām in Ghazna. Some time thereafter he traveled to Lahore, where under the patronage of Muʿizz al-Dīn's viceroy in India, Quṭb al-Dīn Aybeg, he began a history of the Ghurid conquests of northern India. The work, which he began to write in 602/1205-1206, records the Ghurid conquests under Muʿizz al-Dīn

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[47] For details on Rāvandī's biography, see Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 237–9; Julie Scott Meisami, "Rāvandī's Rāḥat Al-Ṣudūr: History or Hybrid?," *Edebiyat* 5 (1994): 181–215; Carole Hillenbrand, "Rāvandi, the Seljuk Court at Konya and Persianisation of Anatolian Cities," *Mesogeios (Mediterranean Studies)* 25–6 (2005): 157–69.

[48] Abū Bakr Najm al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Rāvandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr wa āyat al-surūr*, ed. Muhammad Iqbal (London: Luzac, 1921), 19.

[49] Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *On History and Historians of Medieval India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1983), 58; Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī, *Taʾrīkh-i guzīda*, ed. Edward Granville Browne and Reynold Alleyne Nicholson (Leiden: Brill, 1910), 826.

Muḥammad and his deputy Quṭb al-Dīn Aybeg.[50] The untimely deaths of both men before the

completion of the work—Muʿizz al-Dīn was assassinated in 602/1206 and Quṭb al-Dīn died in a

polo accident in 606/1210—complicated the narrative trajectory of the history, which ends with

the consolidation of an independent Sultanate of Delhi under Iltutmish, who gained prominence

as governor of Badāʾūn and as a close associate of Quṭb al-Dīn.[51] Despite the reversals of fortune

for Niẓāmī's patrons, he lauded the lofty status and auspicious role of both Muʿizz al-Dīn and

Quṭb al-Dīn, the latter of whom he celebrated, in particular, as the Lord of the Auspicious

Conjunction of the world (*Ṣāḥib-qirān-i ʿālam*).[52]

Despite the different geographic and political contexts in which the works were

produced, both *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* and *Tāj al-maʾāsir* share several significant characteristics.

Besides the common usage of *ṣāḥib-qirān*, both works were patronized by Persianized Turkish

courts in newly conquered or recently Islamicized lands. In this regard, both texts highlight the

role of rulers, who, through the use of the sword, uphold the faith and spread the domains of

Islam.[53] Rāvandi exhorts his patron Kay Khusraw to reinvigorate the faith in the central lands of

Saljuq rule in response to the corruption that precipitated the decline of the Great Saljuqs, while

Ḥasan Niẓāmī emphasizes war against infidels (*jihād* and *ghazāʾ*) as a great duty of a Muslim

ruler.[54] Beyond these thematic similarities, the two works were conceived of as hyperliterate

vehicles for patronage. They sought to apply poetry and highly stylized prose to the construction

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[50] For an overview of these conquests, see Peter A. Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate : A Political and Military History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 7–19.

[51] On the political background and reversals of this period, see ibid., 13; On the challenges such setbacks posed to Ḥasan Niẓāmī's historical project, see Nizami, *On History and Historians of Medieval India*, 59–60.

[52] Ḥasan Niẓāmī, *Tāj al-maʾāsir*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya 2991, 8b.

[53] For discussion of this point with respect to *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, see Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*, 240.

[54] Ibid., 241; Rāvandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr wa āyat al-surūr*, 38; Ḥasan Niẓāmī, *Tāj-i Maʾāsir*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Aya Sofya 2991, 7b.

of didactic historical narratives.[55] As such, they both draw heavily upon the most celebrated

Persian poets of their own day and the preceding generations. Because of this self-conscious and

highly stylized approach to prose, the two works also received a fair amount of criticism on their

literary merits from scholars in the twentieth century.[56] And yet, in the late medieval and early

modern periods, the works were held in some esteem; *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* was translated into Turkish

in the fifteenth century at the request of the Ottoman sultan Murād II, and *Taj al-maʾās̱ir*, served

as a model of fine prose writing for secretaries and other litterateurs into the sixteenth century.[57]

This aspect of the continuing relevance of these works in the context of the Ottoman court of the

fifteenth century is examined later in this chapter.

Perhaps not surprisingly then, the term *Ṣāḥib-Qirān* remained an occasional reference in

the chancery-style histories written under the patronage of the Ilkhanids in the thirteenth and

fourteenth centuries. Three of the most prominent historians of this period—Juvaynī (d.

681/1283), Rashīd al-Dīn (d.718/1318), and Vaṣṣāf (d. 730/1229-1230)—all include a few

isolated references to the term in relation to a Chinggisid ruler. In contrast to the previous usage

of the term by Rāvandī and Ḥasan Niẓāmī, the Ilkhanid historians' deployment of *Ṣāḥib-Qirān*

implied not only a sign of God's favor for the Chinggisid rulers, but also an indication of the

peace and justice that their reigns ensured. In this regard, Juvaynī referred to the concept in the

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[55] For a discussion of the features of this chancery style of historical writing, see chapter seven.
[56] Rāvandī, *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr wa āyat al-surūr*, xii–xiii; Ẓāhir al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī and Ismāʿīl Afshār, *Saljūqnāma* (Tihrān: Khāvar, 1332), 5–8; Julie Scott Meisami discusses the critiisms of Iqbāl and Afshār, Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*, 238; Ḥasan Nizami, *Taj Ul Maʾathir = The Crown of Glorious Deeds*, ed. M. Aslam Khan and Chander Shekhar, trans. Bhagwat Saroop (Delhi: Saud Ahmad Dehlavi, 1998), xiii–xvii; Muḥammad Taqī Bahār, *Sabk'shināsī : yā tārīkh-i taṭavvur-i nas̱r-i Fārsī, barāya tadrīs dar dānishkadah va dawrah-i dukturī-i adābiyāt* (Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi khūdkār, 1321), 3:109–111.
[57] Yazıcızāde ʿAlī. Tevārīḫ-i āl-i Selcuq. TSMK Revan 1391. Storey counts fourteen extant copies of the work from the 13th-15th centuries, C. A. (Charles Ambrose) Storey, *Persian Literature : A Bio-Bibliographical Survey* (London: Luzac, 1927), 1:494.

concluding remarks on his chapter of the deeds and actions of Ögedei Khan. After recounting

fifty anecdotes that demonstrated the khan's justice and generosity, Juvaynī concludes:

> We have described something of that which the Necessarily Existent caused to be
> present in his nature in the way of clemency, forgiveness, justice, generosity and
> the teachings of the religion of God; and this we have done that it may be known
> that in every age there is a Lord of the Conjunction, such as in former times were
> Hatim and Nushirvan and others, and their fame will shine forth like the fountain
> of the sun until the end of time, and tales and traditions will be told and recorded
> of them.[58]

Whereas Juvaynī's handling of the term emphasizes the generosity of the khan, Rashīd al-Dīn

refers to the term in the introduction to his history both as one of the royal epithets for his patron

Öljeitü Khan (Sultan Muḥammad Khudābanda), and as a signifier of the peace that his accession

assured. Since, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, such a peaceful transition has never occurred before,

it is a sign that Öljeitü is the most auspicious ruler to assume the throne since the time of

Adam.[59] Vaṣṣāf, too, acknowledges the recurring auspicious aspect of the concept, but

emphasizes its bestowal upon a ruler as a clear sign of God's favor. In Vaṣṣāf's narrative, the

adaptation of the term by the Ilkhanid emperor Arghūn (d.690/1291) occurs at the suggestion of

his Jewish vizier, Saʿd al-dawla, whose nepotism and cronyism in appointments drew the ire of

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[58] Translation by J.A. Boyle, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAṭā Malik Juvaynī, *Genghis Khan : The History of the World Conqueror* (Manchester: Manchester University Press ; Paris, 1997), 234; ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAṭā Malik Juvaynī, *Taʾrīkh-i jahān-gushāy* (London: Luzac, 1912), 1:168.

[59] "The truth is that from the creation of the world and the beginning of Adam's progeny, in no generation has the throne of rule been graced by anyone possessed of such auspiciousness" (Thackston translation), Rashīd al-Dīn Fażl Allāh Hamadānī, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jamiʿu't-Tawarikh = Compendium of Chronicles : A History of the Mongols*, trans. W. M. Thackston (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University, Dept of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1998), 5; *Az baduv-i fiṭrat-i ʿālam va ibtidā-yi ẓuhūr-i ẕurrīyat-i Ādam bāz dar hīch qarnī sarīr-i salṭanat bi-chunīn ṣāḥib qirānī musharraf nagashta ast*, Rashīd al-Dīn Fażl Allāh Hamadānī, *Jāmiʿ al-tavārīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Rawshan and Muṣṭafá Mūsavī (Tehran: Nashr-i Alburz, 1373), 5.

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Muslim functionaries.[60] Perhaps as a consequence of such ill feeling, Vaṣṣāf, on the authority of another secretary Ṣadr al-Dīn Khālidī, relates that Saʿd al-Dawla suggested to Arghun that the khan had inherited the status of prophet through his Chinggisid lineage. To lend credence to this belief, the vizier circulated a document among the Muslim scholars and learned men of the court requesting their acknowledgement of Arghūn's status as the Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction who is sent by God in every age to set right the affairs of the world "and, in accordance with the requisites of the time and for the good of humankind, reveals the custom of a sacred law and the basis of a ritual observance."[61] This notion of Ṣāḥib-Qirān as a cyclically manifested and divinely appointed reformer brought the concept in line with similar Islamic conceptions of religious renewal (tajdīd). Indeed, in parallel with the historiographical references to ṣāḥib-qirān, as will be discussed below, a separate application of Islamic renewal to political discourse unfolded within Mamluk domains.

Even if the term Ṣāḥib-Qirān enjoyed an extensive history in the poetry and historical writing that preceded Timur, such references to the concept in association with a ruler were generally infrequent and unevenly applied. In the generation following Timur's death, the term was used so frequently in reference to him as to become his exclusive moniker. Indeed, beginning with Niẓām al-Dīn Shāmī, Timurid historians, when mentioning the conqueror's

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[60] Jean Aubin, *Emirs mongols et vizirs persans dans les remous de l'acculturation* (Paris: Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, 1995), 43.

[61] The complete sentence reads: *har zamānī ṣāḥib-qirānī nāmūs-i ilāhī bāshad va vujūd-i ū mawjib-i intiẓām va iltiyām-i ʿālam gardad va ʿalá muqtażá al-ayyām va maṣāliḥ al-anām shiʿār-i sharīʿatī va asās-i ṭarīqatī paydā gardānad*, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Faẓl Allāh Vaṣṣāf al-Ḥaẓrat, *Kitāb-i Vaṣṣāf al-Ḥaẓrat*, ed. Muḥammad Mahdī. Iṣfahānī (Bambaʾī, 1269), 241; Aubin, *Emirs mongols et vizirs persans dans les remous de l'acculturation*, 43; Anne F Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds*, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 44.

actions or deeds, simply referred to the ruler as *Amīr-i Ṣāḥib-Qirān*.[62] Beyond its usage simply as

a title, historians working under Shāhrukh, especially Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī, also endeavored to

explicate the astrological dimensions of Timur's auspicious life. In the beginning of his history,

Yazdī includes a lengthy digression following his narration of Timur's birth, in which he

examines Timur's horoscope to substantiate the notion that through his reign, "the bases of the

structure of the felicity of that line were firmly fixed to the pillars of the Lord of the Auspicious

Conjunction until the End of Time."[63] In contrast to most previous discussions of a ruler's status

as Lord of Conjunction, Yazdī's discourse seeks to substantiate the association of the title Lord

of Conjunction with the particular birth and subsequent career of Timur through its specific and

detailed analysis of conjunction astrology. This approach clearly influenced Idrīs, for when he

took up the task of substantiating his use of titles for Bāyezīd II, he also sought to undergird the

legitimating claims that he advanced through detailed scholarly considerations of their

epistemological underpinnings.[64]

VIII.4.2 Mujaddid

The other legitimating term that gained currency during this period also emphasized the

cyclical nature of cosmically or divinely appointed rulers. The title *mujaddid* refers to the

individual sent by God every century to renew the bases of Muslim faith. In contrast to the

concept of a *Ṣāḥib-Qirān*, the conceptual basis of which was derived from celestial events, the

concept of cyclical renewal was firmly grounded in the canonical traditions of the Prophet

Muḥammad (*ḥadīth*/pl. *aḥādīth*). As such, the first prophetic tradition that Abū Dāwūd al-

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[62] Shāmī. Niẓām al-Dīn, *Histoire des conquêtes de Tamerlan*.

[63] Elena A. Poliakova, "Timur as Described by the 15th Century Court Historiographers," *Iranian Studies* 21, no. 1/2 (1988): 37.

[64] For a discussion of Idrīs' use of astrological doctrines in his discourses on kingship, see chapter nine.

Sijistānī includes in the *Kitāb al-malāḥim* (book on battles, often of a prophetic nature) of his canonical *ḥadīth* collection records: "God will send to this community at the turn of every century someone who will restore for it matters of faith (*inna Allāh yabʿath li-hādhihi al-umma ʿalá raʾs kull miʾa sana man yujaddid lahā amr dīnihā*)."[65] Although the tradition may have been associated initially with the eschatological expectations of the Muslim community—and certainly Abū Dāwūd's inclusion of the tradition among other similarly apocalyptic traditions substantiates this notion—from at least the third century, the tradition became strongly connected with certain exceptional scholars whose work was judged to have renewed the bases of faith among Muslims. Ella Landau-Tasseron has identified the frequent early use of the tradition among Shāfiʿī scholars and suggested that the strong correspondence between these scholars and the concept of cyclical renewal stemmed from the early efforts of al-Shāfiʿī's students to legitimize their teacher's views and solidify his legacy.[66] Regardless of whether such a strategy was actively pursued, the title *mujaddid* was closely associated with Shāfiʿī scholars before the ninth/fifteenth century, yet frequently remained a personal and narrowly construed title of reverence used within small scholarly circles to honor exceptional men of learning.

Even if the tradition was closely associated with renowned Shāfiʿī scholars, the concept of cyclical renewal was never completely divorced from eschatological overtones. In the latter half of the eighth/fourteenth century, at least two scholars implicitly or explicitly highlighted the apocalyptic aspect of the tradition. On an implicit level, Ibn al-Kathīr pointed to this aspect of the tradition when he included the *ḥadīth* immediately preceding two other traditions on the signs of

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[65] Abū Dāʾūd Sulaymān al-Sijistānī and Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥamīd, *Sunan Abī Dāʾūd* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿa Muṣṭafá Muḥammad, 1354), 4:109 (no. 4291).
[66] Ibid., 99–113.

the End Time (*ashrāṭ al-sāᶜa*) in *Nihāyat al-bidāya*.[67] More explicitly, Zayn al-Dīn al-ᶜIrāqī (d.

806/1404) suggested that God's appointment of a *mujaddid* was, in fact, a means of postponing

the End Times.[68] In the ninth/fifteenth century, intellectual speculations that conflated the

mujaddid in this century and the arrival of the expected *mahdī* abounded. Indeed, a wide swath

of Muslim scholars, including lettrists, such as ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān Bisṭāmī, and traditional *ḥadīth*

scholars, such as al-Sakhāwī, anticipated the coming Hour at the end of the ninth hijri century

and firmly tied the tradition of renewal to this heightened eschatological expectation.[69] This

apocalyptic foreboding reached such fervor in the latter ninth/fifteenth century that the renowned

Egyptian scholar Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī wrote a treatise beseeching God to confirm him as

mujaddid in the ninth hijri century and issued several religious opinions refuting the impending

Day of Judgment.[70]

As with the earliest usages of *Ṣāḥib-Qirān* in a political context, the eschatological

overtones that would become so important in the ninth/fifteenth century were largely absent in

the earliest political reference to renewal as a legitimating concept. Moreover, not surprisingly,

as with *Ṣāḥib-Qirān*, renewal as a political discursive element emerged from hyperliterate court

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[67] Ismāᶜīl ibn ᶜUmar Ibn Kathīr, *Nihāyat al-Bidāyah wa-al-nihāyah fī al-fitan wa-al-malāḥim*, ed. Muḥammad Fahīm ᶜAbīyah (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Naṣr, 1968), 1:30–31.

[68] Landau-Tasseron, "The 'Cyclical Reform': A Study of the Mujaddid Tradition," 80.

[69] On al-Bisṭāmī's prognostications, see al-Bisṭāmī, *Naẓm al-sulūk fī musāmarat al-mulūk*, TSMK III. Ahmet 1597, 267a-271a; on Sakhāwī, see Muḥammad ibn ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *al-Maqāṣid al-ḥasanah fi bayān kathīr min al-aḥādīth al-mushtahirah ᶜala al-alsinah*, ed. ᶜAbd Allāh Muḥammad Ṣiddīq and ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb ᶜAbd al-Laṭīf (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 1979), 122.

[70] For al-Suyūṭī's religious opinions on the end of the world, see Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ḥāwī lil-fatāwī fī al-fiqh wa-'ulūm al-tafsīr wa-al-ḥadīth wa-al-uṣūl wa-al-naḥw wa-al-i'rāb wa-sā'ir al-funūn*, ed. 'Abd al-Laṭīf Ḥasan (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 2000), 2:86; For al-Suyūṭī's comments on the expected *mahdī* and the express hope that he be considered the *mujaddid* of the ninth century, see E. M. Sartain, *Jalāl Al-Dīn Al-Suyūṭī : Biography and Background* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 2:227; Landau-Tasseron, "The 'Cyclical Reform': A Study of the Mujaddid Tradition," 87.

panegyrics in the eighth/fourteenth century. Yet, in contrast to the title *Ṣāḥib-Qirān*, early usage

of *mujaddid* in such a context occurred within the fourteenth-century court of the Mamluk

Sultanate. Although Mamluk sultans traditionally defined their sovereignty in relation to an

Abbasid caliph appointed by the sultan, court circles in Syria and Egypt were not immune to the

alternative legitimating strategies advanced by hyperliterate Persian courtiers after the advent of

the Mongols in the sevent/thirteenth century. Indeed, even Sultan Baybars, the first Mamluk

sultan to consolidate power effectively, borrowed from contemporary Persian political discourse.

In fact, the title *ṣāḥib-qirān* appears prominently in at least two places among the inscriptions

that Baybars ordered be made on the citadel in Damascus.[71] Such political experimentation

within the Mamluk court continued into the middle of the eighth/fourteenth century, when the

descendants of the Mamluk sultan Qalāwūn endeavored to establish a dynasty and fashion a

basis for rule that could combat effectively the ambitions of powerful Mamluk commanders.[72]

   In this environment, Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Qaysarānī, a chancery official of

the Mamluk court in Cairo, celebrated the accession of the Qalawunid sultan al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ in

743/1342 through a panegyric epistle in Arabic that he presented in the following year, in which

he proclaimed the new sultan *mujaddid* and sought to substantiate this claim with reference to

the full range of rhetorical technique.[73] Presented upon the accession of a new sultan by one of

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[71] Denise Aigle, "Les Inscriptions de Baybars Dans Le Bilād Al-Šām. Une Expression de La Légitimité Du Pouvoir," *Studia Islamica*, no. 97 (2003): 73.

[72] On the reign of Qalāwun's son and most successful heir, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, see Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in Mamluk History : The Third Reign of Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn (1310-1341)* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); For two different views on the period after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reign, see Frédéric Bauden, "The Sons of Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Politics of Puppets: Where Did It All Start?," *Mamluk Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (2009): 53–81; J. van Steenbergen, *Order out of Chaos : Patronage, Conflict, and Mamluk Socio-Political Culture, 1341-1382*, Medieval Mediterranean ; v. 65 Y (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

[73] P.M. Holt first brought scholarly attention to this article in the context of literary production at the Mamluk court, P.M. Holt, Thomas Philipp, and Ulrich Haarmann, "Literary Offerings: A

the chancery secretaries of the court, Ibn al-Qaysarānī's epistle was clearly intended as a vehicle

for patronage as much as an instrument of legitimation of Qalawunid rule. Indeed, both these

objectives are evident throughout the work; Ibn al-Qaysarānī points both to his forebears, who

served as prominent Ayyubid and Mamluk administrative functionaries, as well as to the

elements of divine sanction and fortunate lineage that substantiate al-Malik al-Ṣālih's authority.[74]

Foremost among such legitimating elements is the concept of renewal (*tajdīd*), the elaboration

and substantiation of which occupy three-quarters of the entire epistle.[75] Although Ibn al-

Qaysarānī directly references the prophetic tradition in several places in the work, his conception

of *mujaddid* differs markedly from previous scholarly considerations.[76] Most significantly, al-

Malik al-Ṣālīh's birth in 720/1320 and accession in 743/1342 presented a chronological difficulty

in applying a title dependent upon centennial calendrical turns. To address this challenge, he

uncoupled the original prophetic tradition from the Islamic calendar and applied it to the period

of Mamluk rule in Egypt, which began in the middle of the thirteenth century. With this

rationale, he cited the foundation of Mamluk rule in 643/1245 and noted that al-Malik al-Ṣālih

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Genre of Courtly Literature," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3–16; More recently, Jo Van Steenbergen has analyzed this source with respect to its ideological message and use as a vehicle for professional advancement on the part of its author, Jo Van Steenbergen, "Qalāwūnid Discourse, Elite Communication and the Mamluk Cultural Matrix: Interpreting a 14th-Century Panegyric," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 43 (2012): 1–28.

[74] For al-Qaysarānī's discussion of his ancestors, see Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qaysarānī and 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī, *al-Nūr al-lāʾiḥ wa-al-durr al-ṣādiḥ fī iṣṭifā Mawlānā al-Sulṭān al-malik al-Ṣāliḥ (Abū al-Fidā 'Imād al-Dīn Ismā'īl ibn al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn, 743-746H, 1342-1345M)* (Trablus: Dār al-Inshā lil-Ṣiḥāfah wa-al-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr, 1982), 11–12.

[75] Van Steenbergen, "Qalāwūnid Discourse, Elite Communication and the Mamluk Cultural Matrix: Interpreting a 14th-Century Panegyric," 10.

[76] Specifically al-Qaysarānī states: "It became known through his justice and virtue that he is the one sent to this community at the turn of this century to renew its faith (*uʿlima bi-ʿadlihi wa faḍlihi annahu alladhī buʿitha li-hādhahi al-umma ʿalá raʾs hādhahi al-miʾa al-sana li-yujaddid lahā dīnahā*), al-Qaysarānī and Tadmurī, *al-Nūr al-lāʾiḥ*, 50.

acceded the throne one hundred lunar years later.[77] Although Ibn al-Qaysarānī's adaptation of the *mujaddid* tradition represents an anomaly within the Mamluk context until the reign of Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in the early sixteenth century, his work anticipated the fifteenth-century development of the term in a Timurid context in at least two ways.[78] Most significantly, Ibn al-Qaysarānī demonstrated the suitability of applying the *mujaddid* tradition to a political personage. More provocatively, he offered an innovative exegesis of the tradition that justified its application to a ruler whose birth, life, and rule unfolded entirely within the middle decades of a single hijri century. Both efforts were well suited to the abilities and inclinations of a chancery functionary. On one hand, they frequently had the broad learning in religious, astrological, and mystical sciences to draw creatively upon the salient elements of those traditions that might bolster a king's claim to cosmically or divinely ordained rule. On the other hand, the dictates of the patronage environment in which they wrote tolerated and even encouraged creative interpretations and innovative applications of these traditions in an encomiastic literary form.

Early Timurid usage of *mujaddid* likely developed independently of Ibn al-Qaysarānī's treatise. The title was most prominently associated with Timur's son and eventual successor Shāhrukh from the second decade of the fifteenth century. In the context of his rivalry with his nephew Mīrzā Iskandar, the development of this title likely offered an appealing legitimating strategy at a time when Shāhrukh still contended with rival claimants to sovereign authority. The first proponent of Shāhrukh as *mujaddid* was Jalāl al-Dīn Qāyinī (d. 838/1434-5), who substantiated his attribution with reference to Shāhrukh's abrogation of Chinggisid dynastic

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[77] Ibid., 53–55; Van Steenbergen, "Qalāwūnid Discourse, Elite Communication and the Mamluk Cultural Matrix: Interpreting a 14th-Century Panegyric," 11.

[78] For a discussion of the title *mujaddid* in the context of the reign of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, see chapter five of the present study.

tradition and the reintroduction of the *sharīᶜa*.[79] Despite these laudable policies, the Ḥanafī

scholar faced a more fundamental challenge in his claim. Like al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ, Shāhrukh had

not accomplished anything of note before the turn of the century. Claims to renewal ran counter

to most traditional approaches to identifying renewers, whose activities should precipitate

religious renewal before the turn of a century. Qāyinī accommodated such concerns with the

suggestion that since the Prophet Muḥammad died eleven years after the start of the hijri

calendar, centennial renewers are sent one hundred years from the Prophet's death.[80] As such,

Shāhrukh's independent reign, which, according to Qāyīnī began in 811/1408-9, signified a

chronologically and religiously appropriate marker of the Timurid ruler's status as the renewer of

the eighth century. In the 1420s, Ḥāfiz Abrū and Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī both further popularized

this claim with references to Shāhrukh as *mujaddid* in their historical works.[81] Yazdī, in

particular, strengthened the relationship between renewal and astrology by introducing the

prophetic tradition and Shāhrukh's claim to the title *mujaddid* immediately on the heels of his

lengthy analysis of Shāhrukh's horoscope. Such a creative association parallels al-Qaysarānī's

analysis of renewal in the Mamluk context and further underscores the malleability of

epistemological frameworks and scholarly traditions within encomiastic literary works. Yazdī's

connection between *mujaddid* and astrology also highlights the similarities between the concepts

of *ṣāḥib-qiran* and *mujaddid*. Indeed, this tendency to reference and combine legitimating

elements from conjunction astrology and prophetic tradition would become an important

component of Idrīs' discourse on Sultan Bāyezīd II in the early sixteenth century.

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[79] Binbaş, "Sharaf al-Dīn ᶜAlī Yazdī," 339–40.
[80] Ibid., 340.
[81] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 104–5; Binbaş, "Sharaf al-Dīn ᶜAlī Yazdī," 340.

VIII.5 The Movement of Ideas in the Fifteenth Century

The development of an innovative vocabulary of sovereignty in the early Timurid context of the ninth/fifteenth century did not in and of itself necessitate its spread throughout the central lands of Islam. On one level, polities throughout central and western Asia incorporated these legitimating elements and innovative vocabularies into their own ideological programs because the ideas that undergirded them resonated deeply. We may interpret such resonance as a response to the general crisis of rule faced by all Muslim polities after Abbasid and Chinggisid lineages ceased to serve as viable political options from the middle of the fourteenth century. In this sense, the movement of political ideas—from a Timurid context that effectively engaged these concerns—addressed a fundamental anxiety shared by all of the major political powers in the central lands of Islam in the ninth/fifteenth century. The development of notions of rule divorced from juridical or genealogical considerations and grounded in alternative epistemological discourses offered a powerful new mode of legitimation to which any successful ruler could theoretically lay claim. Yet the spread of this approach to sovereignty did not unfold as a consequence of the abstract and amorphous operation of a climate of ideas. Rather, the social and cultural landscape of Islamic lands created specific conditions under which men and ideas freely and effectively circulated. In large measure, we may trace the spread of a Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty by following the movement of chancery officials and their works—letters, epistles, panegyrics, and chronicles—from one court to the next over the course of the fifteenth century.

Although Islamic lands experienced constant political fragmentation after the dissolution of effective authority by the Abbasid Caliphate in the tenth century, Muslims maintained a high level of social and cultural cohesion that continued to bind the community over centuries and across varied political terrain. This cultural unity was preserved by what Marshall Hodgson

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termed almost fifty years ago "a common Islamicate social pattern."[82] The basic feature that

enabled this common social pattern consisted of a persistently upheld belief that members of any

part of Muslim society should be accepted anywhere else. As a consequence of such a routinely

affirmed social contract:

> Representatives of the various arts and sciences moved freely, as a munificent
> ruler or an unkind one beckoned or pressed, from one Muslim land to another;
> and any man of great stature in one area was likely to be soon recognized
> everywhere else. Hence local cultural tendencies were continually limited and
> stimulated by events and ideas of an all-Muslim scope. There continued to exist a
> single body of interrelated traditions, developed in mutual interaction throughout
> Islamdom.[83]

Notwithstanding developments of world-systems theories by thinkers such as Emmanuel

Wallerstein and Janet Abou-Lughod in the decades since Hodgson expressed these views,

scholars continue to affirm the basic contours of such an 'Islamic world-system' in cultural and

social—as opposed to political or economic—terms. For instance, John Voll observes the social

and cultural dynamics of the Islamic world between 1000 and 1800 and affirms the existence of

"a large, special type of 'community of discourse.'"[84] This Islamic discourse was shared among

urban-agrarian and nomadic-pastoral societies across the Afro-Eurasian ecumene and facilitated

networks of personal and organizational interaction that offered "at least a minimal sense of

corporate, communal identity in the vast emerging network of discourse or world-system."[85] In

this way, Voll's Islamic discourse or Islamic world-system parallels Hodgson's common

Islamicate social pattern. The effects of such an Islamic discourse or Islamicate social pattern can

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[82] Marshall G. S Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 2:9.
[83] Ibid.
[84] John Obert Voll, "Islam as a Community of Discourse and a World-System," in *The SAGE Handbook of Islamic Studies*, ed. Akbar S. Ahmed and Tamara Sonn (Los Angeles, Calif; London: SAGE, 2010), 8.
[85] Ibid.

be observed on an individual level, most famously in the example of the fourteenth-century traveler Ibn Battuta, who, "in his intercontinental wanderings, moved through a single cultural universe in which he was utterly at home."[86] More broadly, they are also observable in what Voll terms the common organizational characteristics that helped give rise to what Hodgson had termed the Sunni internationalism of tenth-fifteenth centuries. The features of this Sunni internationalism were exhibited through the development of cultural organizations, such as the *madrasa* or the Sufi *khānaqāh*, which were privately endowed as pious foundations and hence operated largely independently of the ebb and flow of any particular political order.

Yet certainly political powers, and especially the competition that existed between them, also helped to spur the free flow of ideas. It is in this sense that the effects of this common social pattern and cultural unity are reflected in the circulation of notions of sovereignty in the fifteenth century. Two mediums of circulation predominated in the fifteenth century. One medium was written work—letters, epistles, poems, and books—that expressed ideas on sovereignty and circulated within Islamic lands. In this way the diplomatic letters exchanged by courts or the works produced elsewhere but copied and read in new locales offered a mode by which the new vocabulary of sovereignty spread from one place to another. The other medium of circulation was the movement of people, specifically the scholars and chancery officials who absorbed new approaches to sovereignty at one court, emigrated to another, and adapted the new vocabulary to the official documents and literary works that they produced in their new homes and places of work.

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[86] Richard M. Eaton and Michael Adas, "Islamic History as Global History," in *Islamic & European Expansion: The Forging of a Global Order* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 32.

The movement of written works in the fifteenth century is powerfully illustrated by the lasting popularity and relevance of Ḥasan Niẓāmī's *Tāj al-maʾāsir* in temporal and geographic settings far removed from its time and place of origin in early seventh/thirteenth-century northern India. Although largely dismissed by twentieth-century critics as a second-rate literary work of little historical value, *Tāj al-maʾāsir* was carefully studied and held in high regard throughout the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries. Of the extant copies of the work, at least fourteen were produced before 1500.[87] The work was held in particular esteem within Ottoman court circles during the reign of Bāyezīd II. In fact, the palace library inventory of 909/1502-3 records seven partial or complete copies of Niẓāmī's work,[88] at least one of which was produced in the eighth/fourteenth century[89] Clearly, *Tāj al-maʾāsir* was read as a model of fine poetry and prose, as evidenced by the significant marginal notes in one of the palace copies of the work.[90] The popularity of *Tāj al-maʾāsir* also extended beyond the confines of the palace. Upon the death of Müʾeyyedzāde ʿAbdurraḥmān in 922/1516, the Ottoman royal council ordered two scholars in Constantinople to gather the deceased judge's personal books and compile an inventory.[91] Here too, the seventh/thirteenth-century history of Islamic conquests in Hindustan appeared among the religious texts, chronicles, and collections of poetry gathered by one of the preeminent scholars and cultural tastemakers of early tenth/sixteenth-century Ottoman lands.[92]

While it is clear that the work was copied and preserved in this context as a model of fine Persian prose and poetry, in its subject matter and vocabulary, *Tāj al-maʾāsir* offered its

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[87] Storey, *Persian Literature*, 1:494.

[88] Török F59, 88b.

[89] Ayasofya 2991 is a copy of *Tāj al-maʾāsir* produced in 750/1349. The manuscript includes the seal of Bāyezīd II on 1a. Fatih 4204 is a fifteenth-century copy of the work, although it does not bear Bāyezīd's seal.

[90] Niẓāmī, *Tāj al-maʾāsir*, Ayasofya 2991.

[91] TSMA D. 9291/2, 10b.

[92] Ibid, 10a.

Ottoman readers of the late ninth/fifteenth century an array of images, arguments, and terminology that appealed to their political and ideological sensibilities. Although separated by time and space, the geo-political landscape that Ḥasan Niẓāmī described in reference to the Gangetic Plain in the early seventh/thirteenth century mirrored in many ways the Ottoman geopolitical landscape of Balkans in the late ninth/fifteenth century. Both regions were newly conquered and scarcely Islamicized. In this sense the language and rhetorical technique that Niẓāmī used to describe and laud the conquests of his patrons likely resonated for ninth/fifteenth-century Ottoman readers of *Tāj al-maʾāsir* almost three centuries later, when they were themselves engaged in projects of describing and celebrating Ottoman expansion into Christian kingdoms in the Balkans.[93] The rhetorical categories of *jihād* and *ghazāʾ* exist prominently in both *Tāj al-maʾāsir* and ninth/fifteenth-century Ottoman works.[94] Parallels may also be drawn between the recurring rhetorical images deployed by Ottoman texts and *Tāj al-maʾāsir* alike.[95] Given the popularity of the work in Ottoman lands, there is a distinct possibility that the titles and epithets utilized by Ḥasan Niẓāmī, including *ṣāḥib-qirān*, were a source of inspiration for authors at the Ottoman court as they endeavored to celebrate the achievements of the Ottoman sultans in suitable terms.

In addition to the transportation and copying of written works, ideas on sovereignty also frequently circulated through diplomatic and private correspondence between courts in the

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[93] For a comparative study of *ghazāʾ* in the context of the Balkans and South Asia, see Ali Anooshahr, *The Ghazi Sultans and the Frontiers of Islam : A Comparative Study of the Late Medieval and Early Modern Periods* (London: Routledge, 2009).

[94] Ḥasan Niẓāmī introduces the principal heroes of his narrative with a discussion of the significance of *jihād*, Ḥasan Niẓāmī, *Tāj al-maʾāsir*, Ayasofya 2991, 7b; For discussions of *ghazāʾ* and *jihād* within the context of an Ottoman legitimating program, see Imber, "The Ottoman Dynastic Myth," 1987; Darling, "Reformulating the Gazi Narrative. When Was the Ottoman State a Gazi State."

[95] One of the recurring tropes in *Tāj al-maʾāsir* and Ottoman histories concerns the conversion of the temples/churches of unbelievers to mosques, Ḥasan Niẓāmī, *Tāj al-maʾāsir*, 12b.

ninth/fifteenth century. Concurrent with the development of new concepts of kingship, rulers incorporated elements of the new vocabulary of sovereignty into the formal titulature that they deployed in their own description and in the courteous epithets that they extended to their neighbors and allies. Such correspondence became a site for imperial competition between rulers, especially during periods of political tension or outright hostility.[96] In these circumstances, the manipulation of the formal hierarchies of status dictated by diplomatic convention offered chancery officials rich material by which they undermined the status of their sultan's rival. Yet, during peaceful periods, rulers extended to their neighbors every courtesy available through application of the loftiest and most prestigious titles and epithets conceivable. It is in this context of diplomatic exchange that the new vocabulary of sovereignty, including titles such as *mujaddid* and *ṣāḥib-qirān*, joins the well-established lexicon of the most frequently used titles and epithets.

In his capacity as a chancery official of the Aqquyunlu court of Yaʿqūb, Idrīs participated in this diplomatic phenomenon and helped introduce the new usage of *mujaddid* to the Ottoman court in the 1480s. As mentioned in chapter two, Idrīs, in his capacity as a chancery functionary at the Aqquyunlu court, penned Yaʿqūb's reply to the Ottoman victory proclamation after the successful seiges of Kilī and Aqkirmān. Certainly, at the time of Idrīs' composition of the letter, Ottoman scholars were conversant in the discourse on centennial renewal. Indeed, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī, a scholar living in mid-ninth/fifteeth-century Ottoman Bursa, prominently featured the doctrine of centennial renewal in his apocalyptic calculations that anticipated the

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[96] For a recent study on diplomatic titulature during this period, see Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks: Imperial Diplomacy and Warfare in the Islamic World*; For a focused study on diplomatic correspondence as a conveyor of a subtle conveyor of aggressive policy, see Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "The Delicate Art of Aggression: Uzun Hasan's Fathnama to Qaytbay of 1469," *Iranian Studies* 44, no. 2 (2011): 193–214.

coming Day of Judgment in the ninth hijri century and associated the renewer of this century with the expected Mahdi.[97] Yet in contrast to the Aqquyunlu context, in Ottoman lands the doctrine of renewal was mostly limited to scholars outside the court.[98] This Ottoman context for the concept differed markedly from contemporary political culture within Aqquyunlu domains. There, despite the chronological difficulties of attributing the title to any individual in the middle of a hijri century, a number of scholars and court officials began to celebrate Uzun Ḥasan and his son and ultimate successor, Yaʿqūb, as renewers of the faith in the ninth hijri century. Such scholars included the eminent scholar and teacher of Idrīs, Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī—who lauded Uzun Ḥasan as the "the envoy of the ninth century" in 881/1476—and the historian and chancery colleague of Idrīs, Fażlallāh Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, who celebrated both Uzun Ḥasan and Yaʿqūb as renewers.[99] In this environment, it is little wonder that in the reign of Yaʿqūb, during a period of amicable relations between the Ottomans and Aqquyunlu, Idrīs deemed it appropriate to celebrate Bāyezīd II in a letter to the Ottomans as "the renewer of the foundations of Islam and the constructor of the institutions of the faith (*mujaddid asās al-islām wa al-muslimīn mushayyid marāsim al-dīn*)."[100]

These innovative titles utilized in new contexts also circulated via the flow of private letters. On occasion, royal personages aided the circulation of innovative epithets from one court to another through their private correspondence. For instance, in the aftermath of the Ottoman victory over Aqquyunlu forces at Otlukbeli in 878/1473, Ruqaya Sulṭān, an Aqquyunlu princess

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[97] Cornell H. Fleischer, "Ancient Wisdom and New Science: Prophecies at the Ottoman Court in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *Falnama: The Book of Omens*, ed. Massumeh Farhad and Serpil Bağcı (London: Thames and Hudson, 2009), 235.

[98] Bisṭāmī's ideas became more popular and widespread within Ottoman court circles in the sixteenth century, ibid., 238.

[99] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 104–5; Davānī, "ʿArżnāma," 3; Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Tārīkh-i ʿālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, 164.

[100] Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Nuruosmaniye 3209, 537a.

and the wife of the Timurid prince Sīdī Aḥmad ibn Mirānshāḥ, beseeched Sultan Meḥmed for the release of her two sons, who had been captured in the aftermath of the battle. In this context, it is significant that Ruqaya Sulṭān applied the title most closely associated with Timur, ṣāḥib-qirān, to the Ottoman sultan. Despite her sons' lineage from the great conqueror, their difficult predicament and the expediency of applying this prominent epithet to her sons' captor trumped any reservations regarding the exclusive application of the title for her sons' great-grandfather.[101]

Similarly, these titles circulated through correspondence between scholars and sultans. As part of the patronage networks that overlaid royal and intellectual circles across Islamic west Asia, scholars from distant lands frequently presented literary and scholarly works to sultans at distant courts, who acknowledged their offerings and occasionally encouraged the permanent resettlement of prominent men of learning within their own domains. In some instances, literary gifts conveyed the innovative Timurid titulature to an Ottoman context. For instance, one of the presentation copies of the compendium of Jāmī's works proclaims Sultan Bāyezīd II as ṣāḥib-qirān.[102] Similarly, the exchange of letters, which accompanied literary presentations and invitations to resettle, also constituted a locus for the flow of innovative titles across wide expanses. One such letter written by the Ḥanafī judge of Herat to Sultan Bāyezīd II in 911/1506 illustrates both the phenomenon of scholarly mobility and the application of the new vocabulary of sovereignty to an Ottoman sultan from a distant scholarly admirer. The judge in question, Aḥmad Taftāzānī, was a grandson of the prominent scholar of the early fifteenth-century Saʿd al-Dīn Taftāzānī. The younger Taftāzānī's renown attracted a scholar from Ottoman lands named ʿAbd al-Vāsiʿ, who travelled to Herat, where he spent several years studying under Aḥmad

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[101] Feridun Bey, *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn*, 1:288.

[102] The manuscript in question is an extravagantly produced presentation copy, perhaps completed with the support of Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqara in Herat, *Kulliyat-i Jāmī*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih 4045, 1a.

Taftāzānī.[103] In his letter to Bāyezīd, the judge of Herat explains the scholarly progress of his

student in Khurāsān and his desire to return to Ottoman lands. Taftāzānī couches his request that

ᶜAbd al-Vāsiᶜ receive a warm welcome within an elaborate letter that offers a long list of

Bāyezīd's titles and epithets. Here too, *ṣāḥib-qirān* is included among the other epithets more

usually associated with an Ottoman sultan.[104]

Yet if the circulation of written material in the ninth/fifteenth century offered diverse

courts exposure to the innovative lexicon of kingship that had emerged in Timurid lands, the

movement of scholars and statesmen who were completely conversant in the new discourse

facilitated the thorough adaptation of the vocabulary in new political contexts. On one level,

continued cultural unity within Islamic lands enabled the efficient movement and settlement of

scholars. On another, political volatility in the fifteenth century perhaps accelerated the

process.[105] The regular replacement of one powerful and prestigious court with another offered

scholars professional alternatives or created political instabilities that promoted the emigration of

learned men. The rapid expansion of ascendant sultanates, such as the Ottomans after 857/1453

and the Aqquyunlu after 872/1467, fueled a desire on the part of these polities to attract and

incorporate within their administrative ranks skilled chancery officials and secretaries, many of

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[103] Atçıl, "The Formation of the Ottoman Learned Class and Legal Scholarship, 1300-1600,"
118; Taşköprüzade, *al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuᶜmānīyah fī ᶜulamāʾ al-Dawlat al-ᶜUthmānīyah*, 292–3.
[104] Feridun Bey, *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn*, 1:364–5.
[105] Sohrweide, "Dichter Und Gelehrte Aus Dem Osten Im Osmanischen Reich (1453-1600)";
Atçıl, "The Formation of the Ottoman Learned Class and Legal Scholarship, 1300-1600"; For
discussions of scholarly mobility in the fifteenth century, see Ertuğrul Ökten, "Scholars and
Mobility: A Preliminary Assessment from the Perspective of Al-Shaqāyiq Al-Nuᶜmāniyya,"
Journal of Ottoman Studies 41 (2013): 55–70.

whom developed their rhetorical repertoire in courts that had adapted the Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty.[106]

Uzun Ḥasan's great conquests of 872-874/1467-1469 thoroughly illustrate the enthusiasm with which expanding powers sought to augment their administrative corps with the recruitment of personnel from their defeated adversaries. In 872/1467, Uzun Ḥasan surprised his Qaraquyunlu rivals in western Iran through the capture and execution of Jahānshāh at Mūsh (Muş, Turkey). The death of the Qaraquyunlu ruler opened western and central Iran to Uzun Ḥasan's expansion from the west and Sulṭān-Abū-Saʿīd's reclamation of Timurid territory from the east. Within two years the Aqquyunlu and Timurids fell into conflict and Uzun Ḥasan once again emerged victorious through his capture of the Timurid ruler as he fled to Khurāsān after having abandoned his surrounded forces at Qarābāgh. The effects of these swift victories on the administrative apparatus of the Aqquyunlu Sultanate were significant; within two years Uzun Ḥasan had transformed his polity from a sultanate on the periphery of the Iranian political landscape to one of the preeminent powers in western Asia. This great geographic expansion necessitated significant administrative augmentation.[107] John Woods has noted the tremendous elaboration of Uzun Ḥasan's administrative apparatus through the appointment of representatives of the most prominent local Iranian families—including the Kujujī of Āẕarbāyjān and the Sāvajī and Daylamī of Persian Iraq—to "supervise the administrative, fiscal, and religious affairs of the

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[106] For the role of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in attracting scholars to Ottoman lands, see Atçıl, "The Formation of the Ottoman Learned Class and Legal Scholarship, 1300-1600," 67–70.

[107] For discussions of a similar phenomenon of administrative recruitment under Shah Ismāʿīl, see Jean Aubin, "Études safavides I: Šāh Ismāʿīl et les notable de l'Iraq persan," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 2 (1959): 37–81; Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 48–52.

government."[108] In many significant instances, Uzun Ḥasan favored the high-ranking secretaries

of his defeated enemies and appointed them to high office within the Aqquyunlu civilian

administrative corps. To wit, he appointed Sirāj al-Dīn Qāsim Naqshbandī, a twenty-year veteran

of the Qarayunlu court, his chief of protocol and chancellor.[109] Similarly, after the defeat of

Sulṭān-Abu Saʿīd, he installed ʿAbd al-Ḥayy, the Timurid sultan's chancellor (ṣāḥib-i dīvān-i

inshā) in the same office.[110] Perhaps most significantly for the future ideological trajectory of the

sultanate, he invited Abū Bakr Ṭihrānī to join the Aqquyunlu court. In the years before joining

Uzun Ḥasan in Shawwāl 873/April-May 1469, Ṭihrānī had worked within the chanceries of

Timurid and Qaraquyunlu courts and had begun work on a history upon the request of the

Qaraquyunlu ruler Jahānshāh.[111] Although it is not clear what came of Ṭihrānī's earlier historical

work, he likely incorporated elements of this history into his new work for Uzun Ḥasan.[112]

Indeed, there are several indications that the recruitment of Timurid and Qaraquyunlu

chancery personnel had an immediate effect on the ideological positions of Uzun Ḥasan's

regime. Within several months of the execution of Sulṭān-Abū Saʿīd in Rajab 873/January-

February 1469, the Aqquyunlu chancery was producing assertive diplomatic correspondence that

proclaimed Uzun Ḥasan's successes as a manifestation of God's will. In two letters sent to the

Ottoman and Mamluk courts, Uzun Ḥasan's chancery officials laid out an extensive justification

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[108] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 108.

[109] Ibid., 18; Karbalāʼī Tabrīzī, *Rawżāt al-jinān va-jannāt al-janān*, 1:89–91.

[110] Khʷāndamīr, *Tārīkh-i ḥabīb al-siyar fī akhbār afrād bashar*, 4:108.

[111] For details of Ṭihrānī's biography, see Abu Bakr Tihrani, *Kitab-ı Diyarbakriyya: Ak-Koyunlar tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1993), 1:vii–xvi; For Ṭihrānī's account of how he joined Uzun Ḥasan's court, see ibid., 2:514–6; For the two versions of the letters, see Lajos Fekete, *Einführung in die persische Paläographie: 101 persische Dokumente* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1977), 123–43; ʻAbd al-Ḥusayn Navāʼī, *Asnād va mukātabāt-i tārīkhī-i Irān az Taymūr tā Shāh Ismāʼīl* (Tihrān: Bungāh-i Tarjumah va Nashr, 1341), 561–70.

[112] Approximately one-fifth of Ṭihrānī's narrative is devoted to political developments of the mid-fifteenth century outside Aqquyunlu domains, especially with respect to the Qaraquyunlu conquests under Jahānshāh, Tihrani, *Kitab-ı Diyarbakriyya*, 2:285–375.

for these claims through an esoteric lettrist exegesis of the first verses of *Sūrat al-Rūm* of the

Quran.[113] Based upon the numerological value of two words in one of the verses, the composers

of these diplomatic letters asserted God's forewarning of Uzun Ḥasan's ascendancy in 872/1467.

While the verse in question had been associated previously with prognostications of seminal

political events, the innovative reading of the verse by the Aqquyunlu chancery functionaries

demonstrates the extent to which skilled and learned secretaries sought to undergird the

ideological positions of their sovereigns with knowledge and arguments gleaned from esoteric

traditions.[114] Other intellectuals within the Aqquyunlu orbit soon recognized the power of such

arguments, for within a few years a number of prominent scholars incorporated them into their

panegyrics and historical narratives of Uzun Ḥasan. For instance, in the dedication to Uzun

Ḥasan in his work on ethics, Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī alludes to the numerologically significant words

from the Quranic verse as proof of "the firmness of the foundation of [Uzun Ḥasan's] triumphant

fortune."[115] Chroniclers of the Aqquyunlu dynasty, including Idrīs' colleague in the chancery,

Faẓlallāh Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, also incorporated the prophetic aspects of the Quranic verse into their

historical accounts of Uzun Ḥasan's rise.[116] The use of potent occult exegeses of the Quran for

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[113] John Woods first pointed to the significance of these letters in the new ideological program of Uzun Ḥasan after the great conquests, Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 100–2; Matt Melvin-Koushki has explored their lettrist intellectual underpinnings in Melvin-Koushki, "The Delicate Art of Aggression: Uzun Hasan's Fathnama to Qaytbay of 1469," 202–3; and Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science," 305–6; For the two letters, see Fekete, *Einführung in die persische Paläographie*, 123–43; and Navā'ī, *Asnād va mukātibāt-i tārīkhī-i Irān az Taymūr tā Shāh Ismā'īl*, 561–70.

[114] On earlier uses of the verses for prognostication, see Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science," 290–305.

[115] Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Asʿad Davānī, *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*, ed. ʿAbdallāh Masʿūdī Ārānī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Iṭṭilāʿāt, 1391), 51.

[116] Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Tārīkh-i ʿālam-ārā-yi amīnī*, 165; For another near contemporary interpretation of the verse, see ʿAbd Allāh ibn Fatḥ Allāh al-Baghdādī, *Turkmenische Herrscher des 15. Jahrhunderts in Persien und Mesopotamien nach dem Tārīh al-Ġiyāt̠i.*, ed. Marianne Schmidt-Dumont (Freiburg i. Br.: Schwarz, 1970), 29–31.

ideological purposes also spread further afield with Idrīs' emigration to Ottoman lands. In *Hasht bihisht*, Idrīs, who was no doubt aware of the ideologically charged exegesis of the Aqquyunlu chancery in the time of Uzun Ḥasan, redeployed and reinterpreted the same verse "in the tradition of lettrist proofs and divinatory testimony"[117] to substantiate the favor that God had shown Meḥmed II in his victory over Uzun Ḥasan at Otlukbeli in 878/1473.[118]

While we do not know who composed these letters for Uzun Ḥasan, it is entirely possible that their authors were recently integrated former Qaraquyunlu and Timurid secretaries. Certainly, such secretaries were quickly incorporated into the Aqquyunlu chancery and assigned to compose the most important missives. For instance, in late 874/spring 1470, Abū Bakr Ṭihrānī penned the rescript announcing Uzun Ḥasan's appointment of Yādigār Muḥammad as independent governor of Khurāsān. More than a routine writ of investiture, the appointment of the Timurid prince to govern Khurāsān signaled the Aqquyulu ruler's intention to assert his sovereignty across Iranian lands, and as such, Ṭihrānī deployed the hyperliterate imperial chancery style in announcing and explaining Yādigār Muḥammad's appointment.[119] Perhaps more importantly, these secretaries were also occasionally encouraged to produce historical works. Within two years of his arrival at the Aqquyunlu court, Uzun Ḥasan appointed Abū Bakr Ṭihrānī in 875/1470-1471 to write a history of the Aqquyunlu confederation. The resulting work,

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[117] *ba-qānūn-i dalāʾil-i ḥarfī va shavāhid-i jifrī*, Bidlīsī, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Nuruosmaniye 3209, 470b
[118] Idrīs' exegesis of the Quranic verses includes a traditional interpretation of the verses, the details of which are later used to substantiate his lettrist reading, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Nuruosmaniye 3209, 469b-471b.
[119] Adnan Sadık Erzi, "Akkoyunlu ve Karakoyunlu tarihi hakkında araştırmaları," *Belleten* 18 (1954): 181; A copy of the rescript is preserved in Javāmiʿ al-inshā, Nuruosmaniye 4301, 71b-76a; for an edited version, see Navā'ī, *Asnād va mukātibāt-i tārīkhī-i Irān az Taymūr tā Shāh Ismā'īl*, 320–3; For background on the Yādigār Muḥammad affair, see Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 112–3.

Kitāb-i Diyārbakrīya, was the first major work in the ninth/fifteenth century to apply consistently the title of *Ṣāḥib-Qirān* to a non-Timurid ruler.[120]

Ultimately, the movement of chancery officials who were thoroughly conversant with the Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty spread to lands beyond the Persian politico-linguistic context. Especially as a consequence of the disorder and chaos of the final decades of Aqquyunlu rule, a number of secretaries and courtiers made their way further west to the Ottoman and Mamluk courts, where they were employed as secretaries or were commissioned to write encomiastic historical or literary pieces. As discussed in chapter five, the Mamluk sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī actively patronized émigrés from Aqquyunlu lands during the first two decades of the sixteenth century.[121] Such men produced literary works, such as a Turkish translation of Firdawsī's *Shāhnāma*, and memorialized the polite gatherings of the Mamluk sultan through specially produced recordings of Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's most eloquent and pithy remarks and conversations. In these works, the Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty, including *ṣāḥib-qirān* and *mujaddid*, appears among the titles and epithets associated with Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī.[122]

Perhaps of even greater significance was the impact of Persian state functionaries in Ottoman domains during this period. Although Idrīs, through his varied political activities and monumental dynastic history, stands as the most prominent and successful of the Persian émigrés to Ottoman lands in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, several other officials and

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[120] Throughout the work, Ṭihrānī refers to Uzun Ḥasan as *Ṣāḥib-qirān*, Tihrani, *Kitab-ı Diyarbakriyya*; Even in the early ninth/fifteenth century, the title was occasionally associated with non-Timurid rulers. Aḥmed-i Dāᶜī refers to his patron, Süleymān, the Ottoman prince and presumptive heir of Bāyezīd I, as the lord of conjunction of the domain of temporal authority (*Siyāset mülkinüñ ṣāḥib-ḳırānı*), Ahmed Dâi, *Çengnāme*, ed. Gönül Alpay Tekin, vol. 16., Sources of Oriental languages and literatures (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Üniversitesi, 1992), 313.

[121] For the context of such patronage, see Flemming, "Šerīf, Sultan Ġavrī und die „Perser"."

[122] For a more detailed discussion of this phenomenon, see chapter five.

courtiers arrived in Ottoman lands, joined the chancery or court, and left their mark on Ottoman chancery practice and the ideological trajectory of the sultanate. Such men arrived in Ottoman lands of their own free will—as in the case of Idrīs—but on occasion the incorporation of Persian chancery officials into Ottoman ranks occurred under coercive circumstances. In fact, at least two Persian functionaries in the Ottoman chancery obtained the patronage of the court after having been captured in battle. The first was Mawlānā Munshī, who, after his capture by the Ottomans in the aftermath of the Battle of Otlukbeli in 878/1473, served two Ottoman sultans as a composer of royal diplomatic correspondence in Persian.[123] Although Mawlānā Munshī never rose to a position of prominence within the Ottoman chancery, his twenty years of activity within Ottoman secretarial circles had an impact on several generations of Ottoman chancery officials. His collection of prose writing circulated in his own day and was held in high regard by some of the most prominent Ottoman litterateurs of the tenth/sixteenth century. For instance, Müʾeyyedzāde, the cultural tastemaker of the early sixteenth century, had a copy of Mawlānā Munshī's collection in his personal library.[124] Clearly, Mawlānā Munshī's prose work remained in high esteem well into the reign of Süleymān, as ʿĀşıq Çelebi used the great writer's work as a benchmark by which he judged the prose compositional accomplishments of three poets and secretaries from the reign of Süleymān.[125] The comparison between the Persian stylist and the Ottoman secretaries demonstrates the extent to which Persian prose collections served as models for Ottoman prose writers of Turkish. Even in the eleventh/seventeenth century, by which point Ottoman secretaries wrote almost exclusively in Turkish, the prestige of Mawlānā Munshī's

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[123] On Mawlānā Munshī's capture, see Bidlīsī , *Hasht bihisht*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Nuruosmaniye 3209, 468a; his chancery production is preserved in Sarı ʿAbdullāh Efendi, *Munshaʾāt*, Esad Efendi 3333.
[124] TSMA D. 9291/2, p. 2
[125] Aşık Çelebi refers to Mawlānā Munshī three times in his work in reference to the poets Baḥrī, Ṣunʿī, and Şeyda, Āşiḳ Çelebi, *Meşâ'irü'ş-Şu'arâ*, 416, 1298, 1460.

prose persisted. In fact, the primary record of his stylistic achievement is preserved in a Persian

prose compendium compiled by the Ottoman chancellor Sarı ʿAbdullāh Efendi in the first-half of

the eleventh/seventeenth century.[126] The second prisoner-cum-secretary was Kabīr Laṭīfī

Qāżīzāda, who fell captive to Sultan Selīm after the defeat of Shāh Ismāʿīl at Chaldiran in

920/1514.[127] After a short spell as a prisoner, Qāżīzāda was freed and permitted to join the

secretaries of the Royal Council with the backing of the Anadolu finance director, Meḥmed

Çelebi.[128] In this capacity, he accompanied Selīm on his conquests of Syria and Egypt in 922-

923/1516-1517. During these campaigns, Qāżīzāda contributed to the composition of victory

proclamations in Persian destined for foreign courts, and, while in Syria, helped conduct the first

Ottoman surveys of the financial resources of the newly conquered territory. He recorded these

activities in one of the earliest historical accounts of Selīm's conquests. This work, known as

Ghazavāt-i Sulṭān Salīm, deployed the hyperliterate chancery style favored by Persian secretaries

and served as a source of inspiration for Idrīs when he sat down to compose his own account of

Selīm's reign.[129]

Despite the important roles these men played in their own day, Idrīs Bidlīsī largely

eclipsed them as an effective conveyor of the Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty. Through his

composition of two large and well-received histories and prominent assignments to compose

sultanic correspondence, Idrīs had myriad opportunities to leave his mark on Ottoman

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[126] As mentioned in chapter two, Sarı ʿAbdullāh Efendi attributes fourteen letters in his *inshāʾ* collection as originating from Mawlānā Munshī's *inshāʾ*, Sarı ʿAbdullāh Efendi, *Munshaʾāt-i fārsī*, Esad Efendi 3333.

[127] Ḥakīm Shāh Muḥammad Qazvīnī, *Tazkirah-i majālis al-nafāʾis*, ed. ʿAlī Aṣghar Ḥikmat (Tehran: Kitābfurūshī-i Manūchihrī, 1363), 396.

[128] Qāżīzāda alludes to the support he received from Mehmed Çelebi in his history of Selim's conquests of Mamluk lands, Qāżīzāda, *Ghazavāt-i Sulṭān Salīm*, Hacı Selim Ağa Kütüphanesi 825, 146a.

[129] Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, 21b.

ideological discourses during the reigns of Bāyezīd II and Selīm I. Certain aspects of his thinking on Ottoman kingship were fully accepted and internalized by subsequent Ottoman writers of the sixteenth century. Most significantly, Idrīs was the first writer to associate the Ottoman sultans with the concept of religious renewal (*tajdīd*) and to substantiate such association with historically minded arguments in *Hasht bihisht*.[130] Later generations of Ottoman historians accepted Idrīs' reasoning. For instance, Lüṭfī Pasha, the vizier and historian of Süleymān's reign, followed Idrīs' suggestion that ʿOs̲mān, the founder of the dynasty, was the renewer in the seventh hijri century for his efforts to restore order in the wake of the Chinggisid disturbances.[131] As discussed previously in this chapter, the concept of *tajdīd* was first broadly applied to Shāhrukh in the context of the dynastic succession to Timur and the several messianic movements that shook the foundations of Khurāsānī politics in the 1420s. In the third quarter of the century, as a consequence of Uzun Ḥasan's sweeping conquests and his incorporation of Timurid and Qaraquyunlu chancery officials into his administration, claims of the Aqquyunlu sultan's status as *mujaddid* circulated regularly within western Iran and places farther afield. No doubt, Idrīs mastered the ideological potential of the concept while working as a young secretary in the chancery of Yaʿqūb. Mention has already been made of his deployment of the title in a letter he composed on behalf of Yaʿqūb for Bāyezīd II in 890/1485.[132] Yet, Idrīs' adaptation of *tajdīd* to the Ottoman context of the early-sixteenth century is significant for it signals the wider spread of the Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty to Ottoman lands in prominently pronounced and sophisticatedly argued terms.

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[130] Idrīs first introduces the concept of centennial renewal (*tajdīd*) in reference to ʿOs̲mān, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 38a.

[131] Lüṭfī Paşa, *Tevārīḫ-i Āl-i ʿOsmān* (Istanbul: Matbaʿ-i ʿĀmire, 1922), 6–11.

[132] For discussion of this letter, see chapter two; Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 536b-538a.

Chapter Nine: *Khilāfat-i raḥmānī*: Idrīs' Vision of Kingship

IX.1 Khilāfat-i raḥmānī *and the Aqquyunlu Chancery*

The Aqquyunlu—and subsequent Ottoman and Mamluk—adaptation of the Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty does not suggest that these sultanates lacked terminological innovation in their own right. In fact, many of the polities of the fifteenth century, and perhaps particularly the Aqquyunlu, were concerned with developing innovative, yet broadly resonating titles to describe their sovereignty.[1] To be sure, such innovations shared the basic presuppositions of the Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty of the early fifteenth century. In most instances, the terminology and its underlying epistemological references rejected, or at least sidestepped, juridical or genealogical definitions of sovereignty, which tended to exclude the legitimating claims of the men who actually wielded political authority in the fifteenth century.[2] As we have seen in chapter eight, Timurid strategies for legitimation sought to bolster claims to authority through the divine or cosmic favor shown to Timurid princes. These arguments, in contrast to the relatively staid and constricting juridical and genealogical parameters developed by legal scholars and the upholders of Chinggisid tradition, drew upon a wide array of astrological, mystical, philosophical, and occult doctrines and freely mixed ideas from these varied traditions to create a compelling and universalizing conception of kingship.

In this respect, between the 1470s and 1490s, Aqquyunlu scholars and chancery officials developed and articulated their own descriptive term for this new type of kingship, which they called *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* (the vicegerency of God). As with the Timurid vocabulary of

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[1] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 100–6.
[2] A notable exception in this regard is the Oghuz narratives that circulated among Turkmen principalities in the fifteenth century (discussed in the introduction).

sovereignty, *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* was developed through learned treatises of philosophers, astrologers, and Sufis, employed by scholars in encomiastic celebrations of Aqquyunlu royal patrons, and adapted by secretaries in official correspondence with other sovereign rulers. It is in this intellectual and political context that Idrīs was first exposed to the term. He employed it in the notations made within his personal composition notebook, which he completed a couple years before his departure from his homeland.[3] Over the course of his seventeen-year career among the Ottomans, he made the term his preferred descriptor of the Ottoman sultans and its underlying concept the basis for his discussion of the nature of their rule. Yet Idrīs' adaptation of a term first developed in the Aqquyunlu context of western Iran does not suggest that his use of the concept remained static. In fact, during his years among the Ottomans, Idrīs' discussion on the nature and purpose of rule evolved considerably. It must perhaps remain an open question as to whether such an evolution more immediately reflected changes in his thinking or developments in the broader political contexts in which he operated between 909/1503 and 926/1520.

One thing that is certain is that *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* became vogue among scholars and secretaries in western Iran during the final decades of the fifteenth century. In 881/1476, Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī associated Uzun Ḥasan with the term in his dedicatory preface to the *Arżnāma*. The work was presented to Uzun Ḥasan's son and governor in Fārs, Sulṭān-Khalīl, and described the military and civilian administrative participants of a military review near the ruins of Persepolis.[4] As a catalog of the great dignitaries associated with Aqquyunlu rule, the work is essentially

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[3] The notebook (*majmūʿa*) was completed in Ṣafar 906/August-September 1500, Bidlīsī, Aya Sofya 3986, 134b. Within one year of this date, the Qizilbash seized Tabriz and Idrīs' position in his homeland was jeopardized.
[4] Davānī, "ʿArżnāma"; For a summary translation in English with commentary, see Minorsky, "A Civil and Military Review in Fārs in 881/1476."

encomiastic and, as such, Davānī's characterization of Uzun Ḥasan as ruler suitably establishes

his magnificence:

> The Majesty of the workshop of vicegerency, the emperor of the protected faith, the Jamshid-resembling king, recipient of the succor of the victory-granting heavens over enmity, the warrior in the path of God, the striver in heightening the word of God, the one sent for the ninth century,[5] the one qualified by excellent widespread actions, the greatest of kings of the age, the grandest of the Caesars of the period, refuge of the rulers of the time, the vicegerent of God (*khalīfat al-raḥmān*), the master of the age, the Sultan Abū al-Naṣr Ḥasan Beg Bahadur Khan...[6]

The usage of *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* was subsequently adopted by a number of scholars from western

and central Iran and used in their own laudatory treatment of patrons. For instance, Idrīs' father,

Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī, uses it in the dedicatory preface to his exegesis of the Quran, *Jāmiʿ al-tanzīl*

waʾl-taʾwīl, which he produced some time after Sultan Yaʿqūb's death in 896/1490.[7] Although at

this time Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī still may have maintained ties to the Aqquyunlu court, he deployed

the term in reference to the dedicatee of his exegetical work, the Ottoman sultan Bāyezīd II,

whom he described as the obtainer of the divine vicegerency (*al-fāʾiz biʾl-khilāfa al-*

raḥmānīya).[8] Around the same period, an astrologer with possible connections to Muḥammad

Nūrbakhsh also included the title in the conclusion of an astrological and medical treatise that he

also dedicated to Sultan Bāyezīd II.[9] The scholar in question, Ḥusām ibn Shams al-Dīn Gīlānī,

was known in Ottoman circles as Ḫiṭābī and may have been the son of Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh's

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[5] This is clearly a reference to Uzun Ḥasan's status as the *mujaddid* in the ninth century.

[6] Minorsky, "A Civil and Military Review in Fārs in 881/1476," 148.

[7] Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī makes clear in his preface that he completed the work after Sultan Yaʿqūb's death, Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī Bidlīsī, *Jāmiʿ al-tanzīl waʾl-tawʾīl*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa 109, 3a.

[8] Ibid., 3b.

[9] Ḥusām bin Shams al-Dīn Gīlānī, *Jāmiʿ al-qismayn*. Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Aya Sofya 2414-M. I am grateful to Ahmet Tunç Şen for sharing this reference with me.

prominent disciple, Shams al-Dīn Lāhijī.[10] Regardless of Ḫiṭābī's later Ottoman career as

astrologer (*munajjim*), his origins in Gīlān and possible Nūrbakhshī connections help locate the

term in western Iran during this period.

Use of the title was not limited to laudatory display in scholarly and literary works.

Khilāfat-i raḥmānī seems to have gained some currency within the Aqquyunlu chancery during

the last two decades of the fifteenth century. For instance, an Aqquyunlu secretary employed the

term in a letter composed in 902/1497 on behalf of a group of military commanders who wished

to petition the Ottoman sultan Bāyezīd II. In particular, the commanders, who had become

frustrated with the rule of Rustam in Iran, requested that Bāyezīd send his nephew, the

Bayandurid prince Aḥmad ibn Ughurlu Muḥammad.[11] Although the letter employed rather

simple and direct prose to communicate the petition—an indication perhaps that it was not the

work of Idrīs or any other high-ranking secretary—it included among the epithets of the Ottoman

sultan the declaration of his status as *khalīfa-yi raḥmānī*.[12] Despite the relatively humble prose of

this petition, the upper ranks of the Aqquyunlu chancery corps clearly used the title as well. In

fact, the two most famous secretarial luminaries of this chancery, Idrīs and Fażlallāh Khunjī-

Iṣfahānī, both seemed to have favored the term. Idrīs used it in his personal composition

collection as a shorthand moniker for Yaʿqūb,[13] while Fażlallāh Khunjī-Iṣfahānī employed the

term in 920/1514 in association with his new patrons, the Uzbek rulers of Transoxiana.

Specifically, Khunjī-Iṣfahānī declared Abū al-Fatḥ Muḥammad Shaybānī Khan the imam of the

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[10] For a discussion of Ḫiṭābī's background and career as an astrologer in Ottoman lands, see
Ahmet Tunç Şen's forthcoming dissertation, "Astrology and the Islamic Millennium:
Knowledge, Prophecy, and Politics."

[11] For details on this episode, see chapter two.

[12] Feridun Bey, *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn*, 1:330.

[13] Idrīs entitles one of Yaʿqūb's letters: "A Reply from His Majesty the Victorious Vicegerent of
God (*javāb ki az jānib-i ḥażrat-i khalīfat al-raḥmānī muẓaffarī*), Idrīs Bidlīsī. *Majmūʿa*,
Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Aya Sofya 3986, 49b.

age and vicegerent of God (*imām al-zamān va khalīfat al-raḥmān*) in the introduction to his juridical work on the definition and duties of a Muslim ruler.[14]

IX.2 Khunjī-Iṣfahānī and a Juridical Approach to the Caliphate

Khunjī-Iṣfahānī's usage of the term, and indeed his broader intellectual project, stands in considerable contrast to the general tenor of late fifteenth-century discourses on sovereignty. Most significantly, contrary to the discussions of contemporaries, which frequently neglect the rich juridical tradition of defining the caliphate, Khunjī-Iṣfahānī fully engaged with Ḥanafī and Shāfiᶜī legal thinking on leadership in the Muslim community and sought to define a juridically defensible position on the matter that would accommodate the political realities of his day.[15]

In this manner, his work sought to engage the seminal works of Muslim jurists in previous centuries on the theory of the caliphate, especially al-Māwardī's (d. 450/1057) *al-Aḥkam al-sulṭānīya*, al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) *Iḥyāʾ ᶜulūm al-dīn* and Ibn Jamāᶜa's (d. 733/1333) *Taḥrīr al-aḥkām*.[16] Juridical thought on the caliphate coalesced in the work of al-Māwardī in the fifth/eleventh century at a time when the Abbasid caliphs exercised little *de facto* authority. Al-Māwardī's great contribution was to conceive of a theory of the caliphate that preserved the *de jure* authority of the Abbasid caliphs by formally investing sultans with the authority to exercise political power.[17] In this way, al-Māwardī's work, and indeed much of the subsequent juridical thinking on the theory of rule, offered a rationalization in legal terms of the

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[14] Fażl Allāh ibn Rūzbihān Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Sulūk Al-Mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad ᶜAlī Muvaḥḥid, Chāp-i 1 (Tehran: Shirkat-i Sahāmī-yi Intishārāt-i Khvārazmī, 1362), 50.
[15] Ibid., 49.
[16] For a detailed discussion of Khunjī's work in relation to his predecessors, see Ann K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam: An Introduction to the Study of Islamic Political Theory: The Jurists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 180–5.
[17] Ibid., 80-85.

political history of the Muslim community.[18] With the advent of the Mongols in the thirteenth

century, Muslim jurists were faced with a new challenge, as the extinction of the Abbasid

caliphate threw into disarray the carefully articulated theory of rule that called for the

appointment of leaders from the Quraysh tribe of the Prophet Muḥammad. In this new context,

as Anne Lambton notes, "the problem for the jurists now was to define the authority of rulers so

that Islamic institutions might be maintained regardless of political divisions."[19] The resulting

thinking, especially as articulated by Ibn Jamāᶜa, may be characterized as the legitimation of

brute force. As such, any *de facto* ruler by virtue of the exercise of political power could

rightfully assert the *de jure* authority that previously had been invested exclusively in the caliph.

Citing without specific attribution the saying that "the tyranny of a sultan for forty years is

preferable to the flock being unattended for a single day," Ibn Jamāᶜa held that the seizure and

exercise of power itself invested rulers with authority.[20]

Khunjī-Iṣfahānī largely followed Ibn Jamāᶜa's approach to the matter when he took up

the same questions in the second decade of the sixteenth century. Like Ibn Jamāᶜa, Khunjī-

Iṣfahānī recognized the elective and forceful methods by which an individual could become

caliph. In this manner, he followed the earliest juridical thinking on the caliphate by recognizing

the theoretical appointment of a ruler by 1) election through the consensus of Muslims, 2) a

ruler's designation of a successor, and 3) election through a council. Like Ibn Jamāᶜa, he

reluctantly recognized the forceful seizure of authority as legitimate:

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[18] H.A.R. Gibb, "Al-Mawardi's Theory of the Khilafah," in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, ed. Stanford J. Shaw and William R. Polk (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1962), 162.

[19] Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, 138.

[20] Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn Jamāᶜah, *Taḥrīr al-aḥkām fī tadbīr ahl al-Islām*, ed. Fu'ād ᶜAbd al-Munᶜim Aḥmad, al-Ṭabᶜah 3 (Doha: Ri'āsat al-Maḥākim al-Sharᶜīyah wa-al-Shu'ūn al-Dīnīyah, 1988), 48–49.

The fourth method by which kingship (*pādishāhī*) and the leadership of the community (*imāma*) may be contracted is usurpation (*istīlāʾ*) and brute force (*shawkat*). Scholars have said that when one imam dies and another individual assumes leadership of the community without receiving a pledge of allegiance (*bayʿa*) and without being nominated as caliph, and subdues a population through brute military force (*shawkat va lashkar*), his leadership is legitimate (*munʿaqid*) even in the absence of a pledge of allegiance and regardless of whether or not he is Qurayshī, whether he is an Arab, Persian, or Turk, and whether or not he has all the necessary qualifications for office—indeed, even if he is degenerate and ignorant. Although the one who holds power in this manner becomes a rebel (*ʿāṣī*)—as he has assumed the leadership of the community through an act of aggression and usurpation—they may call him sultan and the titles imam and caliph may be applied to him. But God knows best.[21]

Regardless of a ruler's method of accession, any ruler who exercises power may be called Caliph, Imam, Commander of the Faithful, and Vicegerent of the Messenger of God, however he may not be called Vicegerent of God.[22] This sober and clearly defined theoretical view of rule contrasts sharply with the image of the sultan that Khunjī-Iṣfahānī himself develops in reference to his protector ʿUbayd Allāh Khan in the preface to *Sulūk al-mulūk*. For in the same work in which he rejects the impulse to title kings as the Vicegerent of God (*khalīfat Allāh*), he celebrates his patron's uncle, Abū al-Fatḥ Muḥammad Khan, in the very same manner.[23] It seems, then, that the caliph in jurisprudential terms differed markedly from the caliph in court literature. How can we reconcile the difference in attitudes that Khunjī-Iṣfahānī expressed with respect to the title *khalīfat Allāh/khalīfat al-Raḥmān*?

One way to understand this difference is to consider Khunjī-Iṣfahānī's remarks as jurist and courtier as separate activities that engaged with two discrete discourses, the epistemological underpinnings of which equally had developed fundamentally distinct and intellectually rigorous conceptions of humankind's role in the world. The jurists leveled objections to the term *khalīfat*

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[21] Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, *Sulūk Al-Mulūk*, 82.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid, 50.

Allāh with reference to the early traditions of the Muslim community. Al-Māwardī commented on the matter in *al-Aḥkām al-sulṭānīya* by noting: "the majority of scholars, however, object to this view regarding it as sinful to hold it. Only someone who is absent or mortal, they argue, may be represented by another, but God is neither. When Abū Bakr the Upright heard himself addressed as "O caliph of God," he responded, "I am not the caliph of God but caliph of the Messenger of God."[24] In the centuries between the completion of al-Māwardī's work and Khunjī-Iṣfahānī's similar effort, most jurists writing on the subject—including Ibn Jamāʿa and Ibn Khaldūn—agreed with al-Māwardī's earlier conclusions.[25] However, in parallel with these legal developments, alternative epistemological doctrines developed that not only condoned use of the term vicegerent of God, but indeed, declared its fundamental significance through the assertion that it represented the highest ideal toward which humankind could strive, and the station from which man could properly order the affairs of the world.

IX.3 Ibn al-ʿArabī and the Theosophical Khilāfat Allāh

Beginning in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the concept of a vicegerent of God gained currency among theosophical Sufis. The greatest of these Sufis, that is to say, the one whose ideas had the greatest bearing on the mystical and philosophical trajectories of Islamic thought was Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240). For Ibn al-ʿArabī, his followers, and his latter-day students the vicegerency of God was at the center of a comprehensive cosmological theory that described the nature of God, the cosmos, and man's place within the universe. The theosophical

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[24] Translation of Wafaa Wahba, ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad Māwardī, *The Ordinances of Government : A Translation of Al-Aḥkām Al-Sulṭāniyya W' Al-Wilāyāt Al-Dīniyya*, trans. Wafaa H. Wahba (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing, 1996), 16.
[25] Ibn Jamāʿah, *Taḥrīr al-aḥkām fī tadbīr ahl al-Islām*, 59; Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, Bollingen Series 43 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 1:389.

Sufis explored these phenomena through the science of God's unity (ʿilm al-tawḥīd), which

elucidated equally theological and cosmological questions.[26]

On a theological level, they asked what is God? Their reply focused on three concepts:

God's essence (dhāt), His attributes (ṣifāt), and His acts (afʿāl). God's essence is God in

Himself—the aspect of God that is incomparable and inaccessible. God's attributes (ṣifāt) are

those aspects of God that can be known insofar as He has revealed Himself. These attributes are

synonymous with the ninety-nine most beautiful names of God revealed in the Quran. Of these

many attributes, Ibn al-ʿArabī and his theosophical followers placed special emphasis on the

seven attributes of the Divine Essence (life, knowledge, will, ability, speech, hearing, and sight),

so called because comprehension of their meaning constituted a mark of human perfection.[27]

God's acts are that which He produces through His attributes. So, as Creator (al-Khāliq), God

creates in a single act the universe, and as the Merciful (al-Raḥmān), He produces acts of mercy,

and so forth. These acts can be distinguished further between those that are unseen (ghayb) or

spiritual (rūḥānī) and those that are seen (shāhada) or corporeal (jismānī). These acts and the

effects that they produce correspond to the world of spirits (malakūt), in which unseen and/or

spiritual acts occur, and the world of bodies (mulk), in which seen and/or corporeal acts unfold.

Since God displays His attributes through the acts in the universe, the cosmos as a whole is a

divine form.

On a cosmological level, the science of God's unity is concerned with defining the

cosmos, which is to say everything other than God. God's acts and the effects that they produce

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[26] The discussion that follows draws principally from William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge : Ibn Al-ʿArabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 4–30; and William C. Chittick, *Faith and Practice of Islam : Three Thirteenth Century Sufi Texts* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 28–32.

[27] Michel Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean without Shore Ibn 'Arabî, the Book, and the Law* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 29, 97–99.

correspond to the world of spirits (*malakūt*), the liminal world (*barzakh*), and the world of bodies (*mulk*). This understanding of the cosmos rests upon several interrelated theorems. The first is that there is a distinction between God and the cosmos, the spiritual and the corporeal, the Real and the unreal, and Light and darkness. This distinction is reproduced within the cosmos itself, where the more spiritual, the more Real, and the more Light—the last two of which are attributes of God—are distinguished from the less real, the corporeal, and the dark in an indefinite hierarchy ranging from the brightest, which is closest to God, to the darkest, which is furthest from Him.

This cosmology places humankind at the center of the cosmos. The reason for man's unique status has to do with the all-comprehensiveness (*jamʿiyya*) of human beings, who contain within themselves something of all the cosmos—the seen and unseen, light and darkness, the spiritual and the corporeal, and everything in between.[28] Consequently, man the microcosm corresponds to the cosmos the macrocosm. As a correlation to this notion, humans are also the manifestation of the cosmos in its entirety, and as such are the gathering-place of all of the divine attributes, which God has displayed through His single act of creation. Yet, whereas the cosmos merely reflects the divine attributes in an indefinite and passive manner, humankind alone among creation is capable of gathering the properties of these attributes in a single active and conscious whole. It is in this sense—as the all-comprehensive, active, and fully conscious created thing— that man is the vicegerent of God in His Creation (*khalīfat Allāh fī al-arḍ*) and, as such, is given

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[28] In chapter 355 of *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, Ibn al-ʿArabī writes: "When God created this human configuration and ennobled him as He did through the all-comprehensiveness (*jamʿiyya*) which He placed within him, He put within him claims (*daʿwa*) in order to perfect the form of his configuration, for making claims is a divine attribute," William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge : Ibn Al-ʿArabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 195.

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charge of the whole universe through his central, all-comprehensive, and active nature.[29] This

understanding of *khilāfa*, differs markedly from the leadership of the community worked out by

Muslim jurists. Although the terminology is the same, the vicegerency of the theosophists is a

statement of humankind's potentiality and is therefore an internalized or spiritual matter, which

does not necessarily have any effect on the external and corporeal realm. In other words, those

individuals who attain the status of vicegerents of God may be unknown even to those around

them.

The internal and non-political nature of this vicegerency is succinctly illustrated in a

work ascribed to Ṣadr al-Dīn Qunawī, the most prominent student of Ibn al-ʿArabī and greatest

disseminator of his ideas and a saint whom Idrīs revered.[30] In the work, entitled *Ṭabṣirat al-*

mubtadī wa tadhkirat al-muntahī (Clarification for Beginners and Reminders for the Advanced),

Qunawī sets out to describe the mystical path to knowledge of God. The conclusion takes up the

vicegerency of God by calling its reader to the great task for which he was created: "Know...the

mystery of God's trust and the light of the vicegerency of God have been deposited in your

sacred inward self."[31] Although the author is explicit that the realization of vicegerency is an

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[29] See for example chapter 278 of Ibn al-ʿArabī's *al-Futūḥat al-makkīya*, where he writes: "No existent thing is named by all the divine names except man, who has been charged (*nadb*) to assume the names as his own traits. That is why he was given the vicegerency (*khilāfa*) and the deputyship (*niyāba*), and the knowledge of all the names. He was the last configuration within the cosmos, bringing together all the realities of the cosmos," William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge : Ibn Al-ʿArabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 286.

[30] In his earlier writings on the matter, William Chittick viewed *Clarification for the Beginners* as Qunawī's, William C. Chittick, "The Last Will and Testament of Ibn ʿArabi's Foremost Disciple and Some Notes on Its Author," *Sophia Perennis* 4 (1978): 43–58; More recently, he questioned this attribution, William C. Chittick, *Faith and Practice of Islam : Three Thirteenth Century Sufi Texts* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), xi.

[31] Ṣadr al-Dīn Qunawī, "Tabṣirat al-mubtadī wa tadhkirat al-muntahī," ed. Najafqulī Ḥabībī, *Maʿārif* 1 (1985 1364): 114; I have modified slightly William Chittick's translation, Chittick, *Faith and Practice of Islam*, 104.

inward matter of the soul, his explication of how vicegerency is attained further emphasizes the

point:

> Your vicegerency and governing control appear first in your own specific domain, which is called "the mortal form" or the "human frame." First, you must fulfill the obligation of this vicegerency and maintain the law of equipoise within your own faculties. But you will not be able to maintain the law of equipoise/moderation (*ʿadl*) unless you achieve a character rooted in justice. A character rooted in justice (*ʿadālat*) combines restraint (*ʿiffat*), courage (*shajāʿa*), and wisdom (*ḥikmat*), which are the middle points of the principle character traits (*awsāṭ-i uṣūl-i akhlāq*). Then, in keeping with God's promise, you will be worthy of the general vicegerency in all domains.[32]

The passage also underscores the relation between the theosophical approach to vicegerency and

philosophical approaches to ethics ultimately derived from Plato.[33] Indeed, the four habits

constitutive of justice are a common feature of Sufi literature on vicegerency and philosophical

discussions of the ideal king.

At the time of his earliest exposure to Sufism as a teenager, Idrīs was introduced to this

theosophical approach to understanding man's place within the cosmos. In fact, the *Gulshan-i*

rāz of Maḥmūd Shabistarī, the first Sufi text that Idrīs read under his father's supervision,

references and elucidates the basic contours of the theosophical doctrine of vicegerency.[34] In

particular, the text echoes Qunawī's emphasis on justice as a prerequisite of vicegerency and

reproduces the same formulation with a slight variation:

> The basis of a good character is justice,
> and thereafter wisdom, restraint, courage.
>
> The sage, perfect of speech and deed,

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[32] al-Qunawī, "Tabṣirat al-mubtadī wa tadhkirat al-muntahī," 114–5; Chittick, *Faith and Practice of Islam*, 104.
[33] Plato discusses these fourt attributes in Book IV of *The Republic*.
[34] For a discussion of Idrīs' first forays into Sufism through his study of *Gulshan-i rāz*, see chapter one.

Is the one described of these four.[35]

More significantly, Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī offered further guidance to his son, Idrīs, in these matters through an original work that he composed on the spiritual stations of the Sufi entitled *al-Kanz al-ḥafī fī bayān maqāmāt al-ṣūfī* (*The Welcome Treasure in the Explanation of the Sufi's Stations*).[36] The work, which Idrīs copied at the age of nineteen in 880/1476, concludes with a discussion of the cosmic hierarchy from the microcosm (*al-insān al-ṣaghīr*) to the macrocosm (*al-insān al-kabīr*), the apparent to the concealed, darkness to light, and the world to the hereafter. The vicegerent of God is the one who accesses the full cosmic spectrum and holds sway in both apparent and concealed realms.[37] He who knows the vicegerent of God "becomes the deputy of the vicegerent of God among his people like the prophet to his community."[38] For, as confirmed by the Quranic verse: "Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you [Muḥammad] are actually pledging allegiance to God. The hand of God is over their hands,"[39] knowledge of the vicegerent of God and allegiance to him is the most appropriate manner to order the affairs of a political community. Alī Bidlīsī's discussion of the vicegerency of God bears considerable parallels with the theosophical framework articulated by Ibn al-ʿArabī. Significantly, Alī Bidlīsī's thinking on this matter—although largely left in embryonic form—pushes the theosophical cosmology to the cusp of temporal and political significance, for it insists upon the role of the vicegerent of God in the external and temporal affairs of man. ʿAlī's predisposition to construe the vicergency of God in political terms makes sense in light of his Nūrbakhshī

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[35] Maḥmūd ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm Shabistarī, *The Gulshan ráz* (Calcutta: Wyman & Co, 1876), 35–6.
[36] Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī Bidlīsī. *al-Kanz al-ḥafī fī bayān maqāmāt al-ṣūfī*, Milli Kütüphane (Ankara), Nevşehir Ürgüp 201/3, 52a-82a.
[37] *Fa-huwá khalīfat Allāh fīʾl-arḍ fa-yataṣarrif fī al-ẓāhir kamā yataṣarrif fīʾl-bāṭin,* ibid., 81b.
[38] *Man ʿarafahu...ṣāra khalīfat khalīfat Allāh fī qawmihi kaʾl-nabī fī ummatihi,* ibid.
[39] Quran, 48:10.

affiliation. In fact, ʿAlī's spiritual 'great-grandfather,' Sayyid ʿAlī ibn Shihāb al-Dīn al-

Hamadānī (d. 786/1385),[40] was a persuasive proponent of the potential union of spiritual and

temporal authorities, which he characterized as exoteric authority (*salṭanat-i ṣūrī*) and esoteric

authority (*salṭanat-i maʿnavī* or *khilāfat-i insānī*)[41] in his most popular work on the subject,

Ẕakhīrat al-mulūk.[42] Hamadānī's conception of esoteric authority, as evidenced by his usage of

the term *khilāfat-i insānī*, clearly reflected the theosophical Sufi concept of the vicegerency of

God. For his own part, Idrīs, who shared a spiritual lineage with Hamadānī, may well have

adapted his usage of *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* (also rendered as *khilāfat-i insānī*) from reading

Hamadānī's *Ẕakhīrat al-mulūk* under his father's guidance.

These two aspects of vicegerency—an inner state cultivated through justice and an axial

component of a comprehensive cosmology with political implications—became significant

aspects of Idrīs' political thought as he defined and articulated the attributes of the divine

vicegerency in historical works and political treatises prepared for Ottoman sultans. Yet even as

he drew upon this theosophical approach to vicegerency, he was equally immersed in another

non-juristic, alternative discourse on vicegerency that argued for its necessity in strictly

philosophical terms.

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[40] For the spiritual chain of ʿAlī Bidlīsī, see the chain of mystical authority of his teacher, Muḥammad Nūrbaksh in Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nūrbakhshīya between Medieval and Modern Islam*, Studies in Comparative Religion (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 46.

[41] Hamadānī uses these two terms interchangeably. See, for instance, his title for the sixth chapter of the work, ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad Hamadhānī, *Ẕakhīrat al-mulūk*, ed. Maḥmūd. Anvārī, vol. 11. (Tabrīz: Muʾassasah-i Tārīkh va Farhang-i Īrān, 1358), 289.

[42] For a discussion of the impact of Hamadānī's work in Mughal domains, see Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam: India 1200-1800 / Muzaffar Alam.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 43–46; for a discussion of his influence on the sixteenth-century Ottoman scholar Taşköprüzāde, see Huseyin Yilmaz, "The Sultan and the Sultanate: Envisioning Rulership in the Age of Suleyman the Lawgiver (1520--1566)" (Ph.D., Harvard University, 2005), 94–95.

IX.4 Davānī and the Philosophical Khalīfat al-Raḥmān

In large measure the philosophical discourse on vicegerency developed in parallel with

the theosophical view. Yet, in contrast to the theosophical approach, the original aim of which

was to cultivate the interior life of the believer, the philosophical discourse originated in

scholars' efforts to define the philosopher-king of the ideal political order. Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d.

606/1209), the prominent jurist and theologian of the turn of the seventh/thirteenth century,

clearly and succinctly described this approach and its relationship to the vicegerency of God in

the section on politics in his work on the classification of the sciences entitled *Jāmiᶜ al-ᶜulūm*.[43]

Rāzī's discussion of politics drew largely from the tradition of political philosophy as it

had developed within Islamic lands, especially through the work of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. As

such, like al-Fārābī, he emphasizes the necessity of human association as a consequence of

man's nature as a social or political being. This association is indeed necessary, since man on his

own cannot provide for all of his basic needs.[44] Through association, humans cooperate and a

basic division of labor arises. However, the association of humans also results in acts of

oppression against one another, in consequence of which an administrator becomes necessary to

restrain men from such iniquitous acts. This administrator, through ordering the affairs of the

world, is synonymous with the vicegerent of God (*khalīfa-yi Khudā*).[45] Politics, which is the

practice of administering the affairs of humankind, is of three kinds: external or visible (*ẓāhir*),

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[43] Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʻUmar Rāzī, *Jāmiʻ al-ʻulūm, ya, Ḥadāyiq al-anwār fī ḥaqāyiq al-asrār: maʻrūf bih Kitāb-i Sittīnī*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Tasbīḥī (Tehran: Kitābkhānah-'i Asadī, 1346), 204–9; Ann Lambton provides a succinct discussion of Rāzī's political thought in Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, 130–7.

[44] Rāzī, *Jāmiʻ al-ʻulūm, ya, Ḥadāyiq al-anwār fī ḥaqāyiq al-asrār*, 204.

[45] Ibid.

internal or invisible (*bāṭin*), or a mix of the two sorts.[46] While kings see to the external/visible

mode of politics and learned scholars see to the internal/invisible mode of politics, prophets

combine these two modes into a comprehensive and universal whole. He who is perfect in

knowledge (*ʿilm*) and kingship (*pādishāhī*) is the absolute administrator (*sāyis-i muṭlaq*) and

worthy of the vicegerency of the Lawgiver (the vicegerency of the Prophet Muḥammad, *khilāfat-*

i ṣāḥib-i sharīʿat). He embodies such perfect knowledge and kingship through actions fully in

accordance with reason. In some ways paralleling the four qualities of equipoise later

propounded by Qunawī and Shabistarī, Rāzī asserts that the vicegerent possesses restraint

(*ʿiffat*), courage (*shajāʿat*), knowledge (*ʿilm*), and practical competence (*kifāyat*).[47] As Ann

Lambton suggests, the four traits identified by Rāzī drew equally from the philosophical tradition

and from the Islamic juristic tradition, which, in particular, defined practical competence

(*kifāyat*) and its sub-characteristics as a basic requirement of leadership of the Muslim

community.[48]

The four qualities of equipoise referenced by Rāzī and the theosophical Sufis were

explored thoroughly in works on ethics (*akhlāq*). Although prominent Muslim thinkers, such as

Ibn al-Miskawayh, described the relationship of these four qualities to human happiness in works

on ethics from at least the Abbasid period,[49] Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* was the most

important point of reference for scholars thinking about ethics and politics from a philosophical

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[46] Ibid., 205.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, 134.
[49] Ibn al-Miskawayh calls the four qualities of equipoise *al-faḍāʾil al-raʾīsiyya al-arbaʿ* (the four principal virtues) and specifies them as wisdom (*al-ḥikma*), restraint (*al-ʿiffa*), munificence (*al-sakhāʾ*), and courage (*al-shajāʿa*). Together they combine to produce justice (*al-ʿadāla*). Later discussions of the four qualities of equipoise exclude munificence and replace it with justice. In these schemes munificence is generally understood to be a subsidiary characteristic of justice, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, ed. Qusṭanṭīn Zurayq (Beirut: al-Jāmiʿah al-Amīrkīyah fī Bayrūt, 1966), 16–24.

standpoint between the seventh/thirteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries. In contrast to previous

works, Ṭūsī's work not only offered a thorough discussion of individual ethics (*tahẕīb-i akhlāq*),

but also set such discussion in relation to the other practical sciences, namely economics (*tadbīr-i manāzil*) and politics (*dar siyāsat-i mudun*).[50] In this way, he made explicit the relationship

between an individual's ethics—rooted in the cultivation of equipoise, which Ṭūsī calls the kinds

of virtues (*ajnās-i faẕāʾil*)[51]—and the proper ordering of a political community.

Although Idrīs was fully conversant with Ṭūsī's work—indeed, in one of his notebooks

he includes the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* in a list of volumes that he personally possessed[52]—he likely

drew his thinking on politics more immediately from the work of his own teacher, Jalāl al-Dīn

Davānī. Although Davānī's work on ethics frequently has been assessed as largely derived from

Ṭūsī's thought, there are at least two important aspects of his thought that diverge from Ṭūsī's

work. One of these divergences concerns the degree to which theosophical discussions on the

nature of man's role in the cosmos had entered into philosophically oriented discourses by the

time of Davānī's writing in the late fifteenth century. In contrast to Ṭūsī, Davānī incorporates

elements of the theosophical cosmology into his discussion. A second major divergence is the

degree to which Davānī's work appears motivated by efforts to define the ideal ruler, whom he

calls the vicegerent of God (rendered variously in his works as *khalīfat al-raḥmān, khalīfa-yi ilāhī, khalīfa-yi insānī*). Significantly, Idrīs embraced both of these aspects of Davānī's work and

further elaborated them in his own political thinking.

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[50] Ṭūsī writes in his introduction that, rather than simply translate Ibn Miskawayh's work on ethics, his composition will expand upon the Abbasid philosopher's earlier work by incorporating the other branches of practical philosophy into the discussion, Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Mujtabá Mīnuvī and ʿAlī Riẕā Ḥaydarī, Chāp-i 2 (Tihrān: Shirkat-i Sihāmī-i Intishārāt-i Khvārazmī, 1360), 25–26.

[51] Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Mujtabá Mīnuvī and ʿAlī Riẕā Ḥaydarī, Chāp-i 2 (Tihrān: Shirkat-i Sihāmī-i Intishārāt-i Khvārazmī, 1360), 83–84.

[52] Bidlīsī, Aya Sofya 3986, 1a.

These major divergences are apparent in all of Davānī's thinking on ethics and justice. Although his major work in this regard is the *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*, which he dedicated to Uzun Ḥasan, he subsequently wrote several shorter works on justice dedicated to Yaᶜqūb and the ruler of Gujarat, Sultan Maḥmūd.[53] Across these works, Davānī freely mixes the philosophical terms and concepts employed by Ṭūsī with a theosophical sensibility. So, whereas Ṭūsī regarded the purpose of man as happiness (*saᶜādat*),[54] Davānī concludes: "the purpose of man, who is the summation and most noble of created things and the choice part of the world, is the divine vicegerency."[55] This declaration, as in the theosophical cosmology, places humankind at the center of God's creation and makes clear his potentiality to act as caretaker of the universe. Despite Davānī's divergence from Ṭūsī's understanding of man's purpose, the path by which humankind attains its end remains the same for the two thinkers. This point is perhaps made even clearer in Davānī's *Risāla-yi taḥqīq-i ᶜadālat*, in which he writes:

> The reasoning human soul is from the base of the spiritual, incorporeal world and is bound to the body. For this reason its perfection is arrested. Since, in accordance with the Quranic injunction: "We did not create the heavens and the earth and that between them in play" (44:38), every existent thing was created for a purpose and a good. So, the humanly soul was created for wisdom. Wisdom, in accordance with the Quranic revelation: "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to Worship Me," (51:56) is realized through the perfection of divine servitude, which is an expression of completely expending a force in resembling the divine attributes to the extent possible, such that an individual for this reason becomes the servant of God, or rather, the vicegerent of God. In

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[53] Two of these works have been published: Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Davānī, "Taḥqīq-i ᶜadalat," ed. Najīb Māyil Haravī, *Mishkāt* 18–19 (1989-90 1368): 35–47; Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Asʿad Davānī and Najīb Māyil Haravī, "Risāla-yi ᶜadālat," *Majmūᶜa-yi rasāʾil-i khaṭṭ-i farsī* 1 (1989-90 1368): 60–72; For a discussion on the production history and relationship of these epistles to one another, see Anay, "Celaleddin Devvani, Hayatı, Eserleri, Ahlak ve Siyaset Düşüncesi," 178–9; Reza. Pourjavady, *Philosophy in Early Safavid Iran Najm Al-Dīn Maḥmūd Al-Nayrīzī and His Writings* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 12.

[54] Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, 85.

[55] *Ghāyat-i insān ki khulāṣa-yi akvān va ᶜayn-i aᶜyān va naqā-yi jahān ast khilāfat-i ilāhī ast*, Muḥammad ibn Asʿad Davānī, *Akhlāq-i Jalālī* (Lucknow: Maṭbaᶜ-i Munshī Naval Kishūr, 1283), 57.

consequence of this, it is incumbent upon man to strive to perfect his soul through the acquisition of virtues and the rejection of vices.[56]

The passage succinctly presents the relationship of man's soul to the cosmic hierarchy and grounds the discussion of man's purpose in theological, theosophical, and philosophical discourses. The most fundamental purpose of man is derived directly from the Quranic revelation that humankind was created for the worship of God. Davānī defines the attainment of perfect worship, and by extension the vicegerency of God, in theosophical terms with reference to humankind's potentiality to embody the divine attributes. Yet, ultimately, he agrees with Ṭūsī and the other philosophers that the acquisition of divine vicegerency comes about through the cultivation of virtues, which are synonymous with the four qualities of equipoise.

The second aspect of Davānī's ethical work that is reflected in Idrīs' thought concerns the degree to which his discussions of ethics and justice focus on the ideal ruler. Although *Akhlāq-i Jalālī* deals with ethics, economics, and politics in abstract terms, the encomiastic dedication to Uzun Ḥasan and the introductory remarks on the divine vicegerency lend it a kind of political immediacy absent in Ṭūsī's work. Indeed, John Woods has examined the work not simply as an ethical treatise, but rather as a political pamphlet,[57] the purpose of which was equally to define the attributes of an ideal sovereign and to associate them with Uzun Ḥasan. Davānī is rather explicit in this regard, for in defining the ideal sovereign, he references the various Greek and

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[56] *Nafs-i nāṭiqa-yi insanī az sunkh-i malakūt va ᶜālam-i mujarradāt ast va taᶜalluq-i ū ba badan banābar-i tavaqquf-i kamālāt-i ū-st bar ū va chun ba ḥukm-i 'wa-mā khalaqnā al-samawāta wa al-arḍa wa-mā baynahumā lābiᶜayn' (44:38) har mawjūdi rā ba ḥasb-i iqtiẓāʾ-i ḥikmat-i bāligha az barā-yi ghāyatī va maṣlaḥatī khalq farmūda and pas nafs-i insānī rā barā-yi ḥikmatī khalq farmūda bāshand va chun ḥikmat ba mawjib-i naṣṣ-i sharīf-i 'mā khalaqtu al-jinna wa-al-insa illā li-yabudūn' (51:56) taḥaqquq bi kamāl-i ᶜubūdīyat ast ki ᶜibārat ast az ṣarf-i qavī tamāman dar tashabbuh ba ṣifāt-i illāhī ba qadr-i imkān tā shakhṣ ba sabab-i ān ᶜabd Allāh bal khalīfa Allāh shavad pas bar ādamī vājib ast ki saᶜy namāyad dar takmīl-i nafs-i kh^wud ba taḥṣīl-i faẓāʾil va izāla-yi raẕāʾil*, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Davānī, "Taḥqīq-i ᶜadālat," ed. Najīb Māyil Haravī, *Mishkāt* 18–19 (1989-90 1368): 41.

[57] Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 103–5, 233–4.

Islamic titles by which such a king is known (as the absolute king, imam, administrator of the world, and civic man) and observes that in his own time, "the regulation of the welfare of mankind has been placed in the mighty grip of the victorious emperor [Uzun Ḥasan]."[58] This ideal sovereign oversees the administration of the sacred tradition (*sharīᶜa*) and is synonymous with "the Shadow of God, the Vicegerent of God, and the Deputy of the Prophet."[59]

Although *khalīfat Allāh* was Davānī's most frequently used term to describe the vicegerent of God, he used at least two alternative terms interchangeably. Mention has already been made of Davānī's use of *khalīfat al-Raḥmān* in reference to Uzun Ḥasan. While it is true that Davānī does not clarify exactly what he meant by the term, it is reasonable to assume that he intended the title as an alternative of *khalīfat Allāh*, as he used several terms interchangeably to describe the vicegerency of God. In this regard, Dānishpazhūh notes that some of the manuscript copies of Davānī's epistles on justice consistently replace the term *khalīfat Allāh* with *khalīfa-yi insānī*.[60] This replacement is significant, especially because Idrīs uses *khalīfa-yi raḥmānī* and *khalīfa-yi insānī* interchangeably in at least two of his works produced under Ottoman patronage. Moreover, the use of these specific titles to describe the vicegerency of God helps tie Davānī the teacher and Idrīs the student to one another in conceptual and terminological respects.

IX.5 The Evolution of Khilāfat-i Raḥmānī *in Idrīs' Political Thought*

Like Khunjī-Iṣfahānī, who adapted *khalīfat al-Raḥmān* from an Aqquyunlu chancery context to suit his patronage prospects among the Uzbeks in the 920s/1510s, Idrīs, when he

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[58] Here, I quote the translation of John Woods, ibid., 105; Davānī, *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*, 222.
[59] Davānī, *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*, 223.
[60] Muḥammad Taqī Dānishpazhūh, "An Annotated Bibliography on Government and Statecraft," in *Authority and Political Culture in Shiᶜism*, ed. Said Amir Arjomand, trans. Andrew Newman (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 221.

emigrated from Tabriz in 908/1502, brought the title *khalīfa-yi raḥmānī* along with him and from

an early date consistently applied it to his new patrons, the Ottoman sultans. In contrast to

Khunjī-Iṣfahānī's infrequent use of the term, Idrīs made the concept of divine vicegerency the

principal mode by which he defined kingship and articulated the preeminence of the Ottoman

dynasty through the association of the Ottoman sultans with its underlying characteristics. More

importantly, Idrīs' prolific and varied literary production among the Ottomans between 908/1502

and 926/1520 offers a unique view to the evolution of a single political concept in the mind of a

Muslim intellectual as he wrote across varied political contexts and literary genres over a nearly

twenty-year period. Indeed, through a close examination of Idrīs' writings on the vicegerency of

God, we see that his ideas, although largely indebted to his teacher Davānī, evolved and

exhibited considerable dynamism in their various iterations.

IX.5.1 Mirʾāt al-jamāl

    Idrīs offered his first substantial commentary on the nature of rule in a work that he

presented to Sultan Bāyezīd in 909/1503, shortly after his arrival in Ottoman lands. The work,

entitled *Mirʾāt al-jamāl*, examines the nature of sovereignty through two interrelated epistles.[61]

The first of these epistles occupies the first third of the work and presents the qualities of the

ideal ruler through an examination of the four attributes of equipoise and their subsidiary

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[61] One of the extant manuscript copies was produced in Azadlu, a village outside of
Constantinople in Jumādá I 909/October-November 1503, Bidlīsī, *Mirʾāt al-jamāl*, Süleymaniye
Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa 2149. Nuruosmaniye 4241 is a richly decorated copy that may have
been presented to Bāyezīd. The work was included in the royal library inventory completed in
909/1503, in which it was described as *Mirʾāt al-jamāl* of Idrīs al-Bitlīsī on Sufism (*Mirʾāt al-
jamāl li-Idrīs al-Bitlīsī fī al-taṣawwuf*), Torok F 59, 71a.

characteristics.[62] This portion of the work begins by noting that God, in accordance with the

ḥadīth qudsi: "God created Adam in His image," made Adam a reflection of divine beauty

(*mirʾāt-i jamāl*).[63] Moreover, God has ensured that man receive the divine light through the

successive prophets and saints whom He has sent.[64] After the Prophet Muḥammad, God ensured

the continuation of the lights of His message through two groups: first, the descendants of the

prophet (*ahl al-bayt*), and second, his companions, especially the four-rightly guided caliphs.[65]

Yet, the chain of these leaders continued in succession after these groups through the various

leaders and kings who upheld the principles of the faith. The proof of this reality is substantiated

in the reign of Bāyezīd II, who, despite the depravations of Turkmen war bands, has carried on

the tradition of raising the banner of the faith in the struggle with the idolaters and unbelievers.[66]

More importantly, He is "the absolute verification of [the proverb]: 'the sultan is the Shadow of

God,' in so far as he is a ruler possessed of "the all-comprehensiveness described by the divine

traits (*jāmiᶜīyat-i ittiṣāf-i akhlāq-i ilāhī*)" and "distinguished in the deputyship of prophethood

through exoteric and esoteric kingship (*dar niyābat-i nabavī salṭanat-i ṣūrī va maᶜnavī*

makhṣūṣ)."[67] In proof of these claims, "The Ancient Almighty Godhead has established and

raised the pillars of the throne of vicegerency and the structure of the rank of high honor and the

extreme kindness of this exalted king on four cornerstones of the blessed virtues, which are

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[62] Bidlīsī, *Mirʾāt al-jamāl*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi 1888, 1b-22b.
[63] Ibid., 3b.
[64] Ibid., 3b-4a.
[65] Ibid., 4b.
[66] Ibid., 5a.
[67] Ibid., 7b-8a.

justice, courage, restraint, and wisdom."[68] The remainder of this first epistle presents the four

traits of equipoise in greater detail through examination of their subsidiary characteristics.

Through the introduction and first epistle, Idrīs offers a structure for human history that

emphasizes the role of leadership in preserving the integrity of God's plan. In Idrīs' own day,

Bāyezīd II is the successor to this tradition, the proof of which is exhibited both in his policies

and in his character. Idrīs' approach in this respect combines historical, theosophical, and ethical

discourses to present a compelling image of Bāyezīd as the contemporary sovereign in a

successive chain of just Muslim monarchs. In several important respects, this portion of *Mirʾāt*

al-jamāl anticipated the broader and more detailed image of Bāyezīd that Idrīs developed in

Hasht bihisht. Indeed, *Mirʾāt al-jamāl*, completed as Idrīs was writing *Hasht bihisht*, is perhaps

best viewed as an early iteration of his magnum opus.

If the first epistle is squarely grounded in an ethical discourse with only passing

references to theosophical concepts, the latter portion of *Mirʾāt al-jamāl* places the theosophical

cosmology at the center of a lengthy contemplation of the nature and meaning of the vicegerency

of God. In the latter two-thirds of the work, Idrīs examines these ideas through the presentation

of an allegorical and didactic theosophical tale.[69] At the center of the tale is the supreme

sovereign Mihr, whose realm is depicted as an ocean (*muḥīṭ*) that encompasses seven seas, the

names of which correspond to the king's basic attributes. These seven seas are named each for

one of the seven essential attributes of God's essence: life (*ḥayāt),* knowledge (*ʿilm),* will

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[68] *Qādir-i qadīm arkān-i sarīr-i khilāfat va bunyān-i rutbat-i sharāfat va raʾfat-i īn shāhanshāh-i ʿālī-jāh rā bar chahār uṣūl-i makārim-i akhlāq ki ʿadālat va shajāʿat va ʿiffat va ḥikmat ast muʾassas va muʿallā dāshta*, Ibid., 8a.

[69] On allegorical theosophical tales as vehicles for political thought during this period, see Chad G. Lingwood, *Politics, Poetry, and Sufism in Medieval Iran : New Perspectives on Jāmī's Salāmān va Absāl* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

(*irādat),* ability (*qudrat),* hearing (*sam*ᶜ), sight (*baṣar),* and speech (*kalām).*[70] The king is

assisted in his administration of the realm by a vizier name Mahīn Hushyār, who represents

God's angels.[71] The sons of this vizier are in turn given one of the nine provinces, each of which

is named for a celestial body.[72] Despite the existence of this vizier and his filial governors, Mihr

favors another prince, Māh-i Rukhsār (Moonface) whom he wishes to designate the vicegerent of

his realm.[73] In the earlier portions of the tale, Mihr circumambulates the celestial provinces, in

each of which he holds court and dispenses justice, and visits the sublunar world.[74] The latter

portion of the tale relates several debates (*munāẓarāt)* judged by Māh-i Rukhsār and presented

by various characters, such as Ḥakīm Dānā-Dil (the reasoning part of the humanly soul) and

Amīr Khayāl and Amīr Shūkh. In the conclusion of the tale, the sovereign Mihr bestows the

vicegerency upon Māh-i Rukhsār.[75]

The two sections of *Mir'āt-i jamāl,* therefore, present comprehensive images of the

vicegerency of God from alternating philosophical and theosophical perspectives. In his later

works, especially *Qānūn-i Shāhanshāhī* and *Hasht bihisht,* Idrīs would integrate more

thoroughly the concepts and terminology of these two traditions into a single comprehensive

theory of rule in his other works. Idrīs called this single comprehensive theory of rule

interchangeably *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* or *khilāfat-i insānī.* On a conceptual level, it is clear that in

Mir'āt al-jamāl Idrīs is concerned with defining the vicegerency of God, yet he refrains from

describing this vicegerency as *khilāfat-i raḥmānī.* Despite the absence of this title, the image of

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[70] Ibid., 32b-36b.

[71] Mahīn Hūshyār is presented as one of the king's servants and "the leader of the manifestation of the Quranic verse: 'they do not disobey God in what He commands them, but do what they are commanded,' (Quran 66:6). The subject of this verse are God's angels, Ibid., 36b.

[72] Ibid., 37b.

[73] Ibid., 39b-40a.

[74] Ibid., 43a-52a.

[75] Ibid., 87a-88a.

vicegerency rendered in *Mirʾāt al-jamāl* is analogous to his discussions of *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* presented in his later works.

IX.5.2 Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī

Idrīs' second substantial commentary on political theory offers the clearest indication that the *khilāfat* of *Mirʾāt al-jamāl* is synonymous with *khilāfat-i raḥmānī*. This second commentary, entitled *Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī* (The Kingly Custom), considers the question of vicegerency through a less didactic and more theoretical approach to the matter. Although modern scholarship frequently attributes the work to Idrīs' final years of life, the treatise has several attributes and internal references that suggest its completion during his early years among the Ottomans, perhaps after the presentation of *Mirʾāt al-jamāl*. Based solely upon the coincidence of Sultan Süleymān's popular sobriquet Qānūnī (the Lawgiver) and the title of the work (*Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī*), Hasan Tavakkoli and most Turkish scholars writing after him have concluded that Idrīs wrote the political treatise during the latter years of Selīm's reign and presented it to his son, Süleymān, shortly after his accession in 926/1520.[76] The most significant challenge to this periodization is that the work is dedicated not to Süleymān, but to Bāyezīd's son, Şehinşāh. The work does not mention Selīm or Süleymān. In fact, the only sultan who is mentioned in the preface is Sultan Bāyezīd, whom Idrīs implies is the reigning sultan. Upon mentioning the circumstances of his immigration to Ottoman lands and the support that he received from Sultan Bāyezīd upon his arrival, Idrīs writes: "after the odes of thankful praise for the Sultan of the Age...May God spread his shadows over the dwelling of the Muslims in every

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[76] Hasan Tavakkolî, "İdrîs Bitlîsî'nin "Kanun-ı Şâhenşâhisi'nin tenkidli neşri ve Türkçeye tercümesi" (İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Bölümü, 1974).

place," he decided to offer a work to the son of the sultan.[77] The sultan to whom Idrīs refers is

clearly Bāyezīd, for he mentions no other ruler in the introduction. Moreover, the intercession

that Idrīs includes after mention of this sultan indicates that he is still alive. This interpretation

suggests a *terminus ante quem* of 918/1512.

There are at least two other aspects of the work that suggest an even earlier date. The first

concerns Idrīs' dedication of the work to one of Bāyezīd's sons, Prince Şehinşah, whom Idrīs

lauds as the heir-apparent of the king of the age (*valī al-ʿahd-i sulṭān-i zamān*).[78] We have seen

in chapter three how Idrīs, upon his arrival in Ottoman lands, sought the patronage of powerful

Ottoman royals. Moreover, in at least two works produced between 908/1503 and 911/1506,

Idrīs referred to Prince Aḥmed as Bāyezīd's heir-apparent.[79] Similarly, the ode that Idrīs includes

in praise of Şehinşah in *Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī* is largely the same as the ode that he included in a

work on Sufism dedicated to Selīm shortly after his arrival in Ottmoan lands.[80] This aspect of the

work, namely its strong parallels with similar early works produced as patronage vehicles for

Ottoman princes, suggests that the political treatise was in fact one of Idrīs' earlier literary

products composed at the Ottoman court. Finally, the autobiographical details that Idrīs includes

in the work suggest that it was written before the completion of *Hasht bihisht*. Idrīs' writing

during his years among the Ottomans is particularly marked by the detailed and revealing

explanations that he includes in his works to explain his motivations to write. Frequently such

explanations concern his immediate personal circumstances: he mentions his pilgrimage in

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[77] Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh. Masʿūdī Ārānī, Chāp-i 1. (Tehran: Markaz-i Pazhūhishī-yi Mīrās̲-i Maktūb, 1387), 4–5.

[78] Ibid., 5.

[79] The two works are *Sharḥ-i qaṣīda-yi khamrīya* and *Hasht bihisht*. See chapter three for details.

[80] Cf. Bidlīsī, *Mirʾāt al-usshāq*, Esad Efendi 1888, 155b; Vural Genç, "'Acem'den Rum'a'," 207.

917/1511 in his work dedicated to the Mamluk Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī in the same year;[81] he

details his return journey from the Hijaz in his first work dedicated to Selīm (919/1513);[82] he

offers a forty-year biographical sketch up to the Battle of Chāldirān (920/1514) in order to

explain his composition of *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn* (921/1515),[83] and he mentions his years of service to

the Ottomans and his completion of *Hasht bihisht* in his introduction to his history of Selīm

(unfinished at the time of his death in 926/1520).[84] In contrast, the autobiographical remarks in

Qānūn-i shāhanshāhi focus solely on the circumstances that led to his immigration to Ottoman

lands and his assumption of an honored place at the Ottoman court as well-wisher of the

dynasty.[85] In this regard, the introduction, in content and specific literary expressions, mirrors the

first works that Idrīs produced after his arrival at the Ottoman court, including *Munāẓara-yi rūza*

va ᶜīd (909/1503),[86] *Mirʾāt al-jamāl* (909/1503),[87] *Ḥāshīya ᶜalá anwār al-tanzīl* (before

909/1503)[88] and *Sharḥ-i qaṣīda-yi khamrīya* (909/1503).[89] Moreover, Idrīs' reference to his

position as an honored encomiast (*mādiḥ*) of the Ottomans without any direct reference to *Hasht*

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[81] Bidlīsī, *Asrār al-ṣiyām*, Ayasofya 1994, 2a-4a.

[82] Bidlīsī, *Ibāʾ ᶜan mawāqiᶜ al-wabāʾ*, Şehid Ali Paşa 2032, 1b-3a.

[83] Bidlīsī, *Ḥaqq al-mubīn*, Ayasofya 2338, 2b-10a.

[84] Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma*, Emanet Hazinesi 1423, 17b-22b.

[85] Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh. Masʿūdī Ārānī, Chāp-i 1. (Tehran: Markaz-i Pazhūhishī-yi Mīrās̱-i Maktūb, 1387), 4.

[86] Cf. Bidlīsī, *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ᶜīd*, Ayasofya 3203, 1b-2b.

[87] Cf. Bidlīsī, *Mirʾāt-i jamāl*.

[88] Although the manuscript copy of *Ḥāshīya ᶜalá anwār al-tanzīl* from Bāyezīd's royal library is without a date, we can determine its *terminus ante quem* of 909 on the basis of its inclusion in the library inventory of Bāyezīd II completed in that year. The entry for the work notes: "Kitāb ḥāshiyat tafsīr al-qāḍī li-Mawlānā Idrīs al-Bidlīsī" and is included among other copies of Bayżavī's *Anwār al-tanzīl*, Torok F59, 11a.

[89] Cf. Bidlīsī, *Sharḥ-i qaṣīda-yi khamriyya,* Ali Emiri Farsi 134, 5a/b.

bihisht suggests that he had offered at least a few works to Bāyezīd—*Munāẓara-yi rūza va ʿīd* and *Mirʾāt al-jamāl*—but had not necessarily completed *Hasht bihisht*.[90]

The focus of *Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī* on the technical and theoretical aspects of rule is apparent from the structure and contents of the work. Indeed, the work, consisting of an introduction and four chapters (*chahār maqṣad*), proceeds in a methodical, cumulative manner from basic arguments about the existence and necessity of rule to more detailed discussions of its various attributes and aspects. As such, the introduction is divided between two propositions, the theses of which seek to verify the existence of divinely appointed vicegerency and substantiate its necessity as a basic condition of humankind's efforts to order the world. After establishing the existence and necessity of rule, the first chapter explores the nature of this rule with special reference to the potentiality of humankind to comprehend the divine attributes. The second chapter examines how this potentiality, once attained, is expressed through embodiment of the four attributes of equipoise; in other words, it examines the ethical qualities of the ideal ruler. Chapter three builds upon this discussion by examining in greater detail the responsibilities of such a ruler to his subjects and administrators, while the last chapter offers insights onto the path for the attainment of spiritual kingship.[91] The following discussion will focus on the introduction and first two chapters of the work, as these sections deal most directly with defining the nature and characteristics of the vicegerent of God.

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[90] This hypothesis conflicts with the conclusion of Vural Genç, who, in his recently completed doctoral dissertation concludes that Idrīs undertook *Qānūn-i Shāhanshāhi* after having finished *Hasht bihisht*. Genç reaches this conclusion by interpreting Idrīs' self-description as a wellwisher (*duʿāgūy*) of Bāyezīd to mean that he had already completed his history of the dynasty, Genç, "Acem'den Rum'a," 206.

[91] Idrīs lays out the plan of the work at the end of the introduction, Bidlīsī, *Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī*, 7.

The two propositions advanced in the introduction establish the existence of the vicegerency of God and its necessity for the ordering of the world. Throughout the introduction, Idrīs refers to such vicegerency interchangeably as *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* (the vicegerency of God) and *khilāfat-i insānī* (the vicegerency of Humankind).[92] At first, the choice of terms appears to present a contradiction: how can this rule be both human and divine? Although Idrīs is silent on this question, his introduction offers a reconciliation of the apparent conflict by arguing for the existence of rule as a consequence of the cosmic structure laid down by God:

> Know that because God distinguished and blessed humankind among all elemental bodies through the Quranic revelation: "Certainly we have honored the children of Adam (17:70)" above all the particular created things of the world and honored them foremost among all other created things, so He fashioned humankind as the manifestation of the gathering of His perfect attributes and made him the gathering-place of the encomia of grace and majesty. He molded man's form in two natures, as revealed by the *ḥadīth qudsī*: "I molded the clay of Adam with My hand," from two opposing and contradictory essences. He kindled the light niche of his heart with the lamp of holy light, as is made known by "I breathed into him My [created] soul. (15:29, 38:72)." One of its essences is from the realm of angels and the world of spirits and one of its essences is from the world of corporeal bodies. And the essential substance of its soul comes from the heavenly province and the point of origin of happiness, while its corporeal body is gathered from the world of dominion and the seen... However, through the gathering of those two essences, man is distinguished and selected among the noble existent things. Through the state of equipoise and perfect singularity, he is honored and occupies the seat of vicegerency, as is made known by "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a Vicegerent."[93]

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[92] Compare Idrīs' description of the works' contents, in which he states that the second proposition of the introduction is on the necessity of *khilāfat-i insānī* and his later title for the section, in which the same proposition is described as on the necessity of the *khilāfat-i raḥmānī*, ibid., 7, 10.

[93] *bi-dān ki Ḥaqq subḥānahu va taʿālá chun nawʿ-i basharī rā miyān-i ashkhāṣ-i ʿunṣurī ba sharāfat-i "wa la-qad karramnā banī Ādam" bar tamām-i afrād-i ʿālam muqaddam va munaʿʿam namūd va ba sar-afrāzī miyān-i mukavvanāt va sarvarī-i tamām-i makhlūqāt muʿazzaz va mukarram farmūd avval*[an] *ẕāt-i ū rā maẓhar-i jāmiʿīyat-i ṣifāt-i kamāl-i kh*[w]*ud sākht va majmaʿ-i nuʿūt-i jamāl va jalāl-i kh*[w]*ud farmūd va takhmīr-i qālib-i tarkīb-i ū rā ba du fiṭrat ba muqtaẓā-yi "khammartu ṭīnata Ādam bi-yaday" az du jawhar-i mutaqābil va mutanāqiṣ ba ham andūkht va mishkāt-i dil-i ū rā az charāgh-i nūr-i qudsī bar-afrūkht ki "wa nafakhtu fīhi min rūḥī" az ān ishʿār ast yak jawharash az kishvar-i mujarradāt va ʿālam-i arvāḥ buvad yak jawharash az ʿālam-i ṭabāyiʿ-i jismānīyāt va ashbāḥ-i jawhar-i jānash az diyār-i malakūt va*

The passage references the terminology and concepts of the theosophical Sufis—especially with

reference to man's potentiality to comprehend the divine attributes, and dual spiritual and

corporeal nature—and posits humankind's suitability for rule over God's creation. Yet, this

suitability is based upon man's potentiality to know the realities of existence from creation to the

end, and in view of the fact that he has been created in God's image, as clarified through the

prophetic tradition: "God created Adam in his image."[94] The human marked by these traits is the

vicegerent of God, whom Idrīs defines further as the contented servant (*banda-yi*

saʿādatmand),[95] In so doing, he directly references theosophical discourses on the complete

servant of God[96] and philosophical discourses on happiness as the good of man.[97] Yet whereas

the philosophical discourses are primarily concerned with man's actions in this world, Idrīs

declares that such a contented servant is described by the divine qualities, the perfection of his

soul, and the blessed humanly habits "for the reason of ordering this corporeal world and binding

this realm of the seen to the spiritual world."[98] Despite this calling for man, he recognizes that

not all manifestations of rule successfully unite corporeal and spiritual matters. Those who do are

called the rulers of the exoteric (*ṣūrat*) and the esoteric (*maʿnā*) and count among their ranks

prophets and saints who held temporal authority, the rightly guided caliphs, and the twelve

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*mabādī-yi saʿādat āmada va jism-i badanash az ʿālam-i mulk va shahādat farāham
shuda...ammā jāmiʿīyat-i ān har du jawhar az aʿyān-i mawjūdāt mustasnā va mumtāz ast va bi
ḥālat-i iʿtidālī va vaḥdat-i kamālī masnad-nashīn-i khilāfat va iʿzāz ki "innī jāʿilu fī al-arḍi
khalīfatan" az ān martaba ikhbār ast va bi-ẕilliyyat-i subḥānī ishʿār ast*, ibid., 7–8.

[94] Ibid., 8.

[95] *Pas muḥaqqaq shud ki khilāfat-i raḥmānī ʿibārat az ittiṣāf-i banda-yi saʿādatmand ast*, ibid.,
9.

[96] On the connection between servitude to God and the vicegerency, see Chittick, *Faith and
Practice of Islam*, 31.

[97] Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, 82-83.

[98] *Jihat-i niẕām-i ʿālam-i jismānī va rabṭ-i īn kishvar-i shahādat bā ʿālam-i rūḥānī*, Idrīs Bidlīsī,
Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī, ed. ʿAbd Allāh. Masʿūdī Ārānī, Chāp-i 1. (Tehran: Markaz-i Pazhūhishī-
yi Mīrās̲-i Maktūb, 1387), 9.

imams.[99] Individuals who possess spiritual authority with no temporal power are known as the rulers of the inward reality, while those who rule temporally without knowledge of the inward reality are kings only in the same metaphorical sense as a king on a chessboard.[100] The second proposition of the introduction is on the necessity of *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* in the world and begins with the assertion that knowledge (*ʿilm*) and power (*qudrat*) are indispensible aspects of God's essential attributes. These two attributes of the seven essential attributes of the divine essence were frequently heralded as essential components of a king's qualities, both from a philosophical perspective—as in the work of Davānī[101]—and in more literary genres, in which comparisons of the pen (*qalam*) and sword (*sayf*) served as complex metaphors for knowledge and ability/power.[102]

In the latter respect, Idrīs' discussion of rule in the introductions to *Hasht bihisht* and the *Salīmshāhnāma* assume the more literary approach by which the pen and sword represent respectively the appropriate knowledge and power of a sultan.[103] In *Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī*, Idrīs eschews such a literary turn and instead uses the concepts of knowledge and ability to replicate the philosophers' division of philosophy between theory (*ʿilm*) and practice (*ʿamal*). In this

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[99] Ibid., 9.

[100] Ibid., 9–10.

[101] At one point, Davānī defines the *khalīfat-i insānī* as the one who combines wisdom (*ḥikmat-i bāligha*) and practical ability (*qudrat-i fāżila*), Muḥammad ibn Asʿad Davānī, *Akhlāq-i Jalālī* (Lucknow: Maṭbaʿ-i Munshī Naval Kishūr, 1283), 60.

[102] Since at least the eighth/fourteenth century, scholars and secretaries, including Ibn al-Wardī (749/1348-9 and Ibn Nubāta (d. 768/1366) composed literary epistles on the pen and sword. In the fifteenth century, Davānī also composed a similar treatise entitled *Risāla-yi qalamīya*, Huart, Cl.; Grohmann, A. "Kalam," *EI*². In the contemporaneous Ottoman context, the Turkish poet Firdevsī presented a comparison of the sword and pen to Bāyezīd II, Firdevsī, *Münāżere-yi seyf ü qalem*, Ali Emiri Edebiyat, 576. Kaya Şahin has noted the significance of the sword and pen in bureaucratic circles during the reign of Süleyman through a discussion of Celālzāde Muṣṭafá's *Mevāhibüʾl-ḫallāq fī merātibiʾl-aḫlāq*, Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 232–42.

[103] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, 5b-7a; Bidlīsī, *Salīmshāhnāma,* 27a-33b.

sense, the vicegerent of God, in so far as he reflects the divine attributes, should be perfect in both of these respects. Yet, since the time of the prophet Muḥammad, who realized outward and inward perfection, there has been and, indeed, will be no need to reestablish the sacred tradition.[104] The content of this sacred tradition consists of two divine sources of law (*du qānūnnāma-yi ilāhī va du dastūr-i ḥakīmāna*), which correspond to the revelations of the Quran and the guidance of the prophet through *ḥadīth* (*kitāb va sunnat*).[105] This sacred tradition consists of two aspects: one theoretical and the other practical; and in this way corresponds to the division of philosophy articulated by Muslim philosophers, such as Ṭūsī and Davānī. Whereas these philosophers divided theory into three branches (metaphysics, mathematics, and the natural sciences) and practice into three branches (ethics, economics, and politics), Idrīs offers an alternative division of theory and practice, whereby each of the two aspects of the sacred tradition are divided once to create four types: theory for servants (*ᶜilm-i khādim*), theory for masters (*ᶜilm-i makhdūm*), practice for servants (*ᶜamal-i khādim*), and practice for masters (*ᶜamal-i makhdūm*). The references to servant and master correspond to the basic aspects of the sacred tradition—which are universally incumbent upon all individuals—and a more sophisticated and limited aspect applicable only for the elect. As such theory for servants is the basic knowledge of religion incumbent upon all Muslims, while theory for masters is the special knowledge of the scholars and people of learning, especially with respect to the science of God's unity (*ᶜilm-i tawḥīd*). Similarly, practice for servants is the proper comportment of an individual in accordance with ethics, while the practice for masters is the proper ordering of the affairs of a political community.[106] The ideal Muslim ruler should be the manifestation of both knowledge

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[104] Bidlīsī, *Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī*, 11.
[105] Ibid., 11–12.
[106] Ibid., 12–14.

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(*ᶜilm*) and power (*qudrat*), and as such, have the appropriate comprehension of both the theory of the master, which entails an understanding of both the external and internal aspects of faith, and the practice of the master, which connotes an understanding of both ethics and politics.[107]

Even if the vicegerent of God has perfect facility with certain kinds of theory and practice, Idrīs acknowledges in the first chapter of the work that some aspects of the vicegerency cannot be acquired through simple human agency. The chapter begins by characterizing God's gifts to humankind as one of two sorts. The first sort is a gift of God's liberality (*vahbī*), such as beauty and fortune. The second sort is a gift bestowed through human industriousness (*kasbī*), such as material wealth or skill in crafts. *Khilāfat-i raḥmānī* is God's greatest gift of liberality and is marked by a number of signs of God's liberal munificence and fortune.[108] In this regard, Idrīs cites six signs: 1) innate faith, 2) divine fortune, 3) innate sense of the blessed traits, 4) prestige of lineage, 5) pleasing appearance, and 6) sagacity and quick-wittedness. Among these signs of God's liberality, Idrīs places a special emphasis on the importance of the blessed virtues (*makārim-i akhlāq*), the consideration of which equals the combined length of the other five signs.[109] The centrality of an ethical disposition for the vicegerent of God is also borne out in the content of the second chapter, the entire focus of which concerns enumerating and articulating ethical characteristics and habits appropriate to the rank of a ruler. Here, Idrīs reintroduces the four attributes of equipoise and emphasizes their necessity as a basic condition of the vicegerency of God: "Know that the roots of the blessed virtues and habits, which is a condition

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[107] Ibid., 15–16.
[108] Ibid., 19–20.
[109] Ibid., 23–32.

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of the proof of *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* and a requirement of the worthiness of the status of the divine

shadow, is limited to the four [attributes of equipoise]."[110]

IX.5.3 Hasht bihisht

In large measure, *Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī* assumes the form of a mirror for prince, yet it is

distinguished from most examples of the genre through its insistence on presenting a

sophisticated theory of the ideal ruler by integrating the most salient features of the theosophical

and philosophical traditions. Idrīs revisited many of these ideas in *Hasht bihisht*, yet, in contrast

with both *Mirʾāt al-jamāl* and *Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī*, the parameters of such discussions were

much broader and touched upon a wider array of epistemological traditions. Idrīs' manner of

historical writing helps explain the departure of *Hasht bihisht* from the approaches that he

adopted in *Mirʾāt al-jamāl* and *Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī*. After all, as we have seen in chapter

seven, Idrīs understood historical writing as a malleable discursive tradition, which, at its best,

freely and effectively referenced the widest array of learned traditions. In this regard, abstract

discussions of rule were appropriate to historical writing. Moreover, such discussions rightly

concerned not only theosophical and philosophical concepts, but also theories undergirded by

prophetic traditions, astrology, the occult sciences, and the like.

Significantly, an examination of *Hasht bihisht* for its ideas on rule permits a unique view

to Idrīs' evolution as a political thinker. For, despite his insistence on having completed the work

in a matter of thirty months, Idrīs wrote and rewrote different portions of his magnum opus over

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[110] *Bi-dān ki uṣūl-i akhlāq va malakāt-i karīma ki sharṭ-i taḥaqquq-i khilāfat-i raḥmānī ast va lāzima-yi isthiqāq-i ẓillīyat-i yazdānī munḥaṣir dar chahār aṣl ast*, ibid., 35–36.

a ten-year period.[111] In fact, as a consequence of this reworking, two distinct versions of the history exist. The first version, which most significantly excludes any general introduction to the chronicle, was presented to the court in late 911/mid 1506. This version includes the eight books of the chronicle, each of which offers praise of the Ottoman sultans through discursive prefaces and a narrative treatment of the reign of each sovereign. Yet, seven years later, upon Idrīs' return to Ottoman lands after a year in the Hijaz, Idrīs offered the newly-enthroned sultan, Selīm, a new version of the history, which included a general introduction for the entire project heavily laden with the cosmic significance of vicegerency. In this respect comparison of these two discursive sections, namely the preface to Book Eight (on Bāyezīd II) produced in 911/1506 and the general introduction to the chronicle completed in 918/1512, offers a clear view to the evolution of Idrīs' thinking between 911/1506 and 919/1513. While we may largely reconcile the two images of vicegerency propounded in these discursive sections, the varied emphases between the earlier and later versions highlight the evolution of the concept in Idrīs' mind and reflects the altered political terrain during these years.

Both versions of the eighth book of *Hasht bihisht*, which is concerned with the reign of Bāyezīd II, consist of two prefatory discursive sections, a narrative section, and a final discourse that elucidates the structure of Bāyezīd's regime with reference to the princes and principal officers of his reign. Idrīs, in keeping with the martial structure by which he organized *Hasht bihisht*, called the two prefatory discursive sections the advanced party/ introduction (*muqaddima*) and the vanguard (*ṭalīʿa*). The purpose of both sections is to celebrate Bāyezīd as the greatest ruler of his age. Although both sections draw on the terminology and concepts that he presented previously in *Mirʾāt al-jamāl* and *Qānūn-i Shāhanshāhi*, only the latter section—

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[111] For a discussion of the production history of *Hasht bihisht*, see chapter three and appendix b.

the vanguard—fully explores the philosophical and theosophical ideas advanced in his earlier works. In this section, Idrīs presents Bāyezīd as the ideal ruler by associating his patron with the four pillars of equipoise that he previously expounded upon in his other works.[112] Idrīs precedes this section with his advanced party (preface), which, in contrast, is much broader in scope. In other words, the section references various religious, astrological, mystical, and philosophical authorities to develop a comprehensive image of Ottoman rule—one that is coterminous with an idealized conception of kingship.

As in *Mirʾāt al-jamāl*, Idrīs begins the preface by noting that from the time of Adam to Muḥammad, God ensured an unbroken chain of individuals of virtue and righteousness in the form of prophets, saints, and kings. Muḥammad delivered the eternal path of right and after him Islam spread. Yet, in the period between the last of the four rightly guided caliphs and the advent of the Ottomans, sovereigns did not gather together knowledge, justice, courage, and obedience. In contrast, the Ottomans have become renowned for "the gathering of the dual creations of the fortune of faith and worldly-rule and the creation of the mixture of outward bliss with the dignities of inward gradations."[113] All of the Ottoman sultans passed on these traits from father to son until the time of Sultan Meḥmed II.[114] Upon his death, Bāyezīd II assumed the reins of leadership in the manner of his forebears, and since his reign corresponds with the turn of the tenth century, his status as renewer of the faith is yet another sign of his divine favor.[115]

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[112] Since this section seeks to identify Idrīs' thinking in 911/1506, citations given here will be to Esad Efendi 2198, Idrīs' draft copy from this period. References to the corresponding folios in Nuruosmaniye 3209 will be given parenthetically as well. Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Esad Efendi 2198, 226b-239b (Nuruosmaniye 3209, 498b-509a).

[113] *Ijtimāʿ-i īn du nashʾat-i dawlat-i dīnī va dunyavī va ikhtirāʿ-i imtizāj-i saʿādat-i ṣūrī bā manāṣib-i marātib-i maʿnavī*, Ibid., 219b (Nuruosmaniye 3209, 494a).

[114] Ibid., 219b-220a (Nuruosmaniye 3209, 494b).

[115] Ibid., 220a (Nurosmaniye 3209, 494b-495a).

Immediately following this claim, Idrīs offers eight mystery-laden discourses (*laṭīfa*) that demonstrate Bāyezīd's superiority over all other rulers.

In general, these arguments entail analysis of the obscure meaning of generally acknowledged proverbs, Quranic verses, or celestial events that substantiate Idrīs' central claim. So, for instance, in the first discourse, Idrīs analyzes the oft-cited aphorism, "the sultan is the shadow of God on earth," to demonstrate Bāyezīd's perfect grasp of knowledge (*ᶜilm*) and power (*qudrat*). According to Idrīs, the purpose of the aphorism is to demonstrate that rulers should represent God, and all of His attributes. Particularly fundamental in this regard is the sultan's embodiment of the seven attributes of God's essence (discussed above with reference to Ibn al-ᶜArabī). Idrīs further posits that of these seven attributes, knowledge and power are the most fundamental, and therefore the most essential to rulers. Bāyezīd is cognizant of this truth and embodies the fully knowledgeable and fully powerful sultan.[116] Clearly, this analysis draws upon some of the underlying concepts that Idrīs previously explored in *Mirʾāt al-jamāl* and *Qānūn-i Shāhanshāhī*. Indeed, some of the eight discourses represent his earlier ideas even more directly. For example, the fifth discourse, with its emphasis on Bāyezīd's possession of the blessed virtues and beautiful attributes known to the masters of theory and practice (*aṣḥāb-i ᶜilm va ᶜamal*), clearly references Idrīs' thinking on *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* in his earlier works, as well as the broader tradition of Muslim philosophers.[117]

Yet, the breadth of Idrīs' thinking on rule in these eight discourses exceeds the boundaries of theosophical and philosophical arguments advanced in his earlier works. The last three discourses, in particular, draw upon astrological, historical, and esoteric theories to support further his central contention regarding Bāyezīd's preeminent status. On an astrological level,

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[116] Ibid., 220b-221a (Nuruosmaniye 3209, 495a/b).
[117] Ibid., 223b-224a (Nuruosmaniye 3209, 496b-497a).

Idrīs acknowledges in the sixth discourse that religious scholars have criticized certain practitioners of the science of the stars for prognostications resembling "the style of lies of the soothsayers." Despite this criticism, the science is a legitimate branch of knowledge. The bulk of Idrīs' discourse involves a presentation of the most appropriate and suitable methods for determining a horoscope, at the end of which he concludes simply that Bāyezīd's fortune is superior to all of the horoscopes of any other king.[118] In the following discourse, Idrīs offers a historically grounded theory of Bāyezīd's greatness, through the assertion of his status as renewer of the faith (*mujaddid*). Bāyezīd, with respect to this title, follows in the path of his forefather ʿOs̱mān, who was sent by God to renew the faith after the depravations of the Chinggisid unbelievers.[119] The last discourse is grounded in a numerological interpretation of Bāyezīd's status as the eighth dynasty of the house of ʿOs̱mān. In particular, Idrīs expounds upon the relationship between man and the structure of the cosmos and asserts that the Ottoman sultans (who are the vicegerents of God) correspond with each of the seven heavens, and as such, Bāyezīd, as the eighth, is in the rank of the most perfect of human individuals (*dar rutbat-i akmal-i ashkhāṣ-i insānī*).[120]

Idrīs' references to various learned traditions were clearly part of a conscious strategy to bolster the rhetorical impact of his praise of Bāyezīd. In fact, by way of introduction, many of the opening sentences of the individual discourses offer direct citations of the particular scholarly tradition that informs his argument. So, for instance, in introducing his discourse on ethics, he references philosophers, those "masters of theory and practice (*aṣḥāb-i ʿilm va ʿamal*);"[121] in his discourse on astronomy, he addresses the observers of heavenly events (*murāṣidān-i marāṣid-i*

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[118] Ibid., 224b (Nuruosmaniye 3209, 497b).
[119] Ibid., 225a/b (Nuruosmaniye 3209, 497b).
[120] Ibid., 226a/b (Nuruosmaniye 3209, 498b).
[121] Ibid., 223b (Nuruosmaniye 3209, 496b).

aflāk);[122] and in introducing his discourse on religious renewal, he addresses directly historians, "the verifiers of dates and past accounts of peoples (*muḥaqqiqān-i tavārīkh va akhbār-i savālif-i umam*),"[123] and so forth. The wide-ranging discourses present a formidable battery of heavy rhetorical and intellectual artillery to defend Idrīs' multifaceted central contention regarding Bāyezīd's status as the ideal ruler.

Seven years later, in 919/1513, when Idrīs presented the complete version of *Hasht bihisht* to Bāyezīd's son, Selīm, he necessarily altered the central message of the new sections of the work. First of all, the accession of Selīm required a revised message that would allow for the preservation of Idrīs' older theses regarding Bāyezīd, yet offer suitable praise of his new patron, the recently enthroned Selīm. Significantly, Selīm's accession posed its own unique challenges to Ottoman encomiasts, as the chaotic and fratricidal events that precipitated Selīm's rise to power required special rhetorical care. More broadly, the seven years between the two presentations of *Hasht bihisht* witnessed considerable geopolitical transformations that affected the policies of the Ottoman court and precipitated, in turn, an altered ideological outlook. Since the initial presentation of Idrīs' history, Shah Ismāᶜīl had done away with the last Bayandurid princes in western Iran, conquered Herat, and ejected the Uzbek khans from Khurāsān. His consolidation of power in Iran was matched by his aggressive policies in Ottoman lands. In particular, the 917/1511 rebellion of Şahkulu, with its ideological ties to Shah Ismāᶜīl, suggested to Ottoman observers that Shah Ismāᶜīl had expansionary designs on Qaraman and Anadolu. In the light of this altered political terrain, Idrīs presented a transfigured image of the ideal ruler in the general introduction and conclusion to the new version of *Hasht bihisht* that he offered to

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[122] Ibid., 224a (Nuruosmaniye 3209, 497a).
[123] Ibid., 225a. (Nuruosmaniye 3209, 497b).

Sultan Selīm in 919/1513. This new image was at once darker, more combative, and more eschatological than his earlier vision.

The first sections of the general introduction bear the imprint of this more combative aspect. Here, Idrīs offers an amended cosmology, which, while still fully reconcilable with the theosophical cosmology he previously espoused, offers a more pronounced oppositional framework for the cosmic order. Consequently, the central cosmic role for humankind, although still acknowledged, is placed within an amended framework, in which God has endowed every created thing with a unique lot, appropriate and satisfactory to His will. In view of this fact, "He designated some radiant essences as the manifestation of goodness and ability and some as the sources of evil and affliction."[124] Yet, the creation of alternating and oppositional essences in the universe facilitates a near unending conflict: "between the people of the light of gnosis and God's unity and the lords of the darkness of unbelief and apostasy... the custom of contention and opposition from the two sides was established."[125] In this world of constant opposition, God designates man His vicegerent in the universe, since Adam is "the most complete in the gathering of the cornerstones of contradiction (*dar jāmiᶜīyat-i arkān-i aẓdād atamm ast*),"[126] which is to say, his dual corporeal and spiritual nature encompasses all of the oppositional essences existent in God's creation. Because of humankind's conflicting nature, God "appointed this occupant of the seat of vicegerency in two sorts and ascribed to it two separate names and modes."[127]

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[124] *Baᶜẓī javāhir-i zavāhir rā maẓāhir-i khayr va iqtidār va baᶜẓī qavāhir-i ẓavāhir rā maṣādir-i shurūr va aẓrār sākht*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Nuruosmaniye 3209, 4b.

[125] *Fī mā-bayna ahl-i nūr-i maᶜrifat va tawḥīd va arbāb-i ẓulmat-i kufr va ilḥād...āhang-i mughābala uftād*, Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

[127] *īn muntasibān-i masnad-i khilāfat rā bar du qism manṣūb farmūd va ba-du ism va rasm ū rā mansūb namūd*, Ibid., 5a.

These two types of leadership correspond with humankind's potentiality to embrace God's will or reject it. Consequently, members of the first group are the occupants of the throne of majesty and honored by the adage, "the sultan is the shadow of God." They command the good and prohibit the bad and the most perfect of this group of sultans is he "for whom the foresight of his peerless grace and awe is evident in the mirror of his works and effects, and for whom the gathering of the attributes of opposing effects (*jāmiᶜīyat-i ṣifāt-i muqābalat al-taʾsīr*) of the Quranic revelations: 'And He gives life and causes death (7:158, 23:80, 40:68),' as well as, He is 'over all things competent, (2:148, 3:165)' are apparent in his insightful administration and luminous opinions."[128] In other words, the most perfect ruler of this preferred type of leadership is the one who has combined in himself all of the attributes of God's creation—antithetical though they may be—and established a just administration. In contrast, the second type of rule is implemented through lightless oppression (*ẓulūm-i bī-nūrash*) and opposition to the injunctions and prohibitions of God (*mukhālafat-i avāmir va navāhī-yi khudāʾī*). They are rulers from among the idolaters and enemies of God.[129]

Although Idrīs' cosmology and typology of rule remain wholly theoretical in this section of *Hasht bihisht*, the opposing images of kingship are suggestive of the impending monumental struggle between the Ottomans and Qizilbash. After all, the rhetoric deployed by Idrīs in this section points to the near unending struggle between the people of the light of God's gnosis and the lords of the darkness of unbelief and apostasy (*arbāb-i kufr va ilḥād*). Notwithstanding the Zoroastrian undertones of Idrīs' cosmology—with its emphasis on the struggle between light and

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[128] *Va akmal-i īn qism-i salāṭīn-i jahān-madār pādishāh-i bakhtiyār-jahāndārīst ki dar āyina-yi aᶜmāl va āsārarsh pīsh-i naẓar-i luṭf va qahr bī naẓīrash va dar baṣar-i baṣīr-i tadbīr va rāy-i munīrash jāmᶜiyyat-i ṣifāt-i mutaqābalat al-taʾsīr-i 'wa huwā alladhī yahīy wa yumīt' va 'huwā ᶜalá kull shayʾ qadīr*,' Ibid., 5a
[129] Ibid., 5b.

dark—accusations of unbelief and apostasy in reference to the Qizilbash became one of the key condemnations of Ottoman scholars and court functionaries as they sought to legitimize Selīm's coming campaign against Shah Ismāʿīl in 920/1514.[130] Indeed, Idrīs employed the same formulation when recalling the justification for Ottoman campaigns against the Qizilbash both in a letter that he composed for the Ottoman chancery in 923/1517, and subsequently in his history of Selīm's reign.[131] In the political context in which Idrīs offered the new version of *Hasht bihisht*, an altered theosophical cosmology was apposite. In such a cosmology man still remained the axial component of God's creation through his potentiality to assume the vicegerency. Yet, the basic narrative of this cosmology replaced the hierarchical unfolding of God's creation with an image of the universe that emphasized constant contradiction and opposition.

The updated version of *Hasht bihisht* bore at least one other key amendment to the image of the ideal ruler initially presented in the earlier version of the work in 911/1506. This earlier version necessarily presented Bāyezīd II, the patron of the work, as the ideal ruler. With the accession of Selīm, Idrīs undoubtedly needed to frame an appropriate image of the new sultan in the new version. The resulting portraits of Bāyezīd and Selīm, as reflected in the conclusion to *Hasht bihisht*, contrasted Bāyezīd's pacific and near saintly character with the martial vigor of his son. Consequently, Idrīs describes Bāyezīd "in the image of a king, but rather like Pīr-i Bisṭām / in piety and humility, by nature and name / he suffered hardships in the path of Truth / to obtain Sultan Bāyezīd (Bisṭāmī)'s reward / He abandoned all property and possessions / and

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[130] On this point, see chapter six.
[131] Feridun Bey, *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn*, 1:438. Bidlīsī, Salīmshāhnāma, Emanet Hazinesi 1423, 73b.

entrusted sovereignty and kingship to deputies."[132] These qualities, although eminently laudable,

were unequal to the task of governance in 917/1511, when the world was rocked by great discord

precipitated by the royal succession struggle and the Şahkulu rebellion. In this context, Selīm,

who held in his grasp the "two world-illuminating candles" of the *sharīʿa* and *jihād*, exemplified

the appropriate man of the age.[133] To be sure, Selīm, like his forebears, possessed the four

cornerstones of equipoise (courage, righteousness, wisdom, and justice),[134] yet Idrīs emphasizes

his martial reputation engendered by his enthusiasm to embark on the time-honored path of

jihād, even during his father's reign: "In his father's life, in the custom of his forebears / through

his efforts the struggle became customary again."[135] In this world of heightened conflict, the

pacific nature of the aging Sultan Bāyezīd II was ill suited to the requisites of the age, and Selīm,

through his character and deeds, showed himself to be the worthiest successor.

IX.6 Khilāfat-i raḥmānī and the Ottoman Vocabulary of Sovereignty in a Period of Conquest

  Idrīs' return to the Ottoman court in 919/1513 and invitation to advise Selīm personally

afforded the historian a privileged position of influence during several extended periods of

Selīm's eight-year reign. In this advisory position, Idrīs on occasion promoted *khilāfat-i

raḥmānī*—title and concept—as a key ideological component of Selīm's ideology. The

development and application of innovative terms to describe Ottoman rule was an important

requirement of Selīm's reign. The tumultuous events of his rule called for robust legitimating

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[132] *Bi-ṣūrat-i shah valī chun pīr-i Bisṭām / ba-zuhd u maskanat ham khulq u ham nām / ba-rāh-i ḥaqq riyāżathā kashīdī / ki yābad ajr-i sulṭān bāyazīdī / firāghat kard az amvāl u asbāb / sipurd ū mulk u dārāʾī bi-navvāb*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht Bihisht*, 624b.
[133] Ibid., 624a.
[134] Ibid., 624b.
[135] Ibid., 624a.

propositions. After all, his aggressive campaigns in Iran, Syria, and Egypt against other Muslim powers potentially undermined the centuries-spanning image of the Ottomans as the preeminent warriors of the faith (*sulṭān-i ghāzīyān*). In this context, the Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty and Idrīs' formulation of *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* offered an innovative, yet broadly resonating alternative conception that the Ottomans could embrace and pronounce to their newly conquered subjects and neighboring Muslim rulers.

Over the course of Selīm's eastern campaigns, the Ottomans sought to mold and communicate an appropriate rationale for their conquests. In the buildup to Selīm's campaign against Shah Ismāʿīl, the Ottoman court solicited and obtained the religious sanction of Ottoman scholars, as well as several foreign scholars, for the conflict.[136] Once new lands were conquered, the Ottomans immediately set about communicating a rationale for such conquests to the newly conquered populations. Idrīs was involved in these activities. For instance, in the first Friday prayer in Tabriz after the Ottoman seizure of the city, Idrīs spoke to the congregation and explained Selīm's titles and their significance.[137] While we do not know what specific titles Idrīs dwelt upon, it is entirely possible that—given his prolonged commitment to *khilāfat-i raḥmānī*— such a disquisition, at least, touched upon this title and concept, as well as its underlying emphasis on the four cornerstones of equipoise. Certainly the newly installed Ottoman authorities selected preachers for the Friday sermon in recently conquered cities who would offer ideological support for their policies. In Damascus, Ibn al-Farfūr, a native of the city, frequently offered supportive sermons for the Ottomans in the weeks and months after their arrival. Similarly, another Damascene penned an encomiastic epistle for Selīm, in which he declared the

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[136] For details on this, see chapter six.
[137] Bidlīsī, *Salīmnāma*, TSMK Emanet Hazinesi 1423, 104b.

Ottoman sovereign the renewer of the faith and sought to persuade his neighbors of the virtue and justice of an Ottoman administration.[138]

It is in this context of conquest and legitimation that Idrīs deployed his preferred title of rule in a public official capacity. In the aftermath of the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 923/1517, Selīm ordered the secretaries of the royal council and a number of scholars to pen victory proclamations that would be circulated within Ottoman domains and sent to friendly rulers throughout Islamic lands. Idrīs was asked to write the announcement destined for the ruler of Shirvān. The ensuing missive was a lengthy document that offered the Ottoman ally a detailed account of Selīm's campaigns between the conquest of Kamākh in 920/1515 and the sultan's arrival in Egypt in 923/1517. The record of these activities posed a challenge to the Ottoman image as they described conquest of Muslim polities. To explain and justify these conquests, Idrīs placed the concept and requirements of the vicegerency of God in the forefront of his discourse. Immediately upon communicating an appropriate greeting to the ruler of Gīlān, Idrīs continues:

> As the highest goal and most lofty aim of possessing the seat of the vicegerency of God (*tamakkun-i masnad-i khilāfat-i raḥmānī*) is limited to strengthening Muslim faith, repulsing the effects of oppression, and raising unbelief and apostasy from nearby lands, consequently, before turning to ordering the affairs of dominion and wealth and establishing the banner of security and comfort—as is the established custom of this dynasty of the heavenly vicegerency—in accordance with the religious opinions of the imams and scholars—we (Selīm) preferred first to embark on *ghazāʾ* against the apostate Qizilbash, which takes precedence over and is more important than holy war against unbelief, and to obliterate their general iniquity, which secures the most general and complete benefit for the purest part of the lands of Islam.[139]

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[138] For a discussion of the role of these two Damascene scholars' in the context of early Ottoman legitimating efforts in Syria, see chapter six.

[139] *Chun maqṣad-i aqṣā va maṭlab-i aʿlá az tamakkun-i masnad-i khilāfat-i raḥmānī maqṣūr bar taqviyat-i dīn-i musalmānī va dafʿ-i asạ̄r-i ẓulm va rafʿ-i kufr va ilḥād az mamālik-i qāhira dānī(ya?) buvad har āyina himmat-i ʿālī nihmat qabl az tavajjuh bi-naẓm-i maṭālib-i mulk va māl va istiqāmat-i aʿlām-i amānī va āmāl bar ʿādat-i maʿhūd-i īn khānadān-i khilāfat-āsmān bi-*

Significantly, the passage applies the abstract and theoretical conception of sovereignty that Idrīs described in various scholarly and literary forms to the practical affairs of governance. In this respect, Idrīs proposes the basic requirement of the vicegerency of God as the rationale for Selīm's campaign against Shah Ismāʿīl. In contrast to his literary discourses, which emphasized the vicegerent's inner qualities, Idrīs, in this royal rescript, stresses the vicegerent's duty in strengthening the Muslim faith and defending it from all threats. He substantiates this position with reference to the various religious opinions that the Ottoman court obtained on the eve of the Chāldirān campaign.

More than simply a rhetorical instrument of legitimation, Idrīs' application of *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* in this instance neatly demonstrates the layered and complex connections between sophisticated theosophical and philosophical concepts on the one hand, and their adaptation and application in official chancery products as a component of legitimating discourses on the other. As a title of sovereign authority, *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* made its earliest appearances in encomiastic and chancery material of the Aqquyunlu Sultanate. Yet, in fact, the intellectual underpinnings of the term drew significantly upon older theosophical and philosophical discourses that, under the aegis of Idrīs and his likeminded contemporaries, were increasingly placed in the service of political ideology. Idrīs' dual identity as respected scholar and authoritative statesman of considerable rhetorical talent ensured for the term a favorable hearing within Ottoman intellectual, administrative, and political circles in the first two decades of the sixteenth century; its prominent use in a high-profile official document—even at a moment when Idrīs'

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fatvā-yi aʾimma va ʿulamāʾ-i zamān avval[an] ʿazīmat-i ghazāʾ-i malāḥida-yi qizilbāsh ki az jihād-i kuffār aqdam va ahamm ast va rafʿ-i fasād-i ʿāmm-i īshān rā nafʿ bi-khulāṣa-yi bilād-i islāmī aʿmam va atmam taqdīm farmūdīm, Feridun Bey, *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn*, 1:438.

professional future was uncertain[140]—signals its acceptance within the upper echelons of the Ottoman court.

Yet, as we have seen in chapters three and four, the complex patronage environment of the Ottoman court in the early sixteenth century suggests that the Ottoman sultans rarely embraced a single unified and completely consistent ideological program. In this respect, scholars, encomiasts, and courtiers each offered their own brand of legitimating ideology and, in this manner, ideas and concepts competed in an arena of ideological discourse. This notion of a malleable and flexible ideological program is also reflected in the official chancery products of this period. In fact, of the seven victory proclamations for the conquest of Egypt included in Ferīdūn Beğ's collection, only Idrīs' letter mentions *khilāfat-i raḥmānī*.[141] To be sure, the other victory proclamations offered similar arguments concerning the righteousness of Ottoman actions, yet each scholar or secretary exercised some independence in the precise presentation of these arguments. Consequently, Idrīs' preferred concept, and indeed the broader Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty, remained something of a work in progress during Idrīs' lifetime. Still, we should not discount the intensive and sustained efforts of Idrīs to establish his vision of rule as a viable, and indeed ideal, expression of Ottoman sovereignty.

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[140] For discussion of Idrīs' professional circumstances while writing this letter, see chapter six.

[141] The letters, written in Turkish and Persian and addressed to domestic and foreign audiences, demonstrate a spectrum of rhetorical sophistication. Some of the simpler dispatches to domestic audiences within Ottoman domains appear to be variations on a single template (letters to Süleyman (1:427), the Crimean khan (1:430), and the general announcement sent to judges throughout Ottoman domains (1:431), presumably to be read at Friday prayers. Others, both in Turkish (see the letter to the Ottoman judge governing in Edirne, 1:432) and the Persian letters to the rulers of Māzandarān (1:435) and Gīlān (1:436) produce sophisticated arguments to justify Ottoman action against the Mamluks. None of these letters mention *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* deployed in Idrīs' letter to the ruler of Shirvān, the longest and most elaborate of the victory proclamations (1:438), Feridun Bey, *Münşeʾātüʾs-selāṭīn*.

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Epilogue: The Utility and Limits of Intellectual Biography

Although Idrīs worked to popularize his views on history and kingship through richly patronized literary pieces and widely circulated chancery products, at least two interrelated factors complicate any overall assessment of his impact on an emerging Ottoman legitimating ideology in the sixteenth century. To begin with, despite Idrīs' prominent role as crafter of diplomatic correspondence, we must reserve any larger judgment about the reliability of chancery products to project a wholly coherent and consciously defined statement of the ideological outlook of the Ottoman Sultanate at this time. Likewise, while the Ottoman court encouraged the composition of numerous historical narratives and political treatises in the first two decades of the sixteenth century, it is sometimes difficult to discern which ideas from which works precipitated any immediate or lasting impact on the formal and publicly presented image of the sultan and his sultanate.

In both cases, the challenges concern the numerous and varied voices that participated in chancery activities and literary culture during the period. Certainly, Idrīs' appointment to compose one of the Ottoman victory proclamations of the conquest of Egypt in 923/1517 signals the high esteem in which he was held by Selīm and high-ranking Ottoman statesmen. In this sense, Idrīs' deployment of *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* in a prominent letter destined for public consumption indicates an acceptance on the part of the sultan and his leading advisers that the epithet and its underlying concept appropriately represented the sultan in a wider sphere. Therefore, we may interpret reasonably *khilāfat-i raḥmānī* to have become a component of Ottoman legitimating ideology through Idrīs' efforts in 923/1517. Yet even at this time, other secretaries produced different victory proclamations that advanced alternative or at least varying

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ideological positions. As mentioned in chapter nine, of the seven victory proclamations of Egypt that Ferīdūn Beğ included in his prose collection, only Idrīs' letter mentions *khilāfat-i raḥmānī*. The variations in terminology and argumentation among the letters suggest that secretaries exercised significant leeway as they crafted and developed public sultanic missives. Certainly, they worked within defined parameters; the central message was specified and the broad legitimating strategy agreed upon. Yet, within this framework the final product could remain idiosyncratic. In short, it bore the imprint of an individual's thought even as it ostensibly represented broader policy.

A similar dynamic was at work within the courtly environment of patronage. Clearly, the Ottoman court invested in Idrīs' history, both during the reigns of Bāyezīd II and his successor Selīm I. Bāyezīd's gift to Idrīs for his initial presentation of *Hasht bihisht* is the largest single reward for lettered patronage in the entire gift register of 1503-1512. Although Idrīs negatively assessed the Ottoman court's bestowal of a portion of his history upon the Crimean khan as unworthy of his work,[1] such a gift may equally be interpreted as part of an Ottoman effort to project a sophisticated image of the sultanate to its allies and neighbors. Similarly, in 919/1513, Selīm's court produced at least two richly decorated copies of Idrīs' updated version of his history, one of which was bestowed upon Selīm's only son and successor, Süleymān.[2] Through these various acts, the Ottoman court demonstrated at different moments a material and ideological commitment to Idrīs' historical vision of the Ottoman dynasty and the underlying concepts and theories that he used to substantiate such a vision. Yet such a commitment does not necessarily suggest that the two sultans, the royal family, or the wider court unanimously agreed

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[1] TSMA E. 5675.

[2] The two copies are TSMK Hazine 1655 and Süleymaniye Ktp, Nuruosmaniye 3209. Nuruosmaniye 3209 was bestowed upon Süleymān during Selīm's reign, as evidenced by the gold leaf illuminated frontispiece roundel on 1a.

upon the significance of Idrīs' vision. From its earliest reception, leading elements of the court forthrightly opposed Idrīs' history on linguistic, historiographical, and ideological grounds. In the case of Müʾeyyedzāde's proposal for an Ottoman dynastic chronicle in literary Turkish, such opposition directly contributed to the support of a historical project, namely Kemālpaşazāde's chronicle, with a separate agenda. Indeed, throughout the period, the court encouraged and patronized a number of secretaries, scholars, poets, and courtiers to produce historical narratives and political treatises, all of which were intended to define and project in some way an image of Ottoman rule. Not all of these works became popular or had any lasting impact on Ottoman historiographical and ideological discourses. Still, some of them, at least, exercised an influence in more narrowly construed political and cultural contexts. Reference to the *Ghazāvat-i Sulṭān Salīm* of Qāżīzāda is instructive in this regard, as it underscores the mixed bag of the early-sixteenth-century environment of Ottoman patronage. On one hand, this history of Selīm's conquests by a recent Persian émigré to the Ottoman court seems to have floundered at the margins of Ottoman historical consciousness. Only a single copy of the work remains extant.[3] More importantly, despite the great detail and firsthand authority of the narrative, the work appears to have been little used by subsequent Ottoman historians. On the issue of Qāżīzāda's preferred moniker for Selīm, he rarely deployed the title *ṣāḥib-qirān*—an increasingly popular title in Ottoman circles at this time—and instead opted for the conceptually analogous, but less esteemed epithets of *kishvar-gushāy* (region-conqueror) or *jahān-gushāy*.[4] Yet, on the other hand, Qāżīzāda's work was of fundamental significance to certain contemporary litterateurs. In

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[3] Qāżīzāda, *Ghazavāt-i Sulṭān Salīm*, Süleymaniye Ktp., Hacı Selim Ağa 825.
[4] Although *ṣāḥib-qirān* appears in at least three places in the text, twice in reference to Selim (38b, 86a) and once in reference to Mehmed II (216a), *kishvar-gushāy* appears to be Qāżīzāda's preferred epithet for Selim, as it appears throughout the text, including the first allusion to the Ottoman sultan (2a), Ibid.

fact, two authors of contemporary histories of Selīm's reign—Adāʾī and Idrīs—both specifically cite Qāżīzāda's chronicle as a major source of inspiration for their own historical projects of the 1510s. For these reasons then, in some cases at least, it seems best to interpret chancery products and literary works as latent conveyors of ideological concepts, positions, and arguments, rather than conclusive statements of a legitimating outlook.

But how are we to know which ideas mattered when? In other words, how are we to know which ideas are effectively representative of an Ottoman ideological outlook and which ideas never gained any real traction? Consider the problematic legacy of Idrīs' ideas after his death in 926/1520. On one level, we may conclude reasonably that Idrīs helped adapt to an Ottoman context elements of the Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty that remained an important aspect of Ottoman kingship throughout the sixteenth century. Significantly, Idrīs was the first prominent historian to associate the title of centennial renewer (*mujaddid*)—claimed throughout the fifteenth-century by rulers in the Persian cultural zone—with the Ottoman dynasty from the reign of its founder ʿOs̱mān. This claim, namely that centennial renewal remained the prerogative of the Ottoman dynasty since its inception, became the standard approach for subsequent Ottoman historians. The powerful chancellor of Süleymān's reign, Celālzāde Muṣṭafá, used the term in his history of Süleymān.[5] Similarly, a vizier of this sultan, Lüṭfī Pasha, deployed the title with recourse to the same reasoning used by Idrīs in his history of the Ottoman dynasty completed in 961/1553-4.[6] Another title popularized by Timurid courts and used by Idrīs in his last works became even more prominent in the sixteenth century than the concept of renewal. This title, Lord of Conjunction (*ṣāḥib-qirān*), was the most popular moniker of the Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty. Indeed, it was used to describe every Ottoman sultan

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[5] Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 189.
[6] Lüṭfī Paşa, *Tevarih-i Āl-i Osman*, 6–11.

between Bāyezīd II and Murād III (r. 1574-1595). During Süleymān's reign, Celālzāde deployed

Ṣāḥib-Qirān as the primary indicator of Süleymān in his history in much the same way as Sharaf

al-Dīn Yazdī had done with respect to Timur, and Abū Bakr Ṭihrānī with respect to Uzun Ḥasan.

During the 1520s and 1530s such usage was possibly fueled by the heightening apocalyptic

expectations that had ebbed and flowed in Ottoman lands since at least the conquest of

Constantinople in the mid-fifteenth century.[7] In this environment the term entered official usage

through its prominent application in the preamble to the Egyptian Law Code (*qānūnnāme*) of

931/1525.[8] In later periods, the title remained a mainstay of the dynasty, as evidenced by its

prominent inclusion in the first couplet of an inscription set above one of the principal entrances

to the sultan's private residence in the Topkapı Palace in 997/1587.[9] In all of these instances

then, the Ottoman dynasty or its agents, including Idrīs, adapted and projected elements of the

Timurid vocabulary of sovereignty upon a distinct Ottoman ideological platform.

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[7] On the role of apocalypticism in Ottoman ideology during the reign of Süleymān, see Cornell H. Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleyman," in *Soliman Le Magnifique et Son Temps, Actes Du Colloque de Paris. Galeries Nationales Du Gran Palais, 7-10 Mars 1990*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), 159–77; Cornell Flesicher and Kemal Çiçek, "Mahdi and Millenium: Messianic Dimensions in the Development of Ottoman Imperial Ideology," in *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilization*, vol. 3, Philosophy, Science, and Institutions (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2000), 42–54; Cornell Fleischer, "Shadow of Shadows: Prophecy and Politics in 1530s Istanbul," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 13, no. 1–2 (2007): 51–62; Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 187–93.

[8] For an analysis and English translation of this document, see Snježana. Buzov, "The Lawgiver and His Lawmakers: The Role of Legal Discourse in the Change of Ottoman Imperial Culture" (Ph.D., University of Chicago, 2005), 29–45, 197–232; For an analysis of the law code in the context of Celālzāde's life, see Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 53–59.

[9] The couplet was transcribed by ᶜAbdurraḥmān Şeref as: "*Gözīn-i pādişāhān ḫan-ı murād-ı ᶜālīshān / yegāne şeh-i ṣāḥib-qırān ü ẓıll-i yezdānī*," Abdurrahman Şeref, "Topkapı Saray-ı Hümāyūnu," *Tārīḫ-i ᶜosmānī encümeni mecmuᶜası* 5–12 (1326): 458; Gülru Necipoğlu discusses the inscription in relation to Murād III's building activities at the palace, Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapi Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1991), 174.

But not all of the terms employed by Idrīs faired so well after his death. In fact, Idrīs'

most frequently used titles, the interchangeable *khalīfat-i raḥmānī* and *khalīfat-i insānī*, make

few appearances in literary pieces and chancery documents after his death in 926/1520.

Exceptions include the prominent use of the title by the *şeyḫüʾl-islām*, Ebüʾs-suʿūd Efendi, in

reference to Süleymān in a collection of religious opinions prepared for the sultan.[10] Yet, perhaps

significantly, even Ebüʾs-suʿūd neglected to deploy it in the long list of titles that he included in

a widely circulated deed of the sultan's pious endowment in Constantinople. Similarly,

Taşköprüzāde, the Ottoman scholar of Süleymān's reign, echoed Idrīs' views on the vicegerency

of God in a treatise he entitled *Risāla fī bayān asrār al-khilāfa al-insānīya waʾl-salṭana al-*

maʿnawīya (*Epistle on the Exposition of the Secrets of the Vicegerency of Man and Esoteric*

Kingship).[11] Although, even in this case, it seems that Taşköprüzāde's more significant reference

was Hamadānī's *Zakhīrat al-mulūk* and not necessarily Idrīs' work.[12] Accordingly, even in these

two examples, it is difficult to establish any verifiable connection between Idrīs' preferred terms

and the later scholars' usage.

Such a connection may well exist, but it can be established only through detailed

consideration of the particular experiences of these two later scholars in relation to Idrīs and his

works. This, then, seems to be the crux of the matter. Ideas may have a history, but only in

relation to the individuals who borrowed, adapted, or developed them from somewhere else. It is

for this reason that much of this dissertation has a retrospective dimension to it. Although it has

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[10] Süleymaniye 1051/6, 69b.

[11] There are at least two manuscript copies of this work: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Carullah 2098 and Beyazıt Kütüphanesi, Veliyyüddin 3275. Hüseyin Yılmaz discusses this work in relation to mystically oriented discussions of rule among the Ottomans, Huseyin Yilmaz, "The Sultan and the Sultanate: Envisioning Rulership in the Age of Suleyman the Lawgiver (1520-- 1566)" (Ph.D., Harvard University, 2005), 94–96.

[12] Ibid.

attempted to consider the historical outlook and political thought of an individual active appximately between 1480 and 1520, much of it necessarily considers what came before, and in some cases, what came centuries before. This is also an approach particularly well suited for the central figure of the study. Idrīs' work and thought evince the intellectual traditions in which he was immersed. Whether such traditions concerned mystical, astrological, historiographical, or administrative matters, Idrīs conscientiously sought to ground his own thinking in the appropriate traditions as he himself had received them and understood them. Accordingly, his mature intellectual production on many levels reflects these traditions—he consciously worked within at times distinct and at times overlapping epistemological or professional frameworks and sought to leave his mark in a number of fields. However, the record of this thought also underscores a mind highly attuned to the broader currents of his day—political, cultural, and intellectual. Consequently, a study of Idrīs permits us to unearth a certain kind of history of ideas. It is a history that is highly conscious of its own past, yet fully immersed in the pressing considerations of its particular time and place. It is a history that rejects the notion of ideas as an abstraction. Such a history can never discover some historical essence—some inexorable advance of ideas toward some end. It can only strive to address how ideas during a particular time and in a complicated place addressed certain needs and helped start new things. What those new things become can be determined only with equally detailed considerations of their future contexts.

Appendix A: Chronology of Idrīs Bidlīsī's Life

861/1457	Idrīs' birth on 21 Ṣafar/18 January in the settlement of the messianic Sufi Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh at Sūliqān in northern Iran
869/1464	Death of Muḥammad Nūrbakhsh on 14 Rabīᶜ I/14 November
870/1465	Idrīs' father Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī returns his family to its ancestral home in Bidlīs under the protection of the Rūzhakī Kurdish lord Amīr Sharaf
871/1467	The Qaraquyunlu ruler Jahānshāh invades Aqquyunlu territories in Armanīya in Shaᶜbān/March
872/1467	The Aqquyunlu ruler Uzun Ḥasan defeats Jahānshāh at Mūsh on 12 Rabīᶜ II/10 November; Idrīs and his father are in the retinue of the Qaraquyunlu rulers at the time of this battle; Ḥusām al-Dīn ᶜAlī joins the retinue of Uzun Ḥasan
874/1469	Uzun Ḥasan defeats the Timurid ruler Abū Saᶜīd at Qarābāgh in Rajab/January; Uzun Ḥasan emerges as preeminent ruler in Iran
876/1471	Idrīs begins study of Sufism under the supervision of his father
877/1473	Uzun Ḥasan is defeated by the Ottoman sultan Meḥmed II at the battle of Otlukbeli (Başkent) in Rabīᶜ I/August; shortly thereafter, Idrīs meets Jāmī as the eminent scholar passes through Tabriz on his return home to Herat from pilgrimage
882/1478	Death of Uzun Ḥasan; Aqquyunlu succession struggle
883/1478	Uzun Ḥasan's son Sulṭān-Khalīl emerges victorious in Rabīᶜ II/July and begins his eight-month reign
884/1479	With the support of key power brokers, Sulṭān-Khalīl's brother, Yaᶜqūb, defeats and kills Sulṭān-Khalīl; Sultan Yaᶜqūb is proclaimed ruler from Tabriz
885/1480	Idrīs dedicates *Rabīᶜ al-abrār* to Sultan Yaᶜqūb; enters sultanic service with Aqquyunlu court
885/1480 – 896/1490	With the patronage and support of Sultan Yaᶜqūb's powerful minister Qāżī ᶜĪsá, Idrīs ascends within the ranks of the Aqquyunlu chancery and attains the rank of state secretary (*munshī al-mamālik*)

886/1481	Idrīs is appointed to compose the Aqquyunlu victory proclamation (*fatḥnāma*) in commemoration of the defeat of the rebellious commander Bayandur
889/1484	Idrīs composes official Aqquyunlu letter to the Timurid sultan Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqara; composes reply to Ottoman victory proclamation in the wake of the capture of Aqkirmān and Kilī.
894/1489	Qāḍī ʿĪsá initiates land tax reforms in ʿIrāq-i ʿAjam; these efforts are met with stiff resistance by segments of the scholarly class and possibly contribute to Qāḍī ʿĪsá's murder in the wake of Sultan Yaʿqūb's death in Ṣafar 896/December 1490
896/1490 – 897/1492	Civil war following death of Sultan Yaʿqūb; during the latter part of this period, Idrīs resides in Shiraz, where he studies with Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī
897/1492	Enthronement of Rustam in Tabriz in Rajab/May
903/1497	Rustam's cousin, Aḥmad ibn Ughurlu Muḥammad, returns to Iran from Ottoman lands to contest the throne; with the encouragement of the military and civilian elite, including Idrīs, and the support of the Ottomans, Aḥmad defeats Rustam and is declared the emperor of Persia from Tabriz; Sultan Aḥmad initiates reforms in line with Qāḍī ʿĪsá's efforts nearly ten years earlier; meets stiff resistance and is defeated and killed near Isfahan in Rabīʿ II 903/December 1497; Idrīs cites this date as the end of Aqquyunlu rule; period of chaos and civil war ensues
907/1501	Shah Ismāʿīl defeats the Aqquyunlu prince Alvand at Sharūr outside Tabriz; seizes Tabriz and proclaims himself emperor of Iran
908/1502	In the midst of political upheaval, famine, and plague, Idrīs emigrates from Tabriz and heads to Ottoman lands
908/1502	Idrīs settles in Sofia in the Ottoman Balkans where he completes several works dedicated to the Ottoman sultan Bāyezīd II and his son Aḥmed; begins working on his history of the Ottoman dynasty (*Hasht bihisht*)
908/1502 - 917/1511	Idrīs enjoys the patronage of Sultan Bāyezīd II and composes several works dedicated to the Ottoman sultan; in the latter portion of this period, Idrīs feels his talents and efforts are insufficiently rewarded and points to the jealousy of some of Bāyezīd's leading statesmen as the cause for his marginalization at court
911/1506	Idrīs presents a copy of *Hasht bihisht* in Dhūʾl-ḥijja/May and receives a reward of 50,000 silver aspers

912/1506-7	Idrīs composes a panegyric poem in honor of Sultan Bāyezīd II's son Selīm
917/1511	Feeling marginalized at the Ottoman court, Idrīs departs for pilgrimage to Mecca; passes through Cairo where he is received by the Mamluk sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī; sends a panegyric poem to Shāh Ismāʿīl around this time, perhaps as an overture for repatriation in Iran; settles in the Hijaz where he works on the introduction to *Hasht bihisht*
918/1512	Selīm accedes to the Ottoman throne and invites Idrīs to return to Ottoman lands; Idrīs accepts; begins his journey back to Constantinople at the end of 918 or beginning of 919
919/1513	Idrīs completes the verse conclusion to *Hasht bihisht* and presents the work to Selīm; in the following years, Idrīs will assume a role as an important adviser to Selīm, especially on the Ottoman campaigns in western Iran
920/1514	Idrīs accompanies Selīm and the Ottoman army on its campaign against Shah Ismāʿīl in Iran; Shah Ismāʿīl is resoundingly defeated at Chaldiran in September, but escapes capture
920/1514-922/1516	Idrīs is sent by Selīm to Kurdistan where he endeavors to enlist the support of the Kurdish lords for the Ottoman struggle against Shah Ismāʿīl; the mission culminates in a campaign of joint Ottoman-Kurdish forces which expels Shah Ismāʿīl's forces from Diyārbakr
922/1516	Selīm orders Idrīs to join the main Ottoman army, which had recently defeated the Mamluks under the command of Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī outside of Aleppo
923/1517	Idrīs accompanies Selīm on his campaign against the newly appointed Mamluk sultan Tumanbay in Egypt; Ottoman conquest of Egypt; Idrīs quarrels with some of Selīm's leading statesmen regarding the administration of the newly conquered lands and is sent back to Constantinople
926/1520	Idrīs dies on 7 Dhūʾl-ḥijja/18 November in Constantinople in the midst of composing a history of Selīm's reign, which he became known as the *Salīmshāhnāma*

Appendix B: Analysis of the Manuscripts of *Hasht Bihisht*

The extant manuscript copies of *Hasht bihisht* offer historians a wonderful opportunity to analyze the composition of a massive sixteenth-century Persian chronicle over a period of approximately ten years. This is because, of the more than ninety partial or complete manuscript copies of the work still extant, at least nine contain the author's hand.

This decade-spanning period of composition occurred in at least two distinct phases. In a personally signed letter dated to 918/1512 and now preserved in the Topkapı Palace Museum Archive (hereafter E. 5675), Idrīs clarifies that a first version of his history that he presented to the Ottoman court excluded a general introduction and conclusion.[1] On the basis of the Ottoman Gift Register of 909-918/1502-1512, we may conclude that this version was initially received at Bāyezīd's court in Dhū al-ḥijja 911/May 1506.[2] Later copies of the work, which include a general introduction and conclusion, further clarify certain aspects of the production history. Within the conclusion, Idrīs presented a petition of grievances (*shikāyatnāma*) that confirmed the particulars of his previous letter to Bāyezīd and made clear that an initial copy of his work had circulated at court without a general introduction or conclusion.[3] Moreover, the conclusion also affirms that Idrīs did not begin working on the conclusion until after he received news of Selīm's accession in 918/1512 at his place of residence in Mecca.[4] These later manuscript copies contain the general introduction and conclusion, as well as a number of other changes to the main portions of the history.

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[1] TSMA E. 5675.
[2] *Inʿāmāt Defteri*, Atatürk Kitaplığı, Muallım Cevdet O.71, p. 185.
[3] Bidlīsī, *Hasht Bihisht*, Nuruosmaniye 3209, 634a/b.
[4] Ibid.

These principal characteristics of the earlier and later versions of *Hasht bihisht* are reflected in almost all of the manuscript copies of the work found in Istanbul (and likely most of the others around the world). Koji Imazawa has shown on the basis of the wording and expressions of manuscript copies found in Istanbul that all copies can be divided into two types,[5] which, with two reconcilable exceptions (to be explained below), also correspond with either the version of the history without introduction and conclusion (hereafter type I) or the version with introduction and conclusion (hereafter type II).[6] In other words, all of the extant manuscript copies can be traced to either a version of the work prepared and presented during the reign of Bāyezīd II (type I) or to a version prepared or presented during the early part of Selīm's reign (type II).

Moreover, we are fortunate to have both type I and type II manuscript copies containing Idrīs' hand. Of the type I manuscripts, the most prevalent hand in Esad Efendi 2198 (EE 2198) and Esad Efendi 2199 (EE 2199) bears strong similarities to other signed copies of the work, as well as to the letter from Mecca signed by Idrīs (E. 5675) and endorsed with his personal seal (compare Figures 3, 13, and 14). Koji Imazawa concurs with this interpretation for EE 2199, but offers no comment on EE 2198.[7] These two copies together also constitute a complete version of the history as it likely appeared during the reign of Bāyezīd II (i.e., together the two codices contain a complete version of all eight books of *Hasht Bihisht*, but no general introduction or conclusion). Both manuscripts contain many marginal notes and corrections, and in my

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[5] Imazawa, "İdris Bitlisî'nin Heşt Bihişt'inin Iki Tip Nüshası Üzerine Bir Inceleme," 859.
[6] What I have termed type I, Imazawa terms type B, and what I have termed as type II, he terms type A. This is because Imazawa privileges the chronologically later version as more authoritative. I prefer to emphasize the chronological progression of the work.
[7] Imazawa, "İdris Bitlisî'nin Heşt Bihişt'inin Iki Tip Nüshası Üzerine Bir Inceleme," 869.

estimation are in the same hand. For these reasons then, EE 2199 and EE 2198 likely constituted

Idrīs' draft copy as it existed around 911/1506.

There are at least three other extant type I manuscripts that contain Idrīs' hand. Two of

these manuscripts, Ayasofya 3538 (AS 3538) and Ayasofya 3542 (AS 3542) were produced

together and constitute the majority of a complete version of the work, as it existed in Bāyezīd's

lifetime. Both manuscripts also include Idrīs' editorial corrections in the margins (see Figures 17

and 18). AS 3538 contains book eight of *Hasht bihisht*, while AS 3542 contains the first five

books. According to Imazawa, the paper in both manuscripts is of nearly identical dimensions

(351x258 mm for AS 3538 and 351x256 mm for AS 3542).[8] Both manuscripts are written in a

fine *nastaʿlīq* script in different colored ink with nineteen-twenty lines per page.[9] Moreover, the

paleographic features, section titles, and organization of these two manuscripts correspond with

one another. See Figures 1 and 2 for a comparison of the title pages of the two manuscripts:
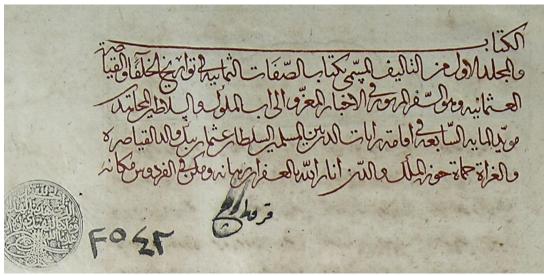
Figure 1: Ayasofya 3542, 1a

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[8] Ibid., 871.
[9] Ibid., 871.

Figure 2: Ayasofya 3538, 1a

Most significantly, the title page for AS 3538 suggests that Bāyezīd was alive at the time of its copying. In particular, the invocation included after Bāyezīd's name and title indicate that he was still alive: ...It is a composition selected from the shining fortune of the Bayezidian Sultanate—May God strengthen the assistants of his Caliphate and invigorate through the light of his justice the eminent men of dominion and faith."[10] For these reasons then, its seems likely that AS 3538 and AS 3542 once constituted considerable sections of a presentation quality copy of the work produced under Idrīs' supervision that circulated during the reign of Bāyezīd II.

To these two high-quality type I manuscripts, we may also add Nuruosmaniye 3210 (N3210) to the list of manuscripts edited by Idrīs. This manuscript, which contains books two through five, also includes marginal corrections in Idrīs' hand in much the same manner as AS 3538 and AS 3542 (compare figures 17, 18, and 19). The preservation of at least five type I manuscripts with Idrīs' hand should not be altogether surprising.[11] The latter version of Idrīs'

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[10] *huwá taʾlīf manʾī ʿan al-dawla al-bāhira al-sulṭāniyya al-bāyazīdiyya aʿizza Allāh anṣār khilāfatahu fī al-ʿālamayn wa aʿizza bi-nūr maʿdalatihi nawāṣī al-mulk waʾl-dīn*, A 3538, 1a.
[11] Since noticing the prevalence of Idrīs' hand in AS 3538, AS 3542, N 3210 during a research trip to Istanbul in July 2015, I have not had the opportunity to examine all of the type I of the

history likely superseded the earlier version (in the eyes of its sixteenth-century readers) and predominated after its completion in 919/1513—indeed, Imazawa counts twenty-six type II versions of the work and only thirteen type I versions among the manuscript libraries of Istanbul.[12] For this reason then, a higher proportion of the earlier version contains the hand of the author.

As for type II manuscripts, we are fortunate to have both a signed draft copy and a signed presentation copy. Esad Efendi 2197 (EE 2197) contains all eight books of the history, the general introduction, and conclusion. Moreover, the colophon for the work is signed by Idrīs and dated 919/1513-1514.[13] We should note here that Idrīs' signature in the colophon does not suggest that he copied the entire work. In fact, as Mehrdad Fallahzadeh has shown recently, this manuscript contains three different hands.[14] Even so, the colophon, as written by Idrīs, accounts for these different hands as it only affirms: "the finishing (or completion) of this writing occurred by the pen of...Idrīs Bidlīsī."[15] In its primary use of black ink for the text with red ink used to indicate section titles and dotted borders for marginal additions and other emendations, EE 2197 bears many common features with EE 2199 and EE 2198, and, as such, likely constitutes the author's draft copy for type II (compare Figures 13, 14, and 15). Nuruosmaniye 3209 (N 3209) is a richly produced presentation copy that is also signed by Idrīs (Figure 16). Like EE 2197, N 3209 contains several hands, yet its conclusion is written in Idrīs' hand with a colophon signed

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manuscript libraries of Istanbul. His hand may be found in other manuscripts than the ones mentioned in this appendix.

[12] Imazawa, "İdris Bitlisî'nin Heşt Bihişt'inin Iki Tip Nüshası Üzerine Bir Inceleme," 863-72. I suspect that an even greater proportion of manuscripts outside of Turkey are type II.

[13] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Esad Efendi 2197, 557b.

[14] Fallahzadeh, "The Eight Paradises (the Hasht Bihisht) and the Question of the Existence of Its Autographs," 287–8.

[15] *wuqiᶜa ikhtitām al-arqām biʾl-aqlām...Idrīs Bidlīsī*, Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Esad Efendi 2197, 557b.

by the author and dated 919/1513-1514.[16] Here too, Idrīs is careful to affirm that he only completed writing this copy.[17] N 3209 also has a frontispiece roundel that indicates it was produced for Selīm's only son and successor, Süleymān.[18] I have relied on N 3209 as the base copy of *Hasht bihisht* in this dissertation, since it is a clean copy that was endorsed by the author and includes all of the various parts of the work (the general introduction, the eight books, and conclusion).

To these type I and II manuscripts, we should discuss several other manuscripts that either contain Idrīs' hand, were produced within his lifetime, or produced on the basis of autographed copies. Two of these contain Idrīs' hand and represent the small exception to the two typologies established by Koji Imazawa. Ayasofya 3541 (AS 3541) includes the general introduction and the first six books of the history. The contents of these six books correspond with type I manuscripts, yet, unlike all other type I manuscripts, this copy also contains the introduction. This introduction is of particular interest as it is Idrīs' handwriting and includes a colophon confirming that fact. Moreover, Idrīs specifies in this colophon that he wrote the introduction to *Hasht bihisht* while he resided in Mecca in 918/1512. Victor Ménage points out in his dissertation that Idrīs' wording only confirms that he wrote the introduction in 918/1512 while in Mecca, and not, as has frequently been assumed by other scholars, that this particular copy was produced in Mecca at that time: "It was written while I was in Mecca...and I am the author of this book...Idrīs ibn Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī al-Bidlīsī...in the year 918."[19] Moreover,

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[16] Idrīs signs the colophon on 636a. Fallahzadeh has noted that the manuscript is written in several different styles of handwriting, which is perhaps indicative of multiple hands in the production of the manuscript, Fallahzadeh, "The Eight Paradises (the Hasht Bihisht)," 389–92.
[17] *wuqiʿa ikhtitām al-arqām biʾl-aqlam...Idrīs Bidlīsī*, Nuruosmaniye 3209, 636a.
[18] Ibid., 1a.
[19] *kutiba wa qad kunt bi-Makka... wa ānā muʾallif al-kitāb... Idrīs bin Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī al-Bidlīsī... bi-sanati thāmin ʿāshir wa tisʿi-miʾa* (Aya Sofya 3541, 14a), Victor Ménage, "A Survey

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Ménage points out that AS 3541 must have been copied on the basis of EE 2197, as most of the marginalia in EE 2197 are incorporated into the main text of AS 3541.[20] The marginalia in EE 2197 that were not incorporated into the main text of AS 3541 must have been added after the main text of AS 3541 was produced.[21] These later additions also appear as marginalia in the presentation copy (N 3209), and therefore indicate that Idrīs was modifying his work even as the presentation copy was being produced.[22] This point further substantiates our conclusion that EE 2197 was a draft copy. From this, we may conclude that the six books of AS 3541 are representative of type I, but that Idrīs appended to this manuscript his introduction. Nuruosmaniye 3212 (N 3212) is the second manuscript displaying characteristics of both typologies. This manuscript consists of books seven and eight of the history, as well as the conclusion. Idrīs copied book eight of this manuscript, and book seven includes several marginal corrections and some of the section headings in his hand.[23] The general features of books seven and eight are in accordance with the characteristics of type I identified by Imazawa. Yet, unlike all other copies of type I manuscripts, N 3212 includes the conclusion. Imazawa has analyzed codicological aspects of N 3212 and concludes that the conclusion of this manuscript was a later addition.[24]

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of the Early Ottoman Histories, with Studies on Their Textual Problems and Their Sources"
(Ph.D., University of London (SOAS), 1961), 608.

[20] Ibid., 608–9.

[21] Compare, for example, the verses in the margins of EE 2197 (3b) and AS 3541 (3b).

[22] N 3209, 4ab.

[23] For instances of Idrīs' marginal corrections, see Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihihst*, Nuruosmaniye 3212, 3a, 9a, 14a, 18b, 25a; for instances of his hand in the sectional titles, see 14a, 23a (Figure 20) and, 30a.

[24] In particular, Imazawa notes that the conclusion contains twenty-seven lines per page, while books seven and eight contain twenty-five. Similarly, the conclusion is written on paper of a slightly different color and dimension, Imazawa, "İdris Bitlisî'nin Heşt Bihişt'inin Iki Tip Nüshası Üzerine Bir Inceleme," 870.

Aside from these manuscripts that were either draft copies or edited by Idrīs, there are several other notable manuscripts that can be tied directly to one of manuscripts mentioned above. Perhaps the oldest of these is Hazine 1655 (H 1655), a type II manuscript. The copy contains the introduction, all eight books, and the conclusion. Moreover, the copy is almost identical to N 3209.[25] With one small, yet significant change, even the colophon of H 1655 appears copied from N 3209. Whereas the colophon of N 3209 reads "the finishing (or completion) of this writing occurred by the pen of...Idrīs Bidlīsī,"[26] the copyist of H 1655 inserted a small additional remark above the line to clarify that he relied on an autographed copy. The colophon reads: "the finishing (or completion) of this writing occurred *on the basis of what had been transcribed* [emphasis added] by the pen of...Idrīs ibn Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Bidlīsī."[27] Although H 1655 is dated 919/1513 in the colophon, its frontispiece roundel suggests that it was produced during the reign of Sultan Süleymān, who only acceded the throne in 926/1520.[28]

All of the remaining manuscripts discussed in this appendix were either copied by Meḥmed ibn Bilāl or copied from one of his manuscripts. In the middle decades of the tenth/sixteenth century, Meḥmed had unparalleled access to Idrīs' personal manuscripts. Between the latter half of 952/1545 and Muḥarram 953/March 1546, he produced a compendium of Idrīs' treatises, poetry, and letters, which, in several cases, now constitutes the only known copy of these works.[29] Between 966/1559 and 976/1569, he produced at least four copies of *Hasht bihisht,* on the basis of EE 2197. During this same time, Meḥmed was also an active

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[25] One important exception in this regard, noted by Imazawa, is the errors in pagination in the conclusion of H 1655, Imazawa, "İdris Bitlisî'nin Heşt Bihişt'inin Iki Tip Nüshası Üzerine Bir İnceleme," 864.

[26] N 3209, 636a.

[27] *wuqiᶜa ikhtitām al-arqām bi-mā nuqila biʾl-aqlam...Idrīs ibn Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Bidlīsī*, H 1655, 668b.

[28] Ibid., 1a.

[29] Bidlīsī, *Majmūᶜa*, Esad Efendi 1888.

copyist of the work of Idrīs' son, Ebū'l-Fażl Meḥmed; in 952/1545-1546, he copied Ebū'l-Fażl Meḥmed's Turkish translation of Vaṣṣāf's Persian history.[30] This access to autographed and unique materials produced by Idrīs, as well as his association with Ebū'l-Fażl Meḥmed, lead me to speculate that he served in the household of Idrīs' son during the latter reign of Süleymān. All four of the manuscripts related to Meḥmed's work are type II manuscripts. FY 619 is the oldest known copy of *Hasht bihisht* completed by Meḥmed. The first section of this manuscript was completed on 28 Shaʿbān 967/24 May 1560, while the conclusion was completed on 29 Jumādá I 968/14 February 1561. The colophon states that the work was produced from an autographed copy. During this same period, Meḥmed produced another copy of *Hasht bihisht*, which he completed on 28 Rabīʿ I 968/16 December 1561 and is now preserved in the Library of University of Tabriz, Faculty of Persian and Foreign Languages (*Dānishgāh-i Adabīyat-i Tabrīz*, Ms. 11, hereafter T 11). Also, during some unspecified month in 968/1561-1562, Meḥmed completed yet a third copy of *Hasht bihisht*, which is now preserved as MS. O 3179 in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (hereafter B 3179).[31] To these three manuscripts copied by Meḥmed, a fourth (Halet Efendi Eki 191-1, hereafter HE 191-1) was produced by Muṣṭafá ibn H̱alīl, better known as Rumūzī (d. before 990/1582) in 979/1571 on the basis of a copy produced by Meḥmed ibn Bilāl intermittently between 966/1558-1559 and 976/1568-1569.[32]

Rather than allow us to produce a single authoritative text, this analysis of the most pertinent manuscripts suggests the utility of several manuscripts for historical inquiry. In fact, since the work freely circulated with the author's permission in two distinct versions, the

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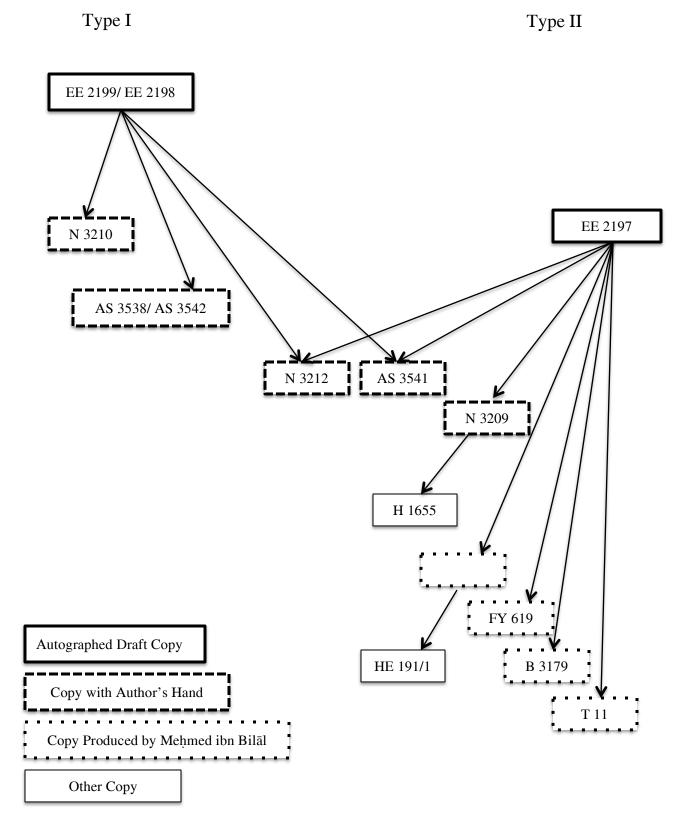
[30] Ebū'l-Fażl Meḥmed, *Terceme-yi Tārīḫ-i Vaṣṣāf*, Millet Kütüphanesi, Ali Emiri Tarih 619.
[31] Şükrü, "Das Hešt Behešt," 135.
[32] Bidlīsī, *Hasht bihisht*, Halet Efendi Eki, 191-1, 325a.

production of a single authoritative critical edition is a complex matter, and one likely to obscure

Idrīs' thinking at either an earlier or later stage of composition.

Appendix C: *Stemma Codicum* **for** *Hasht Bihisht*

Type I   Type II

EE 2199/ EE 2198

N 3210

AS 3538/ AS 3542

EE 2197

N 3212

AS 3541

N 3209

H 1655

FY 619

HE 191/1

B 3179

T 11

Autographed Draft Copy

Copy with Author's Hand

Copy Produced by Meḥmed ibn Bilāl

Other Copy

Appendix D: Works of Idrīs Bidlīsī

This appendix consists of four sections: I) works by Idrīs in Persian, II) works by Idrīs in Arabic, III) collections of Idrīs' prose and poetry, miscellanea of his works, and manuscripts of other authors' works that were partially or entirely copied by Idrīs; and IV) works misattributed to Idrīs. Within each section the works are ordered chronologically with undated works listed alphabetically at the end. *Hasht bihisht* is an exception; I have listed it first, as it is Idrīs' most important work and the one that has the greatest number of manuscript witnesses. Manuscripts of each work are grouped according to country of present location. In all cases, I have attempted to cite the current shelfmark of each manuscript and its present library. Much of my work has relied on nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century catalogs, the manuscripts of which they describe may have changed location in the intervening years. I have made efforts to identify the present library of manuscripts attributed to defunct libraries (e.g. Üniversitäts- und Forschungsbibliothek Erfürt/Gotha and not Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Gotha). In some instances, I have not located the current shelfmark or physical location of a manuscript described in a catalog. In these cases, I have cited simply the original catalog reference.

In compiling this list, for manuscripts in European and Indian libraries, I have relieved primarily upon Carl Brockelmann's *Geschichte des Arabischen Literatur*, C.A. Storey's *Persian Literature* and Yuri Bregel's expanded Russian translation of Storey entitled *Persidskaia literatura: Bio-bibliograficheskii obzor*. For manuscripts in Turkey, I have consulted the catalog of Topkapı Saray Müzesi Kütüphanesi compiled by Fehmi Edhem Karatay, the digital database of the Süleymaniye Library, and the online database of manuscripts in Turkey maintained by the Turkish Ministry of Culture (yazmalar.gov.tr). Koji Imazawa's "İdrîs-i Bitlisî'nin Heşt

Bihişt'inin iki tip nüshası üzerine bir inceleme" is a seminal pioneering study of the manuscripts

of Idrīs' history and a useful source for many of the details on manuscript copies of *Hasht bihisht*

in Turkey included in the list below. For manuscripts in Iran, I have primarily relied upon

Muṣṭafá Diryātī's *Fihristvāra-yi dastnivisht-hā-yi Īrān*. In addition to these basic sources, I have

sought to supplement or amend the following list through direct consultation of individual

catalogs describing particular collections and my own work with the manuscripts.

Manuscripts with Idrīs' hand are indicated with an asterisk (*), while manuscripts copied

by Meḥmed ibn Bilāl are signified with a cross (†).[1] Most of the manuscript copies of *Hasht*

bihisht are incomplete. Wherever possible, I have indicated what portions of the work are

included in each manuscript: introduction (M), the various books on each reign (Roman

numerals I-VIII), and conclusion (Kh).

I. Works in Persian

1. *Hasht bihisht* (911, 919 / 1506, 1513-1514)
   (1) MS. Esad Efendi 2198, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (VII-VIII).*
   (2) MS. Esad Efendi 2199, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (I-VI).*
   (3) MS. Aya Sofya 3538, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (VIII).
   (4) MS. Aya Sofya 3542, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (I-V).
   (5) MS. Esad Efendi 2197, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (M, I-VIII, Kh, copied in 919/1513).*
   (6) MS. Aya Sofya 3541, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (M, I-VI, copied before 926/1520).*
   (7) MS. no. 3209, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (M, I-VIII, Kh, copied 919/1513).*
   (8) MS. Hazine 1655, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul (M, I-VIII, Kh, copied 919/1513).
   (9) MS. 3212 Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (VII-VIII, Kh, copied before 926/1520).*

   (10) MS. III. Ahmed 2914 (M, I-VIII, Kh, likely copied in 10th/16th century)
   (11) MS. Revan 1514, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (M, I-VI).

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[1] On the significance of this copyist, see chapter six.

(12) MS. Revan 1515/1, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (I-VI, copied 963-964/1556-1557).

(13) MS. Revan 1515/2, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (most of VIII).

(14) MS. Revan 1516, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul (I-VII, copied 919/1513).

(15) MS. Aya Sofya 3539, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (I).

(16) MS. Aya Sofya 3540, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (I-III).

(17) MS. Aya Sofya 3543, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (IV-VI).

(18) MS. Halet Efendi İlavesi 191/1, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (M, I-III, VII-VIII, copied by Muḥammad bin Bilāl in 976/1568-1569).†

(19) MS. Halet Efendi İlavesi 191/2, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (VIII, Kh).

(20) MS. Lala İsmail Efendi 379, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (narrative portions of VII).

(21) MS. no. 3082 Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (M, I-IV).

(22) MS. no. 3210, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (II-V).

(23) MS. FY. 225, İstanbul Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (I-V).

(24) MS. FY. 226, İstanbul Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (VIII, Kh).

(25) MS. FY. 550, İstanbul Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (narrative portions of VII).

(26) MS. FY. 619, İstanbul Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (M, I-VIII, Kh, copied by Muḥammad bin Bilāl in 967-968/1560-1561, formerly Halis Efendi 3364).†

(27) MS. FY. 769, İstanbul Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (narrative portions of VII).

(28) MS. Beyazıt 5161, Beyazıt Devlet Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (narrative portions of VII).

(29) MS. 1946, Atıf Efendi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (M, I-VIII).

(30) MS. 1947, Atıf Efendi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (VI-VII).

(31) MS. 1948, Atıf Efendi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (narrative portions of VII).

(32) MS. Ali Emiri Farsça 800-807, Millet Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (M, I-VIII, Kh in eight volumes copied in 1114/1702).

(33) Ms. 1636, Kitābkhāna-yi Madrasa-yi ʿĀlī-yi Sipahsālār, Tehran (possibly tenth century, 222 folios, fihrist, 760-5.

(34) Ms. 11, Dānishgāh-i Adabiyāt-i Tabrīz, Tabriz (copied in 968/1560 by Muḥammad ibn Bilāl, see Nashrīya 4:323.†

(35) Ms. 11382, Kitābkhāna-yi ʿUmūmī-yi Iṣfahān, Isfahan (copied in 977/1569-1570).

(36) Ms. 907, Ṣarum al-dawla, Kitābkhāna-yi farhang-i Iṣfahān, (previously (Ṣārum al-dawla 22, copied in 977/1569-1570).

(37) Ms. 870, Kitābkhāna-yi Salṭanatī, Tehran (copied in 991/1583-1584).

(38) Ms. 272, Kitābkhāna-yi Mūzih va Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, Tehran (Sanaf 1:132).

(39) Ms. 9543, Kitābkhāna-yi Mūzih va Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, Tehran (VII, VIII) (fihrist, 212-30).

(40) Ms. 119, Lughatnāma-yi Dihkhudā, Tehran (copied in 1001/1592-1593) (Nashrīya, 50-3).

(41) Ms. without number, Kitābkhāna-yi Millī-yi Īrān, Tehran (VII, VIII).

(42) Ms. 5619, Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihrān, Tehran (copied in 1072/1661-1662) (325 folios, fihrist: 68-16).

(43) Ms. 3592, Kitābkhāna-yi Mūzih va Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, Tehran (VII, copied in 1075/1664-1665) (fihrist, 1561-10).

(44) Ms. Sarvad 133, Kitābkhāna-yi Mūzih va Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, Tehran, (V-VI, copied in 1079/1668-1669).

(45) Ms. 276, Kitābkhāna-yi Mūzih va Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, Tehran, (copied between 1080-1088/1669-70 – 1677-1678).

(46) Ms. 8762, Kitābkhāna-yi Mūzih va Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, Tehran (copied in 1084/1673-1674) (fihrist 247-28).

(47) Ms. 4164, Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī-yi Āstān-i Quds-i Rażavī, Mashhad (copied in 1084/1673-1674) (al-Qabāʾī fihrist: 611).

(48) Ms. 168, Kitābkhāna-yi Dānishgāh-i Shahīd-i Madanī (formerly Dānishgāh-i Tarbīyat-i Muʿallim-i Tabrīz), Tabriz (I-VII, copied in 1084/1673-1674).

(49) Ms. 4614, Kitābkhāna-yi ʿUmūmī-yi Āyat Allāh al-ʿUẓmá-yi Marʿashī-yi Najafī, Qom (copied in 1088/1677-1678) (fihrist 178-12).

(50) Ms. 114, Kitābkhāna-yi Dānishgāh-i Iṣfahān, Isfahan (VII, copied in 1089/1678-1679) (fihrist 87-1).

(51) Ms. 483, Kitābkhāna-yi Dānishgāh-i Iṣfahān, Isfahan (copied in 1089/1678-1679).

(52) Ms. 84, Kitābkhāna-yi Mīrzā Muḥammad Kāẓimaynī, Yazd (VII, copied in 1090/1679-1680).

(53) Ms. 612, Kitābkhāna-yi Mūzih va Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, Tehran, (copied in 1092/1681-1682).

(54) Ms. 3285, Kitābkhāna-yi Millī-yi Tabrīz, Tabriz (VI-VII, copied in 1092/1681-1682).

(55) Ms. 4806, Kitābkhāna-yi Malik, Tehran (copied in 1096/1684-1685) (fihrist 849-4).

(56) Ms. 4108, Kitābkhāna-yi Malik, Tehran (copied in 1098/1686-1687) (fihrist 849-4).

(57) Ms. 4292, Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī-yi Āstān-i Quds-i Rażavī, Mashhad (V, copied end of twelfth/eighteenth century).

(58) Ms. 5309, Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihrān, Tehran (twelfth/eighteenth century).

(59) Ms. 3455/266, Kitābkhāna-yi Mūzih va Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, Tehran (small selection).

(60) Ms. 9557, Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī-yi Āstān-i Quds-i Rażavī, Mashhad, (copied in 1168/1754-1755).

(61) Ms. 2505/1, Kitābkhāna-yi Millī-yi Īrān, Tehran (portions of VII, VIII, copied in 1178/1764-1765).

(62) Ms. 5321, Kitābkhāna-yi ʿUmūmī-yi Āyat Allāh al-ʿUẓmá-yi Marʿashī-yi Najafī, Qom.

(63) Ms. 1219, Kitābkhāna-yi Markaz-i Iḥyāʾ-i Mīras-i Islām (VII).

(64) Ms. 1219, Kitābkhāna-yi Mudārik-i Farhangī, Tehran (parts of VIII)

(65) Ms. F-1427, Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihrān, Tehran.

(66) Ms. 422, Majmūʿa-yi Duktūr Aṣghar-i Mahdavī, (parts of VII).

(67) Ms. 869, Kitābkhāna-yi Salṭanatī, Tehran.

(68) Ms. 9558, Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī-yi Āstān-i Quds-i Rażavī, Mashhad.

(69) Ms. 6964, Kitābkhāna-yi Millī-yi Īrān, Tehran.

(70) MS. Suppl. Persan 1558 (Blochet no. 522), Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (I-VIII).

(71) MS. Persan 59 (Blochet no. 523), Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (III-IV, copied 952/1545).

(72) MS. Persan 76 (Blochet no. 524), Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (VII-VIII, copied in the tenth/sixteenth century).

(73) MS. Persan 77 (Blochet no. 525), Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (VIII, copied 1106/1695).

(74) MS. Persan 526 Blochet no. 526), Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (VIII, copied in first half of tenth/sixteenth century).

(75) MS. Ouseley 358, Bodleian Library, Oxford (M, I-VIII, copied in 1110/1698)

(76) Mss. Add. 7646, 7647, British Library, London (M, I-VIII, Kh, copied in 988/1580).

(77) Ms. Add. 23,579, British Library, London (III-V, copied in 1069/1659).

(78) Ms. IO no. 91, British Library, London (VII).

(79) Ms. Browne Coll. H 9 (11), Cambridge University Library, Cambridge (VII, copied 1099/1687)

(80) Ms. Or. 1235, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge (VI, copied in 1099/1687).

(81) Ms. Codrington/Reade no. 156 box 70, Royal Asiatic Society, London (VI, part of VII).

(82) Mss. Lindsey 395-6, John Rylands Library, Manchester University, Manchester (copied in 1063/1653).

(83) Ms. 34-M Taʾrīkh Fārisī, Dār al-Kutub, Cairo (based upon incipit, includes M; based upon size (516 folios, 27 lines per page, 30 x 20 cm) likely includes I-VIII and possibly Kh, copied in 1092/1681-1682).

(84) Ms. 35-M Taʾrīkh Fārisī, Dār al-Kutub, Cairo (III, IV, copied in 1071/1660-1661)

(85) Ms. 532-534, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Bankipur, India (M, I-VIII, Kh).

(86) Ms. D. 346, The Asiatic Society, Kolkata, India (VII, VIII, copied in 963-964/1556-1557 by Muḥammad Shāh bin Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn bin Muḥammad Shāh Fanārī from the draft of the author, Wladimir Ivanow, *Concise Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, no. 211).

(87) Ms. 567, aac, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg (this reference was taken from *Mélanges Asiatiques tirés du bulletin de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St. Pétersbourg*, vol. 6 (1869-1873), p. 124).

(88) Ms. P.E.S. 97, National Library of Russia (formerly Leningrad Public Library), St. Petersburg.

(89) Ms. P.E.S. 96, National Library of Russia (formerly Leningrad Public Library), St. Petersburg.

(90) Ms. copied in 1108/1696 recorded by B. Dorn in *Die Sammlung von morgenländischen Handschriften, welche die Kaiserliche Öffentliche Bibliothek zu St. Petersburg im Jahre 1864 von Hrn. Chanykov erworben hat*, St. Petersburg, 1865.

(91) Ms. recorded in C. Salemann and V. Rosen *Indices alphabetici codicum manu scriptorum Persicorum Turcicorum Arabicorum qui in Bibliotheca imperialis literatum universitatis Petropolitanae adservantur confecerunt* (St. Petersburg, 1888), p. 50 no. 951.

(92) Ms. O. Cels. 12 (Torenberg 274) Uppsala University Library, Uppsala, Sweden (M, I-VIII, Kh).

(93) Ms. or. Fol. No. 3179, Staatsbibliothek, Berlin (copied by Muḥammad bin Bilāl in 968/1560-1561).†

(94) Ms. Peterman I, 391 (Pertsch Persian catalog no. 440), Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, (VI-VIII).

2. *Rabīᶜ al-abrār* (885/1480)

(1) Ms. Aya Sofya 3986, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (ff. 37a-40b).
(2) Ms. Esad Efendi 1888/6, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (copied in 952/1546).†

(3) Ms. 7574/2, Kitābkhāna-yi ᶜUmūmī-yi Āyat Allāh al-ᶜUẓmá-yi Marᶜashī-yi Najafī, Qom.
(4) Ms. 3045/10, Kitābkhāna-yi Millī-yi Īran-i Tabrīz, Tabriz.
(5) Ms. without shelf mark, S̱iqat al-Islām, Tabriz.

3. *Risāla fī al-nafs* (1480s)
(1) Ms. Arabic 385, John Rylands Library, The University of Manchester, Manchester.

4. *Risālat-i khazanīya*
(1) Ms. Esad Efendi 1888/7, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (copied in 952/1546).†

5. *Munāẓara-yi rūza va ᶜīd* (909/1503)

(1) Ms. Aya Sofya 3203, Süleyaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (copied in 909/1503).*
(2) Ms. Esad Efenedi 1888/5, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (copied in 952/1546).†

(3) Ms. 7574/3, Kitābkhāna-yi ᶜUmūmī-yi Āyat Allāh al-ᶜUẓmá-yi Marᶜashī-yi Najafī, Qom.
(4) Ms. without shelf mark, S̱iqat al-Islām, Tabriz.

6. *Sharḥ-i qaṣīda-yi khamrīya* (909/1503)
(1) Ms. Aya Sofya 4092, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
(2) Ms. Ali Emiri Farsi 134, Millet Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.

7. *Mirʾāt al-jamāl* (909/1503)
(1) Ms. Şehid Ali Paşa 2149, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.

(2)   Ms. Aya Sofya, 4241, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
(3)   Ms. Esad Efendi 1888/1, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (copied in 952/1546).†

(4)   Ms. 28 S̱iqat al-Islām, Tabriz.
(5)   Ms. 2968, Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihrān, Tehran (copied in 1290).
(6)   Ms. 2781, Kitābkhāna-yi Madrasa-yi ᶜĀlī-yi Sipahsālar, Tehran.
(7)   Ms. without shelfmark, S̱iqat al-Islām, Tabriz.

8. *Mirʾāt al-ushshāq* (first decade of sixteenth century)
(1)   Ms. Esad Efendi 1888/4, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (copied in 953/1546).†

9. *Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī* (first decade of sixteenth century)[2]
(1)   Ms. Esad Efendi 1888/2, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (copied in 952/1545).†
(2)   Ms. 2087, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, Istanbul.

10. *Sharḥ-i Mas̱navī-yi Maᶜnavī*
(1)   Ms. F-6128, Kitābkhāna-yi Markazī-yi Dānishgāh-i Tihrān, Tehran.

11. *Chihil hadīs̱*
(1) Ms. Aya Sofya 469/1, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
(2) Ms. Fatih 791/1, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
(3) Ms. Lala İsmail 30, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.

12. *Dīvān-i Qāż̤ī ᶜĪsá va Najm al-Dīn Masᶜūd*[3]
(1) Ms. Muallım Cevdet O. 121, Atatürk Kitaplığı, Istanbul (918/1512).
(2) Ms. Cod. Orient 39, Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm

13. *Ḥaqq al-mubīn fī sharḥ ḥaqq al-yaqīn* (921/1515)
(1)   Ms. Aya Sofya 2338, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (copied in 921/1515).*
(2)   Ms. Şehid Ali Paşa 1402, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
(3)   Ms. Pertev Paşa 606/17, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
(4)   Ms. Lala İsmail 135/11, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (copied in 1116/1704-1705).

14. *Khavāṣṣ al-ḥayavān* (923/1517)
(1)   Ms. Revan 1665, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
(2)   Ms. Aya Sofya 2912, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul

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[2] Idrīs Bidlīsī, *Qānūn-i shāhanshāhī*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh. Masʿūdī Ārānī, Chāp-i 1. (Tehran: Markaz-i Pazhūhishī-yi Mīrās̱-i Maktūb, 1387).

[3] Idrīs Bidlīsī, Ṣafī al-Dīn ʿĪsá Sāvajī, and Najm al-Dīn Masʿūd Sāvajī, *Dīvān-i du sarāyandah az qarn-i nuhum: Qāż̤ī ʿĪsá Sāvajī va Shaykh Najm al-Dīn Masʿūd*, ed. Amīnah. Maḥallātī, Chāp-i 1. (Tihrān: Kitābkhānah, Mūzih va Markaz-i Asnād-i Majlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī, 2012).

15. *Salīmshāhnāma* (completed posthumously, circa 974/1567)[4]
    (1)   Ms. Emanet Hazinesi 1406, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
    (2)   Ms. Emanet Hazinesi 1423, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
    (3)   Ms. Revan 1540, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
    (4)   Ms. Esad Efendi 2447, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
    (5)   Ms. Lala İsmail 348, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.

    (6)   Ms. Persan 235, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

    (7)   Ms. Add. 24,960, British Library, London.
    (8)   Ms. Lindsey no. 47, John Rylands Library, Manchester University, Manchester.

    (9)   Ms. pt. 162/Seetzen nr. 13 (Pertsch Gotha Persian catalog no. 32), Üniversitats- und Forschungsbibliothek Erfürt/Gotha, Gotha, Germany.

16. *Munāẓara-yi ᶜishq bā ᶜaql*
    (1)   Ms. Beyazıt 5863, Beyazıt Devlet Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.

II. Works in Arabic

17. *Ḥāshiya ᶜalá anwār al-tanzīl* (909/1503)
    (1) Ms. Aya Sofya 303-M, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
    (2) Ms. Molla Murad 108, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.

18. *Asrār al-ṣiyām* (917/1511)
    (1) Ms. Aya Sofya 1994, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.

19. *Risālat al-ibāʾ ᶜan mawāqiᶜ al-wabāʾ* (919/1513)

    (1)   Ms. Şehit Ali Paşa 2032, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (copied in 919/1513).*
    (2)   Ms. Şehit Ali Paşa 2033/2, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (copied in 933/1526-1527).
    (3)   Ms. Aşir Efendi 275/3, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
    (4)   Ms. Bağdatlı Vehbi 1379, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
    (5)   Ms. Esad Efendi 1682/18, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
    (6)   Ms. Süleymaniye 708/92, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
    (7)   Ms. no. 1272/11, Hacı Selim Ağa Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
    (8)   Ms. Raşid Efendi Eki 684, Kayseri Raşit Efendi Eski Eseler Kütüphanesi, Kayseri.
    (9)   Ms. 1553/2 Burdur İl Kütüphanesi, Konya Bölge Yazma Eserler Kütüphanesi, Konya.

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[4] Published in Turkish translation: İdrîs Bitlîsî, *İdrîs-i Bidlîsî Selim Şah-nâme*, trans. Hicabi Kırlangıç (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2001).

(10) Ms. Spr. 727 (Pertsch Arabic catalog no. 6371), Staatsbibliothek Berlin, Berlin.

(11) Ms.14586, Maktabat al-Asad al-waṭanīya, Damascus (from Awqāf Ḥalab, copied in 1132/1718-1719).

III. Prose Collections, Compendia, and Manuscripts Copied by Idrīs

1. *Inshāʾ*
   (1) Ms. Aya Sofya 3986, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.*
   (2) Ms. FY 906, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.
   (3) Ms. Esad Efendi 1888 (ff.), Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.†

2. Miscellanea compiled by Idrīs
   (1) Ms. Aya Sofya 3986, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.*
   (2) Ms. Ragıp Paşa 919, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul.*

3. Miscellanea of Idrīs' works
   (1) Ms. Esad Efendi 1888, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (compendium of Idrīs' works posthumously compiled, copied between Ramaḍān 952/November 1545 and Muḥarram 953/March 1546).†

4. *Kanz al-ḥafī fī maqāmāt al-ṣūfī* (Ḥusām al-Dīn ʿAlī Bidlīsī)
   (1) Ms. 201/3 Nevşehri Ürgüp İl Halk Kütüphanesi Koleksiyonu, Milli Kütüphane, Ankara (copied by Idrīs in 880/1476).*

IV. Works Misattributed to Idrīs

1. *Risāla fī al-khilāfa wa ādāb al-salāṭīn*

   (1) Ms. FY 1228, İstanbul Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, Istanbul

   This work, completed in 918/1512, has also been attributed to Idrīs in several modern scholarly works. The reason for the attribution stems from a note included in the front matter of the manuscript by Ali Emiri, the late Ottoman scholar, manuscript collector, and bibliographer. Ali Emiri states that "This work is the composition of Mawlā Idris al-Bitlīsī and it is in his hand – attested by ʿAlī Emīrī Beğ (*hadhā al-athar taʾlif al-Mawlá Idrīs al-Bitlīsī wa bi-khaṭṭihi bi-shahādat ʿAlī Amīrī Begi*)." Despite Ali Emiri's assertion, this work is not in Idrīs' hand. We have a number of manuscripts

signed by Idrīs, some of them from the same period as *Risāla fī al-khilāfa*. The handwriting in *Risāla fī al-khilāfa* differs markedly from all of the verifiable autographs of Idrīs' works.

Moreover, several other aspects of *Risāla fī al-khilāfa* suggest that the work is not Idrīs'. In the vast majority of works that Idrīs wrote between 909/1503 and his death in 926/1520, he positively identifies himself as the author in the preface and explains the circumstances that motivated him to write. In contrast, *Risāla fī al-khilāfa* includes no internal references to Idrīs Bidlīsī at all. The author of this epistle does not mention his own name or the circumstances that informed his decision to write the work.

Lastly, *Risāla fī al-khilāfa* also differs markedly from Idrīs' other works in terms of style and content. The work uses simple sentences in Persian that are a distinct departure from the complex constructions of Idrīs' luxuriant and highly stylized chancery style of writing. More importantly, the content of the work bears no relationship with Idrīs' other discussion of *khilāfa*. As discussed in chapter nine, Idrīs made *khilāafat-i raḥmānī* his signature term for discussions of the caliphate in several literary works and chancery documents. This term or any conceptually analogous discussion is completely lacking in *Risāla fī al-khilāfa* and offers further indication that this work is not the product of Idrīs. For these reasons, it is unlikely that Idrīs is the author of this work.

2. *Lavāmiḥ al-Fuṣūlayn*

(1) Ms. Feyzullah 1071, Millet Kütüphanesi, Istanbul

Several recent Turkish dissertations have attributed this work to Idrīs Bidlīsī. More recently, Vural Genç has shown convincingly that this work cannot be Idrīs'.[5] The confusion stems from a passage in the ultimate section (section 55) of this Arabic work, in which the author mentions Idrīs Bidlīsī's *Ibāʾ ʿan mawāqiʿ al-wabāʾ* and cites its date through a direct quotation of Idrīs' colophon in one of the manuscript copies. Just below this passage, the colophon of *Lavāmiḥ* clarifies that the author of the work is Meḥmed bin ʿAlī el-Edrinī, an instructor of Sultan Bayezid's *madrasa* in Edirne, and that the work was completed in 1051/1641-1642.

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[5] Vural Genç, "'Acem'den Rum'a,'" 8.

Appendix E: Samples of Idrīs' Handwriting

A) From Achival Documents:

Figure 3: TSMA E. 5675 (letter to Bāyezīd ca. 918/1512)

Figure 4: TSMA E. 1019 (921/1515)

Figure 5: TSMA E. 8333/2 (921/1515)

B) From Works other than **Hasht bihisht***:*
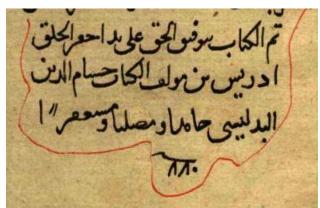
Figure 6: Nevşehir Ürgüp 201/3, 82a (*al-Kanz al-ḥafī fī maqāmāt al-ṣūfī*, 880/1475-6)
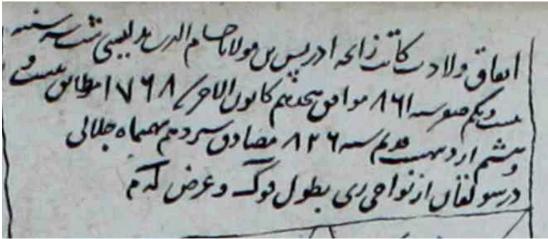
Figure 7: Ragıp Paşa 919, 221a (*Majmūʿa*, ca. 880/1475-6)

Figure 8: Ayasofya 3986, 1a (*Majmūʿa*, 906/1500)
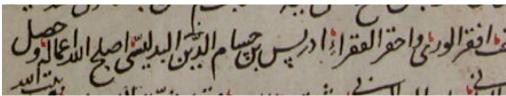
Figure 9: Şehid Ali Paşa 2032, 1b (*al-Ibāʾ ʿan mawāqiʿ al-wabāʾ*, 919/1513)

Figure 10: Şehid Ali Paşa 2032 (colophon *al-Ibāʾ ʿan mawāqiʿ al-wabāʾ*, 919/1513)

Figure 11: Ayasofya 2338, 3a (*Ḥaqq al-yaqīn*, 921/1515)

ختم الله لنا بالحسنى كما ختمنا الكتاب بعون الله الهادي إلى الخير في العقبى والأولى

وأنا أفقر الورى وأحقر الفقراء إدريس ابن حسام الدين علي البدليسي وفقه الله تعالى لما يحبه ويرضى كتب ذلك بيده اليمنى ختمنا في مفتتح العشر الأولى من شهر جمادى الأخرى من السنة الأولى في العشر الثالث بالمأية بعد الألف في العشر الثالث بالمأية

الأحدية النبوية والعاقبة للتقوى

Figure 12: Ayasofya 2338 (colophon *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn*, 921/1515)

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C) From manuscripts of **Hasht bihisht***:*

Figure 13: Esad Efendi 2198, 2b (ca. 911/1506)

Figure 14: Esad Efendi 2199, 2a (ca. 911/1506)

Figure 15: Esad Efendi 2197, 17a (ca. 919/1513)

Figure 16: Nuruosmaniye 3209, 636a (colophon dated 919/1513)

Figure 17: Ayasofya 3538, 189a (with Idrīs' correction in the margin)

Figure 18: Ayasofya 3542, 349a (with Idrīs' correction in the margin)

Figure 19: Nuruosmaniye 3210, 6a (with Idrīs' correction in the margin)

Figure 20: Nuruosmaniye 3212, 23a (Idrīs' handwriting begins with the section heading)

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Evrak (E.): 1019, 5429, 5675, 5858, 6401, 6467, 6673, 7061, 8333 (1-3), 8334, 11602

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