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ENCOUNTER AFTER THE CONQUEST: SCHOLARLY GATHERINGS IN 16TH-CENTURY OTTOMAN DAMASCUS

Abstract

This article examines the extensive intellectual and social exchange that resulted from the Ottoman imperial incorporation of Arab lands in the 16th century. In the years immediately after the 1516–17 conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate that brought Egypt, Greater Syria, and the Hijaz under Ottoman rule, Turkish-speaking Ottomans from the central lands (Rumis) found that their political power was not matched by religious and cultural prestige. As the case of Damascus shows, scholarly gatherings called *majālis* (sing. *majlis*) were key spaces where this initial asymmetry was both acutely felt and gradually overcome. As arenas for discussion among scholars on the move, literary salons facilitated the circulation of books and ideas and the establishment of a shared intellectual tradition. As occasions where stories were told and history was made, they supported the formation of a common past. In informal gatherings and in the biographical dictionaries that described them, Rumis and Arabs came together to forge an empire-wide learned culture as binding as any political or administrative ingredient of the Ottoman imperial glue.

The Ottomans were no strangers to conquest when they first entered the gates of Damascus in 1516. Just two years prior, they had defeated the Safavid army at Chaldiran and temporarily occupied Tabriz; six decades earlier, they had taken their bite of the “Red Apple” and put an end to the Byzantine Empire; and for the century and a half before the conquest of Constantinople, they had been riding fur-clad and victorious into cities and towns across Anatolia and the Balkans. But the conquest of the Mamluk Empire in 1516–17 was different. This was no piecemeal occupation of a shrubby frontier, no subjection of an upstart Anatolian beylicate, no capture of a former Christian capital. This was an almost instantaneous incorporation of an entire empire, one that stretched from Cairo across the ancient and holy cities of Damascus, Aleppo, Mecca, and Medina, one that claimed inheritance to the caliphate and to the centuries-old scholarly and religious traditions of Islam, and one whose inhabitants had often looked down on the Ottomans from their perch up in the lap of Cairo, “the mother of the earth.”¹

Viewed from the perspective of the Mamluk Empire (1250–1517), the Ottomans were newcomers to the Islamic high culture. At least until the conquest of Constantinople, the lands of Rum, as the former territories of the Eastern Roman Empire continued to be called, were seen by many Muslims elsewhere as marginal to the

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development of the religion and its learned traditions.² Indeed, for the predominantly Turkish-speaking “Rumis” who inhabited these territories, Islam was only one of several sources of cultural inspiration, political legitimacy, and social cohesion.³ Well into the 15th century, Ottomans and the rulers of other Anatolian principalities were still just setting up an Islamic-inspired institutional framework and high cultural canon, often upon Byzantine foundations.⁴ This article examines elite social gatherings in the half-century after the Ottoman conquest of Arab lands to document the persistence of perceived Arab scholarly preeminence over Rumis, and the mechanisms by which this asymmetry was eventually overcome.

The expansion of 1516–17 precipitated one of the greatest instances of knowledge transmission and cultural encounter in the history of the Ottoman Empire.⁵ Yet, whereas the reorganization of provincial bureaucracies was orchestrated from the imperial center, in nonstate scholarly gatherings called *majālis* (sing. *majlis*) ideas often traveled against the grain of political domination. In the first decades after the Ottoman conquest, the prestige of Arabic and of late Mamluk scholarship meant that Rumis serving in the new provinces often struggled to meet the intellectual standards of the local Arab scholars over whom they presided. By the second half of the 16th century, this had begun to change. Elite social gatherings were key arenas where the cultural scales were recalibrated, as the interactions between Kinalızade ‘Ali, the Rumi chief judge of Damascus from 1562 to 1566, and Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi, the esteemed Shaf‘i mufti of the same city, illustrate. By offering open-ended but regulated spaces of intellectual encounter, literary salons encouraged the development of pan-Ottoman learned debates and a shared scholarly canon. As such, they played a key role in the integration of new territories.

In focusing on the intellectual dynamics of imperial incorporation, this article builds upon a growing interest among Ottomanists in social and cultural aspects of empire building.⁶ Increasingly, studies of the Arab provinces have shown how Ottoman administrative, legal, and military institutions relied on the “soft” underbelly of architecture, histories, and households.⁷ Social gatherings suggest that even in the 16th century, when the Ottoman bureaucracy was at its finest, the success of the imperial project depended on personal networks and on a shared elite culture. By examining the production and circulation of Ottoman books, this article also contributes to the budding field of Ottoman intellectual history, joining a chorus of voices challenging the longstanding assumption that Islamic thought stagnated in the postclassical period.⁸ Finally, the study connects to a broad historiographical conversation on cultural exchange, which, rich as it is, has rarely viewed the Ottoman conquest of Arab lands as an encounter of significance because it did not traverse the lines of religion.⁹ Scholars have sometimes contrasted the European Age of Exploration with an inward-looking Ottoman Empire uninterested in other geographies. The tensions of the Rumi-Arab encounter show that 16th-century inhabitants of the Eastern Mediterranean were in the midst of their own engagement with new polities, one that left a deep imprint on the region.

CULTURAL ASYMMETRIES

Ottoman officials were subject to considerable scrutiny when they first arrived in Arab-dominated cities such as Damascus in the 16th century. Only rarely did the educated

provincial elite call into question the political legitimacy of Ottoman appointees; the intellectual credentials of these newcomers, however, were another matter. Although the Rumi chief judges (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*) of major urban centers were usually drawn from the best-educated men in the empire, the respect they enjoyed in the lands of Rum was not always matched in the Arab provinces. In Arab-dominated cities such as Damascus, scholarly gatherings put a premium on eloquent Arabic and on the Arab-Islamic scholarly tradition, domains where Turkish-speaking Rumis were often at a disadvantage.

Long before the rise of coffeehouses in the mid-16th century—and long after—literary salons often called *majālis* constituted the main spaces for social and intellectual exchange across much of the Islamic world.¹⁰ Derived from the Arabic root *j-l-s*, “to sit,” and widely used in both Arabic and Ottoman Turkish (*meclis*, *mecālis*), *majlis* literally means “sitting” or “place where one sits.” As such, from Andalusia to Persia, it was a broad term that could refer (with or without a modifier) both to various kinds of gatherings (meetings, receptions, assemblies) and to the halls where such gatherings occurred.¹¹

Heirs to this medieval tradition, elite Muslim men across the Eastern Mediterranean held and attended social gatherings in the 15th and 16th centuries.¹² The character of these occasions varied considerably depending on their location and aim. The range of permissible behaviors, language of exchange, and intellectual focus differed in Tahtakale and in the Topkapı Palace; in Sofia and in Alexandria; in the *majlis al-‘ilm* (scholarly gathering) and *meclis-i üns* (friendly, intimate gathering) (see Figure 1). In general, though, *majālis* can be thought of as by-invitation-only gatherings attended by well-to-do Muslim men for the purpose of social and intellectual exchange.¹³ The importance of *majālis* to the Ottoman social and cultural world is indicated by their ubiquity in the written record: they feature prominently in poems, travel narratives, etiquette manuals, and as we will see, biographical dictionaries in both Arabic and Turkish.¹⁴

While usually formed around a core group of people living in the same city, literary salons were an integral part of elite travel.¹⁵ One of the first things that Ottoman learned men did when they arrived in a new city was join such gatherings. As a result, *majālis* functioned as key venues in which men from different parts of the empire encountered one another. This was never more true than in the wake of the Ottoman incorporation of Arab lands in 1516–17.

When Rumi and Arab scholars met in gatherings in the decades following the conquest, theirs was not a first encounter. Since the late Middle Ages, Anatolia was increasingly embedded in a network of scholarship and patronage that stretched from Khorasan to Cairo.¹⁶ Given the inchoate nature of the Ottoman madrasa system of higher education in the 14th and 15th centuries, many local scholars pursued their advanced studies in Persian and Arab lands.¹⁷ In cities such as Cairo and Damascus, Rumi students would sit next to Arab peers in *majālis dars*, as lessons were often called.¹⁸ Other Rumis profited from the linguistic affinity between Ottomans and the ruling Mamluk elite, finding in the latter willing patrons of Turkish-language work.¹⁹ These men were present in the *majālis* of the imperial court in Cairo, advising, entertaining, or translating for the Mamluk sultan and his associates.²⁰ Finally, over the course of their travels across Arab lands, Rumis joined the domestically held *majālis* of leading local scholars.²¹

Yet Arab-Rumi encounters were not evenly distributed across the region. Prior to the conquest, Arabs rarely attended gatherings in Ottoman lands. Although by the 15th



FIGURE 1. (Left) Literary Gathering at the Palace, Sultan Selim I, *Divan*, 1515–20 (detail). Image courtesy of Istanbul University Library, F. 1330, fol. 28a. (Right) The Ruler Visits an Immoral Judge, Sa'di, *Gulistan*, 1565. Image courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art and Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Purchase, F1949.2 folio 110r. The two images illustrate the varying character of 16th-century social gatherings. The first depicts the young sultan reading a book with two companions. The second, which accompanies a fictional story of a judge fallen in love with a boy, features elements common on less restrained occasions, including wine and courtship.

century Ottoman elites had become increasingly powerful patrons of arts and letters, Ottoman scholarship was still fledgling compared to the venerable intellectual tradition of Mamluk Cairo and Damascus.²² Ottoman madrasas may have been growing in number and in productivity, but the scholars that defined the cutting edge of Islamic learning mostly operated elsewhere.²³ As a result, only few Arab scholars traveled to Rum in the late Mamluk period.²⁴

After the Ottoman conquest, the nature, direction, and volume of regional travel changed. For the first time, learned Arabs encountered significant numbers of Ottomans who were patrons and power holders.²⁵ With the incorporation of Arab lands into the Ottoman legal and administrative system, two elite groups in particular began to travel back and forth between the new provinces and the imperial center: Arab scholars and Rumi chief judges.²⁶ Whereas the former had once gone to Cairo for patronage and protection, they now attended the *majālis* of high-ranking Rumis in Istanbul, demonstrating their worthiness for office through their knowledge and etiquette.²⁷ Salons also played a

key role for Rumis serving as chief judges in the Arab provinces. On the one hand, gatherings allowed them to meet local elites upon whom the success of their tenures relied. On the other hand, they produced high-pressure situations in which judges themselves were judged, both on their intellectual prowess and on their ability to engage in polite conversation.

When Kinalızade ʿAli arrived in Damascus as chief judge in 1562, only two men did not rush to meet him: ʿAlaʿ al-Din b. ʿImad al-Din al-Shafiʿi, who was dying, and Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi, who “abstained from frequent visitations of qadis and others.”²⁸ Instead, Kinalızade himself had to seek out the two men—first al-Ghazzi, and only thereafter the sick man, who died six days after this visit.²⁹ The fact that both Sharaf al-Din ibn Ayyub al-Ansari (d. 1592), al-Ghazzi’s student, and Najm al-Din al-Ghazzi (d. 1651), his son, mentioned this fact in their biographies of Kinalızade is suggestive of how significant were the politics of visiting. Paying respect to incoming qadis upon their arrival in the city was the custom of the Damascene elite, and the tally of who did and did not do so offered a measure of a qadi’s stature.³⁰ From the perspective of local scholars and deputy judges (*nuwwāb*, sing. *nāʿib*), such receptions could determine professional careers. As the head of the provincial justice system, the chief judge could appoint and remove his own deputies. Moreover, because many chief judges of Damascus later went on to serve as military judge (*kāzī ʿasker*) of Anatolia, a role with oversight of madrasa appointments in Anatolia and the Arab provinces, establishing good relations with them was a professional investment for scholars as well. Al-Ghazzi’s decision to abstain from visiting Kinalızade was an unequivocal sign of his independence, and bordered on an affront.³¹

By the time of Kinalızade’s arrival, Badr al-Din Muhammad b. Radi al-Din Muhammad al-Ghazzi al-ʿAmiri al-Dimashqi (d. 1577) was in no need of favors from the Rumi elite. Al-Ghazzi was born in 1499 into a distinguished Damascene family of scholars; at the age of twelve he was studying in Cairo with the star scholars of the waning Mamluk Empire (he received *ijāzas* from Zakariyya al-Ansari [d. 1520] and, probably through al-Ghazzi’s father, Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti [d. 1505]).³² At fifteen he was issuing his own judicial opinions (*fatāwā*). By seventeen, back in Damascus, he attracted his first students.³³ At age thirty, just a few years after the Ottoman conquest, al-Ghazzi traveled to Istanbul to advance his career.³⁴ Advance it he did, and by the time of Kinalızade’s arrival in Damascus, contemporaries considered al-Ghazzi to be the al-Suyuti or Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalani (d. 1449) (two leading scholars of the late Mamluk period) of his age and “the showpiece of religious scholars in Damascus, indeed, in the entire world.”³⁵ Eventually, though, the scholarly spotlight became too harsh. “Generation after generation benefitted from him and traveled to him from faraway places,” his son explained, “necessitating his withdrawal from people in the middle of his life.”³⁶ Al-Ghazzi’s self-imposed seclusion explained his neglect of arriving qadis such as Kinalızade ʿAli, yet his stature caused them to visit him instead. Indeed, as chief Shafiʿi mufti, imam of the Umayyad mosque, and an instructor at several major madrasas, al-Ghazzi could be considered the foremost intellectual figure of his generation in Damascus.

Nevertheless, al-Ghazzi had something of an equal in Kinalızade ʿAli, who was no small fish in the Ottoman pond. Rather, when Kinalızade arrived in the city to take up the position of chief judge, he already had a distinguished teaching career behind him. Sent from his hometown of Isparta to Istanbul as a young boy, Kinalızade, like all

of his fellow Rumi ‘ulama’, was educated from a young age in Arabic and the Islamic sciences.³⁷ After completing his studies, he made the rounds of Rum, teaching in Edirne, Bursa, and Kütahya before returning to Istanbul to become an instructor first at one of Mehmed II’s eight madrasas (*ṣāhn-i semān*), and finally, in 1559, at one of the madrasas of the just-finished Süleymaniye mosque—two of the most prestigious institutions of higher learning in the empire.³⁸ In all of these places, Kinalızade consistently found himself in the company of the most educated and powerful men of his time.³⁹ In Istanbul he had frequently hosted literary *mecālis*, and he could recite poetry and extemporize effortlessly in Arabic as well as in Persian and Turkish.⁴⁰

In spite of his towering political and intellectual standing, Kinalızade ‘Ali had to prove himself when he first met with Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi and other local scholars. For when Kinalızade sat in a room full of Damascenes, he did so as a representative of the Ottoman state and as a Rumi, and neither inspired immediate confidence. Many scholars had a healthy mistrust of state functionaries. Al-Ghazzi’s decision to retreat from the world of social gatherings was not just that of a tired, overworked scholar, but also that of a man wary of politics and power. Spending too much time with representatives of the state, al-Ghazzi’s student and biographer Hasan al-Burini (d. 1615) explained, could compromise one’s independence and integrity.⁴¹ Though qadis were devoted to learning in a way that governors usually were not, their intellectual merits could not be taken for granted, as Sharaf al-Din ibn Ayyub intimated in his biographical compilation of the chief qadis of Damascus. Although Ibn Ayyub usually expressed his skepticism politely through silence, in extreme cases he did not mince his words: Ahmed Çelebi, appointed in 1550, “was called Ahmad with [the letter] *qāf* because of the harshness of his disposition, his stupidity, and his abuse of his adversaries. So he was called Ahmad with a *qāf*, that is, *aḥmaq* [stupid].”⁴²

Supplementing this general suspicion of state functionaries was Arab scholars’ persistent feeling of their own preeminence in matters of learning. Though there was an ever-growing Ottoman tradition of scholarship and belles-lettres, the portions of it in Turkish and in Persian remained inaccessible or uninteresting to most Arabs in the first decades after the conquest.⁴³ What mattered in the Arab lands was mastery of the Arabic-language Islamic sciences, a requisite for ‘ulama’ regardless of linguistic or ethnic background. This arena had been dominated in the century or two leading up to the conquest by scholars of the Mamluk realms, and it showed in the first decades that followed it.

While Rumi scholars were often familiar with the work of Arabs at the beginning of the 16th century, Arabs knew little about the lives and works of their Rumi contemporaries.⁴⁴ The Islamic biographical tradition enjoyed immense popularity under the Mamluks, boosting the reputations of contemporary scholars and encouraging the canonization of their predecessors. Though often universal in intent, in practice these compilations profiled only few scholars outside of Mamluk territories; scholars educated and working in Ottoman lands were all but absent.⁴⁵ In the Ottoman Empire, by contrast, there was no Arabic-language biographical dictionary of Rumi scholars that curious Arab scholars could consult until 1558, when the Istanbul-based scholar Taşköprüzade completed *al-Shaqa’iq al-Nu‘maniyya fi ‘Ulama’ al-Dawla al-‘Uthmaniyya* (The Red Anemone on the Scholars of the Ottoman State).⁴⁶ In his introduction, Taşköprüzade lamented,

while historians have recorded the great deeds of the ‘ulama’ and the *a’yān* . . . none of them attended to the compilation of the news of the ‘ulama’ of these lands. Hence their names and their image barely remain on the tongues of all those present and passed away (*ḥādir wa-bād*).⁴⁷

Indeed, in the first decades following the conquest, scholars famous in Rum need not have been known in Damascus.⁴⁸

The circulation of books exhibited an equal asymmetry. While there is no evidence of Arab scholars acquiring books on a large scale in Istanbul, Rumis ploughed ravenously through the intellectual riches of the Arab lands. Kınalızade ‘Ali commissioned Ibn Ayyub to prepare a copy of the medieval scholar Ibn Khallikan’s (d. 1282) famed biographical dictionary.⁴⁹ He also acquired the works of contemporary Arab scholars, including a work by one of his teachers in Damascus.⁵⁰ Some contemporaries claimed that Kınalızade brought back no less than five thousand books from the Arab lands to Istanbul after his travels as chief judge.⁵¹

Patterns of instruction reflected the initial reservations that Arab scholars felt about Rumis. Many Rumi chief judges continued their studies upon arriving in the Arab lands, despite being full-fledged professors in their own right. A list of Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi’s Rumi students contains some of the most powerful figures of 16th-century Ottoman jurisprudence, including Çivizade Mehmed Efendi (d. 1587) and Mehmed Bostanzade (d. 1598), both of whom would go on to serve the Porte first as military judges and then as sheikh ül-Islam; Fevri Efendi (d. 1571), a famous poet and one-time companion of Sultan Süleyman; and finally, Kınalızade ‘Ali himself.⁵² Mature Arab scholars studying with Rumis in the first decades after the conquest were much more rare.⁵³ When al-Ghazzi traveled to Istanbul in 1530, for example, he wrote extensively about all that he taught his Rumi contacts, but was silent on what they had taught him—although he met with many scholars more senior than himself (including the jurist Ebu’s-Su‘ud [d. 1574], who later became Sultan Süleyman’s trusted sheikh ül-Islam).⁵⁴

For much of the 16th century, Arab scholars rarely articulated these reservations openly. In part, this was because they often relied on Rumis for their positions, as the comments of the Meccan scholar Qutb al-Din al-Nahrawali (d. 1582) suggest. Passing through Damascus in 1557 on his way to Istanbul, he wrote a praise poem for Muhyiddin Mehmed Çelebi (d. 1564), the son of Ebu’s-Su‘ud and the chief judge of the city at the time. In it, al-Nahrawali called Mehmed “the incomparable one of his age . . . whose virtue hath spread/A protective shading o’er the parting of days and o’er nations.”⁵⁵ It was only after “nothing of consequence came my way from this ode” that al-Nahrawali remarked that the poem “didn’t particularly delight him [Mehmed], because of his inadequate sophistication in literature and lack of experience with diction among eloquent Arabs.”⁵⁶

In the early decades after the expansion, there was often a disparity in how Rumi scholars were evaluated in Istanbul and how they were received in Damascus. The Skopje-born İshak Çelebi (d. 1537), for example, was rewarded by two Ottoman sultans for his poetry, scholarship, and pleasant company.⁵⁷ In a Turkish-language profile of İshak written just a year or so after his death, the biographer Sehi Bey (d. 1548) explained,

he was distinguished amongst the paragons of the time and the virtuous of the age, and was respected amongst the people of learning [*ehl-i ‘ilm*] for all sorts of virtues. He gave so much

care and attention to fluidity of language, firmness of speech, and matters of meaning that it is impossible to describe.⁵⁸

Damascene historians were more reserved in their praise. Muhammad ibn Tulun (d. 1546) likely met ʾIshak when the latter served as chief judge in Damascus from 1536 to 1537. Although he recognized ʾIshak's skill in Persian poetry, his evaluation was otherwise tepid:

he had a great interest in reading *al-Hidaya* [that is, *al-Hidaya fi al-Furuʿ*, the compendium of Hanafi law by Burhan al-Din al-Marghinani] to his students but he was not able to. He was linked to learning but had little skill in legal judgment [*durbat al-qaḍāʾ*]. For that reason he often stayed in his house.⁵⁹

ʾIshak's eloquence, learning, and wit did not translate well into the Arabic-language context—little wonder that he withdrew from Damascene high society.

INTELLECTUAL EXCHANGE

Rumi scholars were initially at a disadvantage in scholarly gatherings. However, with access to salons, some of the main spaces where mature scholars could exchange ideas, Rumis closed the knowledge gap between political center and province. More and more, men like Kinalizade ʿAli held their own against their Arab interlocutors.

Around 1563 or 1564, Kinalizade ʿAli attended the *majlis al-khatm* (closing session, or literally, sealing), held by al-Ghazzi in honor of his Qurʾan commentary *al-Tafsir al-Manzum* (The Versified Qurʾan Commentary).⁶⁰ *Majālis khatm* were common in early modern Damascus, and had the character of either a graduation ceremony or a book release party. Al-Ghazzi's son Najm al-Din reported,

if he [Badr al-Din] finished teaching or writing a book, he held a banquet and made its completion festive. He invited the important people and the poor [*fuqarāʾ*]. He hosted them and was equally hospitable to the poor as to the amirs.⁶¹

In this case, al-Ghazzi celebrated his completion of the teaching of the commentary to a group of students (he had finished writing it almost a decade earlier, in 1555).⁶²

However accessible the accompanying banquets may have been, the intellectual heart of these gatherings was exclusive and serious. Composed of a group of invited senior scholars and the students whose coursework was being recognized, *majālis khatm* gave young men the opportunity to watch mature scholars in action. Although it is unclear who other than Kinalizade attended this particular gathering, the city's intellectual heavyweights surely would have been there.⁶³ The setting for the *khatm* lent the occasion additional gravity; while most Damascene scholars hosted gatherings in their homes and gardens, al-Ghazzi held his at one of the holiest sites of the city, namely, the shrine of Yahya ibn Zakariyya (John the Baptist) in the prayer hall of the Umayyad mosque.⁶⁴ Al-Ghazzi presided, with the participants gathered around him in a semicircle. Far from haphazard, the seating arrangement would have mapped out a hierarchy onto the floor of the mosque.⁶⁵

Attendees would have waded through a variety of scholarly topics, debating and relating poems in turn. Al-Ghazzi may have discussed his commentary, and intrepid

listeners would have offered responses. Perhaps in this way, Kinalızade became entangled in a disagreement with al-Ghazzi over a dispute between the late medieval grammarian Abu Hayyan al-Gharnati (d. 1344) and his student al-Samin al-Halabi (d. 1355) regarding inflectional endings (*i'rab*) of certain words in the Qur'an. Abu Hayyan had criticized certain case endings in the widely read Qur'an commentary by Abu al-Qasim al-Zamakhshari (d. 1144). Al-Samin, disagreeing with his teacher, had defended al-Zamakhshari.⁶⁶ In the debate's 16th-century continuation in the Umayyad mosque, al-Ghazzi took the side of Abu Hayyan against al-Zamakhshari; Kinalızade sided with al-Samin against the criticisms of Abu Hayyan.⁶⁷

After the debate was cut short in the *majlis*, Kinalızade went home to his library and found that both al-Suyuti and Ibn Hajar had, like him (and al-Samin), found the criticisms of Abu Hayyan groundless.⁶⁸ So Kinalızade composed some verses in which he presented his findings to al-Ghazzi and challenged him to respond. Wrapping al-Ghazzi in illustrious garments of praise, punning on his name, Kinalızade wrote, "oh, my sayyid, whose mastery of learning is famous . . . [whose] superiority over other scholars towers as the full moon [*badr*] towers over the rest of the shining stars." Al-Ghazzi's response adopted Kinalızade's rhyme and formulated his praise in equally absolute terms: "oh sayyid, rising above the people of the age without exception/well known in every science to a great extent/Oh imam, high above the heads in your height."⁶⁹ After several more exchanges in which each was unable to convince the other, both eventually penned a treatise outlining the points in defense of their respective positions.⁷⁰

The debate remained public as the scholars of Damascus weighed in on who they thought had prevailed. While Badr al-Din's son Najm al-Din was silent on this point in his biographical dictionary, according to Kinalızade's son Hasan Çelebi (d. 1604) and the Egyptian biographer Taqi al-Din al-Tamimi (d. 1601), the majority of Damascene scholars favored the arguments of Kinalızade 'Ali.⁷¹ The fact that both sons of the men involved in the debate described it in their biographical compilations suggests just how important the encounter was to the two families (although Najm al-Din mentions it only in his biography of 'Ali, not in that of his own father). For the Kinalızade family, the gathering demonstrated the respect 'Ali enjoyed among Arab scholars. As Hasan Çelebi explained when he summarized his father's time in Damascus, "in gatherings and parties [*mecālis-ü mehāfilde*] the grandees and people of rank recited most solemn assurances of praise and encomium, each of them testifying [here he switched to Arabic], 'indeed he is a sign of the wonders of God.'"⁷² The fact that scholars not present that day recorded the dispute suggests the weight that others likewise gave such occasions.⁷³

Period accounts of the incident indicate the tension contemporaries sometimes felt between the universal Islamic tradition on the one hand and particular ethnic communities on the other. Usually 'ulama' formulated their praise in absolute terms: the language of al-Ghazzi and Kinalızade's letter exchange implied a single group of Islamic scholars, scholars who were in competition, to be sure, but who measured themselves by the same standards. Yet Hasan Çelebi formulated his father's victory as one not only over al-Ghazzi personally, but over Arab scholars generally:

because the Arab 'ulama' did not have these sorts of particulars, they were vanquished and dispirited in the arena of discussion and argument, and all of them agreed with the virtue of 'Ali

and said [again, switching to Arabic], ‘he is the one who did that which those before him were unable to do.’⁷⁴

Hasan Çelebi’s explanation suggests the particularist logic that coexisted with Islamic unity: a scholar’s performance within the Islamic tradition did reflect at least in part upon the virtue of his ethnic or linguistic community.

Despite this tension, gatherings such as al-Ghazzi’s helped to weave the intellectual fabric of the Turkish- and Arabic-speaking worlds more closely together. The two treatises that resulted from the Ghazzi-Kinalızade debate were included, usually side by side, in several Ottoman scholarly anthologies, making them inseparable to readers for generations to come.⁷⁵ In these collections, the exchange featured alongside the works of individuals at the very pinnacle of 16th-century Rumi scholarship, such as Ebu’s-Su‘ud and Kemalpaşazade Ahmed Çelebi (d. 1534). Nearly a century later, the Istanbul-based scholar Katib Çelebi (d. 1657) would record the debate twice in his bibliographical dictionary *Kashf al-Zunun ‘an Asami al-Kutub wa-l-Funun* (The Removal of Doubts in the Names of Books and Fields of Knowledge), including particulars such as its location and, of course, its victor (Kinalızade).⁷⁶ Such works helped to focus scholarly attention across the empire on a common set of texts and issues.

BOOK CIRCULATION

Informal gatherings encouraged the postconquest integration of the Ottoman learned tradition by facilitating the circulation and reception of books. Salons helped to spread the reputations of certain works, sparking debate or encouraging consensus around their meaning. Al-Ghazzi’s *khatm* left its mark on Ottoman learned circles in ways beyond the *i‘rāb* dispute: the book his gathering celebrated, *al-Tafsir al-Manzum*, itself occasioned an empire-wide controversy. The commentary’s composition in verse offended many. The Qur’an, after all, was emphatically *not* poetry, and was superior to it: “we have not taught him [Muhammad] poetry; it is not seemly for him.”⁷⁷ Not only had al-Ghazzi made the word of God poetry by quoting Qur’anic verses in poetic meter (in order to gloss them), many argued; by adding an *alif* to the end of those verses, he had committed the far more serious offense of altering parts of the Qur’an.⁷⁸ The book polarized the scholars of Cairo as “some of them permitted it, others denied its permissibility, others rejected it, and others recognized it and praised it.”⁷⁹ Qutb al-Din al-Nahrawali, whom al-Ghazzi hosted in Damascus in the late 1550s, also mentioned the scandal in his short profile of al-Ghazzi.⁸⁰

Likely through men such as al-Nahrawali, who carried the news of books as they traveled, the controversy finally reached the very top of the imperial learned hierarchy: the sheikh ül-Islam Ebu’s-Su‘ud and, according to some accounts, even Sultan Süleyman himself. The Yemeni scholar Muhammad al-Shawkani (d. 1834) claimed that discussions of the *tafsir* were so vehement that Süleyman eventually convoked a meeting of the city’s ‘ulama’ to evaluate it; a period source corroborates that the piece was reviewed by Ebu’s-Su‘ud.⁸¹ The sheikh ül-Islam was no stranger to Badr al-Din. The two had met in Istanbul in 1530, when Ebu’s-Su‘ud was an instructor at one of Mehmed II’s eight madrasas. They had gotten along well at the time, and had entered into animated discussion about the nature of the food served in hell.⁸² It is thus likely that Ebu’s-Su‘ud would have

received the reports of al-Ghazzi's irreverence with skepticism, having witnessed his piety and learning firsthand. Nevertheless, Ebu's-Su'ud cautiously condemned the book, probably under public pressure, when he heard its premise.⁸³ Yet when the commission convened, it found nothing wrong with the work, and rewarded al-Ghazzi with money and honor.⁸⁴ Though al-Shawkani's account may well be exaggerated, Ebu's-Su'ud did eventually accept the work, albeit reluctantly.⁸⁵

The book remained so infamous that Rumis passing through Damascus would question al-Ghazzi about it. "I did not versify the Qur'an, and I did not change anything in its expressions. I just quoted them in verse; *I did not versify them,*" al-Ghazzi would retort angrily.⁸⁶ Al-Burini regretted that the book was composed in verse because people avoided it for that reason, whereas if it had been in prose "there would have been plenty of people who would have spread it around the land."⁸⁷ Others were of the opinion that the controversy was merely the result of jealousy and resentment.⁸⁸ In any case, if it was not read, the book was at least discussed, as al-Burini said, by "the 'ulama' of his age."⁸⁹ Al-Ghazzi's commentary provoked one of a growing number of empire-wide intellectual controversies following the 1516–17 conquest.⁹⁰

The attention bestowed upon *al-Tafsir al-Manzum* resulted in no small part from the gatherings that publicized the book. Whether or not al-Ghazzi had anticipated the criticism he would receive, he contributed to his work's notoriety through the widely attended *khatms* he held for it.⁹¹ Given al-Ghazzi's prestige and his mass of contacts across the Ottoman lands, it is easy to understand how the work was sealed into the minds and memories of so many scholars.

But if these assemblies encouraged the conflagration of the scandal, they were equally important in resolving it. Scholarly gatherings offered al-Ghazzi an opportunity to promote his own interpretation of his work to potential readers. The trust al-Ghazzi had won in his face-to-face encounters with influential scholars, not least Ebu's-Su'ud, surely contributed to their begrudging acceptance of his controversial project by convincing them of his integrity and goodwill. It has been recognized that the Islamic tradition privileged the personal authorization of works over the transmission of knowledge in writing.⁹² In the Ottoman Empire, in Istanbul as much as in Damascus, this process extended beyond the teacher-student relationship. Learned men used gatherings to influence the reception of books among mature colleagues.

This meant that Ottoman scholars wrote for an audience that was very immediate and real. Mustafa 'Ali (d. 1600) boasted that his *Kava'idü'l-Mecalis* (The Etiquette of Salons) "became quite well known at gatherings of all educated people, grandees who are persons of refinement, eloquent persons, and poets."⁹³ The Arab scholar Muhibb al-Din al-Hamawi (d. 1608) presented his travel account to a circle of friends in Damascus and then incorporated their comments into its final pages.⁹⁴ As men traveled through the empire's cultural centers attending scholarly gatherings, they learned not only of the existence of certain books, but also of their reception by various learned communities. As they traveled onwards, they took the news of these books along with them. Al-Ghazzi's 16th-century commentarial controversy suggests that in the dense and well-connected Ottoman scholarly community, books rarely traveled without a reputation in tow.

Literary salons thus reveal a very dynamic process of Ottoman canon formation. A number of historians have documented the development during the 16th century of a

distinctly Ottoman imperial culture in the literary, artistic, and scholarly domains.⁹⁵ In 1565, when Kınalızade was still in Damascus, Sultan Süleyman issued a firman, or imperial rescript, laying out a curriculum for Ottoman imperial madrasas. Surely this was an unprecedented show of educational centralization, as Shahab Ahmad and Nenad Filipovic rightly argue. And yet, as the two note, the document contains evidence of considerable openness, including the incorporation of the work of Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti: “the fact that al-Suyuti died only sixty years before the present syllabus was drawn up is expressive not only of how swiftly he became recognized as a scholar of historic standing, but also of the receptiveness of the Ottoman canon to new works.”⁹⁶

Majālis go a long way in explaining this flexibility. Al-Suyuti was known among Rumi scholars before the 1516–17 conquest, and indeed, Kınalızade ‘Ali adduced him as an authority in his debate with al-Ghazzi.⁹⁷ Nonetheless, because of al-Suyuti’s importance in late Mamluk scholarship, traveling Rumis like Kınalızade ‘Ali probably encountered his works to a far greater extent in Arab lands than they had at home. Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi, after all, was the holder of an *ijāza* from al-Suyuti, and some fancied him the al-Suyuti of his age.⁹⁸ The 1565 firman also included Ibn Hajar’s commentary on al-Bukhari—the same Ibn Hajar who had taught al-Ghazzi’s teacher Zakariyya al-Ansari, to whom al-Ghazzi was compared, and whom Kınalızade cited in his dispute with al-Ghazzi.⁹⁹ In including people such as al-Suyuti and Ibn Hajar, the firman likely responded to an ongoing conversation within the empire, one taking place as much in scholarly gatherings as in madrasas. Seen in this light, its curriculum seems less of an order than a reaffirmation. It was part of a process of canon formation guided not by the sultan and his advisers alone, but also by scholars across the Ottoman Empire.

HISTORY WRITING

In addition to acting as spaces of debate, social gatherings were opportunities for gossip, storytelling, and autobiography. They thus helped to generate a repertoire of stories, and eventually written histories, that became common to members of the learned elite across Ottoman lands. The dispute between al-Ghazzi and Kınalızade was recorded in biographical dictionaries produced not just in Damascus, but also in Istanbul and Cairo, by people who were not present themselves that day. Some of those who related the story had learned of it second hand from men who had participated in the event (especially Kınalızade himself).¹⁰⁰

Rumi and Arab historians alike saw salons as valuable sources of information. When historians set out to profile the great men of the past, they relied mostly on written evidence evaluated through careful textual criticism. When they profiled their contemporaries, however, they had no recourse to such written data. Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, anecdotes that historians gathered in *majālis* provided much of the meat for their biographical entries. Indeed, one of the prerequisites for being a good biographer was the cultivation of a healthy social network. Hasan al-Burini hosted gatherings in his own garden, spent nights in the homes of statesmen, and was widely appreciated for his ability to captivate salon audiences: “he was never at a scholarly *majlis* without being its nightingale.”¹⁰¹ These occasions allowed al-Burini to cultivate close relations with Arabs and Rumis alike, whether bureaucrats, military leaders, or scholars.¹⁰² Indeed, his biographical dictionary *Tarajim al-A‘yan min Abna’ al-Zaman* (Biographies of the

Notables from the People of the Times) (1601–15) featured many individuals the biographer had met personally in Damascus gatherings. These included locals, of course, but also Rumis who had visited the city on one pretext or another. From al-Burini's perspective, what gave unity to the disparate men treated in the dictionary was a common location, firstly in Damascus, and secondly within a particular set of social gatherings (and hence, social circles).

Al-Burini's history was not exceptional in its close connection to *majālis*. As we have seen, many of the occurrences cited in Hasan Çelebi Kinalızade's biographical dictionary of poets were based on the gatherings that his father had attended. In Damascus, Ibn Ayyub's *al-Rawd al-'Atir fi Ma Tayassara min Akhbar Ahl al-Qarn al-Sabi' ila Khitam al-Qarn al-'Ashir* (The Perfumed Garden of Assembled Notices of the People of the 7th to the End of the 10th Century) (1590) and Najm al-Din al-Ghazzi's *al-Kawakib al-Sa'ira bi A'yan al-Mi'a al-'Ashira* (The Orbiting Planets of the Notables of the 10th Century) (1624) both relied heavily on salons, as spaces where history was made, as sources of information on historical actors, and for the very identification of those actors. Although Ibn Ayyub's *al-Rawd al-'Atir* featured many scholars of centuries past, the biographies of his contemporaries contained frequent mentions of gatherings he had attended. His detailed biography of Kinalızade 'Ali was possible because Ibn Ayyub had "visited him ['Ali] frequently" during his time in Damascus.¹⁰³ The title of Najm al-Din al-Ghazzi's later biographical dictionary reflects the deep reliance on such gatherings in the genre: *Lutf al-Samar wa-Qatf al-Thamar min Tarajim A'yan al-Tabaqat al-Ula min al-Qarn al-Hadi 'Ashar* (The Sweetness of Nightly Conversation and the Fruitful Harvest of the Biographies of Notables of the First Class of the 11th Century). Reading about great men was a fruitful conversation, the title suggested, but the book also emerged from such conversations, as the text itself revealed repeatedly. As skeptical as Arabs may have initially been of the intellectual merits of some of their Rumi visitors, by memorializing their lives and binding them together with those of reputable Arabs, they helped to build a single learned community that spanned the Ottoman lands.

CONCLUSION: IMPERIAL INTEGRATION

The 1516–17 Ottoman conquest of the Mamluk Empire propelled enormous social and intellectual exchange across the Eastern Mediterranean. Although connections between Anatolia and the Arab lands had existed prior to the conquest, the integration of the two regions into a single empire prompted a sharp acceleration of contact between their learned populations. Informal scholarly gatherings were central to this process. Less narrowly circumscribed than class lessons held in madrasas, *majālis* facilitated exchange amongst mature 'ulama'. Welcoming to scholars on the move, salons aided the creation of pan-Ottoman scholarly networks; as venues for discussion and debate, they facilitated the circulation of ideas and books. The result was an intellectual community that self-consciously cut across ethnic and administrative divisions—something akin to an Eastern Mediterranean "republic of letters."¹⁰⁴ Scholarly gatherings were the physical foundations of interpretive communities that linked learned men to one another long after they parted company.

The meetings of mature scholars shaped many different phases of the social lives of books, from their creation, to their presentation, to their evaluation. Nowhere in their

twin treatises did al-Ghazzi and Kinalızade mention the encounter from which their disagreement arose. Recovering the personal exchanges that preceded their writings suggests that even some of the most recondite works of the Ottoman period emerged from specific disputes held in specific moments. Not only was early modern Islamic learning dominated by a delight for debate, Ottoman writing was the product of live gatherings and addressed contentious issues. Historians of the Ottoman Empire often focus on formal instruction in the madrasa in order to understand knowledge transmission. However, in the early modern period, a wide range of occasions allowed mature scholars to meet and exchange ideas.

The intensity of communication within the learned community meant that books often traveled preceded by a reputation. Writers used social gatherings to furnish written work with an oral gloss, thus preparing the ground for a favorable reception. But these same gatherings militated against such control, offering platforms for opponents to delegitimize particular works or disseminate alternate readings of them. The fact that biographical dictionaries frequently documented scholarly opinion meant that a book's reputation often outlived its writer. Later generations, too, would understand ideas within their social and intellectual contexts, as Kinalızade 'Ali did when he consulted Ibn Hajar's biographical compilation. Abstract treatises were not read then and should not be read now as divorced from particular social worlds.

The postconquest convergence of Rumi and Arab scholarly communities depended upon a shared culture of scholarly sociability. Al-Ghazzi's debate with Kinalızade and the treatises it generated helped to secure al-Ghazzi's place in the expanded academic sphere of the 16th century; although he spent only a year or two in Rum over the course of his life, his personal encounters with Rumis passing through Damascus established his reputation in the new imperial center. The same is true for the biographical accounts of Kinalızade 'Ali: were it not for his time in Damascus and his skilled participation in its social circles, he might have never found his place in the Arabic-language biographical compilations of the era—and certainly not the honorable place he came to occupy. Although the Ottoman *'ilmiyye* had grown considerably from its modest beginnings in Anatolia, a shared culture of social gatherings meant that the community remained grounded in the physical, face-to-face interactions of individuals.

In all of these ways, informal social gatherings were a key motor in the engine of imperial integration. Qadis, as the case of Kinalızade 'Ali has shown, were central not only in the dispensation of (Hanafi) justice in accordance with the standards set by the Porte, but also for the circulation of knowledge.¹⁰⁵ When judges returned to Istanbul after serving in the provinces, books were only the most tangible of the things that they brought back with them: ideas and friendships likewise linked them to the places they had visited. Even in the 16th century, when Ottoman bureaucracy was most centralized, timars and taxes alone did not ensure imperial cohesion. Of equal importance was an empire-wide salon culture that facilitated the integration of elites upon their arrival in a new city.

Viewed from the perspective of informal, nonstate gatherings, imperial incorporation emerges as a process driven as much from the bottom-up as from the top-down. In the realm of law and bureaucracy, policy was undoubtedly directed from the center.¹⁰⁶ In matters of intellectual culture, power was more dispersed. By accepting Rumis into

local circles and into the biographical dictionaries based on those circles, Arabs did much of the hard work of constructing a single, pan-Ottoman community of scholars. This process was not matched by the Rumi biographical tradition, Turcophone and Persianate as it was in its orientation.¹⁰⁷ When Damascene authors included Rumis in their histories, they made Ottoman sovereignty locally legible.¹⁰⁸ This may have had parallels in other parts of the empire, including the Grecophone lands conquered in earlier centuries.¹⁰⁹ The integration of Ottomans into local literary traditions helped to establish their legitimacy in new territories.

Nevertheless, the competitive nature of salons cautions us against indiscriminate celebrations of exchange. The experiences of Rumi chief judges in Damascus point to the laborious and often contentious aspects of knowledge transmission. However effective informal informational networks might have been, they were embedded in deeply felt hierarchies. While men such as Kınalızade were invited to Damascus *majālis*, and in some debates achieved the upper hand, they participated on the terms of local Arabs, in Arabic-language discussions on Arabic-language writings. Because Arabs did not feel the same affinity for Rumi traditions that Rumis felt for the Arabic literary corpus, learning traveled primarily in one direction, at least initially.

In the decades following the Ottoman conquest of the Arab lands, the Porte's Rumi representatives made little effort to export a centrally developed literary or linguistic tradition, as we have come to expect from many modern nation-states, including Turkey. Rather, the servants of the sultan strove to excel in a shared Islamicate and Arabic culture, one in which conquered territories were initially perceived to be dominant. This required considerable exertion from even the most learned Rumi scholars, but it also had a significant payoff, namely the rapid influx of texts and traditions from the Arab lands to Rum. The explosion of intellectual activity in the 16th-century Ottoman capital and the experimentation with new genres was in no small part indebted to the movement of ideas from the Arab lands northwards. These ideas were carried in large part not by infiltrating Arabs but by Rumis themselves. From a modern perspective, the Ottoman incorporation of Arab lands has often been viewed as an end—an end to religious openness, an end to intellectual fervor, and, for Arabs, an end to political autonomy. From the point of view of Islamic literary culture, it was a new beginning.

NOTES

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¹ *Umm al-dunyā*, as Cairo continued to be called. Muhibb al-Din al-Hamawi, *Hadi al-Az'an al-Najdiyya ila al-Diyar al-Misriyya*, ed. Muhammad 'Adnan Bakhit (Jordan: Jami'at Mu'ta, 1993), 45.

² Seljuk Anatolia was marginal in histories and geographies written in the heartlands of the late medieval Islamic world, and was viewed as a sort of "Wild West." Andrew Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız, "Introduction," in *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*, ed. Andrew Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 2–3.

³ Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995); Heath Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2003). In using the terms "Arab" and "Rumi," I follow the conventions of the period. On the term Rumi, see Salih Özbaran, *Bir Osmanlı Kimliği: 14.-17. Yüzyıllarda Rûm/Rûmi Aidiyeti ve İmgeleri* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004); Cemal Kafadar, "A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography

and Identity in the Lands of Rum,” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 7–25; Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011), 3–6, 51–74; Nadia El Cheikh and C. E. Bosworth, “Rūm,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs (Brill Online, 2013), Princeton University, 31 August 2013, <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com>; and Halil İnalçık, “Rūmī,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. For Arabs, who referred to themselves as a collective as either ‘*arab* or *awlād al-‘arab*, see Jane Hathaway, “The *Evlād-i ‘Arab* (‘Sons of the Arabs’) in Ottoman Egypt: A Rereading,” in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, vol. 1, ed. Colin Imber and Keiko Kiyotaki (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 203–16; Michael Winter, “Ottoman Qadis in Damascus during the 16th–18th Centuries,” in *Law, Custom, and Statute in the Muslim World*, ed. Ron Shaham (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 102–3; and Bruce Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516–1918: A Social and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 14–15.

⁴Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, “Ottoman Educational and Scholarly-Scientific Institutions,” in *History of the Ottoman State, Society and Civilization*, vol. 2, ed. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002), 372; Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, chap. 1 and 2; Sara Nur Yıldız, “From Cairo to Ayasuluk: Hâci Paşa and the Transmission of Islamic Learning to Western Anatolia in the Late 14th Century,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 25 (2014): 270–72.

⁵The intellectual consequences of the conquest have only recently begun to receive the attention they deserve. Benjamin Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Égypte: Historiens et conquérants au XVI^e siècle* (Paris: Peeters, 2006); Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), chap. 7; Reem Meshal, “Antagonistic Sharī‘as and the Construction of Orthodoxy in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Cairo,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 21 (2010): 183–212; Guy Burak, “Faith, Law and Empire in the Ottoman ‘Age of Confessionalization’ (Fifteenth-Seventeenth Centuries): The Case of ‘Renewal of Faith,’” *The Mediterranean Historical Review* 28 (2013): 1–23. For more cursory treatments, see Andrew Hess, “The Ottoman Conquest of Egypt (1517) and the Beginning of the Sixteenth-Century World War,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4 (1973): 55–76; Andreas Tietze, “Ethnicity and Change in Ottoman Intellectual History,” *Turcica* 23 (1991): 385–86; and Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, 96.

⁶Among others, Cornell Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleyman,” in *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), 159–77; Hakan Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski, eds., *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Rhoads Murphy, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty: Tradition, Image and Practice in the Ottoman Imperial Household 1400–1800* (London: Continuum, 2008); Emine Fetvaci, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2013); and Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁷On social and cultural relations between the Arab provinces and the imperial center, see Albert Hourani, “Ottoman Reform and the Politics of the Notables,” in *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1981), 83–110; Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment to Ottoman Rule: Institutions, Waqf, and Architecture in Cairo (16th and 17th centuries)* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); Jane Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: The Rise of the Qazdağlıs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, “‘In the Image of Rūm’: Ottoman Architectural Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Aleppo and Damascus,” *Muqarnas* 16 (1999): 70–96; Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Égypte*; Alan Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire*.

⁸For an example of this trope, see Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur* (Berlin: Emil Ferber, 1902), 267.

⁹A small selection of this expansive literature includes Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia,” *Modern Asian Studies* 31 (1997): 735–62; Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006); Marcy Norton, “Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics,” *American Historical Review* 111 (2006): 660–91; and E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011).

¹⁰Samer Ali calls the literary salon (referred to as *mujālasa* in his period) “one of the primary mechanisms for forming Abbasid society and literature,” Dominic Brookshaw argues that “it was largely within the framework of *majālis* that much of the intellectual, cultural and social life of medieval Muslims took place,” and Maria Subtelny describes the *majlis* as “the main forum for literary, particularly poetical, expression in the late Tīmūrid period.” Samer Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons in the Islamic Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 13; Dominic P. Brookshaw, “Palaces, Pavilions and Pleasure-Gardens: The Context and Setting of the Medieval *Majlis*,” *Middle Eastern Literatures* 6 (2003): 199; Maria Subtelny, “Scenes from the Literary Life of Tīmūrid Herāt,” in *Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens* (Papers in Mediaeval Studies 6), ed. Roger Savory and Dionisius Agius (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), 144. See also Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, Mark R. Cohen, Sasson Somekh, and Sidney H. Griffith, eds., *The Majlis: Interreligious Encounters in Medieval Islam* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999).

¹¹George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 10–12; “*Madjlis*,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*.

¹²On 16th-century Ottoman salon culture, see Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541–1600)* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 22–23; Halûk İpekten, *Divan Edebiyatında Edebî Muhitler* (Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1996), 227–37; Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005), 144–46; Halil Çeltik, “Halep’te Kınalızâde Hasan Çelebi’nin Şairler Meclisi,” *Gazi Türkiyat* (2007): 137–47; Halil İnalçık, *Has-bağçede ‘Ays u Tarab: Nedimler Şâirler Mutribler* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011), chap. 4–8; and Zeynep Tarım Ertuğ, “Entertaining the Sultan: *Meclis*, Festive Gatherings in the Ottoman Palace,” in *Celebration, Entertainment and Theater in the Ottoman World*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi and Arzu Öztürkmen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

¹³Female poets only rarely took part in Istanbul *mecâlis*. For an exception, see Latifi, *Tezkire-i Latifi* (Istanbul: İkdam Matbaası, 1896–97), 321. Much earlier, al-Ghazzali discouraged scholars from attending the *majālis* of not only kings but also commoners, suggesting that nonelite groups held them as well. Lazarus-Yafeh, “Preface,” in *The Majlis*, ed. Lazarus-Yafeh et al., 11.

¹⁴Salons continued to play an important role in Ottoman cultural life in later centuries. Rainer Brömer, “Scientific Practice, Patronage, Salons, and Enterprise in Eighteenth Century Cairo: Examination of Al-Gabartī’s History of Egypt,” in *Multicultural Science in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Kostas Chatzis, and Efthymios Nicolaidis (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003); Nelly Hanna, “Culture in Ottoman Egypt,” *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 2, ed. M. W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 98–99; M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), 94; Henning Sievert, “Eavesdropping on the Pasha’s Salon: Usual and Unusual Readings of an Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Bureaucrat,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 41 (2013): 159–95.

¹⁵This was true in the medieval period as well. Sarah Stroumsa, “Ibn al-Rāwandī’s *sū’ adab al-mujādala*: The Role of Bad Manners in Medieval Disputations,” in *The Majlis*, ed. Lazarus-Yafeh et al., 70; Benjamin Z. Kedar, “The Multilateral Disputation at the Court of the Grand Qan Möngke, 1254,” in *The Majlis*, ed. Lazarus-Yafeh et al., 162–83.

¹⁶Carl Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 61–68; Francis Robinson, “Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals: Shared Knowledge and Connective Systems,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8 (1997): 151–84, esp. 156; İlker Evrim Binbaş, “A Damascene Eyewitness to the Battle of Nicopolis: Shams al-Dīn Ibn al-Jazarī (d. 833/1429),” *Contact and Conflict in Frankish Greece and the Aegean, 1204–1453*, ed. Nikolaos G. Christis and Mike Carr (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 153–75.

¹⁷Of 115 scholars employed in Ottoman madrasas between the 14th and 16th centuries, about 43 percent had been educated in Iran, 23 percent in Egypt, 15 percent in Anatolia, 9 percent in Transoxiana, 8 percent in Syria, and 2 percent in Iraq. İhsanoğlu, “Institutions,” 372. See also İsmail Erünsal, *Ottoman Libraries: A Survey of the History, Development and Organization of Ottoman Foundation Libraries* (Cambridge, Mass.: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, Harvard University, 2008), 9–10; Ertuğrul Ökten, “Scholars and Mobility: A Preliminary Assessment from the Perspective of *al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu‘māniyya*,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 41 (2013): 62; and Yıldız, “From Cairo to Ayasuluk.”

¹⁸Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzi, *al-Durr al-Nadid fi Adab al-Mufīd wa-l-Mustafīd*, ed. Abu Ya‘qub Nash‘at al-Misri (Giza: Maktabat al-Taw‘iyya al-Islamiyya, 2006), 116.

¹⁹Carl Petry, "Travel Patterns of Medieval Notables in the Near East," *Studia Islamica* 62 (1985): 75–76; Jonathan Berkey, "Culture and Society During the Late Middle Ages," *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 375–76; Yıldız, "From Cairo to Ayasuluk," 265–67.

²⁰Barbara Flemming, "Şerîf, Sultan Ğavrî und die 'Perser,'" *Der Islam* 45 (1969): 81–93; *Majalis al-Sultan al-Ghawri: Safahat min Tarikh Misr fî al-Qarn al-'Ashir al-Hijri*, ed. 'Abd al-Wahhab 'Azzam (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqafa al-Diniyya, 2010). On live performances of hadith commentary in late Mamluk Cairo, see Joel Blecher, "Hadith Commentary in the Presence of Students, Patrons, and Rivals: Ibn Ĥajar and *Şaĥîḥ al-Bukhārî* in Mamluk Cairo," *Oriens* 41 (2013): 261–87. On preconquest courtly contact between Ottomans and Mamluks, see Cihan Yüksel Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks: Imperial Diplomacy and Warfare in the Islamic World* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014).

²¹Hacı Paşa met with scholars in Damascus on his way to Cairo, and the Rumi poet Behiştî attended gatherings of 'Ali Shir Nava'i in the Persian lands. Yıldız, "From Cairo to Ayasuluk," 265; Mehmet Çavuşoğlu, "Kanunî Devrinin Sonuna Kadar Anadolu'da Nevâyi Tesiri Üzerine Notlar," *Gazi Türkiyat* 8 (2011): 24.

²²Istanbul became a destination for the ambitious during the reign of Bayezid II, although unrest in the Timurid lands had already sent many Persian scholars westwards earlier in the 15th century. Hanna Sohrweide, "Dichter und Gelehrte aus dem Osten im osmanischen Reich (1453–1600): Ein Beitrag zur türkisch-persischen Kulturgeschichte," *Der Islam* 46 (1970): 263–302; Sooyong Kim, *Minding the Shop: Zati and the Making of Ottoman Poetry in the First Half of the Sixteenth Century* (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2005), 64–65.

²³Only two works in the 16th-century Ottoman madrasa curriculum discussed below were written by authors working under Ottoman rule. Shahab Ahmed and Nenad Filipovic, "The Sultan's Syllabus: A Curriculum for the Ottoman Imperial *medreses* Prescribed in a *fermân* of Qânûnî I Süleymân, Dated 973 (1565)," *Studia Islamica* 98/99 (2004): 216. See also İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Anadolu Beylikleri ve Akkoyunlu, Karakoyunlu Devletleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1969), 209–23; and İhsanoğlu, "Ottoman Educational and Scholarly-Scientific Institutions," 372.

²⁴According to Carl Petry, only about 3 percent of Egyptian scholars and bureaucrats traveling in the 14th century made trips to Rum. Petry, "Travel Patterns," 81, 86.

²⁵Some scholars of Rumi origins did move to Cairo in the 15th century and remained there as revered scholars and teachers. Petry, "Travel Patterns," 74–75.

²⁶Other social and professional groups were mobile as well, of course. See Suraiya Faroqhi, *Travel and Artisans in the Ottoman Empire: Employment and Mobility in the Early Modern Era* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014).

²⁷Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi, *al-Matalî' al-Badriyya fî al-Manazil al-Rumiyya*, ed. al-Mahdi 'Id al-Rawadiyya (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-'Arabiyya li-l-Dirasat wa-l-Nashr, 2004), 128–29.

²⁸Najm al-Din al-Ghazzi, *al-Kawakib al-Sa'ira bi A'yan al-Mi'a al-'Ashira*, vol. 3, ed. Jibra'il Jabbar (Beirut: American Press, 1945), 187.

²⁹Sharaf al-Din ibn Ayyub, *al-Rawd al-'Atir fî Ma Tayassara min Akhbar Ahl al-Qarn al-Sabi' ila Khitam al-Qarn al-'Ashir*, MS, Berlin Staatsbibliothek, Wetzstein II, 289, 204a; al-Ghazzi, *al-Kawakib*, 3:187.

³⁰Al-Ghazzi, *al-Kawakib*, 3:27–29; Sharaf al-Din ibn Ayyub, "Dhayl Qudat Dimashq hatta Sanat al-Alf li-l-Hijra," in *Qudat Dimashq: al-Ṭaghayr al-Bassam fî Dhikr man Wuliyya Qada' al-Sham*, ed. Salah al-Din al-Munajjid (Damascus: al-Majma' al-'Ilmi al-'Arabi, 1956), 333; Sharaf al-Din ibn Ayyub, *Nuzhat al-Khatir wa-Bahjat al-Nazir* (Damascus: Manshurat Wizarat al-Thaqafa, 1991), 153.

³¹A few years later, another chief qadi of Damascus punished al-Ghazzi for a similar incident. Hasan al-Burini, *Tarajim al-A'yan min Abna' al-Zaman*, vol. 2, ed. Salah al-Din al-Munajjid (Damascus: al-Majma' al-'Ilmi al-'Arabi, 1959–63), 99; al-Ghazzi, *al-Kawakib*, 3:29–30.

³²For near-contemporary biographies of Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi, see al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 2:93–105; al-Ghazzi, *al-Kawakib*, 3:3–10; Muhammad ibn al-Hanbali, *Durr al-Habab fî Tarikh A'yan Halab*, vol. 2, ed. Mahmud Fakhuri and Yahya 'Abbara (Damascus: Wizarat al-Thaqafa wa-l-Irshad al-Qawmi, 1973), 436–39; and Ibn Ayyub, *al-Rawd*, 239b–245a. For secondary literature, see Fatih Çollak and Cemil Akpınar, "Gazzi, Bedreddin," in *TDVİA*, vol. 13 (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1996), 537–39; Ralph Elger, "Badr al-Din Muhammad al-Ghazzi," *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography, 1350–1850*, ed. Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 98–106; and Ralph Elger, "Badr ad-Din al-Gazzi und der Verrat seiner Freunde," in *Glaube, Skepsis, Poesie: Arabische Istanbul-Reisende im 16. Und 17. Jahrhundert* (Beirut: Ergon, 2011), 17–22.

- ³³Al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 2:98; al-Ghazzi, *al-Kawakib*, 3:4–5.
- ³⁴Al-Ghazzi, *al-Matali‘ al-Badriyya*.
- ³⁵Hasan Çelebi Kınalızade, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu‘ara*, ed. İbrahim Kutluk (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1978), 669; Richard Blackburn, trans., *Journey to the Sublime Porte: The Arabic Memoir of a Sharifian Agent’s Diplomatic Mission to the Ottoman Imperial Court in the Era of Suleyman the Magnificent* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2005), 49; al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 2:93.
- ³⁶Al-Ghazzi, *al-Kawakib*, 3:5.
- ³⁷Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 21–33.
- ³⁸Mustafa İsen, “Kınalızade Ali,” *TDVİA*, 25:417; R. C. Repp, *The Müfti of Istanbul* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986), 43–44.
- ³⁹İpekten, *Divan Edebiyatında Edebî Muhitler*, 233.
- ⁴⁰Kınalızade, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu‘ara*, 658; İsen, “Kınalızade Ali,” 417; A. S. Oktay, *Kınalızâde Ali Efendi ve Ahlak-ı Alâî* (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2005), 59.
- ⁴¹Al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 2:94.
- ⁴²Ibn Ayyub, “Dhayl Qudat Dimashq,” 326.
- ⁴³For example, Damascene biographers ignored Kınalızade’s Turkish-language *Ahlak-ı ‘Alai*, despite the fact that it was written in Damascus and to this day is considered one of Kınalızade’s most important works. Instead, they often mentioned two Arabic-language writings that were “in the fashion of Ibn Nubata and Ibn al-Wardi,” i.e., medieval scholars from Greater Syria. Ibn Ayyub, *al-Rawd*, 204b. See also Ahmad al-Khafaji, *Hadha Kitab Rayhanat al-Alibba wa-Zahrat al-Hayat al-Dunya* (Cairo: al-Matba‘a al-Wahbiyya, 1877), 321–27. For *tezkires* and other Turkish-language literature, see Selim Kuru, “The Literature of Rum: The Making of a Literary Tradition (1450–1600),” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 2, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi and Kate Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 54–92. On Persian-language historiography, see Sara Nur Yıldız, “Ottoman Historical Writing in Persian, 1400–1600,” in *Persian Historiography*, ed. Charles Melville (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 436–502.
- ⁴⁴Of course, not all scholars working in the Mamluk realms were Arabs. Ulrich Haarmann, “Arabic in Speech, Turkish in Lineage: Mamluks and Their Sons in the Intellectual Life of Fourteenth-Century Egypt and Syria,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 33 (1988): 81–114; Jonathan Berkey, “‘Silver Threads among the Coal’: A Well-Educated Mamluk of the Ninth/Fifteenth Century,” *Studia Islamica* 73 (1991): 109–25.
- ⁴⁵Rare exceptions include Molla Gürani and Muhammad al-Kafiyaji, who both however spent many years in Mamluk lands. Muhammad al-Sakhawi, *al-Daw‘ al-Lami‘ li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tasi‘* (Beirut: Dar Maktabat al-Hayat, 1934–36), 1:241–43, 7:259–61.
- ⁴⁶In the 1530s Ottomans began writing Turkish-language biographical dictionaries of Rumi poets (called *tezkires*).
- ⁴⁷Taşköprüzade, *al-Shaqa‘iq al-Nu‘maniyya fi ‘Ulama’ al-Dawla al-‘Uthmaniyya* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabi, 1975), 5.
- ⁴⁸Ibn Ayyub explained that Çivizade Muhyiddin Mehmed Efendi was “one of the *mawlās* who was famous in those lands [around Istanbul].” Ibn Ayyub, *al-Rawd*, 259b.
- ⁴⁹That is, *Kitab Wafayyat al-A‘yan*. Ibid, 204b.
- ⁵⁰Al-Ghazzi, *al-Kawakib*, 3:187.
- ⁵¹Ibn Ayyub, *al-Rawd*, 205a.
- ⁵²Kınalızade studied Qur’an commentary and recitation, hadith, and rhetoric while in Damascus. Ibid, 204b; al-Ghazzi, *al-Kawakib*, 3:6, 187.
- ⁵³One exception was Ibn Hilal al-Hanafî, a scholar from Homs who studied with Kınalızade ‘Ali. Ibn Ayyub, *al-Rawd*, 270b.
- ⁵⁴Al-Ghazzi, *al-Matali‘ al-Badriyya*, 263–75.
- ⁵⁵Blackburn, *Journey to the Sublime Porte*, 39.
- ⁵⁶Ibid, 40.
- ⁵⁷Hamdi Savaş, “*İshak Çelebi, Kılıççızâde*,” *TDVİA*, 22:527–28.
- ⁵⁸Sehi Bey, *Heşt Bihişt: The Tezkire by Sehi Beg: An Analysis of the First Biographical Work on Ottoman Poets With a Critical Edition Based on Ms. Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya, O. 3544*, ed. Günay Kut (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1978), 158.
- ⁵⁹Ibn Tulun, *Qudat Dimashq*, 319.
- ⁶⁰Katib Çelebi, *Kashf al-Zunun ‘an Asami al-Kutub wa-l-Funun* (Beirut: Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi), 730–31. Al-Ghazzi wrote two versions of this book, one full and one abbreviated.

⁶¹Al-Ghazzi, *al-Kawakib*, 3:5–6. Another prominent Damascene held a *khatm* each year at his home for *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Ibn Ayyub, *al-Rawd*, 45b.

⁶²Taqi al-Din al-Tamimi, *Kitab Tabaqat Taqi al-Din*, Süleymaniye Library, MS Ayasofya 3295, 239a.

⁶³In another *khatm*, the men first discussed and then ate together with al-Ghazzi. This session featured the influential Damascene scholars Abu al-Fath al-Maliki, Shihab al-Din al-Tibi the Elder, and Isma‘il al-Nabulusi (the great-grandfather of ‘Abd al-Ghani), as well as the Rumi scholars Fevri Efendi and Çivizade Mehmed Efendi. Al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 2:95–97; al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 1:11–12.

⁶⁴The Umayyad mosque had been used to hold reading circles already in the 12th century. Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 32–82.

⁶⁵Biographers often recorded seating arrangements in detail. Al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 2:95–96; Ibn Ayyub, *al-Rawd*, 115a–b. See also Hirschler, *The Written Word*, 47–50.

⁶⁶Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, *al-Durar al-Kamina fi A‘yan al-Mi‘a al-Thamina* (Hyderabad: Da‘irat al-Ma‘arif al-‘Uthmaniyya, 1929–31), 1:339; Claude Gilliot, “Kontinuität und Wandel in der ‘klassischen’ islamischen Koranlegung (II./VII.-XII./XIX. Jh.),” *Der Islam* 85 (2010): 63–64.

⁶⁷For a detailed summary of their debate copied from Kinalzade’s own notes, see al-Tamimi, MS Ayasofya 3295, fol. 239a.

⁶⁸Al-Ghazzi, *al-Kawakib*, 3:188; Ibn Hajar, *al-Durar*, 1:339–40; Kinalzade, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu‘ara*, 669; al-Tamimi, MS Ayasofya 3295, fol. 239a.

⁶⁹Al-Ghazzi, *al-Kawakib*, 3:188.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 189.

⁷¹Kinalzade, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu‘ara*, 669–70; al-Tamimi, MS Ayasofya 3295, fol. 239a. See also Katib Çelebi, *Kashf al-Zunun*, 730–31. Since al-Tamimi’s source for the dispute was Kinalzade Ali himself, it is no surprise that he should have given this reading of the events.

⁷²Kinalzade, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu‘ara*, 670.

⁷³The debate was also recorded in 1571 by a certain al-Faridi, who did not attend the *majlis* but met with Kinalzade later. Al-Faridi, “Nukat ‘ala Ma Waq‘a bayn al-Qadi ‘Ali Çelebi wa-Ibn al-Shaykh Radi al-Din,” Library of the Escorial, MS Escorial 1318, fols. 14b-33a.

⁷⁴Kinalzade, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu‘ara*, 670.

⁷⁵Extant copies of the two treatises include Leiden University, MS Leiden 1666; Princeton University Library, MS Garrett 3817Y, fols. 93b–106b; Süleymaniye Library, MS Esad Efendi 3556, fols. 1b–29a; Süleymaniye Library, MS Mihrişah Sultan 39, fols. 45b–70b.

⁷⁶Katib Çelebi, *Kashf al-Zunun*, 1:122–23, 730–31.

⁷⁷Ya Sin 36:69.

⁷⁸Al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 2:94–95; Katib Çelebi, *Kashf al-Zunun*, 1:454.

⁷⁹Al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 2:94.

⁸⁰Blackburn, *Journey to the Sublime Porte*, 48. Al-Nahrawali had also studied with al-Ghazzi during the latter’s pilgrimage to the holy places in 1542–43. Ibn Ayyub, *al-Rawd*, 262a–b.

⁸¹Al-Shawkani’s account is not entirely reliable. He claims that al-Ghazzi was in Istanbul when the manuscript was reviewed, but no other contemporary account confirms this. Al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 2:104; Muhammad al-Shawkani, *al-Badr al-Tali‘ bi-Mahasin Min Ba‘d al-Qarn al-Sabi‘*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Sa‘ada, 1929–30), 252. There is an autograph copy of *al-Tafsir al-Manzum* in the Süleymaniye Library dated 1554–55 (962). Süleymaniye Library, MS Hüsnü Paşa 11.

⁸²Al-Ghazzi, *al-Matali‘ al-Badriyya*, 268.

⁸³Al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 2:94, 104.

⁸⁴Al-Shawkani, *al-Badr al-Tali‘*, 2:252.

⁸⁵Al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 2:104.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 105.

⁸⁸This was the opinion of ‘Abd al-Latif al-Shafi‘i (a student of Najm al-Din al-Ghazzi) in the 1630s. Süleymaniye Library, MS Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1390, fol. iia. For a similar opinion, see Süleymaniye Library, MS Kemankeş 240, fols. 70a–b.

⁸⁹Al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 2:94.

⁹⁰Coffee and the works of Ibn ‘Arabi were others. See Ibn Tulun, *al-Tamattu‘ bi-l-Iqran*, 118, 174–75, 216–17, 264, 266, 280.

⁹¹ Al-Ghazzi held another *khatm* for the piece in 1569–70. Al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 1:11–12; al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 2:97.

⁹² William Graham, “Traditionalism in Islam: An Essay in Interpretation,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23 (1993): 512–14. For the controversial nature of the written tradition, see Michael Cook, “The Opponents of the Writing of Tradition in Early Islam,” *Arabica* 44 (1997): 437–530.

⁹³ Mustafa ‘Ali, *The Ottoman Gentleman of the Sixteenth Century: Mustafa Âli’s Mevâ’idü’n-Nefâ’is fî Kavâ’idi’l-Mecâlis*, “Tables of Delicacies Concerning the Rules of Social Gatherings,” trans. Douglas Brookes (Cambridge, Mass.: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 2003), 4.

⁹⁴ Süleymaniye Library, MS Ragıp Paşa 1474, fol. 190b ff.

⁹⁵ Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah”; Gülru Necipoğlu, “A Kanun for the State, a Canon for the Arts: Conceptualizing the Classical Synthesis of Ottoman Art and Architecture,” *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, 195–216; Walter Feldman, *Music of the Ottoman Court: Makam, Composition and the Early Ottoman Instrumental Repertoire* (Berlin: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 1996), 24; and Kuru, “The Literature of Rum.”

⁹⁶ Ahmed and Filipovic, “The Sultan’s Syllabus,” 210–11.

⁹⁷ Al-Suyuti himself boasted of his fame throughout the Islamic world. Marlis Saleh, “al-Suyūfī and his Works: Their Place in Islamic Scholarship from Mamluk Times to the Present,” *The Mamluk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 77.

⁹⁸ Al-Ghazzi, *al-Kawakib*, 3:4, 7.

⁹⁹ Ahmed and Filipovic, “The Sultan’s Syllabus,” 200.

¹⁰⁰ Al-Tamimi, MS Ayasofya 3295, fol. 239a; MS Escorial 1318, fols. 14b–15a.

¹⁰¹ Al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 1:17, 21; al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 2:103; Najm al-Din al-Ghazzi, *Lutf al-Samar wa-Qatf al-Thamar min Tarajim A‘yan al-Tabaqat al-Ula min al-Qarn al-Hadi ‘Ashar*, ed. Mahmud al-Shaykh (Damascus: Wizarat al-Thaqafa wa-l-Irshad al-Qawmi, 1981), 1: 358–59.

¹⁰² Al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 1:73; Ibn Ayyub, *al-Rawd*, 113a.

¹⁰³ Ibn Ayyub, “Dhayl Qudat Dimashq,” 329.

¹⁰⁴ Anthony Grafton, “A Sketch Map of a Lost Continent: The Republic of Letters,” in Anthony Grafton, *Worlds Made by Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 9–34.

¹⁰⁵ Guy Burak, “Dynasty, Law and the Imperial Provincial Madrasa: The Case of al-Madrasa al-‘Uthmaniyya in Ottoman Jerusalem,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45 (2013): 111–25.

¹⁰⁶ A different picture emerges if we examine legal practice. Meshal, “Antagonistic Sharī‘as.”

¹⁰⁷ Scholars and poets of Arab descent are rare in *tezkires* such as Hasan Çelebi’s or in Taşköprüzade’s *al-Shaqa’iq al-Nu‘maniyya*. Even Kınalızade ‘Ali’s 1566 *al-Tabaqat al-Hanafiyya*, which constructed a single scholarly lineage from Abu Hanifa to Kemalpaşazade, included no contemporary Arab scholars.

¹⁰⁸ Al-Burini’s biography of a *danişmend* contained a detailed review of the meaning, pronunciation, and etymology of that word. Al-Burini, *Tarajim*, 1:77.

¹⁰⁹ Michael Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, trans. Charles Riggs (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1954); Baki Tezcan, “Ethnicity, Race, Religion and Social Class: Ottoman Markers of Difference,” in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (London: Routledge, 2012), 163n18.