#### THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

# CONTENDING WITH CRISIS: SACRED BODIES AND THE OTTOMAN QUEST FOR ORDER IN THE LONG 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY (c.1574-1720)

# 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

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

JUNE 2022

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#### **Note on Transliteration**

The transliteration conventions adhered to in this dissertation are, like the Ottoman Turkish language iteself, a bricolage but broadly pertain to those laid out by the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (IJMES) for Ottoman Turkish, Persian, and Arabic respectively.

When a work or name in Arabic or Persian is being referenced the transliteration conventions of IJMES apply for those languages. The conventions of Modern Turkish orthography meanwhile apply for texts and names in Ottoman Turkish.

Words which have passed into common English usage such as "pasha", "vizier", and "janissary" however remain untransliteated. Place names also remain untransliterated.

All dates are given in the common era exclusively, unless otherwise stated.

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#### Acknowledgements

Here follows the only part of this dissertation project written in one sitting. For those in the know, this is not what my writing process looks like. I tend to agonize over sentences, word choice, turns of phrase, and choice of punctuation for weeks on end, only to then return to the text and move around some more commas and semicolons for good measure. The current deviation from established practice however was not compelled by the pressure of a looming submission deadline, nor was it a reflection of the lack of importance I accorded the task. On the contrary, what follows are the outpourings of the heart, which needed no urging nor brooked any interruptions.

My thanks go first and foremost to Professor Hakan Karateke, my advisor and mentor throughout my time at the University of Chicago. His sage advice and his constant guidance were indispensible to the completion of this project, and to my development as a scholar of the Early Modern Ottoman Empire. There were times when he, based on a sense of the sources and the field that is without equal, gave advice that prevented frustrations and disruptions later on. More often though he exhibited a great deal of trust in my ways of thinking and writing, which instilled in me a confidence to expand the project well beyond its initial confines. Professor Leora Auslander constantly pushed me to examine the tensions, silences, and elisions that pervaded my analyses, and opened my eyes to new theories and methodologies in the study of history. A master pedagogue and an incisive observer of the academy, she also informed my ways of teaching as well as my sense of myself as a professional. Professor Azfar Moin at the University of Texas at

Austin came on the committee late into the process, but his outsized influence on my work belies the duration of his participation on the dissertation comittee. He has informed my sense of the place of the scared in world history, and has particularly influenced my thinking on how the body as discursive assemblage operates in early modern Islamicate contexts. He not only read a backlog of loosely organized drafts with great care and patience, but was also exceedingly generous with the time he devoted to my development as a scholar and a professional. That is a debt that I know I can never repay. Dr. Helga Anetshofer first taught me the finer points of modern Turkish and Ottoman Turkish. Then she was kind enough to lend her time and energies to the dissertation project. The questions she posed at every turn constantly forced me to hone my analysis, and imparted in me a sense of academic rigor that I will always carry with me as I move forward with my career. I am also grateful for all the support she gave me in my endless fellowship applications. If it was not already clear, having me as an advisee is a test of anyone's patience.

Beyond the dissertation committee, I am grateful to Professor John E. Woods, who made my time at NELC and CMES one of the most intellectually rewarding of my life. His expansive sense of Islamic history, particularly of "the Middle Periods", has inspired a whole generation of Chicago scholars, and this author particularly. I never took a class with Professor Ghenwa Hayek, and yet she taught me more about pedagogy than any training program ever could. And it was at her initiative that the NELC Graduate Working Group came together during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing a useful platform for myeself and others to workshop our written work and provide each

other with emotional support. To the friendship and camaraderie of colleagues who comprised this group, namely; Michael Peddycoart, Stephanie Kraver, Allison Kanner-Botan, Samantha Pellegrino, and Erin Atwell, I will forever be grateful. My thanks go also to Professor Holly Shissler, Orit Bashkin, Franklin Lewis, Ahmed El-Shamsy, Michael Rossi, Fred Donner, Jan Goldstein, Julie Orlemanski, James Ketelaar, Tahera Qutbuddin, Saeed Ghahremani, Elkhidr Choudar, Paul Walker, Cornell Fleischer, and Kağan Arık for all they taught me during my time at the University of Chicago. Beyond Chicago, Özgen Felek at Yale University, Irvin Cemil Schick formerly of Istanbul Şehir Üniverstesi, Shahzad Bashir at Brown University, Faruk Taşkale of Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi, Tobias Heinzelmann of the University of Zurich, and Christiane Gruber of the University of Michigan provided useful advice, materials, and connections that greatly facilitated the present study. I am also enternally grateful to Amanda Young, Eliza Higbee, Brittany Ciboski, and Traci Lombre for keeping NELC and CMES running through thick and thin.

At the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), my first intellectual home and a place of infinte good memories, I was fortunate enough to be guided by Professor Hasan Karrar, a scholar of tremendous erudition and boundless generosity. It is safe to say that had it not been for him, I would never have gone to grauate school. Professor Ali Usman Qasmi was an unparalleld professional and intellectual mentor whose lectures, conversation, and encouragement gave me the courage to keep going. Professor Anne-Christine Habbard's incisve and philosophically robust ways of thinking and problematizing have left a deep and lasting influence on my approach to research and

teaching. Dr. Ali Ahmad Nobil's class on "Introduction to Historical Studies" started my journey into academia and his class on "The World since 1453" sealed my fate. At LUMS I am also grateful to Professor Waqar Zaidi, Professor Ali Khan, and Dr. James Beresford for their support of me as a scholar.

I have profound debts to pay to many friends and colleagues across the world. My thanks go to Annie Greene, Mariel Colbert, Abuldrehamn Nazar, Ali Ishaq, Joel Veldkamp, Rohail Rafique, Marshall Watson, Rizwan Asghar, Moin Zafar, Caroline Anglim-Peddycoart, Arlen Wiesenthal, Betül Kaya, Shaahin Pishin, Matthew Lowenstein, Zachary Winters, August Samie, Lester Hu, Rachel Farell, Josephine Lippincott, Alexandra Hoffman, Henry Clements, Francesca Chubb-Confer, Sibte Haider, Kara Peruccio, Rizwan Gilani, Zeynep Tezer, Daniyal Khan, Cattie Wit, Tobias Scheunchen, Daria Kovaleva, Marissa Smit, Waleed Ahmar, Akiva Sanders, Cağdas Acar, Kyle Wynter-Stoner, Gosia Łabno, Samin Rashidbeigi, Yujie Li, Hélène Rey, Kate Costello, Sarah Furger, Owen Green, Chelsea Flennar, Varak Ketsemanian, Rachel Schine, Isabel Lachenauer, Suay Seyma Erkoz, Abby Krischbaum, A. Tunç Şen, Carlos Grenier, Emin Lelic, Matthew Melvin-Koushki, Noah Gardiner, Daniel Ohanian, and Gwendolyn Ruth-Christie, all of who honored me with the gift of their friendship and support. Raza Khan did not leave to see this project completed, but his fond memory pervades my thoughts and his profound sense of intellectual curosity and humanity continues to be the touchpaper to my own. This dissertation is dedicated to him.

The support offered by Dr. Laura Ring at the Regenstein Library, Zeynep Simavi at the American Research Institute in Turkey, and Tolga Cora and Ipek Hüner-Cora at Boğaziçi

University was crucial to the completion of this project. At UChicago Grad, Elisabeth Powers, Anne Janusch, Brian Campbell, and Sara Mehta helped me with the minutae of fellowship applications and interview preparation. My thanks goes also to the Fulbright Comission and the U.S. Department of Education who funded my Fulbright-Hays DDRA fellowship in Istanbul from July 2021 to January 2022, as well as to the Arnaldo Momigliano Fund at the Humanities Division, which provided generous support for research travel. I am also grateful to the all the staff at the Regenstein Library, the Süleymaniye Library, ISAM Istanbul, the ANAMED Library Istanbul, the Prime Ministers Ottoman Archives Istanbul, and the British Library in London, all of who make our scholarly work possible.

My best friend Zaib Aziz has been the most constant source of support, wisdom, laughter, insight, and banter throughout the past decade. Whilst we have not lived in the same city since 2014, there has been no one on whom I have relied on more in times of felicity, calamity, and gravity. Her friendship and untiring support—even during times when I was unreasonable, self-flagellating, and an insufferable bore besides—has been the crowing acheivement of my life.

My thanks go also to Ahsun bhaiya, Anika Bhabi, Maleeha Apa, Bilal Bhai, Ather Chachu, Shella Chachi, Papu Chachu, Anjum Chachi, Asif Chachu, and Nadya Chachi. Their prayers, support and encouragement enabled me to embark on my journey into the humanities and social sciences when this path seemed precarious at best, and ruinous at worst. The love of Maira, Rabiya, Fazail, Ibrahim, Bilal, Mohib, Aleeya, Abeeha,

Maheen, Harris, Mishal, Zain, Noor, Aeman, Anushay, and Ayza made me who I am. And the love of Ariana, Ayra, Sheroo, Tahani, Mirha, Zyna, and Mysha inform who I should strive to be.

And finally I am eternally grateful to Mama, Papa and my late grandmother Muniba Begum ("Ami") who sacrificed much and more to raise me, and who invested in me the values of hard work, human decency, and the importance of family. Whilst I have often fallen short of these ideals, I can only hope that I will live up to them in the next chapter of my life.

#### **Dissertation Abstract**

This dissertation explores the transformation of early modern Ottoman religio-political and religio-social thought and practice between the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century. It shows how, in this pivotal period characterized by economic, political, ecological, and law and order crises in the Ottoman Empire, an increased preoccupation with mysticaloccult forms of embodied religion manifested itself at the level of the court in Istanbul, as well as at the level of broader Ottoman society in the Anatolian and Balkan provinces. Whilst until now scholars have used the state archives to shed light on the impact of "the 17<sup>th</sup> century crisis" on the Ottoman state's policing and resource extraction efforts, this project uses mystical-occultist texts and talismanic objects to shed light on the complex religious dimensions of this period. More specifically, it demonstrates this increased preoccupation with the salvific power of sacred bodies across three key sites, namely: the ritual representation of the sultan's body in the elaboration of Ottoman sacred kingship, the embodied miracle narratives in the hagiographies of Anatolian and Balkan Sufi saints, and the bodily renditions of the prophet Muhammad and other Islamic figures in talismanic books and objects. By analyzing and drawing connections across this diverse corpus of textual and material production from the period, this project shows how people made use of bodies—of scared royal, saintly, and prophetic intermediaries as well as their own—to access immediate and concrete sources of divine power during times of need.

Introduction

#### The Body [Politic] in Crisis

"Notice that the love of the heart is, in a certain sense, carnal, because our hearts are attracted most toward the humanity of Christ and the things he did or commanded while in the flesh. The heart that is filled with this love is quickly touched by every word on this subject. Nothing else is as pleasant to listen to, or is read with as much interest, nothing is as frequently in remembrance or as sweet in reflection. The soul prepares the holocausts of its prayers with this love as if they were the fattened offerings of bullocks. The soul at prayer should have before it a sacred image of the God-man, in his birth or infancy or as he was teaching, or dying, or rising, or ascending. Whatever form it takes this image must bind the soul with the love of virtue and expel carnal vices, eliminate temptations and quiet desires. I think this is the principal reason why the invisible God willed to be seen in the flesh and to converse with men as a man. He wanted to recapture the affections of carnal men who were unable to love in any other way, by first drawing them to the salutary love of his own humanity, and then gradually to raise them to a spiritual love. Were they not at just this level when they said: "See, we have left everything and have followed you"? It was only by the love of his physical presence that they had left everything. They could not even bear to hear a word of his approaching passion and death, although this was to be their salvation. Even after it had all happened they could not gaze upon the glory of his ascension without deep sorrow. This is why Christ said to them: "Because I have said this to you sadness has filled your hearts." So it was only by his physical presence that their hearts were detached from carnal loves."<sup>1</sup>.

---Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermons on the Song of Songs

With these words, Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153), a seminal figure in medieval Christian thought, laid out a mystical-theological vision centered on contemplative love for a human Christ composed of sinew, bone, and blood. Elsewhere in his text, he asked his readers to conceptualize the various degrees of mystical experience as the kissing of the hands, the feet, and the mouth of Christ respectively, and even advised his readers to pray

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermon on the Song of Songs*, no. 20: Three Qualities of Love, verse no. 6, accessed at: http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/c0t.htm

with "the sacred image of the God-man"<sup>2</sup>. Such analogies and ritual prescriptions did not however derive from a positive appraisal of carnal forms of love or the body per se, both of which he held to be decidedly inferior to spiritual love and the soul respectively. Rather the emphasis on the body derived from what he saw as a fundamental and inescapable fact about human abilities and dispositions, namely that the capacity of men and women to feel love, which for him was a *condicio sine qua non* for gaining access to the divine, could only be activated, initially at least, through carnal (read; embodied) ways of knowing and feeling, which they could more readily mobilize. Only then could they begin to cultivate more spiritual and cerebral forms of love for Christ and attain salvation.

Whatever the specificities of his reasoning and the particularities of his spatial and temporal context, Bernard's words point to a truth that also informs this study about embodied patterns of devotion and religious practice during the Ottoman "long 17<sup>th</sup> century" (c. 1574-1720). The fact that all of us possess a body through which we apprehend and ultimately come to know the world means that the body as image, metaphor, symbol, and actuality also frames our social imaginaries, and constitutes a key terrain upon which our political claims and our cultural categories are articulated and negotiated. For example, the body of a ruler comes to stand in for the whole *body politic*<sup>3</sup>, the categories of gender, class, race, and faith are defined and policed in bodily terms<sup>4</sup>,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See Sermon 4: The Kiss of the Lord's Feet, Hands, and Mouth in Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Karin Sennefelt, A Pathology of Sacral Kingship: Putrefaction in the Body of Charles XI of Sweden, *Past & Present*, Volume 253, Issue 1, November 2021, p. 83–117.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See in particular the collection of essays in *Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the Anthropology of Material Life*, Margaret Lock and Judith Farquhar (eds.)(Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007).

and the actual un-spoilt body of a saint becomes the seat of miracles and the physical and spiritual center of a community<sup>5</sup>. The body therefore operates in society both as discursive symbol and as tangible fact. As anthropologist Mary Douglas posited;

"The social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived. The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience so that each reinforces the categories of the other. As a result of this interaction the body itself is a highly restricted medium of expression. The forms it adopts in movement and repose express social pressures in manifold ways. The care that is given to it, in grooming, feeding and therapy, the theories about what it needs in the way of sleep and exercise, about the stages it should go through, the pains it can stand, its span of life, all the cultural categories in which it is perceived, must correlate closely with the categories in which society is seen in so far as these also draw upon the same culturally processed idea of the body".

In a similar vein, Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* also posited the idea that we are constituted as perceiving, sensate beings by a two-layered human body composed of a "present body" that engages with the world in real time and a "habitual body" that is the cumulative product of culturally contingent accretions of past perceptions, sensations and bodily movements. This latter body informs the former and *vice versa* in a dialectical fashion<sup>7</sup>. To put it differently, what Merleau-Ponty and Douglas' interventions allows us to do is move beyond conceptions of the body and the sensorium as universal biology and to view them as processes of cultural elaboration

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> For examples of such treatments in Islamic history see; Scott Kugle, *Sufis and Saints' Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), and Shahzad Bashir, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013). For a classic treatment of saint's bodies in the Christian east see; Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, (Oxford and New York: Routldege, 2003 [1970]), p. 72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, (New York and London: Routledge Classics, 2002) p. 84-102.

Whilst such uses of the body hold for all times and all places, they acquire particular force during times of crisis and transition. This once again has to do with their efficacy as symbol and metaphor, which ultimately derives from their mass apprehensibility, and crucially, their intrinsic tangibility. Crises tend to pose urgent questions and dilemmas to societies, and these demand immediate and tangible answers and solutions. For demonstration one need only look back to the most recent seismic shift in the global order from which we are now removed enough in time to able to subject it to anthropological, sociological, and historical analyses, namely; the fall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a new dispensation in the former Soviet republics, i.e. the era of post-socialism. As Katherine Verdery has shown, the new social, political, economic and intellectual implications of Soviet collapse activated a form of 'necropolitics' across the former Soviet countries as various groups and communities exhumed the bodies of national heroes who had fallen victim to communism and reburied them in lavish, poignant, and sacralizing ceremonies. At the same time statues, which are essentially bodies rendered into sacralized icons of bronze and stone, were uprooted and replaced to mark key moments of temporal rupture<sup>8</sup>. In a similar vein, Anya Bernstein, in her engaging study of Buddhist communities in post-socialist Buryatia has shown how the sacred bodies of lamas, monastics, disciples, and political leaders informed the creation of a particularly Buddhist form of body politics through which Buryatian Buddhists developed new politico-religious subjectivities in the new post-socialist world

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

order<sup>9</sup>. Most recently, an illuminating dissertation by the historian Joseph Kellner charts how an intensification of mystical, esoteric-occultist, and apocalyptic movements—and their accompanying bodily rituals—in Russia manifested as key responses to the disorientation and loss of meaning associated with the collapse of the Soviet Union<sup>10</sup>. It would therefore appear that the disenchantment that was supposed to characterize modernity never really materialized, and our own responses to the changing world around us still involve embodied rituals, aberrant cosmologies, and non-normative forms of religion<sup>11</sup>.

The questions that sections of early modern Ottoman society were asking themselves during their own "time of troubles" had to do with the effective representation and articulation of the political role of the Ottoman dynasty, the place of local saintly shrines in the maintenance of communal life, and the protection of one's life and property against natural and manmade disasters. What form did their responses to these concerns take? And what may these responses tell us about the nature of crisis, politics, and religion at this crucial period of Ottoman history?

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Anya Bernstein, *Religious Bodies Politic: Rituals of Sovereignty in Buryat Buddhism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> The monograph derived from this dissertation is forthcoming (2024). I thank Joseph Kellner for sharing with me his dissertation, "The End of History: Radical Responses to the Soviet Collapse" (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: University of California, Berkley, 2018).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> See; Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, translated by Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), and Jason Josephson Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of the Human Sciences*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

#### Argument, Chapter Breakdown, and Sources

The pages that follow will argue that, during a period of Ottoman history characterized by state contraction, rampant banditry, peasant flight, multiple regicides and rebellions, and the widespread disintegration of settled life in Anatolia and the Balkans, embodied forms of mystical-occultist Islam also manifested themselves both at the level of the Ottoman court, and at the level of broader society. This dissertation will chart these developments across three key sites. In chapter 1, it will analyze the representations of the body of sultan Murad III in the development of Ottoman sacred kingship at the onset of the Islamic millennium. In chapter two it will chart how the bodies of sūfī saints in the Anatolian and Balkan provinces of the empire became the focal points of communal devotion and cohesion during this time of crisis. In chapters 3 and 4, it will analyze the employment of the body of the prophet Muhammad in the creation and proliferation of novel forms of talismanic poetry and objects from the early 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Taken together, the upsurge of body-centric piety evinced in these connected yet distinct domains of political and cultural activity represented attempts to appeal to various types sacral sovereignties at a time of tremendous disruption and change.

This dissertation project therefore does not aim to provide a chronological narrative. Rather it comprises discrete but interlinking cases studies that shed light on how early modern Ottomans mobilized mystical-occult cosmologies mediated by sacred bodies as a means of effecting changes in their circumstances during times of great instability and upheaval. These case studies, moreover, are composed of a range of textual, material, and

artistic sources that operated in particular ways. Therefore, as opposed to laying out a hermeneutic or interpretive method that applies to all of them right at the outset, each chapter or chapter section will begin with a discussion of the chosen source, its genre specific qualities, its treatment in the extant scholarship, and the ways in which they are being read and analyzed in the present study. Thus each chapter can be read as a selfcontained essay. What will need to suffice here is a brief outlining of the sources. Chapter 1 will trace how a discourse of cosmic sacrality was developed around the body of sultān Murād III was articulated across three key sites: in a physiognomy cum portrait album produced in 1579, in the context of the sultān's own dream and vision narratives that he narrated to his spiritual mentor between 1574 and 1588, and which he had compiled in 1591-92, and lastly via the production of talismanic shirts that merged cosmic and occultist knowledge with the body of this sultan. Chapter two traces how saintly bodies were rendered as salvific and indispensible to the continuity of individual and communal life during times of crisis. It does this via an exploration of embodied miracle narratives in two hagiographies produced in the Anatolian and Balkan parts of the empire respectively. Chapter 3 traces how the bodily qualities of the prophet Muḥammad were rendered in the Hilye-i Şerīfe (The Noble Description) of Meḥmed Hākānī (d.1606). Essentially a versified panegyric about the bodily attributes of the Muḥammad, the *Ḥilye-i Ṣerīfe* was supposed to protect whomsoever read, copied, wrote, beheld, or even kept the work on their person from a plethora of calamities. The chapter traces its various conceptual and literary precursors, before proceeding to analyzing its content to analyze how it carried out its talismanic function. Chapter 4 stays with the Hilye-i Şerīfe, but extends the analysis to its significant material afterlife, i.e. its

proliferation in the form of *hilye* codices, liturgical anthologies, and talismanic charts and objects in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Based on a preliminary codicological analysis of more than two hundred copies extant in the various manuscript and museum archives in Turkey, this chapter explores how the body of Muḥammad that was rendered into verse by Ḥākānī was transformed into a devotional artifact that was engaged by the pious in a plethora of tactile and embodied ways. Before the utility in studying these attempts can be raised however the exact contours of these 17<sup>th</sup> century upheavals need to be delineated so as to provide a historical backdrop to the case studies that comprise this project.

## The 17<sup>th</sup> Century Crisis in the Ottoman Empire

The first element of change one might consider as inaugurating a period of crisis in the Ottoman lands is monetary. In particular, the effects of the global price revolution on the Ottoman Empire were particularly disruptive. As Ömer Lütfi Barkan argued in the 70s, the massive hike in prices of most basic commodities and foodstuffs between the periods 1500-1650 set in motion seismic upheavals in the economic and social structure of the empire<sup>12</sup>. This he argued was caused in large measure by the influx of silver into the Ottoman lands from silver mines of the Spanish and Portuguese maritime empires in the new world. His pioneering data seems to suggest that prices of key commodities went up by 500 percent in this period<sup>13</sup>. These price hikes were particularly disruptive for the Ottomans as their main currency, the *akçe*, was silver-based. As Michael Ursinus has

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "The Price Revolution of the Sixteenth Century: A Turning Point in the Economic History of the Near East", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 6, No. 1 (Jan., 1975), pp. 3-28. <sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

further elaborated more recently the price raises were accompanied by a concomitant fall in the value of money. So whilst originally in the early Ottoman centuries the rate of exchange was 30 akee to the Venetian gold ducat, by the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the exchange was more like 60 akee to the ducat. The situation worsened even further from the 1580s onwards and at this time the rate was 240 akee to the ducat<sup>14</sup>. Writing in the 90s, Sevket Pamuk, whilst not contesting Barkan's conclusion that prices did increase, argued that although price increases outstripping state revenues did add to the Ottomans' fiscal woes, fielding infantry large armies that were paid salaries and that were armed with expensive firearms were the main culprit in the fiscal crisis<sup>15</sup>. The disruptive effects of this went beyond fiscal imbalance though as we shall see later. Coming back to Barkan's analysis, he argued that the *timār* system disintegrated as a direct consequence of the price revolution since dues remained fixed on each timār whilst the costs of living and armaments went up. Instead of increasing timariot dues, he argues, the central government exacted extraordinary tax levies on the populace to bring in cash. This undermined the  $sip\bar{a}h\bar{i}$  corps and the provincial armies who then vacated their  $tim\bar{a}rs^{16}$ . Pamuk however argues that all in all, whilst price increases added to the fiscal crisis, Barkan's attribution of Ottoman "decline" to it as a singular causative factor is exaggerated and that other factors played their part<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Michael Ursinus, "Ch. 28: The Transformation of the Ottoman Fiscal Regime 1600-1850", *The Ottoman World*, Christine Woodhead (ed.) (Oxford and New York; Routledge, 2012), p. 424.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Şevket Pamuk, "The Price Revolution in the Ottoman Empire Reconsidered", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Feb., 2001), pp. 69-89.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Barkan, p. 23-24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> See Pamuk, p.82.

We now return to the changing patterns of warfare and its associated expenditure as causative factors in the 17<sup>th</sup> century crises that were alluded to in the previous paragraph. As Halil İnalcık has argued the fiscal crisis and the subsequent overhaul of the fiscal and land tenure system of the Ottoman state might even have been chiefly compelled by mounting military expenditures, caused in part by the increasing numbers of wars on both the eastern and western fronts, but also due to technological changes in warfare<sup>18</sup>. The cavalry forces that had been the backbone of the Ottoman military were becoming increasingly ineffective against hand held firearms. Encountering these on the battlefields of Europe, the Ottoman state quickly realized that an overhaul of the forces in favor of firearm bearing infantry was needed. Suddenly the costs of war that were defrayed by assigning provincial cavalrymen the use of *timārs* fell on the state which needed cash to arm *levend* units with expensive firearms<sup>19</sup>. The results of this move were far reaching for the central treasury, the land tenure system, and on rural life in extensive areas in Anatolia and the Balkans.

With regards to budget deficits at the central treasury, these became the norm in the late  $16^{th}$  century and continued until the Köprülü viziers in the later half of the  $17^{th}$  century were able to temporarily balance the books. Linda Darling holds that in 1581 the central treasury had a shortfall of 56 million *akçe* whilst by 1597, the largest ever budget deficit had been recorded at 400 million *akçe*<sup>20</sup>. With regards to land tenure, it no longer made sense for the state to continue to hand out provincial prebends to an ineffective provincial

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Halil Inalcik, "Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire 1600-1700", *Archivum Ottomanicum*, vol. 6 (1980), pp. 283-338.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Inalcik, p. 288-297.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Linda Darling, *Revenue-raising and legitimacy: tax collection and finance administration in the Ottoman Empire*, 1560-1660, (Leiden: Brill, 1996), p. 239.

cavalry when an infantry bearing firearms was proving to be more effective. As a consequence the state made two far-reaching changes to fiscal administration. Firstly it converted many timārs into tax-farms (iltizām), a system that required the tax-farmer to furnish the state with part of the taxes collected instead of demanding military service of its holder in exchange for use of the surplus extracted<sup>21</sup>. These tax-farms were lucrative and were auctioned off for large up-front fees that brought much needed cash to the central treasury. What state officials had intended by so doing was to be able to extract more up-front cash from the provinces and more effectively tap into commercial revenues generated by large-scale urbanization and monetization of Ottoman society and economy in the 16<sup>th</sup> century than the *timār* system had been accomplish. It had also sought to, in the words of Ariel Salzmann, open up the "patrimonial reserve" for use by a greater plurality of people wanting to join the Imperial elite<sup>22</sup>. However, considering that centralstate elites like viziers, muftis, and other state officials were better placed to avail this auction of state revenue sources, they swallowed up the bulk of them hereby increasing the disparity between Istanbul and the provinces<sup>23</sup>. And as Metin Kunt has also demonstrated, the state also increasingly gave provincial governorships to central state appointees instead of granting them to provincial elements who had risen from the ranks of the provincial administration. This was because it now needed appointees to extract and forward revenue previously utilized at source, and appointees from the center could be relied upon to do this more effectively. Moreover the province replaced the district as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ariel Salzmann, "An Ancien Regime Revisited: "Privatization" and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire", *Politics and Economy*, vol. 21, no. 4, (1993). p.398.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 404-405. See also, Ariel Salzmann, "The Old Regime and the Ottoman Middle East" in *The Ottoman World*, p. 409-422.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.402-403.

the central administrative unit at this time<sup>24</sup>. All this led to further undermining of the  $tim\bar{a}r$  system as the incentive schemes towards higher provincial administrative posts broke down. Provincial elements however were able to more effectively compete in these auctions later on in the  $17^{th}$  century and eventually come to dominate them. With the conversion of these tax-farms into life-term possessions in the late  $17^{th}$  century, the emergence of new counter-elites with both state and provincial origins—a process already affected in the  $17^{th}$  century—would pick up pace.

The second tactic of the central treasury that might have made up between 20 and 33% of the revenues of the central state during the 17<sup>th</sup> century was the levying of extra-ordinary taxes at times of particular need. These went by the title 'avārīz' when levied upon peasant populations and would be collected either in the form of cash, or in kind or in services rendered to the passing Imperial army. Alongside these, extra-ordinary taxes levied particularly on the wealthy went by the title of assistance (imdādiyye) taxes. These also had the effect of bolstering extra-state agents with local know-how and independent networks who now could siphon off tax income into their own pockets<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, as Madeline Zilfi has aptly demonstrated, the 17<sup>th</sup> century also saw the aristocratization of the 'ulemā' class who were increasingly able to amass wealth and control of titles and pass these on to their offspring<sup>26</sup>. This was undoubtedly linked to members of the clerical elite joining the new tax farm market in the provinces but may also be linked to a number of sultanic decrees (1715) that empowered the Istanbul 'ulemā' to make appointments,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> See I. Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550-1650* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983). p. 95-99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> On these forms of taxation see Ursinus, p. 425-429.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> See; Madeline C. Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Post-Classical Age (1600-1800)*, (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988), p. 43-80.

and which restricted entry into the *mūlāzemet* ranks from provincial *medreses*<sup>27</sup>. This new class of "'*ulemā*' of the cradle" would emerge as a key power faction in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century dynastic and imperial politics<sup>28</sup>. The effects in turn of these changes were manifold and far-reaching. Instead of what took place in the old system, namely the granting of *timārs* in far off provinces to *sipāhīs* without their own local network as well as their near-constant rotation by the center, what we now see is the emergence of powerful mediating powers (*kažā 'ayāni*) in local adminsitration as well as an emerging class of landholders (*çiftlik ṣāḥibleri*)<sup>29</sup>. What the state had tried to prevent in the old system, i.e. the creation of gentry households in the provinces via an accumulation of wealth and its transference over generations, now began to be effected on a pervasive level.

Serious peasant flight also began to be compelled by extensive banditry that led to widespread ruination of the village economy in many parts of Anatolia and the Balkans in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This banditry was caused not only by the demobilization of *levend* or *sekbān* mercenaries bearing firearms after decades of war with the Hapsburgs and the Safavids in the 1590s, but also by large-scale proliferation of unmarried, underemployed young men in the villages who joined the bandit groups and bolstered the numbers of the Celālī rebels. As Michael Cook has demonstrated, all through the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there was an expansion of population growth that outstripped the expansion of arable land in the core areas of the empire. By the late 16<sup>th</sup> century average peasant holdings had fallen from ½ a çift to 1/3 and even ¼ a çift in many

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 56-61.

See chapters 4 and 5 in ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> See Ursinus, p. 429-431.

cases<sup>30</sup>. Thus many small farms were unable to provide a living to the many young men in the villages. In contrast, the expanding Pasha households and their need to muster armed retainers and soldiers to fight in imperial wars meant that there were employment opportunities to be had in provincial centers. As William J. Griswold, Mustafa Akdağ, Oktay Özel, and Karen Barkey have aptly demonstrated, the number of sekbāns thus swelled to unprecedented proportions and when these men were demobilized, they began to cause widespread rural unrest that constituted the Celālī revolts of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>31</sup>. Indeed in between the years 1591-1611 in particular, leaders of armed mercenaries terrorized the villages and ran extensive protection rackets. What we have here then is the creation of a cyclical effect. Population pressures in the provinces, the rising costs of living, and the increasing number of lucrative military jobs in the provincial centers led to widespread peasant flight from the villages. All of this then led to large number of armed young men becoming mercenaries, which led to banditry when these men were demobilized, which in turn led to more peasant flight. Another factor that might be further considered here is the rapaciousness that the new tax farming system had unleashed. Because tax farms were initially auctioned so as to be held for only a few years, the tax farmers sought to extract as much revenue from the peasantry as was physically possible to make good on their sizable initial investment. This caused the further ruination of the village economy in Anatolia.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Michael A. Cook, *Population Pressure in Rural Anatolia 1450-1600*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> See; Mustafa Akdağ, *Celâlî Isyanları* (1550-1603), (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1963), William J. Griswold, *The Great Anatolian Rebellion, 1000–1020/1591–1611*, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, number 83. (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz. 1983), Oktay Özel, *The Collapse of the Rural Order in Ottoman Anatolia: Amasya 1576-1643*, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), "The reign of violence: the Celalis c.1550-1700" in *The Ottoman World*, pp. 184-202, and Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureucrats: The Ottoman Route to State-Centralization*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994).

So far we have looked at monetary fluctuations, changes in land tenure patterns, the increasing incidence of war on two fronts, developments in military technology and strategy and a large-scale demographic shift as contributing factors to the 17<sup>th</sup> century crisis. An additional factor that is now increasingly being recognized as having played a part in the collapse of the rural economy of many empires on a global scale were fluctuations in the climate. As historian Sam White has cogently argued, environmental and climatic fluctuations were consequential factors for imperial history in that the imperial apparatus relied on massive provisioning, resource maintenance and extraction systems that involved skillful use of land, water, forest, mineral and manpower resources, all of which White sees as constituting "imperial ecologies"<sup>32</sup>. When climatic shifts occur these imperial ecologies are disrupted and threaten a breakdown of the entire imperial apparatus. This problem became particularly acute from the late 16<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, which saw a range of climactic disruptions collectively called "the Little Ice Age". From the 1560s onwards the climate was often unstable. 1561, 1570, 1585 were standout years of drought that had wiped out entire harvests in the core lands of the empire and brought unprecedented strain on imperial provisioning systems<sup>33</sup>. This was the followed by almost half a decade (1591-1596) of severe drought in the whole of the Eastern Mediterranean region<sup>34</sup>. Sometimes the reverse also adversely affected crop yields as well. For example 1565 saw widespread flooding as well as heavy snowfall in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Sam White, *The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). p. 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 138. <sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 141.

Thrace and parts of the Balkans<sup>35</sup>. Similar climactic fluctuations continued well into the later half of the seventeenth century which no doubt effected crop yields since research has shown that even small fluctuations in temperature, rainfall or snow could lead to large scale crop devastation. As White as convincingly shown, this was particularly true for Anatolia where four commodities, i.e. wheat, barely, sheep, and goats, constituted the main produce<sup>36</sup>. Thus when blight, drought, animal disease, flooding or extreme winter snows manifested, the peasantry did not have alternative staples to fall back on. White sees such climate disasters to be a central cause of the recurrent rebellions and ubiquitous banditry that constituted the Celālī uprisings of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>37</sup>.

What emerges from the above analysis is a picture of a cash-strapped central state and cash-rich provincial gentry that increasingly held revenue sources as essentially private property in a fast monetizing society increasingly linked to the global economy. It is in this context that we must see the politics of the center, which, according to Baki Tezcan, saw changes that were unprecedented enough in nature and scale to deserve this period being called "The Second Ottoman Empire". Indeed this was a period that saw a whole series of political crises unfold. The viziers, the grand muftis, and their respective networks were able to exercise unprecedented influence in dynastic politics. In 1617, the seyhü'l-islām Hocazāde Es'ad himself a scion of an 'ulemā' household that had amassed unprecedented power in the reigns of Murād III and Meḥmed III, was able to break with dynastic law and bring Aḥmed I's younger brother Muṣṭafā I to the throne in an attempt

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 76.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> See in particular, Chapter 7 in ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

to bring dynastic succession under legal supervision by establishing the principle of seniority<sup>39</sup>. Another powerful imperial faction headed by the chief black eunuch of the harem opted to curb such legal supervision of sultanic power. serī'at The aforementioned grand mufti was still able to refuse to sanction the 'Osmān II's killing of his brother Mehmed when the former sought a verdict to that effect in 1618 on the grounds that it was contrary to the serī at 40. These developments are part of a pattern that would see six out of the nine reigns between 1603 and 1703 end in depositions, with various empowered factions like the 'ulemā', the janissaries, the pasha households, and the officials of the palace (now with far reaching networks and resources of their own) seeking to place limitations on royal authority<sup>41</sup>. Naturally, this destabilization also had its correlates in within these power groups as well. Individual careers and fortunes in Ottoman officialdom rose and then fell with alarming rapidity during the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century, leading one historian to dub this era as an age where politics was shaped by "factions and [royal] favorites",42. Thus when we talk about a crisis of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, we also talk about a comprehensive crisis of the center as well.

### Religion and the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Crisis

Where then is religion in all this? As discussed earlier, Madeline Zilfi's work traced the implications of the empire's various fiscal and demographic crises for the learned establishment charged with the interpretation and discharge of sacred law. More recently,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.46-47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 62-63.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Ibid, p.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> See; Günhan Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites at the courts of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617) and his Immediate predecessors", Unpublished PhD dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2010.

Derin Terzioğlu, Tijana Krstić, Marc David Baer, Aslıhan Gürbüzel, and Nir Shafir have widened the scope of the discussion by situating Sūfīs, converts, preachers, royal retainers, travellers, and even books and sacred space more prominently into their investigations of religious change in this period<sup>43</sup>. What this has enabled is a shift of focus away from the politics of the central learned establishment and onto changes in patterns of piety and religious engagement in broader Ottoman society. Derin Terzioğlu for example situates the 17<sup>th</sup> century production and proliferation of catechistic 'ilm-i *ḥāls* as part of a wholesale move towards greater confessionalization as well as the articulation of vernacular piety in the Turkish language<sup>44</sup>. Tijana Krstić meanwhile has contextualized self-narratives of conversion from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to the early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries penned by converts from Christianity and Judaism to Islam as attempts at proselytization and defining the contours of Muslim-ness consistent with the confessionalization thesis<sup>45</sup>. Marc David Baer traces a 17<sup>th</sup> century "a turn to piety" amongst the household of sultān Mehmed IV and sees its members as inaugurating unprecedented drives at converting selves, others, and sacred space<sup>46</sup>. Aslıhan Gürbüzel's work has explored how public preachers in 17<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul shaped, and in turn were shaped by, the emergence of a new religio-political public sphere that mediated between elite and non-elite reading

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Derin Terzioğlu, "Sufis in the age of state-building and confessionalization" in *The Ottoman World*, "Where ilm-i hal meets catechism: Islamic manuals of religious instruction in the Ottoman Age of Confessionalization", *Past and Present*, no. 220 (Aug. 2013), p. 79-114, and "Sunnah-minded Sufi Preachers in service of the Ottoman State, *Archivum Ottomanicum* 27 (2010), p. 241-312. Tijana Krstic, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change and Communal Politics in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), Aslıhan Gürbüzel, "Teachers of the Public, Advisors to the Sultan: Preachers and the Rise of a Political Public Sphere in Early Modern Istanbul (1600-1675)", (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: Harvard University, 2016), and Nir Shafir, "The Road from Damascus: Circulation and the Redefinition of Islam in the Ottoman Empire, 1620-1720", (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: University of California, Los Angeles, 2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Terzioğlu, "Where ilm-i hal meets catechism".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> See chapter 4 in Krstic, Contested Conversions to Islam.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Baer, Honored by the Glory of Islam.

publics<sup>47</sup>. Nir Shafir's work meanwhile has situated the emergences of these reading publics, a culture of pilgrimage centered on the hajj, as well as the religious polemicism of the period to the circulation of people and objects between the Turkish and Arabic speaking parts of the Eastern Mediterranean<sup>48</sup>. This dissertation seeks to contribute to this innovative wave of scholarship that is illuminating the changing contours of religious life in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire.

Where it diverges from these contributions is in its focus on the place of the 17<sup>th</sup> century crisis, mystical-occultism, and sacred bodies in (re)articulations of religiosity during the Ottoman long 17<sup>th</sup> century. Now, whilst nearly all of the above works make periodic references to the crisis of Ottoman state and society during this period, most of them, save perhaps Baer, do not consider it to be a central determinant of the processes they describe. In particular, Terzioğlu and Krstić's employment of the confessionalization paradigm primarily situates the 17<sup>th</sup> century "turn to piety" as emerging from a shared Ottoman-European context shaped by urbanization, state formation, population and economic growth, and geopolitical rivalry during the 15th and 16th centuries. These processes moreover have the state and its constituent actors as the chief drivers of the changing religious landscape. Whilst certain developments of the 16<sup>th</sup> century no doubt created the conditions of possibility for some of the texts and initiatives that form the focus of this study, I see my sources more as direct responses to the instability and dislocation that accompanied the period of crisis that began in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and continued on well into the 18th century. Therefore, rather than skipping over the 17th

Gürbüzel, "Teachers of the Public, Advisors to the Sultan".
 Shafir, "The Road from Damascus".

century crisis or enumerating it as just one of many factors, I situate it prominently as the contextual backdrop to my ensuing analysis. The centrality of the period of the crisis for a whole range of not only social and political transformations, but cultural and intellectual ones as well became apparent to me during my readings on the 17<sup>th</sup> century crisis in Ottoman history, and acquired renewed emphasis and urgency as I wrote chapters of this dissertation during a succession of COVID-19 lockdowns.

Once we begin to shed the scholarly ambivalence towards crisis as an analytical category that has accompanied the dismantling of the "decline thesis" over the last two decades, we can also begin to displace the state as the primary actor in early modern religious transformations. Indeed, it is worth asking what the utility of a state-centric or statedependent explanatory paradigm is for an era when state institutions came under unprecedented strain, became increasingly decentralized, and suffered sustained attacks on their legitimacy. This question has also been posed by Gürbüzel who sees urban preachers as key drivers of the 17<sup>th</sup> century religious change, but who did so by animating an emerging civic public sphere, a liminal space where they acted as intermediaries between elements of the state and the burgeoning urban populace<sup>49</sup>. In a similar vein, chapters 2, 3, and 4 that deal with sacred bodies in the context of shrines and the production and use of talismans in particular also ask: where else other than the bureaucratic state did early modern Ottomans turn to for worldly and other-worldly redress and salvation at a time of crisis? To what otherworldly sovereignties did they appeal? And through what material and religious practices did they make such appeals?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Gürbüzel, "Teachers of the Public, Advisors to the Sultan", p. 31-32.

I argue that the answers to these questions lie in an exploration of various forms of mystical-occultism. In this respect too, I diverge from the prevailing scholarship, which has seen religious change in this period only in terms of a move towards greater "sharia/sunnah mindedness", a greater emphasis on orthopraxy, and a hardening of confessional boundaries. Whilst textual evidence does indeed corroborate this larger development, a move towards greater orthopraxy was not the only option available to early modern Ottomans at this time. Indeed, embodied forms of Sufism, occultism, and magic were always widespread at all levels of Ottoman society and were frequently called upon to affect a change in people's material lives. I argue that as a ready repertoire of knowledge and practice employed to render an immanent divinity accessible, forms of mystical-occultism acquired renewed importance at this time. Once again, this is not to discount the parallel rise of a moralistic preoccupation with correct belief and correct practice. Rather it is to suggest that whereas crises and social transformation my compel a move towards transcendentalist forms of religion (i.e. forms of religion that remove the divine out of reach of ritual and place a renewed emphasis on correct belief), forms of immanentist religion (i.e. forms of religion that bring God closer to earth and render divinity accessible via embodied ritual) also acquire an ineluctable attraction by virtue of their very tangibility and the immediacy of their redress<sup>50</sup>. That is to say, their power is predicated on the material fact of their making divine presence accessible and readily utilizable.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> The distinction between "immanence" and "transcendence" in my discussions of religion is derived from Alan Strathern's analysis of religion in "Introduction" and "Chapter 1" in *Unearthly Powers: Religious and Political Change in World History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Why then have the embodied articulations of sacred kingship, saintly hagiographies, hilye codices, and related talismanic objects that form the focus of this study not been better integrated into explanatory frameworks of religious change in this period? Apart from the aforementioned preoccupation with state-centric explanatory paradigms, the answer may also lie in how scholars of Ottoman and Islamic history have defined such categories as "religion", "literature", and "politics".

#### Bringing the occult and the material back in to definitions of Islam

That an exploration of mystical-occultism has not informed the overall picture of 17<sup>th</sup> century religious transformation is not surprising. As historian James Grehan pointed out recently, studies of religion in the Middle East have tended to display "an overriding emphasis on scripture, theology, official ritual, and perhaps law and jurisprudence"<sup>51</sup>. Such priorities moreover, according to historian Matthew Melvin-Koushki, derive in no small measure from analytical categories yielded by post-Enlightenment and colonialist forms of knowledge production<sup>52</sup>. Simply put, in an era where the category of religion was constituted according to a set of normative understandings conditioned by Western Protestantism, elements such as scripture, law, belief, and morality came to be the defining criteria for "religion". As a result, even when attempts are made to get at more vernacular forms of piety in the pre-modern Ottoman Empire, the focus has been on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> James Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints: Everyday Religion in Ottoman Syria and Palestine*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014). p.4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Is (Islamic) Occult Science Science?", *Theology and Science*, 2020, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 303-324.

forms of knowledge drawn directly from scriptural-doctrinal religion<sup>53</sup>. The result is a sense of "high" religion of theoretical sophistication, and a "low" religion that was a simplified and abridged version derived from the same epistemological framework.

That being said, significant strides have recently been made in problematizing and expanding the parameters of Islam. Shahab Ahmed, in his posthumously published *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* called for a conceptualization of Islam that took into account:

"The capaciousness, complexity, and, often, outright contradiction that obtains within the historical phenomenon that has proceeded from the human engagement with the idea and reality of Divine Communication to Muḥammad, the Messenger of God"<sup>54</sup>.

Whilst Ahmed does not directly engage with the magical and occult dimensions of Islam in a sustained way, his call to treat Islam as "as a human and historical fact" partakes in the same struggle to rescue Islam from anachronistic treatments that prune it down to purely canonical-textual sources. An almost parallel intervention by Michael Muhammad Knight makes the case more emphatically, though he recognizes the problem that inheres in continuing to use such terminology as "magic", "esotericism", and "the occult". Knight contends;

"The Christian crisis of the Reformation, along with increasing engagement of cultures beyond Christian-Jewish-Muslim milieus in the Age of Exploration, contributed toward the development of "religion" as a category. "Magic"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Terizoglu, "Where ilm-i hal meets catechism" and "Sunnah-minded Sufi Preachers". See also; Madeline C. Zilfi, "The Kadizadelis: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul", *ournal of Near Eastern Studies*, vol. 45, no. 4 (Oct., 1986), pp. 251-269.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016). p.6.

materialized as a separate entity from "religion" alongside the notion of a religion as a codified system of belief (and the newly recognized possibility of religions existing in the plural). The European study of religions in modernity, as filtered through Euro-Christian frameworks and prejudices, gave us a number of terms that can be easily historicized and deconstructed, but which we tend to take for granted as expressing empirically observed, concrete realities: "animism," "shamanism," "mysticism," "gnosticism," and of course "magic" and "religion" themselves." "55

As Knight goes on to argue however, the hermetically sealed nature of such categories tends to fall apart on closer examination. Even an exploration of narratives the Qur'an the most universally accepted source in debates over what is or is not Islamic—yields a complicated picture that at once affirms the magical prowess of prophets like Solomon or Moses, as well as the need for Muslims' to be aware of the tricks and stratagems of mere soothsayers<sup>56</sup>. Moreover, beyond simply the concepts and ideas it contains, the way the Qur'an itself was apprehended and indeed continues to be apprehended as God's uncreated speech endows its material codex with magico-thumaturgical powers that could affect real change in the world. In fact so pervasive have such prophylactic and healing powers of scripture been that modernizing reformers, rather than deny their existence, to have sought to explain these powers of the Qur'an through scientific reasoning, i.e. "by styling the magical as scientific" 57. Thus even with starting points such as the texts, objects, and theological positions that would enjoy mass acceptance across both the historical and contemporary Muslim world—to say nothing of the complex theosophical interpretations that were laid upon and are inseparable from them in historical terms—we are in the realm of the magical.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Michael Muhammad Knight, *Magic in Islam*, (New York: Tarcher Perigee, 2016), p.10-11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> See "Chapter 2: Magic in the Revealed Sources" in ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Yusuf Muslim Eneborg, The Quest for 'Disenchantment' and the Modernization of Magic", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, vol. 25 no. 4 (2014), pp. 419-432.

This last point also brings us onto the importance of objects and material artifacts in countering the disembodied and abstracted ways that Islam has been dealt with in the academy. In her introduction to a recent edited volume Anna Bigelow makes the case;

"The alterations and orientations engendered by objects and bodies can be understood as having hermeneutical capacities, not merely as expressions of belief, but also as orienting agents of the creative process that is Muslim becoming. This is particularly important if one insists that the arts of consciousness are engaged by all Muslims in diverse ways, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, class, or age. Theorizing "what Islam is" does not belong only to the text-producing and legal-minded. On the contrary...the selection of a garment or adornment, the consideration of an image or an object, the adaptations to built and natural environments, and the manipulation of materials of devotion or daily need, offer theories and interpretations of Islam as well. These objects embody notions of appropriate practice, enculturated norms, personal choices, markers of identity, and internalized values" services and interpretations.

In other words, how Muslims have engaged materials, objects, and built environments, not only those of the most lavish and the monumental quality but also those that pertain to the mundane and the everyday, has continually framed their understandings of Islam, as well as their identity as Muslims. Not merely the inert material instantiations of theologies and doctrines derived from textual religion, they are instead agentive entities that actively shape understandings of religion, and inform its ability to pattern individual and communal life during times of crisis. A saintly shrine for example is not only a material manifestation of the "idea" that the saint is the possessor of great power and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Anna Bigelow (ed.), *Islam through Objects*, (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), p.9. For a more wide ranging treatment of the potential and constraints of doing history with material things see; Leora Auslander, "Beyond Words", *The American Historical Review*, Volume 110, Issue 4, October 2005, p. 1015–1045.

religious authority, but also a site where particular kinds of exchange, labor, and devotion takes place, all of which then inform and perpetuate the status of the cult in question. And a book of talismanic verse is not merely a means to collate, preserve, and carry about its contents. Rather, through its bindings, its paper, its ink, and its size—its very thingness—it channels a supplicant's engagement with it in particular ways, and in so doing informs his/her subjectivity. Things therefore should matter profoundly to any historian of religion, as they did to the subjects of his or her scholarly investigations.

#### What does "literature" do?

There is however yet another conceptual stumbling block that has placed limits on what constitute appropriate sources for the study of religion in the field of Ottoman Studies, and which has consequently distorted our picture of religious change in the period, namely: a placement of genres into disciplinary silos. For example, a designation of royal portraiture and talismanic shirts as art and textiles and therefore the sole preserve of historians of art and textiles respectively has meant that their implication in the kinds of questions asked by historians of religion, i.e. questions of sacrality, kingship, and cosmic sovereignty are seldom, if ever, elaborated upon. In a similar vein, once they are recognized as poetry and placed under the ossifying ambit of "Turkish literature" or "dīvān poetry", the *hilye* are removed from the larger social, political, cultural, and religious context of their production. This privileging of what the late Walter Andrews called "the internal world of the poetry" as opposed to the question of "how that internal world operates to organize and clarify concerns of the broader world of Ottoman

society"<sup>59</sup> has meant that an appreciation of the *hilye's* capabilities as textual-talismans doing useful work in the world gets sidelined in favor of a focus on them as literary texts. This focus in the extant scholarship moreover, has often not gone beyond transcriptions of the Arabic script or beyond straightforward descriptions of the content. And as Oscar Aguirre-Mandujano has contended, when history and poetry have come together on rare occasions in the extant scholarship, the latter appears most often either as a mine of factual details or as a ready supply of pithy vignettes that embellish narratives already built up using archival and manuscript sources<sup>60</sup>. In other words, poetry figures only as the proverbial cherry on the cake.

Taking my cue from scholars of Ottoman poetry and history, I contend that we must ask what early modern Ottomans themselves sought to do with poetry. Sure enough, they did use poetry to amuse themselves and others in the context of a garden party or recite it as liturgy in a religious commemoration. However, beyond its aesthetic qualities, poetry could also be "a political act with restricted results and well-defined effects", i.e. a way for statesmen, scholars, sūfīs, and bureaucrats to appeal to powerful patrons, and through them shore up their social, political, and spiritual status within the increasingly defined imperial culture of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire. Success in these endeavors, as Aguirre-Mandujano has demonstrated, depended upon striking the right balance "a between genre and occasion, that is, between the use of the appropriate

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<sup>61</sup> Aguirre-Mandujano, p.62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Walter G. Andrews, *Poetry's Voice Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), p. 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup>Oscar Aguirre-Mandujano, "The Social and Intellectual World of a Fifteenth-Century Poem", *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, vol. 7, no. 2, Fall 2020, pp. 55-79. Another recent volume that embarks on a similar project is Christiane Czygan and Stephan Conermann (eds), *An Iridescent Device: Premodern Ottoman Poetry*, (Bonn University Press/V&R Unipress 2018).

discursive forms and the context of its delivery". 62 His work on the panegyric that Velīyyüdīn Aḥmed Pasha (d. 1496-97) wrote for the Zeynī şeyh Tācüddīn İbrāhīm in particular highlights how poetry could affirm spiritual connections between ṣūfīs and members of the Ottoman elite<sup>63</sup>. In a similar vein I ask: what does such a line of thinking do when it is brought to bear on the panegyric description of the body of the Prophet Muhammad? As I will argue in chapter 3, the hilye of Ḥākānī represents the use of poetry of praise to make an appeal, not to the more modest sovereignties of sultans and saints, but to the more unparalleled cosmic sovereignty of Muḥammad and in so doing invite his intercession into the earthly realm.

## **Otherworldly Sovereignties**

Implicit within the call to engage seriously with how early modern Ottomans appealed to the cosmic sovereignties of sultans, saints, and prophets is a call to extend our conception of sovereignty and politics beyond the realm of human to human interactions, and into the realm of human to meta-human interactions. As Marshall Sahlins—channeling A.M. Hocart—asserted,

"Even the so-called "egalitarian" or "acephalous" societies, including hunters such as the Inuit or Australian Aboriginals, are in structure and practice cosmic polities, ordered and governed by divinities, the dead, species-masters, and other such metapersons endowed with life-and-death powers over the human population. There are kingly beings in heaven where there are no chiefs on earth. Hobbes notwithstanding, the state of nature is already something of a political

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Ibid, p.57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Ibid.

state. It follows that, taken in its social totality and cultural reality, something like the state is the general condition of humankind. It is usually called "religion." <sup>64</sup>

These "metapersons" as Sahlins dubs them could be spirits, ghosts, deities, angels, ancestors or demons<sup>65</sup>. They could also be the cosmic spiritual entities of Prophets, their companions, saints, and other sūfī virtuosi who, in a time of extraordinary need, can respond to their supplicants by marshaling unearthly interventions into earthly affairs. By the amelioration of pain and suffering via the miraculous feat, such entities could thus effect the "state of exception" (the subversion of an established condition or order) that is the distinguishing characteristic of the sovereign<sup>66</sup>. As we have discussed however these sovereignties and the embodied and mystical-occultist means through which their powers were marshaled however do not figure into scholarship on the responses to the 17<sup>th</sup> century crisis, despite the fact that they were real enough for those of our historical interlocutors who lived during such times. Rather, as has already been mentioned, Ottoman responses to the crisis, owing perhaps to the modern tendency to cleave the heavens and the earth asunder, have only been examined from the perspective of the state, i.e. as a crisis of the tax base.

This dissertation, the first cultural history of the body and embodiment in Ottoman studies, is thus an exploration of the meaning sacred bodies came to acquire for early modern Ottomans during a period of unmitigated crisis, and as such it is history in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Marshall Sahlins, "The Original Political Society", *HAU: The Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, vol.7 no.2 (2017), pp. 92.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> For a historical overview as well as a new articulation of the relationship between sovereignty and the sacred see; Robert A. Yelle, *Sovereignty and the Sacred: Secularism and the Political Economy of Religion*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

anthropological vein. Taking inspiration from the recent trends in the humanistic and social sciences that merge politics and cosmology, as well as from new trends in the study of sacral kingship, Sufism, the occult, and material culture in Ottoman and Islamic history, I argue that in order to write truly emancipatory histories that do justice to the worldviews of our historical interlocutors, we must take their beliefs and their practices seriously. We must ask if human affairs can ever be free of non-human actors and forces, and if a politics without a cosmos is ever conceivable in any society regardless of period. In framing politics and sovereignty in cosmic terms in this way, I mount a challenge to contemporary scholarship that poses its questions, forms its categories, and conducts its analysis through the disenchanted lens of secular modernity. As part of this paradigm, politics is reduced to a sphere of primarily human give-and-take determined by the logics of reason, realpolitik or utility maximization, whilst cosmology is reduced to a mere list of celestial objects whose existence is posited but seldom incorporated into social and political analysis.<sup>67</sup> Within Ottoman studies, such assumptions have contributed, at one extreme, to an archival fetishism that sees the mining of objective facts and data from repositories of state bureaucratic documents as the primary way to study Ottoman

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> My work therefore takes inspiration from the ontological and new materialist turns in the humanistic and social sciences as exemplified by; Bruno Latour, "Whose Cosmos, Which Cosmopolitics? Comments on the Peace Terms of Ulrich Beck." Common Knowledge 10, no. 3 (2004): p. 450-62 and We Have Never Been Modern, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). Isabelle Stengers, "The Cosmopolitical Proposal" in Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy, Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (eds.), (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), p. 994-1003. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "Who is Afraid of the Ontological Wolf? Some Comments on an Ongoing Anthropological Debate", The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology, vol. 33, No. 1, (Spring 2015), pp. 2-17. Phillipe Descola, Beyond Nature and Culture, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014). Martin Holbraad and Morten Axel Pedersen. The Ontological Turn: An Anthropological Exposition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). Oliver J. T. Harris and John Robb, "Multiple Ontologies and the Problem of the Body in History." American Anthropologist 114, no. 4 (December 2012): p. 668-79. Mario Blasser. "Is Another Cosmopolitics Possible?" Cultural Anthropology 31, no. 4 (November 6, 2016): p. 545-70. David M. Gordon, Invisible Agents: Spirits in a Central African History, (Athens: Ohio State University Press, 2012). Luke Clossey, Kyle Jackson, Brandon Marriott, Andrew Redden, and Karin Vélez. "The Unbelieved and Historians, Part I: A Challenge." History Compass 14, no. 12 (2016): p. 594-602. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (eds). New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

political, social, and cultural history. On the other, it has contributed to a textual fetishism that relies on scriptural, normative and canonical sources to yield an ahistorical picture of religion devoid of political, ritualistic, and magical-occultist concerns. My project, which engages with under-utilized sources and approaches, breaks down these various binaries in an attempt to understand the less obvious ways Ottomans themselves conceived of crises, flux and conflict. In this endeavor, the body is my chosen analytical category since it is the body—in its various textual, artistic and performative iterations—that rendered apprehensible and observable the invisible workings of providence that underlay Ottoman conceptions of the social, religious, and political order.

# Chapter 1

*The Royal Body*: Imperial Crisis and the Sacral Kingship of Sulṭān Murād III (r.1574-1595)



(Fig 1.0) Murād III, Ķıyāfetü'l-insāniyye fī şemā'ili'l-'Osmāniyye, fol. 61b

## Introduction: To render a sulțān

Sometime in 1578, the powerful Ottoman grand vizier Ṣokollu Meḥmed Pasha (d. 1579) initiated a project that in the Ottoman context was unprecedented in terms of its form and content. He commissioned the *şehnāmeci*<sup>68</sup> Seyyid Lokmān (d.1601) and the court painter Nakkāş 'Osmān (active between 1565-1585) to produce a work containing the portraits and physiognomic descriptions of the twelve sulṭāns of the Ottoman dynasty. Titled the *Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye fī ṣemā'ili'l-'Osmāniyye* (Human Physiognomy in the Dispositions of the Ottomans), this work was arranged chronologically, beginning from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> An official tasked with producing literary histories of the Ottoman dynasty in the style of 9<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet Ferdowsī's *Shāhnāma* (The Persian Book of Kings). For more on the history of this office from the reign of Süleymān to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, see: Christine Woodhead, "An Experiment in Official Historiography: The Post of Şehnāmeci in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1555-1605", *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 1983, Vol. 75 (1983), pp. 157-182.

the dynasty's founder 'Osmān Gāzī (d.1326) and ending with the reigning sulṭān Murād III (d. 1595)<sup>69</sup>. As a number of historians of Ottoman art have shown, in addition to the physiognomic descriptions and paintings of the sulṭāns produced by Ottoman scholars and painters, Naṣṣṣṣ 'Osmān is also known to have consulted serial portraiture of the Ottoman sulṭāns printed in Lyon, Rome and Venice<sup>70</sup>. The portraits rendered on the basis of these sources were then checked against the royal portraits made within the circle of the Venetian painter Paolo Veronese (d. 1588), which had been painstakingly acquired by the grand vizier via the Venetian Bailo Niccolò Barbarigo in 1579<sup>71</sup>. Lokmān describes this process thusly;

"Because the physiognomies [semâ'iller] corresponding to the biographies of the holy-war conducting sultāns belonging to this renowned dynasty were not available, there was great distress. And because it was extremely necessary to find those famous works [āsār, portraits] in order to insert them in their proper place, this matter was promptly discussed with Master Osman, one of the court's portrait painters who is without equal in his age. And some were obtained but when it was verified that all of them were in the possession of Frankish masters, this matter was submitted to his highness the Grand Vizier. With his noble care the required portraits [suver], which were the best that one could desire, became accessible" 12.

Thus the production was patronized and facilitated at the highest levels of the Ottoman court and was a logistical operation on a truly international scale. Moreover, based on the number of extant manuscript copies of this work (twelve in total), as well as the proliferation of similarly rendered portraits of Murād III's successors at least until the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> My study is based on a facsimile version contained in *Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye fī şemā'ili'l-'Osmāniyye* (Human Physiognomy in the Dispositions of the Ottomans), (Istanbul: Istanbul Center for Historical Research, 1998).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Julian Raby "From Europe to Istanbul", p. 136-163 and Gülrü Necipoğlu, "The Serial Portraits of Ottoman Sulţāns in Comparative Perspective", p. 38-42 in *The Sulţān's Portraits: Picturing the House of Osman*, Selmin Kangal (ed.) (Istanbul: Işbank, 2000), and Emine Fetvacı, "From Print to Trace: An Ottoman Imperial Portrait Book and Its Western European Models", *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 95, No. 2 (June 2013), p.243-268.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> See all of the above for these paintings' European provenance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Translation and transliteration from Necipoğlu, p. 39. Also qtd in Fetvacı, p. 247.

mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, it is clear that this work had wide circulation and had even set the visual idiom for the Ottoman dynasty well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The questions that then arise are: why did the lack of such portraiture cause "great distress" at the court of Murād III? Why had Sokollu Meḥmed Pasha, Seyyid Lokmān and Nakkāş 'Osmān collaborated to painstakingly produce such an unprecedented work? And what was happening at the very heart of the empire to compel such experimentation with form and content?

This chapter argues that this work formed part of an elaborate discourse of divinized kingship that developed around the body of Murād III between 1574 and 1595 at a time of mounting imperial crisis and apocalyptic expectation. As a monarch cognizant of the arrival of the Islamic millennium (c. 1591-92) and of his own status within this cosmic scheme, Murād oversaw the development of courtly production that posited his body as the ultimate channel for divine grace and even as the axis mundi. This elevation of Murād to a place of cosmic significance however was hardly an expression of dynastic confidence. Rather, given the recent rise of powerful bureaucratic statesmen like Sokollu Mehmed as the *de facto* rulers of the empire, protracted and costly wars with both the Safavids and the Hapsburgs on the eastern and western fronts, historic currency debasement and inflation, civil unrest, and the development of an increasingly factional political environment at the center, the development of Murād's embodied sacred kingship ought to be read as a crisis-induced recalibration of the chief dynast's role in the Ottoman order: from a mobile and charismatic heroic holy warrior to primarily that of a palace-bound "icon", a cosmic mediator between the terrestrial and heavenly realms. In other words, it was in light of the sultan's own cosmic self-regard, his inherited loss of administrative power to his viziers, as well as the court's desperate need for a cosmic intercessor in a time of crisis and messianic expectation that a whole range of material and textual production centered on the body of the sultān emerged. In particular, we find in Murād's reign, (1) the unprecedented development of serial royal portraiture and physiognomy albums for court consumption (2) the composition of what amounts to a hagiographic collection of Murād's various "oneiric-embodied" encounters with God, His spirits and His angels, and lastly (3) the employment of occult and esoteric knowledge in the construction of the sultān's talismanic shirts that I argue conveyed his own embodiment and mastery of cosmic and occult knowledge. It is these diverse but interconnected efforts through which I trace the articulation of Murād's particular brand of kingship.

### Why the royal body? And why this particular sultan?

In his famous 1957 study titled, *The King's Two Bodies*, the historian Ernst Kantorowicz described the rule of the early modern English monarch as "an absolutism exercised, not by an abstract "State," as in modern times, or by an abstract "Law," as in the High Middle Ages, but by an abstract physiological fiction which in secular thought remains probably without parallel." <sup>73</sup> The "abstract physiological fiction" he was referring to was a political theological concept that maintained that the person of the king possessed a two-tiered regal body; a mortal, fallible human body, and an immortal, infallible and inherited *body politic*. This conception, which seeped into much bureaucratic language,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1957, [2016]). p. 4.

legal discourse and ceremonial practice in medieval and early modern Europe, allowed theologians and lawyers to, in the words of Stephen Greenblatt, "defeat death by extending [the King's] bodily existence far beyond carnal boundaries."<sup>74</sup> In other words. it allowed the institutions of government a semblance of continuity and order at the time of the monarch's demise, and in an age when states all but lacked modern methods of exercising social and political control. Now, whilst Kantorowicz's negation of the role of an abstract state in the exercise of political power in favor of a "mystic fiction" involving the body of the king might be bit of an exaggeration, the distinction he draws between an abstract state and the king's body, and the importance he gives to the latter as the linchpin of a comprehensive political theology are nevertheless crucial starting points for any endeavor seeking to understand the workings of power in the pre-modern era. As annales historian Marc Bloch argued, this was because; "in the eyes of his faithful subjects a king was, after all, something very different from a mere high official. He was surrounded by a 'veneration', which did not simply originate in the services he performed."<sup>75</sup> This being the case, Bloch asks; "how can we understand this feeling of loyalty which was so strong and so specific at certain periods in our history if, from the outset, we refuse to see the supernatural aura which surrounded these crowned heads?"76 In a similar vein to Kantorowicz, in his famous 1924 study on the healing powers associated with the thaumaturgical bodies of medieval English and French monarchs, he would go on to argue that in order to contribute to a "political history of Europe, in the widest and truest

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, "Introduction: Fifty Years of *The King's Two Bodies*", *Representations*. 106(1): p. 64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, (Montreal: Routledge and Kegan Paul, and McGill-Queen's University Press, 1924 [1973]), p. 4.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

sense of those words"<sup>77</sup> one had to move beyond consideration of "the most minute details of the workings of the administrative, judicial and financial organization which [kings] imposed on their subjects" and instead "fathom the beliefs and fables that grew up around the princely houses"<sup>78</sup>. In other words, to truly understand the operation of power in pre-modernity, one had to contend with the issue of *les rois thaumaturges* and a sacralizing "mystique of royalty" that surrounded them.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the datedness of Kantorowicz and Bloch's interventions, and despite the centrality of the sultān to virtually all Ottoman conceptions of political order, Ottomanists, eschewing what they saw as "good king, bad king history" and embracing the potential for social, economic, legal and cultural history afforded by the Ottoman archives, primarily viewed political history as the study of socio-economic groups, political and legal institutions, and power networks. All the while, the person of the sultān himself remained a secularized abstraction at the top of the "circle of justice" More recently however, studies of Ottoman political thought have begun to focus more intently on the mystique of the Ottoman sultān in the early modern period. Most notable

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup>Bloch, *The Royal Touch*, p.5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Bloch, *The Royal Touch*, p.4.

This clarion call to reinvigorate the study of kingship—the standard form taken by political leadership in societies able to sustain a state for most of human history—was issued recently by the late Marshall Sahlins and the late David Greaber in *On Kings*, (Chicago: Hau books, 2017), by Alan Strathern in *Unearthly Powers: Religious and Political Change in World History*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), and by both Strathern and A. Azfar Moin in the forthcoming edited volume; *Sacred Kingship in World History: Between Immanence and Transcendence*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022). I thank Azfar Moin for sharing an advance of the volume's introduction with me. <sup>80</sup> A standard summation of this Islamicate governmental ideal, dating back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE, goes: "The world is a garden, hedged about by sovereignty, Sovereignty is lordship preserved by law, Law is policy governed by the king, The king is a shepherd supported by the army, The army are soldiers fed by money, Money is revenue gathered by the people, The people are servants enfolded by justice, Justice is harmony, the well-being of the world". For a comprehensive treatment of this concept see: Linda T Darling, "Circle of Justice", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson, 2012.

in this regard has been the recent work of Christopher Markiewicz and Hüseyin Yılmaz, both of whom have charted how scholar-bureaucrats serving the Ottoman state drew on novel post-Mongol and Timurid vocabularies of rule to sacralize and mystify Ottoman notions of kingship during the course of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. 81 In their framings, what started off as a 14<sup>th</sup> century frontier principality buttressed by the legitimating ideologies of holy war, Oğuz Turkic lineage and descent from the Seljuks eventually gave way to a fully-fledged imperial project with universal ambitions in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. At the head of this project was the sultan, who after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, incorporation of Muslim polities in eastern Anatolia and the Arab lands between 1473 and 1517, and particularly in the midst of developing rivalries with the Safavid and Hapsburg sacral states, became the saintly possessor of the khilāfat-i raḥmānī (the Viceregency of God), the ṣāib-qirān (Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction), mujaddid (Renewer) and zill Allāh fī'l 'arż (the Shadow of God on Earth). As Yılmaz has argued, the "ever increasing numbers of such terms were not decorative titles to glorify the ruler but qualifiers to designate him in the idiom of a particular ideology, discipline, or tradition."82 As such these aforementioned titles—and in particular *şāhib-qirān* which connected the ruler to a felicitous planetary conjunction, most frequently of Jupiter and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> See; Christopher Markiewicz, *The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam: Persian Emigres and the Making of Ottoman Sovereignty*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), and Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018). These works have thus elaborated on the study on this topic by Cornell H. Fleischer. See; "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleymân" in *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, Gilles Veinstein (ed.), (Paris: La Documentation française, 1992), p. 159–77.

<sup>82</sup> Yılmaz, Caliphate Redefined, p. 145.

Saturn<sup>83</sup>—not only conveyed God's favor upon the house of 'Osmān, but also the millenarian and messianic components of 16<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman political thought.

Most of this scholarship on messianic and sacral sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire however has sought to analyze such royal titulature in abstract and disembodied ways using histories or treatises and texts on Ottoman and Islamic political theory alone. Moreover, the focus of this scholarly thrust has almost exclusively been on the early to mid 16th century reigns of Selīm I (r. 1512-1520) and his successor Süleymān (r. 1520-1566). Departing in crucial ways from the extant scholarship, this chapter analyzes a wider range of textual, artistic and material sources produced during the reign of Murād III (r. 1574-1595) in order to explore some of this courtly titulature's more concrete aspects; i.e. the demonstration of this sultān's body itself, (a) as an outward manifestation of his saintly inner disposition and divinely-favored status, and (b) as the axis mundi mediating divine truths and blessings from the heavens to the earth. Despite the fact that Murād's reign coincided with the actual Islamic millennium (c. 1591-92), and despite the unprecedented degree to which he sought to cultivate an image of himself as a divinely ordained sultān-saint, only historian Özgen Felek has discussed the elaboration of Murād III's royal-saintly persona in any detail<sup>84</sup>. This neglect may have something to do with the tendency to view the sedentary, reclusive, and by all accounts epileptic Murād as a weak and unlikely candidate for the study of Ottoman sacral kingship, especially when compared to the more militarily successful reigns of his predecessors. I will go on to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> For more on this title see; N.S. Chann, "Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction: Origins of the Ṣāḥib-Qirān", *Iran & the Caucasus*, vol. 13, No. 1 (2009), pp. 93-110.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> See in particular; Chapters 4 and 5 in Özgen Felek, "Recreating Image and Identity: Dreams and Visions as a Means of Murād III's Self Fashioning", (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: University of Michigan, 2010).

argue, this neglect, which results from a dominant scholarly tendency to view the Süleymanic model of sacral kingship as an ideal type against which all others must be judged, tends to confuse two distinct modes of divinized kingship arising out of distinct circumstances and imperatives. To not rectify this neglect it is to miss a crucial opportunity to examine these imperatives and the complex ways in which rulership and the cosmos were joined together in the crisis-ridden decades of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.

It is my contention that the case of Murād III provides a unique window into the wholesale transformation of Ottoman kingship in the later part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Drawing upon the historian Alan Strathern's recent theoretical bifurcation of divinized kingship, I see this transformation as a move away from an earlier "heroic" mode that was predicated upon a personalized charisma created through military leadership on the plain of battle, and towards a later "cosmic" mode that was predicated entirely upon "the presentation of the king as a ritual pivot, an intermediary between human society and the divine forces that govern its affairs". \*\*S\* The latter effect however was not primarily achieved through the mere employment of titulature plucked from tomes of Ottoman and Islamic political thought. Rather, it was the product of stylized, experimental and repetitive processes of ritual representation centered on the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere employment of the body of the king. \*\*Endowed through the mere em

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup>Strathern, *Unearthly Powers*, p.164-189. This analysis is further developed by Strathern along with A. Azfar Moin in the forthcoming: *Sacred Kingship in World History: Between Immanence and Transcendence*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup>A. Azfar Moin has also cogently argued in his influential study of sacral and messianic kingship in Mughal India and Safavid Iran that beyond any reworking of law or promulgation of doctrine, the discourses around the monarch's body *themselves* were of fundamental import to the elaboration of his mystique, see Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), p. 23.

the palace—and through his objectification into a static idol straddling both the terrestrial and heavenly realms. In some senses this process can be seen as an inevitable feature of periods that arrived after extraordinary territorial expansion and growth have given way to a certain stasis characterized by imperial consolidation and bureaucratic expansion. At such moments, courtly ritual and representation must body forth the divinization that was plainly evident in earlier "heroic" deeds<sup>87</sup>. Applying this explanatory scheme to the Ottoman 16<sup>th</sup> century, we can broadly consider Selīm I to be enacting a heroic mode of kingship based on his conquest of the Arab lands in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. His son Süleymān in the early part of his reign meanwhile enacted a more hybridized form of heroic-cosmic kingship based upon both his leadership of campaigns of conquest as well as his ad-hoc experimentation with cosmic and messianic forms of imperial ideology<sup>88</sup>. In Murād's reign the shift towards the ritual-cosmic mode is completed, and the leadership of military campaigns gives way to a performance of cosmic kingship solely from the confines of the palace. This scheme thus allows us to see Murād's preference for a palace-bound existence as not simply a matter of personal inclinations and circumstances as much of the scholarship has attested, but rather as a deliberate strategy of cosmic kingship.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> See the helpful tabulation in Strathern, *Unearthly Powers*, p. 165.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> These categorizations are not intended to be absolute statements about the kingship style of these sovereigns across the full length of these reigns, but rather to serve as helpful heuristics. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that Selīm I was also styled as a saint-king during his reign, whilst the later part of Süleymān's reign saw him adopt a mode of "righteous kingship" that was characterized less by occultist experimentation and more by the lead he took in codifying dynastic law and embracing a more Sunniexoteric ethos. For more on the specifics of occultist imperialism during the reigns of Süleymān, see: Cornell H. Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah" and "Shadow of Shadows: Prophecy in Politics in 1530s Istanbul", *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1&2, 2007, p. 51-62.

Crucially however, the embodied performance of Murād III's cosmic kingship that forms the subject of this chapter cannot be simply understood as the inevitable structural consequence of what came before. I argue that the marked emphasis on merging the cosmos and the royal body during his reign were also compelled by factors particular to this period, namely; the sense of apocalyptical anxiety and messianic expectation attending the onset of the Islamic millennium in 1591-92, a pervasive sense of crisis at all levels of state and society in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, the political problems posed by Murād's lack of public visibility and participation in military campaigns for certain sections of the elite, and widespread rumors about his affliction with epilepsy and other bodily ailments. The importance of these particular contingencies is underscored by the fact that the similarly sedentary and palace-bound reign of his father Selīm II (r. 1566-1574)—which bridged the heroic-cosmic kingship of Süleymān and the purely cosmic kingship of Murād III—did not witness the degree of consternation about the sultān's role in the imperial order nor the unprecedented patronage and cultivation of the occult sciences that would transpire during the subsequent reign of his son<sup>89</sup>. Thus the articulation of Murād's embodied kingship was influenced by many contradictory and diverse pressures, and was directed at an equally diverse audience.

Whilst such an embodied treatment of sacral kingship has not yet been conducted in the field of Ottoman Studies, I hold such an embodied approach to be indispensible to any true understanding of sovereignty since it allows us to focus on what has recently been termed "the scaffolding of sovereignty", i.e. the "aesthetic, artistic, theatrical and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Hakan Karateke, "On the Tranquility and Repose of the Sulţān" in *The Ottoman World*, Christine Woodhead (ed.) (London and New York: Routledge, 2012, p. 117-118.

symbolic structures" by which sovereignty—itself fragile and under constant threat of erasure from within and without—is established and perpetuated<sup>90</sup>. This was especially true in the early modern period, a time when ideas of universal empire became revivified following the establishment and subsequent collapse of the world empires of the Mongols and Amīr Timūr. Such universalizing ambitions then entailed the articulation of novel political theologies that drew and built upon already-existing nomenclatures and practices of saintly power drawn from theosophical Sufism, Shi'ism and the Turko-Mongol tradition. 91 The articulation of sovereignty in this period therefore came to acquire unprecedented mystical-cosmological and messianic dimensions, all of which had to be articulated, almost by their very nature, via the performance of the monarch's body. As mentioned earlier, during times of imperial expansion and growth a significant portion of this performative work is done in an ad-hoc fashion on the field of battle, leaving little in the way of an observable historical record. In times of crisis that follow periods of stasis and consolidation however, the complex web of pulleys and strings that enable the ritual drama of sovereignty to be staged at court comes sharply into focus.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, , Stefanos Geroulanos, and Nicole Jerr, "Editor's Introduction" in *The Scaffolding of Sovereignty: Global and Aesthetic Perspectives on the History of a Concept*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Early Modern Islamicate Empire: New Forms of Religiopolitical Legitimacy", *The Wiley Blackswell History of Islam*, Armando Salvatore, Roberto Tottoli (eds.), (Hoboken NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2018), p. 351-375.

Between Heroes and Cosmocrats: The Embodied Sacral Kingship of Murād III in the Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye fī şemā'ili'l-'Osmāniyye of Seyvid Lokmān

The central point being advanced by both the textual and visual components of the Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye was that the members of the Ottoman dynasty were uniquely fit to rule by virtue of their possession of superlative qualities, which were physically manifest on their bodies and which were the consequence of their august and continuous lineage<sup>92</sup>. By way of a preface, the author of the work, Lokman, also provided a short treatise on physiognomy that outlined the utility of this science and explained what each body part conveyed in terms of the possessor's internal character<sup>93</sup>. Taken together, the portraits and the physiognomies of the sultans thus provide an encoded discourse of embodied kingship for the Ottoman dynasty. However as the culmination point of the work and its entire raison d'être, it is the lengthy entry on Murād III that provides the key towards understanding the work as a whole. Before exploring the particular details of this verbal entry and its accompanying portraiture, a brief sketch of the particular political, cultural

As is well attested to in the extant literature, Murād was a stay-at-home monarch who had never led the Ottoman army on campaign. His public appearances in the capital moreover were also few, and it was even said that in the final two years of his reign, he did not leave Topkapı palace at all<sup>94</sup>. Whilst this immobility stood in sharp contrast to the highly mobile military careers of Selīm I and Süleymān, it was still in line with the largely

and intellectual circumstances of his reign is warranted.

 <sup>92</sup> Fetvacı, "From Print to Trace", p. 243.
 93 Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye, fols. 7a-18b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Hakan Karateke, p. 117-118.

sedentary reign of Murād III's father Selīm II (r. 1566-1574). And yet it was former's immobility and public absence in particular that drew sharp criticism from contemporary historians like Mustafā 'Ālī and Selānikī. Responding to this disparity, Hakan Karateke has recently argued that this was likely due to the fact that the costly protracted wars of his reign did not result in clear victories<sup>95</sup>. In a similar vein, Christine Woodhead has written about how the expanding powers of the imperial bureaucracy, the loss of expansionary momentum in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, and a pervasive sense of imperial decline had led to debates about the precise role of the monarch in the functioning of Ottoman government<sup>96</sup>. In other words, the developing military and fiscal crises that were beginning to be felt quite early in Murād III's reign may have compelled a need at court for alternative ways render him visible and present. It is perhaps no coincidence then that the reign of Murād III marked, in the words of Filiz Çağman, "the zenith of royal portraiture", with the sultān being rendered by all the major court painters of that era, namely; Nakkāş 'Osmān, Nakkāş 'Alī, Ḥasan Pasha and Aḥmed Nakṣī. 97 This particular sultān's public invisibility thus stands in stark contrast to the proliferation of his portraits at the court of Istanbul and well as in Europe.

The lack of participation in campaigns moreover was not only seen as a problem for the fortunes of the army in a context where the sheer royal presence was believed to bring thaumaturgical benefits but also for court historians whose work had until recently relied

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>95</sup> Ibid, p. 117.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Christine Woodhead, "Murād III and the Historians: Representations of Ottoman Imperial Authority in Late 16th-Century Historiography" in *Legitimizing the order: the Ottoman rhetoric of state power Legitimizing the Order: the Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, Hakan T. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (eds.), (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p.87.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Filiz Çağman, "The Zenith of Royal Portraiture: Murād III" in *The Sulṭān's Portraits: Picturing the House of Osman*, (Istanbul: Işbank, 2000), p. 213.

heavily on casting the sultān in the role of warrior for religion and the state<sup>98</sup>. Since the sedentary and scholarly Murad did not fit this model, evidence of his cosmic status had to be read not in his military deeds, but on his very body. This shift is observable within the whole literary output of the office of the sehnāmeci under Selīm II and particularly under Murād III when compared to works produced under Süleymān. Whereas the latter focused on the warrior sultan's movements whilst on a military campaigns, the former became increasingly focused on the very person of the sultan himself. For example, Lokmān's three-part *Şehinşahname* (The Book of the Emperor) on the reign of Murād III, produced in 1581, 1592 and 1596, narrates military and political developments from the vantage point of Istanbul and begins with a large introductory section devoted to Murād III's accession ceremonies. Moreover, in the miniatures, the sultan is frequently depicted giving an audience to diplomatic envoys and other state functionaries whilst enthroned in Istanbul<sup>99</sup> A similar emphasis on a sedentary ruler conducting a detached form of oversight from on high and embodying the essential characteristics and paraphernalia of a cosmic pivot is also manifest in a treatise on the distinguishing qualities of the Ottoman dynasty by Mehmed Talīkīzāde (şehnāmeci from 1591-1600)<sup>100</sup> titled the Şemā'ilname-i  $\bar{A}l$ -i 'Osmān (The Book of the Distinguishing Features of the Ottoman Dynasty), which by its very title emphasizes the innate physical and personality characteristics (semā'il) of Ottoman dynasts as opposed to their noteworthy military campaigns 101. Thus the emphasis of earlier *şehnāme* works on the ruler as  $\dot{g}\bar{a}z\bar{i}$  (holy warrior) is later replaced by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> Fetvacı, "From Print to Trace", p. 247.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> Woodhead, "Murād III and the Historians", p. 91-92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> See; Christine Woodhead, "Talīqīzāde Meḥmed el-Fenārī", *Historians of the Ottoman Empire Project*, Cemal Kafadar, Hakan Karateke and Cornell Fleischer (eds.), accessed at:

https://ottomanhistorians.uchicago.edu/en/historians/80

Woodhead, "Murād III and the Historians", p.93-94.

an emphasis on the ruler as "the *padişah*, the emperor, a more elevated and less tangible figure"<sup>102</sup> whose very presence at the head of things was indispensible to the social order and the proper functioning of the state. In other words, what the larger textual-artistic corpus produced during Murād III's reign is doing is ossifying and immobilizing him in a dense network of ceremonial, regalia and symbolism.

Crucially however, as my discussion of Murād III's entry in the *Ktyāfetü'l-insāniyye* as well as the rest of this chapter will demonstrate, this shift towards the ritual representation of sulṭān Murād's body was not only a pragmatic search for content on the part of courtiers in the face of this sulṭān's many idiosyncracies and deviations from tradition as some of the scholarship attests<sup>103</sup>. Rather I view this and other efforts as structural components of the particular kind of sovereignty. The *Ktyāfetū'l-insāniyye*, whilst drawing from European models of visual representation, was actually in service of a specific genre of embodied sacral kingship that had acquired widespread currency in the heavily mystical-occultist milieu of the post-Mongol and post-Timurid Islamicate world, and was particularly relevant at the close of the first Islamic millennium<sup>104</sup>.

We now move on to the written entries of *Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye*, which have been overlooked in the extant scholarship as either mere verbal descriptions of the comparatively better studied accompanying portraiture or as straightforward recollections of Lokmān's physiognomic taxonomies explicated at the start of the text. As I will demonstrate

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Millennium see chapter 5 in A. Azfar Moin, The Millennial Sovereign, p. 144-182.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Woodhead, "Murād III and the historians", p. 91.

<sup>103</sup> See; Fetvacı, "From Print to Trace", p.247, and Woodhead, "Murād III and the Historians", p.87. 104 For the parallel case of the embodied sacral kingship of Mughal Emperor Akbar at the turn of the

however, they are more detailed and symbol-laden than has been previously assumed and function as highly elaborate discourses on embodied cosmic kingship. The entries for the last three sultans also reflect the larger shift from heroic to cosmic modes of legitimation that we have already seen between *şehnāme* works produced under Süleymān and Murād III. For example, whereas the entries on Selīm I, Süleymān and Selīm II describe their various military conquests in some detail, the greater part of the entry for Murād is more heavily concerned with the semiotics of his body, his physical strength, his skill in arms, his saintly disposition and the extent of his divine knowledge. With regards to his features and what they denoted, Lokman poetically narrates that Murad had an appearance more luminous than saintly light, that his complexion was redder than the rose, that his blessed face was round and well portioned, that his breast was clear and pure, that his luminous inner consciousness was as brighter and more translucent than golden glass, and that his outward and inner aspects were illuminated by divine knowledge<sup>105</sup>. Moreover, some features like his cheeks and his forehead, which are qualified as "traces of the caliphate" and "denoting the sultanate", were described as "flashing with a brighter radiance than the Sun" and "being akin to the ascent of felicitous fortune" respectively 106. Thus far from explicating his features in the straightforwardly descriptive manner of a physiognomy treatise, Lokmān employs several qualifiers and mystical-poetic symbolism to project Murād III's body as proof that his disposition was that of a true, saintly and divinely sanctioned sovereign.

And while Lokman praises Murad III's maintenance of the army, no single victory or

<sup>105</sup> Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye, fols. 60a-61a.

<sup>106</sup> ibid, fol.60a.

conquest is mentioned. Rather, martial prowess is also discussed as a quality of the sultān himself and demonstrated by recourse to his bodily abilities. For example, Murād III's skill in riding is described as being akin to those of the famous heroes of the *Shāhnāmeh*, namely; Sām, Nerīmān and Rüstem<sup>107</sup>, while his skill in arms is described in the following manner;

"His heroic sword arm in terms of skill could slice open the button from Orion's belt, and could seize the very topknot of the Pleiades constellation, [and] could render the muslin-cloth covering of the moon disheveled".

Earlier in the text, Murād is also described as imparting his knowhow of fighting to his troops directly in the following manner;

"After the Imperial council whose mark was justice, he often gave currency to the campaigns of holy war in a kingly manner at the felicitous moment of an auspicious conjunction, being as he was without parallel in the mannerisms that comprised the tradition of heroism and in accordance with the very image of the verse "rouse the believers to fight" [Qur'ān 8:65]. He put useful troops and celebrated warriors in the testing ground of endurance and for the purposes of resolve and war, he demonstrated the ways of perseverance [in the art of] riding [literally: mounting and dismounting]. And he gave limitless gifts, presents honorific robes and approval to each and all according to their skill and merit and this encouraged the troop faction and rendered them joyous from the charming profits accrued. (When) the clever-handed and lion-clawed archers could not draw their training bows (kepāde), that young beauty (nihāl) with the golden crown guided the ascent/journey (mi'rāc) of the flying arrow to the target with the powerful strength of (his) arm."

Thus Lokmān not only depicts Murād III as endowed with extraordinary strength, heroism and skill, but also as a monarch who played an active part in keeping the soldiery

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> Ibid, fol. 60b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> Ibid, fol. 61a. Ottoman Turkish: *Bāzū-yı mubārızāneleri hünerbāzlıkta cevzānın kemerinden girah açup ve pervīnin sorgucun kapub kamerin destārın perīṣān ederdi.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> Ibid, fols. 58a-58b. Ottoman Turkish for last sentence and translation: *Kemān-keṣān-ı tīz-dest [u] ṣir-çenk kepādesin çekemeyip, bāzū-yı kadr-i kudretle nihāl-i zerrīn-tāc āmācda tīr-i hadenk-perrānıŋ mi rācin buldurub*. I thank Dr. Helga Anetshofer-Karateke for assistance with this last sentence of the passage.

in good form by directly imparting his martial knowledge to them via his own embodied performances and encouraging the most promising amongst them. In contrast with earlier entries, Lokmān also devotes a considerable amount of space to the royal ceremonial and paraphernalia. Early on in the entry for example, Murād III's accession, his largesse and his dispatching of 'adāletnāmes<sup>110</sup> to the far-flung corners of the empire are described<sup>111</sup>. And in the section where he writes about the sultān's dress and turban, Lokmān also describes how "as per the ready and existing ceremonial rites of sultān Süleymān, [and] for the necessity of the sultānate in countering its heretical enemies, he would pass with ornament and decoration in the course of procession and spectacle"<sup>112</sup>. He also discusses Murād's possession sword of the Prophet Muḥammad (a relic which had come into Murād's possession sometime after his coronation) and cites it as a reason for the resilience and potency for the sultān's army.<sup>113</sup>

Apart from lending strength and encouragement to his troops by demonstration of his own martial tactics, Murād III is also shown enacting other bodily performances in the *Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye* that were depicted as aiding his army on the battlefield. In the words of Lokmān;

"With the wish of being rewarded and rendered akin to the meaning of the verse "he who does good is for himself" [Qur'ān 45:15] he became immersed in nightly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> This was a written declaration ceremoniously issued by an incoming sultān upon the start of his reign. In it he vows to uphold justice, order, prosperity and security in the empire. See; Halil Inalcik, "Adaletname" in "*TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* 1. cilt, 1988, p. 346-347.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> Ibid, fols. 57a-57b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> Ibid, fol. 62a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> Ibid, fol. 59a.

seclusions and performed the sanctioned supplications of *zikr* and worship, and from the blessings thereof the result of the tradition "whoever is for God, God is for him" became manifested [and] his functionaries of state became victorious and his enemies marred by misfortune were defeated."<sup>114</sup>

What we encounter here is another image of Murād III: that of a sacral sovereign channeling God's blessings into the earthly realm through such embodied acts as "nightly seclusions", *zikr* (vocal remembrance of God common amongst ṣūfīs) and ritual supplications. This passage thus seems to counter the critics who bemoaned Murād III's absence from the Persian campaign as detrimental to the war effort by suggesting that the thaumaturgical benefits of the sulṭān's secluded supplications, as opposed to his actual presence on the battlefield, had aided his troops in battle. Why though would Murād III's prayers and supplications in particular have had this much force? As Lokmān stresses right at the outset of his entry on the former,

"In the multitudes of young men, an ascetic, scrupulously pious, just and lawconscious exalted Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction [sāhib-qirān] such as [Sultān Murād III] could not be found in this era. The seat of the Caliphate [hilāfat] was particular and restricted to this personage beyond description, and he revivified the glorious traditions of his namesake and ancestor from the house of 'Osmān, the miracle-denoting Hudāvandigar [Sultān Murād Ġāzī], on him be the mercy of the Lord of forgiveness...The voice of his justice covered the earth and always his royal attention augmented towards God. Always, all his exalted deeds and actions were in accordance with the law of the master of the universe [Muhammad] may lofty prayers be upon him, [and] he did not commit to anything save the sherbet of worship on the carpet of eager felicity. Because his boon companions were knowledgeable in mystical matters (ehl-i 'irfān) and his confidants were the righteous and the seyhs of the time, the pearls of fragrant advice from ocean-like sermons had an influence on his intellect-endowed ears and the benefits of jewel-like sayings impacted this scholar amongst men, and all amongst the young and old adorned and embellished the tablet of their deeds with the jewels of the tradition, "People follow the faith of their Kings." 115

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> Ibid, fol. 58a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> Ibid, fols. 57a-58a.

Murād III then was no ordinary monarch. By virtue of being "ascetic, scrupulously pious, just and law conscious", and by virtue of consorting with mystics and the righteous, he alone possessed "the seat of the Caliphate" and the title of "the Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction", i.e. he was divinely ordained Sulṭān with a deep knowledge of esoteric and exoteric religion. As such, he had acquired a special proximity to God and he alone could marshal divine blessings to aid his servants.

It is also worth considering here whether Lokmān's paramount concern with Murād III's bodily features and capabilities may also have been compelled by a need to depict him as the very picture of masculine good health and thus counter rumors about his epilepsy. The possibility must be entertained since an entrenched view of Murād III as a sedentary ruler would only come to crystallize later in light of retrospective assessments of the entirety of his almost twenty-one year reign (and in particular, his last two years on the throne), whereas Lokmān's work was commissioned and executed quite early in 1578-1579. Rumors about Murād III's affliction with epilepsy however seem to already be circulating quite early in his reign. For example, Salomon Schweigger (d.1622), a German Lutheran theologian and Hapsburg diplomat who had resided in Istanbul between 1577 and 1581, would note in his *Ein newe Reiss Beschreibung auss Teutschland nach Constantinopel und Jerusalem*, published in 1608, that Murād III was "possessed by terrible epilepsy, and therefore preferred a silent, calm life, far from

people's view"<sup>116</sup>. In his 1588 work on Ottoman history titled; *Annales Sultanorum Othmanidarvm, a Turcis sua lingua sripti,* the German humanist Johannes Löwenklau (Leunclavius) (d. 1594), who had accompanied the Hapsburg embassy to the Sublime Porte headed by Heinrich von Liechtenstein between 1584-1585, also recalls an episode from 1583 in which Murād was taken over by an epileptic fit whilst riding a horse, fell down and was almost considered to be dead<sup>117</sup>. The English historian Richard Knolles (d. 1610) in his 1603 *Generall Historie of the Turkes* reproduces Löwenklau's observations of this incident in English, which reads;

"This Summer also Amurath disporting himselfe with his Muts [mutes], was almost dead. These Muts are lustie strong fellowes, depriued of their speech; who neuerthelesse by certain signes can both aptly expresse their owne conceits, and vnderstand the meaning of others: these men for their secrecie are the cruell ministers of the Turkish tyrants most horrible commaunds, and therefore of them had in great regard. With these Muts mounted vpon faire and fat but heavie and vnreadie horses; was Amurath, vpon a light and readie horse, sporting himselfe (as the manner of the Turkish emperours is) riding sometime about one, sometime about another, and striking now the horse now the man at his pleasure; when suddenly he was taken with a fit of the falling sicknesse, his old disease, and so falling from his horse, was taken vp for dead: insomuch, that the Ianizaries supposing him to have beene indeed dead, after their wonted manner fell to the spoyling of the Christians and Iewes, and were proceeding to further outrages, had not their Aga or captaine to restraine their insolencie, to the terror of the rest hanged vp one of them taken in the manner, and certaine others in the habit of Ianizaries. Neuerthelesse, *Amurath* shortly after recouered againe, and to appease that rumour of his death (openly vpon their Sabboth, which is the friday) rid from his pallace to the temple of Sophia; where I with many others saw him (saith Leunclauius) his countenance yet all pale and discoloured." <sup>118</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> Qtd in Özgen Felek, "Epilepsy as a contagious disease in the late medieval and early modern world" in *Plague and Contagion in the Islamic Mediterranean*, Nükhet Varlık (ed.), (Kalamazoo and Bradford: Arc Humanities Press, 2017), p. 173.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup>For the Latin text see; Johannes Löwenklau, *Annales Sultānorum Othmanidarvm, a Turcis sua lingua sripti,* 1588 [1596] p. 91. Accessed at:

https://archive.org/details/bub gb UK6m8j78e9IC/page/n93/mode/2up

For more on Löwenklau see; Höfert, Almut, "Hans Löwenklau", in: *Christian-Muslim Relations 1500 - 1900*, David Thomas (ed.), Brill Online, and Schönauer, Sonja, "Leunclavius, Johannes", in: *Brill's New Pauly Supplements I - Volume 6 : History of classical Scholarship - A Biographical Dictionary*, English edition by Chad M. Schroeder (2014).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> Richard Knolles, *The generall historie of the Turkes from the first beginning of that nation to the rising of the Othoman familie*, 1603, Early English Books Online, Text Creation Partnership, accessible at: <a href="https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A04911.0001.001/1:49.2?rgn=div2;view=fulltext">https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A04911.0001.001/1:49.2?rgn=div2;view=fulltext</a>, p. 977.

What is interesting within this account is not only an early confirmation of one of Murād's epileptic episodes, but also its recollection of the social unrest that immediately followed. If this passage in Knolles and Löwenklau is correct, it suggests that word of Murād's fits and his potential demise was prone to leaking out of the confines of the palace and creating a febrile political situation in the capital, all of which prompted an immediate response from the palace in the form of a royal appearance at the Hagia Sophia. Yet this was not the only time that Knolles mentioned Murād III's affliction with epilepsy, which he dubs the sultān's "old disease". In fact, he mentions it several times and even cites it to explain why Murād III, at the outset of the 1578 campaign against the Safavids, "was determined not to goe himselfe in person with his army, but to send one of his worthiest Captains in his stead."119 That this causal connection between Murād III's epilepsy and his inertia was also widely rumored amongst the Ottoman elite is evidenced by a short addition to the Künhü'l-ahbār (Essence of Histories) titled "On the tranquility and repose of the sultān" that historian and bureaucrat Mustafā 'Ālī (d. 1600) added to his magnum opus after the former's death in 1595. In it, 'Ālī rejected the rumor that the sultān was afflicted by epilepsy and thus could not travel, and opted instead to argue—by way of letter analysis of Murād's name—that the Sultān's personal substance ( $z\bar{a}t$ ) was inclined towards a sedentary life<sup>120</sup>. Whatever the actual veracity of 'Ālī's claims, as Karateke has argued, his "dismissal of the claim that his suffering from epilepsy was an explanation for Murād's reluctance to go on campaign is clear evidence that the issue was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> Ibid, p. 926.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> Karateke, "On the tranquility and repose of the Sulṭān", p. 117.

controversial and that various explanations were being openly debated"<sup>121</sup>. It is my contention that the *Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye* and the discourse around Murād's body it contains can also be read as a direct response to such political anxieties about his health.

The accompanying portraiture (see cover image) also betrays the imperatives of cosmic sacral kingship. This was firstly because whereas earlier models of royal painting focused more on the sultans' movement on campaigns of conquest amognst a throng of courtiers and soldiers, the portraiture of the Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye serves to remove any sense of movement or emotion, and renders these sultans akin to static icons. That is to say, they are deprived of the characteristics that could betray their humanity and are placed apart from the rest of human society. The result is that they are effectively rendered as sacred. In Strathern's words, heroic "celeritas" is replaced with cosmic "gravitas" 122. This is particularly true for the portrait of the work's patron Murād III, in which his face has been rendered as possessing almost perfect symmetry and his individual features as being of the most perfect of proportions, all of which carried positive implications for the soul within the Ottoman and Islamic physiognomic tradition<sup>123</sup>. Moreover, Murād III's portrait is unique amongst all twelve portraits in terms of its distinctive paraphernalia. Indeed, whereas most other portraits depict the subject as either holding a handkerchief or a flower, Murād III is the only sultān depicted as holding both a flower and a book, both symbols of his refined scholarly and literary sensibility. Even Bayezid II, who had also famously been a prolific bibliophile, patron of the occult sciences, and man of letters is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Ibid

<sup>122</sup> Strathern, *Unearthly powers*, p. 167.

<sup>123</sup> Kıyāfetü 'l-insāniyye, fol. 61b.

deprived of this latter prop. 124 This suggests that the book, which scholars have conjectured to be the Qur'an, was meant to convey a quality particular to Murad, perhaps even his mastery and patronage of the divine and occult sciences. It could also be a symbolic nod to the Qur'an copy of the prophet Muhammad, which Murad claims to have received in a dream and which is explicitly identified as representing "the knowledge of the prophet" (more on this later)<sup>125</sup>. Also unique amongst all the portraits (save that of Bayezid I, "the thunderbolt") is the inclusion by Murād's side of a scimitar, which not only reinforced Murad's claims to martial prowess but could also hint at Murād's possession of Muḥammad's sword. As we saw, this is a relic that also figures in the written entry and as we shall see, it also serves as a mark of investiture in one of his dream accounts<sup>126</sup>. Read together, the Our'an and the scimitar thus convey Murad's position as the master of both religion and the state (dīn u devlet). Last but not least, Murād's magnificent turban is the only one to contain bejeweled aigrettes, which could possibly denote his status as the reigning sultān. All in all, the whole portrait serves to depict Murād as healthy, robust and possessed of superlative features, all of which were signs of divine favor and his status as a saint-king.

Moreover, the portraiture was also intended to be evocative of dynastic continuity over two and a half centuries. Such a message comes across most clearly when the portraits are considered together in the chronological order (from 'Osmān Gāzī to Murād III) in which they are arranged in the *Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye*. Moreover, slight variations in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> Ibid, fol. 41b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Kitābü'l-menāmāt: Sultan III. Murad'ın Rüya Mektupları, Özgen Felek (ed.) (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2012), fol. 96a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> Ibid, fol. 75a.

costume, physical features, paraphernalia and backdrops between sultans also serve to stress continuity whilst, at the same time, preventing the cascade of portraits from coalescing into an undifferentiated collection of generic images. 127 The need to visually render two and half centuries of uninterrupted succession by recourse to sultanic bodies however is not a reflection of elite confidence in a fully-fledged imperial ideology centered on the dynastic family. Rather, it is reflective, ironically, of a deep sense of anxiety—pervasive amongst all levels of Ottoman ruling establishment at this time—that the various established customs of the empire were being abandoned and institutional decay was setting in. Read in this way, the first eleven serial portraits and their physiognomic descriptions serve to establish a set a of aesthetic properties of the sultān as embodied manifestations of the Ottoman political order, before the final portrait and physiognomic entry of Murād III (the ultimate patron and focus of the work) is unveiled and posited as continuing, and in some—essentially non-military—senses surpassing, the examples set by his ancestors<sup>128</sup>. This need to stress continuity and stability by recourse to the sultanic body is also manifest in the employment of the same serial sultanic portraiture in the Zübdet'üt-tevārīh (Essence of Histories), a universal history from the dawn of time to the Ottomans, composed by Lokman for Murad in 1583<sup>129</sup>. As we will see in the next section, Murād's Kitābü'l-menāmāt (Book of Dreams) features certain dream narratives where embodied encounters and material exchanges with previous Ottoman sultāns served to underscore Murād's embodiment of dynastic continuity.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> Gülrü Necipoğlu, "The Serial Portraits of Ottoman Sultāns in Comparative Perspective", p. 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> Fetvaci, "From Print to Trace", p. 259.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> Moreover, it would appear that the same concerns also seem to have pervaded the reign of Mehmed III, which saw the development of imperial genealogies (*silsilenāmes*) employing royal portraits fixed into medallions. On both these works see; Necipoğlu, "The Serial Portraits of Ottoman Sulṭāns in Comparative Perspective", p. 42-49.

To sum up then, the sultān's insularity in the face of mounting fiscal and military crises, rumors about his compromised health, and the onset of the millennium had precipitated a shift in the way Ottoman kingship was articulated: from an earlier heroic mode that was based on a sultān's personal military record and towards a more cosmically oriented form based on his regalia, his bodily features, his ability to compel divine favor and his embodiment of dynastic continuity. In other words, the artistic and physiognomic project of the *Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye* emerged to situate Murād as a divinely sanctioned intercessor between this world and the next at a time of both cosmic and terrestrial upheaval.

## Murād III and "Oneric-Embodiment" in the Kitābü'l-menāmāt

The *Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye* did not mark the extent of the Ottoman court's attempts to articulate Murād III's cosmic kingship by recourse to his sacred body. In 1592, Nūḥ Ağa, master of horse to Murād, compiled and copied the sulṭān's visions and dream accounts<sup>130</sup>, which the latter had sent between 1574 and 1588 to Ṣūca' Dede (d. 1588), a poor dervish who had become his spiritual mentor (*ḥūnkār ṣeyḥi*) sometime after his coronation. Özgen Felek has argued that this compilation (titled the *Kitābū'l-menāmāt* or Book of Dreams), amounted to a particular kind of hagiography (*menākıbnāme*) of the sulṭān since, by depicting him "as visiting sacred places, performing saintly miracles in the physical world, and ascending to the sky to visit the heavens and hell" during the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> These were variously categorized as dream  $(v\bar{a}ki'a)$ ,  $ilh\bar{a}m$  (divine inspiration),  $nid\bar{a}$  (divine call),  $hitt\bar{a}b$  (divine speech),  $tecell\bar{\iota}$  (theophany) or  $zuh\bar{u}r$  (appearance) etc. Thus the entries do not only include what Murād III experienced while asleep, but also the visions and sensations that came upon him whilst he was awake.

course of his dreams and visions, its main purpose was "to relate sulţān Murād's noble deeds and adventures in the 'ālem-i miṣāl (the World of Ideal Images/Forms) and establish his image and identity as a true Friend of God (velīyyu'llāh)" Given that the extant copy of this finely produced work was bound and decorated with gold almost four years before Murād III's death (and right around the time of the Islamic Millennium), and that it entailed access to the sulţān's highly personal correspondences to his spiritual mentor, it is highly likely that the work was produced with Murād III's direct involvement. Moreover, from Nūḥ Ağa's introduction it is also apparent that the work was intended for the spiritual instruction of a wider, mystically inclined audience. The Kitābū'l-menāmāt is thus a rare, if mediated, glimpse into the private psyche and public self-projection of an early modern Ottoman sulţān.

As just mentioned, Özgen Felek considers the *Kitābü'l-menāmāt* as a special kind of hagiography that was compiled in order to portray Murād III as a true mystic and a friend of God. Whilst this description is not wholly incorrect, I argue that it does not go far enough in explicating the radical nature of Murād's aims in compiling this text around 1591-92. Indeed, when we holistically analyze the manner in which the *Kitābū'l-menāmāt* narrates Murād III's "oneric-embodied" interactions with divine metapersons in the heavenly realm of the unseen, his many ecstatic experiences and visions, as well as the theophanies, divine inspirations, and visions that accompanied such moments, we begin to understand that this text is no mere hagiography or "dream-log". It is my argument that what Murād III and Nuḥ Ağa were attempting when they compiled this text

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> Özgen Felek, "Re-creating Image and Identity: Dreams and Visions as a means of Murād III's self-fashioning", (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: University of Michigan, 2010), p. 81.

at the turn of the Millennium was the crafting of a new sort of counter-scripture and through it the ushering of a new dispensation that posited Murād's revelation receving body as able to augment the immutable Qur'anic scripture itself. Indeed, the work constantly depicts Murād III's body (when receiving divine inspirations and during oneric and visionary narratives) as a site of divine intervention, contact, presence and revelation, all of which enabled Murād to engage in the ritual performance of his sacred cosmic kingship without leaving the confines of the palace in the manner of his ancestors. In other words, in this work we see the actual embodied-ritual processes by which Murād gradually became a sacral sovereign, not on the field of battle, but in the cosmic dream/revelatoratory zone where the sacred and the mundane met. In this respect the *Kitābū'l-menāmāt* is the very essence of cosmic kingship of the embodied variety.

Whilst the larger work that Felek has transcribed contains almost 2000 accounts of various sorts, this section, in keeping with the more specific aims of this dissertation, will only focus on conducting a close reading of those accounts that prominently feature ritualized performances involving Murād's body. Broadly speaking, these oneiric-embodied episodes can be roughly be divided into; (i) times when tactile contact, ingestion of substances or exchange of objects associated with past figures signified, in tangible form, the transfer of divine knowledge and royal authority to Murād III, (ii) times when divinity or divine favor itself acquired corporeal form, (iii) times when the thaumaturgical power of Murād's body enabled him to induce material abundance in the world, and (iv) and times when Murād experienced states of rapturous ecstasy (vecd).

Regarding the first of these categories, a salient example comes in the 23<sup>rd</sup> dream of the *Kitābü'l-menāmāt*, in which Murād narrates how;

"...they [referring perhaps to spirits or angels] stripped this humble servant [i.e. Murād]. They showed us all our organs  $(a'\bar{z}\bar{a})$  from head to foot. Saying, "Is this not the power of the Exalted Truth [Allāh]? Saying "He created this [organ] this way and this [organ] that way" they showed us all our organs one after the other. And then poured water on us from head to foot and purified us. And, my fortune, apart from this, they utterly wore out your humble servant; whatever the skill within the name "the vanquisher" ( $Kahh\bar{a}r$ ) is, thus did they do. They squeezed our body from head to toe. In the dream, we continuously repeated the name, saying, "the vanquisher, the vanquisher." 132

In this episode, Murād's whole experience is rendered even more intensely embodied by his repeated assertion that outside powers acted upon his body "from head to feet/toe". The first of these embodied interactions where parts of Murād's anatomy are presented to him served to highlight the nobility of the microcosmic human form in general and Murād's body in particular, while the interactions that followed were overwhelming tactile and cleansing experiences that can be read as marking the preparation of his royal body to receive divine revelations. In this respect, they evoke resemblances to key episodes from the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, who as a child had his chest opened up and washed by angles so as to prepare him for his prophetic career (see Chapter 3), and who had also famously been left overwhelmed and exhausted by his first interaction with Gabriel in the cave of Hira. Beyond such narrative resemblances however, the hypothesis that Murād's bodily experiences in this narrative served as episodes of enunciation and initiation is further supported by the fact this dream appears early in *Kitābū'l-menāmāt*,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> *Kitābü'l-menāmāt*, fol. 5a, p. 61. For alternate English translation see; "Dream 23" in Walter Andrews and Özgen Felek's translation at "The Sultan's Dream Project": https://depts.washington.edu/ndtwp/sultansdreams/?page id=63

and that soon afterwards Murād begins to experience theophanies and divine inspirations for the first time.

Yet another key episode that involved a highly embodied experience with the divine occurs in a dream where Murād inherits the status of the pole of poles (*quṭbu'l-aqṭāb*) or the *axis mundi*, a seminal moment that in some ways marks the culmination of the entire first half of the text. As he narrates it to Şüca' Dede;

"My fortunate father, a strange dream appeared. Within a dome, all the saints (lit: friends of God) were gathered and the pole of poles was also present. And then I arrived as well. When I approached the pole of poles he took me in his arms and squeezed me tightly. At the moment he embraced me, a sweat came out of his right cheek and I drank up all of that sweat. And when he squeezed [me] again, sweat came out of his left cheek and I drank that up as well. Then the pole of poles said, "Now you have surpassed me and all the [other] friends of God, God willing". He then said, "Both continue to hold kingship and become the pole of poles" 133.

Here, Murād's bodily interactions with *quṭbu'l-aqṭāb* (who is not identified) are of two kinds. The first is an embrace which is further qualified as a "tight squeezing" (*muḥkem ṣiqmaq*). Such squeezing, one after the other, then causes perspiration from both the right and left cheeks of the *quṭbu'l-aqṭāb*, which is quickly ingested by Murād. While, as we have already seen with the previous account, tactile contact is sufficient for suggesting sanctification or a transfer of divine knowledge, here the ingestion of sweat from two different cheeks of the pole of poles serves to demonstrate the union of sainthood and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> Kitābū'l-menāmāt, No. 851, fol.119a, p. 200. In her English translation Felek adds a sentence "Another drop of sweat came out again, and I drank that one too" between the two squeezes and ingestions (see; "Recreating Image and Identity", p. 150). This is probably an unintentional mistake because there is no corresponding sentence to this in the original Ottoman transcription. The addition of this third drop would have undermined Murād's assumption of the dual sovereignty that is denoted by the ingestion of the two excreted sweat drops.

kingship in the person of Murād. This dream therefore depicts Murād's embodied assumption of the dual-caliphate, which was comprised of an exoteric dimension (i.e. terrestrial kingship) as well as esoteric dimension (the position of the spiritual axis, the qutb)<sup>134</sup>. As Markiewicz has discussed, Ibn 'Arabī's initial renderings of this idea posited that the *qutb*, as "God's appointee who, through spiritual perfection, constituted the central axis around which the microcosm and macrocosm revolved...is the real head of God's community in his age (sayyid al-jama 'a fi zamanihi)"135. Though sainthood did acquire unprecedented political potential in such early formulations, the possession of the esoteric caliphate did not yet necessarily entail the exercise of formal sovereignty. In the heavily messianic post-Timurid era however where traditional Sunni conceptions of the caliphate were increasingly redundant, scholars such as Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī and Husām al-Dīn 'Alī Bidlisī developed a political philosophy which advocated an explicitly political role for the possessor of the spiritual/esoteric caliph of the age, an orientation which then went on to influence the political thought of 'Alī Bidlisī's son Idrīs Bidlisī, the chief ideologue of 16<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman sacral sovereignty<sup>136</sup>. To have Murād ingest two separate drops of fluid from two separate cheeks of the *qutbu'l-aqtāb* then was no mere embellishment, but rather a deliberate discursive choice that tangibly conveyed the dual nature of his sovereignty.

The *Kitābü'l-menāmāt* also takes up Murād's embodiment of dynastic continuity. Indeed, a number of encounters with sulṭān Süleymān and sulṭān Selīm II in the realm of dreams

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>134</sup> Evrim Binbaş, *Intellectual networks in Timurid Iran: Sharaf Al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī and the Islamicate Republic of Letters*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). p. 257-261.

Markiewicz, The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam, p. 254-257.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

served exactly this purpose. For example in one dream account, Murād relates how he comes upon a bridge over a river, whereupon, "the late sultan Süleyman comes, saying, "First, I crossed this bridge, then your father crossed it. Now, you cross it." These sultans' act of crossing a bridge, one after the other, obviously serves to highlight dynastic succession. In yet another revealing dream account, sultān's Süleymān's verbal conferral of kingship to Murād is followed by the former gifting a horse—a symbol of regal power and a consistent image in the *Kitābü'l-menāmāt* —to the latter, which served to drive the same point home in more tangible terms<sup>138</sup>. In a similar dream, Murād also narrates how his father Selīm II gives him "an armlet [bāzūbend] and something resembling a bejeweled aigrette" 139. Beyond such gifts simply denoting Selīm's approval of his son's rule, the bejeweled aigrette can also be seen as explicitly denoting his sulţānate, since it is a particular feature of Murād's turban in the Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye portrait, and signified, perhaps, his status as the reigning sultān<sup>140</sup>. As we have seen in the analysis of the Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye, the issue of stressing dynastic continuity was also a paramount concern of that text.

These however were not the only instance where an exchange of objects served to legitimize and sanctify Murād. In other dream accounts, Murād receives some of the relics of the prophet Muhammad himself, which served to tangibly illustrate the transfer

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> *Kitābü'l-menāmāt*, No.48, fol. 8b. p. 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> Ibid, No. 36, fol. 6b, p. 63.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> Ibid, No. 31, fol. 6a, p. 63.

<sup>140</sup> It is also interesting to note that these various dreams of royal investiture involving past dynasts seem to cluster together in the very initial section of the compilation but do not recur in later dreams and visions. The topicality of this earlier section therefore betrays Murād's anxieties and lack of confidence about his royal inheritance, a sense which is replaced by a greater confidence in both his mystical position and his status as the monarch as his reign (and the text) progresses. It is possible therefore that the dreams and visions of the *Kitābū'l-menāmāt* might have been arranged in a roughly—though not entirely—chronological order.

of spiritual authority to the former. In a particularly revealing example, Murād is gifted his copy of the Qur'ān, which he narrates as follows;

"They brought a small trunk. In that trunk was a noble Qur'ān. A Divine inspiration came that "This noble Qur'ān is one that Muḥammad the messenger of God used to carry at his chest constantly. Reciting from this Qur'ān once is better than reciting from any other ten times. And the messenger of God (peace be upon him) said that if one recites this Qur'ān on top of a gigantic rock, is it any wonder that that rock shatters due to the awe of God? And if one recites it facing the sea, the waves of the sea turn from one side to another? if [one] recites it towards wind, the wind turns direction?...Now, take this Qur'ān. May it be blessing for you." Thus was the Divine inspiration. I took [the Qur'ān] and placed it at my chest. It was written on it, "'Alī Fāṭima ve sūretū'l-raḥmān." Reciting the sūretū'l-raḥmān from this Qur'ān is superior to reciting it from others. The inheritor of the knowledge of the Prophet; inheritor of the knowledge of the Prophet." '141

Here Murād's repeated invocation of "inheritor of the knowledge of the Prophet" towards the end of the narrative makes explicit the transfer of knowledge and authority represented by the gifting of the Qur'ān and its placement at Murād's chest, i.e. on the heart, which was considered the seat of knowledge in Ṣūfī thought. Within the dream realm, Murād is also given "a large dagger [büyük ḫançer]" belonging to the prophet, which evokes the fact that Murād had been given the prophet's sword by a *şeyḫ* soon after his ascension to the throne in 1574<sup>142</sup>. Perhaps it is these highly symbolic transfers that are represented by the book and the scimitar in Murād's portrait in the *Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye*. In yet another dream the famous mantle [ḫɪrka] belonging to Muḥammad appears from the world of the unseen and is draped onto Murād's body, once again

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup>Ibid. For an alternate English translation see; Felek, "Recreating Image and Identity", p. 191.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> Ibid, No. 570, fol. 75a, p. 152, and Gülrü Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, (MIT Press, 1992), p. 151.

signifying that Murād was his successor on earth <sup>143</sup>. As with Muḥammad's sword however, the mantle was not only a symbolic object gifted within the dream or visionary realm, but an actual relic that played important roles in the cultivation of Murād's status as a divinely guided caliph of Muslims. Indeed, a large mantle, which was purportedly the one gifted to Ka'b ibn Zubayr by Muḥammad himself and made famous by the Mamluk poet Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Sa 'īd al-Būṣīrī (d. 1294-7) in his *Qaṣīdat al-burda*, had been acquired by Selīm I after the conquest of Egypt. However it was Murād who, quite early in his reign, converted the royal bedchamber in the court of pages at the Topkapı palace into a shrine for the mantle and other relics <sup>144</sup>. Moreover he had tile work made for the chamber inscribed with al-Būṣīrī's *Qaṣīdat al-burda*, and later in 1592-3 had also commissioned a gold-plated and bejeweled ebony cupboard for storing the mantle <sup>145</sup>. Thus the exchange of relics in the dream realm has corollaries to Murād's actual attempts to cultivate his embodied cosmic sovereignty by recourse to the holy relics of the Prophet Muhammad.

The previous paragraphs discussed some key moments of material transfer (of relics and other symbolic objects) that occurred between Murād and divine metapersons such as Gods, prophets, angels, spirits, and ancestors in the realm of the unseen. There is however another category of transfer in the text that is so fleeting that it could be easily looked over entirely in favor of more dramatic examples. This is the transfer of letters (*tezkere*), books, and paper between Murād and unnamed forces from the divine realm.

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One example in the text goes:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> Kitābü'l-menāmāt, No. 101, fol. 14a, p. 73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> Gülrü Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, p. 150.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>145</sup>Ibid, p. 150-152.

"My fortunate father, this wretched one's dream was thus: they [not identified] gave us a letter. In it was inscribed, "My Murād Ḥān, be forever joyous! Why do you not offer advice (naṣīḥat) to your father? [referring here to Ṣūca' Dede and probably not the deceased Selīm II] Advise [him] (naṣīḥat eyle). We have placed you with God". Thus was it written. However the writing bore no resemblance to the writting of this world. It was written in green letters (yaṣɪl ḥaṭṭ ile yazılmış). I read it via divine inspiration" 146.

This account is unique amongst many similar ones in the text in that in it Murād actually describes the quality of the writing of this otherworldly missive. It is green in color, which perhaps links it with Islam, and its mystical dimension in particular. It is also completely unworldly, and only able to be read via divine inspiration. This same sense is echoed in a later theophany (tecellī) in which, after experiencing intense levels of self-effacement and mental disturbance, he hears a command from the beyond that was without letters and without sound (bī-hurūf u bī-ṣavt): "from this moment hence, do whatever you wish" In yet another account, this time in a dream, he witnesses an inscription that reads: "In the name of Allāh, most gracious, most merciful. You have achieved nearness to the Truth [God]" (Bismillāhi'r-raḥmāni'r-raḥīm, qurb-i Haqq'a varduŋ), and then reveals that it was in fact divine knowledge ('ilm-i ledūnnī) written on "a piece of paper" Even though Murād relays these messages to his mentor in Turkish, their quality of being beyond sense perception reminds one of the metaphysical language of cosmogenesis whose manifestation as the literal letters and sounds of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> Ibid, No.11, fol. 3b-4a, p. 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> Ibid, No. 86, fol. 12a, p. 71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> Defined by Imām al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) as "direct knowledge from God" acquired through intuition. See his *Risāla al-Laduniya*, translation; A. Godlas, 1998, http://islam.uga.edu/laduni.html

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> Ibid, No. 45, fol. 8a, p.65. Ozgen Felek's transcription reads: Sa'ādetlü pederüm, beyne'l-yakazada müşāhede bu oldı kim bir yazu zāhir oldı. "Bi'smi'llāhi'r-raḥmāni'r-raḥīm. Kurb-ı Ḥakk'a varduŋ."Ba'dehu yine zāhir oldı kim bir kāġıza yazılmış, "'İlm-i ledünnī." Bu vech üzere. Benüm sa 'ādetüm, bākī fermān sulṭānumuŋ".

Arabic alphabet corresponded only to its surface-level, exoteric dimensions. In the post-Mongol period, claims to mastery over this meta-language were central to virtually all articulations of cosmic sovereignity. Murād's ability to tangibly receive this language in the form of letters, read it, and through it claim various types of religio-political authority is thus an occultist power move *par excellence*.

A second category of embodied dreams and visions were those where divinity itself acquired outward corporeal form. An example of this appears in Murād's recollection of a divine call (*nidā*), which tells him; "The light of the noble forehead of Muḥammad was transferred to you" This reference to the light of Muḥammad's face (a common theme which is explored in chapter 3) evokes copious descriptions of the brightness of Murād's body in the *Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye*, where this quality was also tangibly linked to the latter's possession of divine knowledge and sanctity derived from Muḥammadan sources 151. In another revealing dream narrative, the religion of Muḥammad (*dīn-i Muḥammad*) itself acquires corporeal form. As Murād relates it;

"Between sleep and wakefulness, this wretched one's dream was thus: there was a black curtain in a desert. I opened the curtain [and saw that] there was a young boy  $(o\dot{g}lan)$  sitting there. On his head was a jeweled crown [and] he was a beloved  $(ma\dot{h}b\bar{u}b)$  to such an extent that he defied all description. I approached and took the boy in my lap and was just wondering to myself who this was when a call from the spiritual realm came: "This is not a boy, it is the religion of Muḥammad and the religion of Islam  $(d\bar{i}n-i Muhammed ve d\bar{i}n-i Isl\bar{a}mdur)$ , it is the religion of Muhammad". Thus was the answer." 152

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>150</sup> Kitābü'l-menāmāt, No. 783, fol. 107b, p. 188.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> Kıvāfetü'l-insāniyve, fols. 60a-61a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>152</sup> Ibid, No. 483, fol. 62a. P.136-137. For an alternative English translation see; Felek, "Recreating Image and Identity", p. 193-194.

What we observe here is a cunning use of prosopopoeia, i.e. the rhetorical device by which inanimate or abstract entities are given human characteristics and made to act or speak. What does this discursive gesture achieve here? Since the form of an adolescent boy was considered the perfect representation of divine beauty in Sūfī thought, this particular embodiment of "the religion of Muhammad" seems fitting (see chapter 3 for more). Moreover, rendering the Islamic faith corporeally in this way also allows it to then be engaged by Murād in a highly embodied encounter where he takes it cradles it in his lap. This gesture, which at once suggests intimacy, love, and a protective relationship between the two, therefore allows Murad to convey an image of himself as the protector of the faith. Not only that, the tactile exchange in this dream narrative is also a way of suggesting that Murād had acquired an incomparably intimate knowledge of Islam itself. This episode also has parallels to another dream narrative where 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib appears as a beardless youth dressed in green. Murād then proceeds to take the youth into his lap, lays him on chest and kisses him on the mouth 153. Here however, 'Alī's known association with Sūfī knowledge and his green garb (which also evokes the mysterious figure of the mystical guide Hızır) suggests that this embodied interaction may have signified Murād's engagement with esoteric knowledge in particular. Murād however does not merely engage with the embodied manifestations of the divine in the Kitābü'lmenāmāt, but rather, in the most radical acts of embodiment, himself acquires divine forms. For example, in one dream narrative, he saw that his form (sekl) had transformed into the form of Hızır (Khidir), an immortal figure from the Qur'an known to possess profound mystical knowledge, (and the second most-mentioned prophetic figure of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>153</sup> Ibid, No. 927, fol.129a-b, p. 213.

Kitābü'l-menāmāt after Muḥammad)<sup>154</sup>. Then once when he is "between sleep and wakefulness" he is even transformed into the prophet Muḥammad himself. Here he also informs the reader that he witnessed something similar when he was still a prince based in Manisa, but that "that time it was a dream"<sup>155</sup>. It would therefore appear that his sense of his melding with Muḥammad had progressed and grown stronger over time. Whilst such examples might be enough to cause consternation in more sober scholarly circles, Murād's further claim that he heard a divine inspiration "from the invisible realm" that proclaimed, "you are the spirit of God in human form" (anta rūḥu'llāhi fī shakli'l-baṣari) is redolent of the claims of being the embodiment of divinity expressed by other 16<sup>th</sup> century monarchs like the Safavid Shah Ismā'īl, and the Mughal Emperor Akbar. <sup>156</sup>

The third category is comprised of dreams and visions where the thaumaturgical power of Murād's body channeled God's *baraka* and induced material abundance in the world. For example, in one dream Murād visits a woman in the throes of hard labor, prays for her and induces her to give birth to a girl<sup>157</sup>. In others, Murād takes a single ruby into his mouth and multiplies it by "five or ten" turns a stone into cheese<sup>159</sup>, and induces the well of Zamzam to become full of water<sup>160</sup>. And in a dream particularly evocative of one of Muḥammad's miracles where he produced water to quench the thirst of his companions from his fingers, Murād sees his own fingers transformed into fountains of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> Ibid, No.91, fol. 12b, p. 72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>155</sup> Ibid, No. 1795, fol. 252a, p. 336.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>156</sup> Ibid, No. 47, fol. 8a, p. 65. See; V. Minorsky, "The Poetry of Shāh Ismā'īl I", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, vol. 10, No. 4 (1942), pp. 1026a, and A.Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, p. 158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> Ibid, No. 828, fol. 115b, p. 197.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> Ibid, No. 29, fol. 6a, p. 62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>159</sup> Ibid, No. 51, fol. 8b. p.66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> Ibid, No. 932, fol. 130a, p. 214

milk<sup>161</sup>. As we shall see in the chapter 2, such miracles, which conveyed a saint's power to tap into "God's invisible treasury" for the benefit of his followers, were ubiquitous in 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman hagiographies and were crucial to the elaboration of his body and his lodge as nodes of social brokerage, charitable wealth redistribution and cultural exchange for the community. In a similar vein, by positing his thaumaturgical body as being effortlessly able to access God's beneficence within the realm of dreams, Murād also intended to allude to his own role as the linchpin of socio-political order and the guarantor of material abundance. This idea of Murād as creator and distributor of abundance is also dramatically conveyed in a dream narrative where he climbs on top of a mountain sized pile of wheat and distributes it to the poor gathered below 162.

Whilst it can be argued that these oneiric-visionary narratives may not fully capture the sense of embodied tangibility that standard sūfī-hagiographic encounters couched in the actual physical world might more effectively be able to convey, I nevertheless contend that they fully partake in the construction of the mystique around Murād's body, not only by the fact of their being rendered into text by Nūḥ Aga, but also by their very employment of bodily performances involving tactility, sensation, ingestion, material exchange, metamorphoses, and thaumaturgical prowess. Such elements, even though they occur within the world of images and visions, still serve to render concrete the abstract transfer of mystical knowledge and divinely sourced power to a temporal ruler, as well as the potential political, religious, and social implications of such a transfer. Indeed, once Murād establishes that he is recalling a dream or a vision, the narrative story proceeds to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> Ibid, No. 712, fol. 96b, p. 177. <sup>162</sup> Ibid, No. 12, fol. 4a. p. 59-60.

set up context, characters, the flow of linear time, religious symbolism and affect in the manner of a standard miracle narrative, hereby allowing the reader to proceed to read it in the same hermeneutic fashion, i.e. as an embodied discourse of saintly kingship. It is to retain the tangibility and sensoriality of these bodily performances that are enacted in the various narratives of the *Kitābü'l-menāmāt*, that I have opted to label them as "oneiric-embodied" events, as opposed to simply dreams and visions.

Beyond the textual, narrative and semiotic dimensions of Murād's "oneiric-embodiment", in reading Murād's body in the *Kitābü'l-menāmāt* we also have to guard against the modern tendency to favor the "real" (i.e. the material and physical) over the "unreal" (i.e. the oneiric, the visionary and the spiritual), for no such distinction existed between the material and immaterial in the early modern context. Indeed, in the Islamicate context, dreams were not merely a conjuring trick played by the mind. Rather they were believed to involve a soul's ascent into the heavenly sphere and thus were considered a well-established window into the unseen world of spirits and the divine, with one famous prophetic *hadith* proclaiming a Muslim's dreams to be "one forty-fifth part of prophecy" In such a context, dreams and their subsequent recording and interpretation were often means for predicting the future as well as for advancing claims of piety, righteousness and good fortune. These "affirmative dreams" as Maxim Romanov calls them, served to confirm a person in their status or mission in life as well as their knowledge of God and His religion by vouchsafing the dreamer a vision of venerable

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>163</sup> Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 6614, Şaḥīḥ Muslim 2263.

Muslim figures from the past. 164 Within the Sufi intellectual tradition in particular, a disciple's narration of all his dreams to his master was a key way by which the latter gauged the former's spiritual progress along the Şūfī path. As Felek has argued, Murād, who was firmly entrenched within this *episteme*, "turned his dreams into narrative tools through which he also conveyed an image that he wanted people to have about him" 165. Most crucially however, dream and vision narratives were the most appropriate means for him to articulate his cosmic status since they allow him to situate himself, quite literally, at the mid-point between the terrestrial and extra-terrestrial (between the mundane and the sacred) realms hereby enabling him to engage with and draw power from cosmically important entities, and personages. The medium or dreams and visions thus allow Murād to assume the cosmic dimension of his kingship, a dimension which is implied in titulature such as "Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction (*ṣaḥib-ḥarān*)" but which requires ritual performances like those in the *Kitābū'l-menāmāt* for their demonstration.

Apart from being quasi-prophetic and cosmically attuned media, dreams and visions were also apt for another very important reason; they enabled Murād to psychically transcend the confines of the palace (and even escape the bounds of the earth) without physically stepping outside its gates. Contra to traditional Ṣūfī hagiographies that often involved the performance of miracles in full view of a corroborating public, the various dreams, divine inspirations, divine calls, divine speeches, theophanies, and appearances that he witnessed when he was "between sleep and wakefulness" or while he was fully awake were part of the sulṭān's inner experience. Which is to say, Murād scaled mountains,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>164</sup> Romanov, Maxim, "Dreaming Hanbalites: Dream-Tales in Prosopographical Dictionaries" in *Dreams and Visions in Islamic Societies*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), p. 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>165</sup> Özgen Felek, "(Re)creating Image and Identity" in ibid, p. 250.

traversed seas, ascended to the heavens, and performed miracles, all from the comforts of his royal bedchamber. Therefore, much like the <code>Ktyāfetü'l-insāniyye</code>, the <code>Kitābū'l-menāmāt's</code> visionary narratives also represented a powerful workaround for a sulṭān who was invisible in the public sphere but who was also eager to project the saintly and cosmic nature of his kingship via recourse to narrations of his bodily performances.

If however seclusion within the palace was not simply the result of keeping attention away from Murād's physical ailments (such as his epilepsy) nor merely a matter of this monarch's personal inclination, but was instead a structural consequence to the deification, objectification, and immobilization within a dense network of ritual that all articulations of cosmic sovereignty necessarily entailed, then one can profer another, perhaps more radical interpretation. Travelling between the celestial and earthly realms via the medium of dreams and visions enabled Murād III to psychically escape the fetters of the "adverse sacralization" that tended to ensnare cosmic rulers. Sahlins and Graeber describe this process as follows;

"...to recognize the metahuman status of the monarch, to "keep the king divine" requires an elaborate apparatus which renders him, effectively, an abstraction, by hiding, containing, or effacing those aspects of his being that are seen as embodying his mortal nature. Kings become invisible, immaterial, sealed off from contact with their subjects or with the stuff and substance of the world—and hence, often, confined to their palaces, unable to exercise arbitrary power (or often any power) in any effective way" 166.

Alan Strathern has termed this same process as "the ritualization trap", and he departs from Sahlins and Graeber in that he sees this process as "a noble/chiefly assertion of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>166</sup> Sahlins and Graeber, On Kings, p. 8.

power...rather than a more generic communal process".<sup>167</sup>. In other words, the king does not so much fall into the ritualization trap as he is actively pushed into it by those seeking to remove him from the actual reigns of government. History is replete with examples of the bodies of Japanese emperors, English kings, Abbasid caliphs, kings of Congo, and obas of Benin being transformed into relic-like touchstones for their more powerful servitors. In fact, Graeber cites the Ottoman example of the 17<sup>th</sup> century as a classic case study of exactly this process 168. And lest we forget it is worth recalling that the Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye, which similarly sought to artistically render the sultān as a static icon of sovereignty, was a project completed under the careful eye of none other than Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, powerful grand vizier to three successive Ottoman rulers, and a chief architect of the 16<sup>th</sup> century ascendency of the Ottoman bureaucracy. In contrast, the Kitābü'l-menāmāt was a project directed by Murād personally towards the end of his life, and although it bolsters his claims of cosmic sovereignty, it does so on his own terms by giving him freedom to range widely not only upon the earth, but in the heavens as well.

## Between Falling Sickness and Sacred Disease: Reading Murād III's Enraptured Body in the Kitābü'l-menāmāt

There is, however, another kind of bodily state in the *Kitābü'l-menāmāt* that does not neatly fit in any of the above-mentioned categories, but which nevertheless figured more often than almost any other kind of bodily event, and which, I argue, could be highly

<sup>167</sup> See note 160 in Strathern, *Unearthly Powers*, p. 186.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>168</sup> Graeber, "Chapter 7: Notes on the politics of divine kingship or, elements for an archeology of sovereignty", in *On Kings*, p. 418-419.

conducive to the cultivation of his embodied sacral kingship, namely; *vecd/wajd*, a state of rapture or ecstasy, which in Murād's case was often so intense that it compelled a complete loss of consciousness and sensation, causing him to fall down. To cite the very first dream narrative in the *Kitābü'l-menāmāt* as an example, Murād recalls how, upon hearing a recitation of the Qur'ān, "we were in the throes of ecstasy to such an extent that we were near to loosing our mind (*aklum żāyi' olmaġa az kalmuş*). Our father and mother came and [had to] restrain us with force." Whilst in this episode the moment of intense ecstasy was compelled by a recitation of the Qur'ān, in another dream narrative, he recalls;

"...I was having a gathering, and reading *Muḥammediye*. While reading it, when I arrived at the prayers between the God and the Prophet<sup>170</sup>, I suddenly went into ecstacy (*vecd oluruz*) while reciting "Allāh". Then, I stood up crying."<sup>171</sup>

Here ecstasy and a loss of consciousness occurred whilst Murād read the famous *Muḥammediye* of Yazıcızāde Meḥmed, a text on the life of Muḥammad that had become a cornerstone of Ottoman piety in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. In other dream narratives, Murād also goes into *vecd* after witnessing divine flashes<sup>172</sup> and after encountering a mysterious, featureless entity later identified as God Himself<sup>173</sup>. Moreover, there were also instances where Murād's ecstasy and subsequent loss of consciousness occurred during moments of an epiphany or theophany (*tecellī*), i.e. whilst he was awake or when

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>169</sup> Kitābü'l-menāmāt, No. 1, fol. 2b, p.58. See also:

http://depts.washington.edu/ndtwp/sultansdreams/?page\_id=63

Ottoman Turkish transciption by Felek in No. 633, fol. 83b, p. 162: "Ḥażret-i Ḥak̞k̞'ile Resūl 'a. m. ortasında olan münācāta geldügmizde...". While confusingly rendered, this probably refers to prayers that Muhammad offered to God.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>171</sup> Ibid. For an alternate translation see; Felek, "Recreating Image and Identity", p. 118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>172</sup> Ibid, No. 30, fol. 6a. p.62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>173</sup> Ibid, No. 651, fol. 88a. p. 166.

he was "between sleep and wakefulness". In a particularly detailed example of such an account, Murād describes how;

"This poor servant was favored by an Epiphany, praise be to God. However, this epiphany was not like the previous epiphany. There was no light. Previously the light of the beauty of God's Glory would appear and from that the Divine Essence would happen. Just now, strangely we did not see it in that way again. I suddenly realized that had lost my mind and was destroyed (maḥv olduġum bilürem). Instantly, an amazement [occurs?]<sup>174</sup>. Instantly I look, and my mind cracks instantly. Five or six times there was such an epiphany. O my fortune's blessing, explain to me what kind of thing this is, please. And then, like a blast of thunder, would come Divine Calls and Sacred Responses. Once a Divine Call would come, once there would be an epiphany. After each Divine Call there would be an epiphany. After there was an epiphany, I know that it was an epiphany, since my mind would be disrupted, and I would be destroyed. But then, I heard a Call from the Lord. Now, part of my soul returned to its place. But I had found a complete [sense of] consolation. O my fortune's blessing, you see, the Divine Call has put me at ease. In part, my soul wandered but the consolation was wondrous. It was not like this for such a long time. There was no light whatsoever. Instantly we were atop a mountain of musk. This epiphany clearly happened between [sleep and] wakefulness".<sup>175</sup>.

Here Murād describes his mental state as a derangement and a shattering of the mind whilst explicitly linking these with the arrival of divine calls, sacred responses, and epiphanies.

All this begs the question, what does it mean to relate an episode of rapturous ecstasy and loss of consciousness and sensation with a dream? As we have established in the previous section, the dreams and visions of the *Kitābü'l-menāmāt* were meticulously constructed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>174</sup> This is unclear in both the original Ottoman text and in Felek and Andrews' English translation. See; No. 65, Ibid, fol, 10a. p. 68 for the transcribed Ottoman Turkish: "*Hemān 'aklum gidüb maḥv olduģum bilürem. Hemān bir aacāyib. Hemān bakaram, hemān 'aklum çak olur*".

This translation is by Özgen Felek and Walter J. Andrews. See number 65 (epiphany) in "The Sultān's Dream Project", https://depts.washington.edu/ndtwp/sultānsdreams/?page\_id=63

narratives intended to convey very particular ideas about the nature of Murād's sovereignty and his religious authority. This they achieved by recourse to specific symbols, imagery and performances derived from an oral and written mystical tradition, all of which served to render Murād's body as a site of divine self-disclosures and as a mediating channel between God and physical creation. It is therefore likely that as with these other bodily performances, the episodes of ecstasy and bodily agitations were also encoded performances that served the ideological purposes of their author and chief subject matter. What could these ideological imperatives be?

By way of an answer, let us first note that the descriptions of the ecstasies, loss of consciousness and sensation, as well as the resulting propensity to fall down are strikingly similar to tonic-clonic seizures characteristic of epilepsy, which was also called "the falling sickness" in archaic English for this exact reason. This opens up the possibility that these episodes of ecstasy were in fact oneiric narrativizations of Murād III's epileptic seizures. Relatedly, it is also possible that the dreams, visions, inspirations, and theophanies he experienced were also a result of postictal psychosis (i.e. the behavioral and psychological changes that can follow an epileptic seizure), the various symptoms of which included visual, olfactory, auditory and somatosensory hallucinations, paranoid thoughts and, most significantly, delusions of religious grandeur. Moreover, as we have seen, many of Murād III's dreams, divine inspirations, and theophanies occur when he was, in his own words, "between sleep and wakefulness". This is a quality consistent with certain types of nocturnal seiziures that tend to occur before, during, and after sleep. Whilst modern science only began to empirically examine

this phenomenon in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>176</sup>, the relationship between sleep and epilepsy was well established enough for Aristotle to claim, "sleep is similar to epilepsy, and in some way, sleep is epilepsy"<sup>177</sup>. Read in this way alongside other corroborating historical narratives, the various dreams, visions, and paranoid panics that inundate the *Kitābü'l-menāmāt* therefore yield convincing proof that sultān Murād III was indeed an epileptic. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century however epilepsy was not only considered to be potentially contagious, but its seizures as well as their various psychological effects were often associated with humoral imbalance or, worse, with demonic possession and witchcraft<sup>178</sup>. In either case, they could pose a political problem for any monarch afflicted by such maladies. And it would appear that Murād was aware of the suspicion with which his fits were held. In one dream account for example, he recalls;

"I was looking at a book and went into ecstasy. I was reciting "There is no God but God" in ecstasy. Then a woman (*bir ḥātūn*) said; "Calm yourself!" I said: "What are you saying? I go into ecstasy when I want to, and avoid it when I so wish. I reprimanded her saying "You clear off!." 179

What makes this a highly illuminating narrative is the figure of the anonymous woman, who casts suspicion on the nature of Murād's experiences hereby provoking Murād to retort that he had absolute control over his bodily states. This dream account is thus

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>176</sup> Lanigar, Sean, "Sleep and Epilepsy: A Complex Interplay", *Journal of the Missouri State Medical Association*, 2017 Nov-Dec, 453-457.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>177</sup> Qtd in Owsei Temkin, *The Falling Sickness: A History of Epilepsy from the Greeks to the Beginnings of Modern Neurology*, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) p.34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>178</sup> See; Özgen Felek, "Epilepsy as a contagious disease in the late medieval and early modern world", p. 153-175. For the medical-intellectual conceptions of epilepsy in medieval Islam see; Paula Jolin, "Epilepsy in Medieval Islamic History", (Unpublished MA Thesis: McGill University, 1999).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>179</sup> Kitābü'l-menāmāt, No.632, fol. 83b, p.162. Ottoman Turkish transcription by Felek: "...bir kitāba bakub vecd olmişvuz. "Lā ilāhe illa'llāhu," deyü zikir iderüz vecd ile. Andan bir hātūn eydür, "Ṣakın kendüŋi!" Biz eydürüz, "Sen ne söylersin? İstedügüm zamān vecd oluram, istedügüm zamān olmazam. Sen aradan çik!" diyü azarlaruz". For an alternate translation see; Felek, "Recreating Image and Identity", p. 114.

useful for the historian for two reasons. Firstly, in attempting to disassociate Murād's ecstatic experiences from suspicious or illicit sources (such as illness or demonic possession), it implicitly suggests that his bodily convulsions were indeed provoking controversy in Ottoman high society. Secondly, its defensive stance allows us as historians to consider how Murād chose to respond to these controversies via the discursive choices he (or Nūḥ Aġa) made in narrating his ecstatic states. In other words, how did Murād understand his lapses into ecstasy and in what ways did he want them to be apprehended by others?

A detailed consideration of the aforementioned ecstatic episodes demonstrates how, far from merely denying a demonic or pathological source for them, Murād posits what for us is his potential epilepsy as epiphany (or his "falling sickness" as "sacred disease"), and in so doing, takes a potential political conundrum and turns it into a political opportunity to develop his brand of embodied sacral sovereignty. For example, Murād often uses the mystically loaded term annihilation (mahv)<sup>180</sup> to describe his state after he had lost consciousness and sensation. Furthermore, many moments of oneiric ecstasy in the Kitābü'l-menāmāt seem to be brought about through recitation of sacred texts and seem to be accompanied with ecstatic utterances like "Allāh!" and "Hū!", divine calls, divine flashes and theophanies. Such contextual details as well as the choice of vocabulary (vecd, maḥv, fenā') thus firmly situate these episodes within a Ṣūfī epistemology, in which ecstasy, divine utterances, bodily agitations and a loss of consciousness were

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>180</sup> Redhouse defines *maḥv* as "A causing not to exist, an annihilating", and Felek translates it as "obliteration" (see "Recreating Image and Identity", p.57). In Sufism it denotes a destruction of one's human attributes and a melding with the divine.

indicative of a spiritual seeker's witnessing *of* or union *with* God. Regarding the bodily agitations associated with such witnessing, the famous Ṣūfī theorist of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Abū Naṣr Al-Sarrāj (d. 988), who whilst discussing the related issue of *shaṭḥiyyāt* (ecstatic utterances) in Sufism, says;

"If a questioner asks the meaning of shath, the answer is that it means a strangeseeming expression describing an ecstasy that overflows because of its power, and that creates commotion by the strength of its ebullience and overpowering quality, This is shown by the fact that shath in Arabic means "movement"... The floursifting house is called "the shaking house (al-mishtah) because they shake the flour so much, above the place where they sift it, and sometimes it spills over the edges from so much shaking. Thus shath is a word derived from movement, because it is the agitation of the intimate consciences of the ecstatics when their ecstasy becomes powerful. They express that ecstasy of theirs by an expression the hearer finds strange—but he will be led astray to his perdition by denying and refuting it when he hears it, and he will be safe and sound by avoiding its denial and searching out the difficulty in it by asking someone who really knows it. This is one of its characteristics: have you ever noticed that when a great deal of water is flowing in a narrow stream, it overflows its banks? It is then said, "The water shataha (overflowed) in the stream." Therefore when the ecstasy of an aspirant becomes powerful, and he is unable to endure the assault of luminous spiritual realities that have come over his heart, it appears on his tongue, and he expresses it by a phrase that is strange and difficult for the hearer, unless he be worthy of it and have widely encompassed knowledge of it. And that, in the language of those who are familiar with technical terminology, is called *shath*." <sup>181</sup>

Thus it is the witnessing of "luminous spiritual realities" that overpowers the heart of the mystic, hereby causing a turbulence that spreads throughout the body before reaching the tongue and resulting in ecstatic utterances. Whilst modern scholars have focused more on the intellectual content of these utterances as well as the controversy they caused in more orthodox scholarly circles (the case of Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj, d. 309/922, and his ecstatic claim, "I am the Truth [God]" and his subsequent trial and execution being the most well-studied amongst these), Al-Sarrāj's analysis reveals that these ecstatic bodily agitations

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>181</sup> Qtd in Carl W. Ernst, Words of Ecstasy in Sufism, (Albany: State University of New York, 1985), p. 12.

were inseparable from the entire Sūfī discourse on mystical states, divine witnessing and ecstatic sayings, not only in physiological terms, but as demonstrated via the abovequoted discussion of the flour mill and the water stream, in etymological terms as well. This etymological connection and the centrality of bodily movements to the mystical experience of the divine would then find its way into the work of the foremost authority on mystical ecstasy in medieval Islam, the Persian Şūfī and poet Rūzbihān Baqlī (d. 1209), who similarly asserted that, "in the language of the sūfīs, *shath* is derived from the agitations of the intimate consciences of their hearts" which occurs when "they see the objects of contemplation in the hidden, and the secrets of the hidden of the hidden, and the mysteries of greatness." 182 It should be pointed out however that despite the vivid descriptions of ecstasy and the divine visions that accompanied these states, his exclamations upon lapsing into vecd and falling down remain restricted to "Allāh!", "Hū!" and "Hagg!". There is only one instance where Murād utters the phrase "I am the Truth" in the manner of Hallaj, but when it happens it does not happen actually in the midst of an instance of vecd that is actually narrated. Rather it occurs in the context of a letter in which he implores his spiritual mentor Sücā dede to not fear his use of this phrase<sup>183</sup>.

Even within normative Sunni thought, the existence of aḥādīth qudsiyya (a special category of ḥadīth in which God himself speaks through Muḥammad) attests to the theoretical validity of the processes by which God could seize control of the body and mental faculties of a human and speak and act through him or her. Moreover, the content

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>182</sup> Qtd in ibid, p. 18.

<sup>183</sup> Kitābü'l-menāmāt, fol. 222b.

of one such <code>hadīth qudsī</code> known as the <code>hadīth al-nawāfil</code> (the tradition of the supererogatory acts) in particular became the canonical basis for virtually all discussions of ecstatic states in Ṣūfī thought. It reads;

"My servant draws not near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it." 184

Thus acts of obligatory and supererogatory worship, which as we have seen particularly occupied Murād and formed a cornerstone of his self-image as rendered in the *Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye*, had the power to draw in God's love and infuse a mystic's body with His presence thus bringing about states of ecstasy. As Michael Ebstein has recently demonstrated, whilst the tradition of the "sober" Sufism of the Junaydī school was content to confine itself to the "ethico-psychological" implications for the individual spiritual wayfarer of such an embodied union of man and the divine, Ṣūfīs in the vein of Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī, Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī and Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj more fully explored its more "ontological-collective" implications for the whole of creation 185. Their work touched on questions such as;

"Can we speak of a divine manifestation (*tajalli*, *zuhur*) in man, and if so, what are its broader implications, beyond the confines of the individual mystic? What is the significance of this manifestation in terms of ontology and the nature of

The Collections of Forty, Number 25. Translation and original Arabic text at: <a href="https://sunnah.com/qudsi40">https://sunnah.com/qudsi40</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>185</sup> Michael Ebstein, "The Organs of God: Hadīth al-Nawāfil in Classical Islamic Mysticism", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 138, no. 2 (2018), p. 289.

both the divine and human? Does the mystic, through whom God reveals Himself to the world, enjoy special privileges (perhaps in his relation to the sacred law), and what unique status does the mystic hold in society, in history, in the universe as a whole?"<sup>186</sup>

As ever, perhaps the most comprehensive treatment of such questions was given by Ibn al-'Arabī, who, held that the supreme mystic could have his organs transformed into the organs of God due to his performance of obligatory and supererogatory worship. Crucially however, this radical embodiment was not consequential for such an individual alone but for the whole of creation since, by virtue of sharing a part of God, he received divine knowledge directly from God, was protected from sin and error, acted as mediator between God and His creation and held lordship over all creation, spiritual and physical<sup>187</sup>. To put it more simply, Ibn al-'Arabī's use of the *hadīth al-nawāfil* carried a significant political charge in that it linked God's seizure of the supreme mystic's organs and sensory faculties with the latter's possession of extraordinary religio-political authority and what Ebstein calls "magico-theurgical abilities" 188. Whilst such a framing obviously served to drape all the supreme mystic's actions, however mundane, with utmost sanctity, the process by which God seized the mystic's body was not always outwardly apparent, except in moments of ecstasy and rapture, when it became a clearly observable, embodied spectacle. I contend that it is this process that Murād's dramatic states of vecd necessarily signified for the reader, even as modern readers would read them as epileptic seizures.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>187</sup> Ibid, p. 285 and 286.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

Much like the discourse of embodied kingship in the *Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye*, Murād's ecstatic experiences in the *Kitābü'l-menāmāt* can also be read as calibrated responses to prevailing anxieties about his bodily afflictions, particularly his epilepsy. In fact, when read within a particular politico-theological epistemological framework, it becomes apparent that, far from merely being signposts of Murād's spiritual progress as an individual mystic alone, the episodes of ecstasy in the *Kitābū'l-menāmāt* were also meant to be embodied markers of divine presence, and as such buttressed the former's position as a divinely ordained cosmocrator. A potential political conundrum is thus deftly spun into a poignant articulation of cosmic sovereignty.

But that is not all. These ecstatic experiences and their placement amongst dreams, visions, and even alongside the direct speech of God (in both Arabic and Turkish), also open up ways for us to reconceptualize the very nature of this text. The *Kitābü'l-menāmāt* with its beautiful *naskh* script festooned with vowel diacritics, its ample use of Quranic verses interspersed with Murād's own divine inspirations in Arabic and Turkish, as well as the dramatic bodily experiences that prepared for and accompanied these revelations reveal this text to be a continuation of Quranic scripture. By extension Murād's body is posited as the site through which this new scripture was brought forth into the world at the turn of the Millennium.

## Letterism, Embodied Sacral Kingship and Sultan Murad III's Talismanic Shirts

The physiognomic and artistic project of the *Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye* and the visionary project of the *Kitābū'l-menāmāt*, whilst drawing upon established discursive and artistic traditions, were nevertheless unprecedented productions that emerged as novel responses to challenges, conditions, and opportunities that were peculiar to the reign of Murād III. At the same time however, there was also a category of material production that acquired renewed vigor and importance for Murād's project of embodied sacral kingship, namely; talismanic shirts produced at the sultān's court. These were essentially cotton or linen shirts, which were treated with alum and egg white to give them a glossy paper-like finish. Then, at an apposite time determined by a court astrologer, experts trained in letter and number mysticism as well as in the esoteric and magical uses of the Qur'ān would festoon the shirts with calligraphy, magical squares, lozenges and other symbols believed to hold talismanic-protective and healing powers.

Now, the talismanic shirt was hardly a novelty of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century or even of the Ottoman domain of cultural production. An early example from 1480 made for Cem Sultān (d. 1495) is extant in the Topkapı Palace Museum, and examples from Iran, South Asia and West Africa have survived down to the present day<sup>189</sup>. That said, the Ottoman context in general, and the court of Murād III in particular, saw the production of the largest number of such shirts by far. A recent appraisal of the extant scholarship by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>189</sup> See "Kat 1 (TSM 13/1404)" in Hülya Tezcan, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Koleksiyonundan Tılsımlı Gömlekler*, (Istanbul: Timaş, 2011) p.46-47. See the introduction to Rose E. Muravchick, "God is the Best Guardian: Islamic Talismanic Shirts from the Gunpowder Empires", (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: University of Pennsylvania, 2014, p. 1-20.

Özgen Felek puts the number of shirts associated with Murād III at six, already the highest number explicitly attributed to any one Ottoman sultān<sup>190</sup>. Whilst finding Felek's assessment to be convincing, I contend that, given the number of 16<sup>th</sup> century shirts kept in the royal collection with unrecorded patrons, the number of shirts made for Murād III is, quite possibly, even higher. In the analysis that follows I will do a short survey of a few shirts attributed to Murād before making a case, on content and contextual grounds, that three more, previously unattributed shirts (TSM 13/1406, TSM 13/1184, TSM 13/1182), can be reliably connected to Murād III. Having laid the foundation to my argument that Murād III's reign saw a veritable zenith in the production of talismanic shirts, I will then flesh out how this upsurge contributed to the developing discourse of Murād's sacred body.

As a starting point, let us consider TSM 13/1135, the shirt with the strongest link to Murād III and which also comes with an exact date. This is down primarily to a note appended to the shirt that informs us that this "armor shirt" (*zurh ķamīṣ*) was gifted to the sulṭān by his mother, Nurbānū Sulṭān, upon his visit to her palace in January 1582<sup>191</sup>. From this, Felek has speculated that the shirt must have been produced in order to ward

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>190</sup> Of these six shirts (TSM 13/955, 13/1164, 13/1135, TSM 13/1185, TSM 13/1186 and TSM 13/1165), only three (TSM 13/955, 13/1164, 13/1135) are unanimously accepted as definitely belonging to Murād III. Hülya Tezcan considered one (TSM 13/1185) as "possibly belonging to Murād III" and one (TSM 13/1186) as merely "a shirt from the 16<sup>th</sup> century", all the while noting that this latter shirt had striking similarities to the former as well as to TSM 13/955. She also attributes one shirt (TSM 13/1165) to Murād IV (r. 1623-1640), an assessment based on inscriptions on the shirt that read, "Murād, your Sulṭānate is protected" and on what she considers to be a style consistent with later (17<sup>th</sup> century) talismanic shirts. In this assessment she is contradicted by Felek and another scholar, Murat Sülün, both of whom see the prayers on the shirt to be consistent with the kind of fears and anxieties expressed by Murād III in his *Kitābü'l-menāmāt*. Felek also notes that the kind of occult knowledge that went into the production of such shirts is more readily attributable to Murād III's court than to that of Murād IV. See; Özgen Felek, "Fears, Hopes, and Dreams: The Talismanic Shirts of Murād III', *Arabica*, vol. 64 (2017) pp.647-672.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>191</sup> Kat 4 (TSM 13/1135)" in Hülya Tezcan, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Koleksiyonundan Tılsımlı Gömlekler*, p. 54-57.

off black magic, which was rumored to have afflicted Murad, and which seems to have caused a fair amount of consternation in the palace<sup>192</sup>. This hypothesis is certainly supported by the presence on the shirt of Qur'anic suras, al-Falag (113) and al-Nas (114), both of which were regularly employed against black magic and demonic possession. The presence elsewhere (on the chest, shoulder blades and sleeves) of magical squares containing the esmā'-i husnā (the 99 "beautiful" names of God), as well as the repeating inscriptions of the sura al-Ikhlās (112) on the front—both of which were not particularly connected to protection against black magic—however suggests a wider range of uses. Another key motif on the shirt is the fabled sword of 'Alī, the doubled pointed *Dhulfiqār*, which extends from the slit of the collar right down to the very end of the shirt. The inscription of the sura, al-Fath (48) on each blade of this sword, coupled with the motif's association with the banners of the Janissary corps as well as the sultān's own standards suggests that the shirt may also have been intended to convey a military use<sup>193</sup>. It is important to bear in mind however that the presence of *al-Fath* too can denote a more general use as well, owing to its employment on a wide range of talismanic objects of a decidedly non-military character, such as medicinal bowls<sup>194</sup>. Whatever the actual intended function of the shirt, what the shirt does explicitly convey is a knowhow and application of the esoteric and occult interpretations of the Qur'ān and the 99 names of God.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>192</sup> Felek Özgen, "Fears, Hopes, and Dreams", p. 665.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>193</sup> Ibid p 666

Emilie Savage-Smith, *Science, Tools & Magic Part. 1: Body and Spirit, Mapping the Universe*, (London: The Nour Foundation, 1997), p. 118.



(Fig. 1.2)TSM 13/1135, Picture copyright: Hülya Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayı Museum

Another shirt, TSM 13/1185, is, according to Tezcan, likely to have been made for Murād III<sup>195</sup>. It is made of sized linen and differs from the other aforementioned shirts of Murād in that it makes use of a style of mirrored calligraphy known as *muthannā* on the front, the back as well as on the sleeves. Despite miniature writing filling almost all of the space of this shirt, the large medallions containing such *muthannā* constructions are the most prominent features of this shirt, and would have constituted the most actively talismanic components of it since they contain the kind of Qur'ānic verses regularly employed to enhance a talisman's power. For example, in the bottom section of the front, two star shaped medallions on the left and right contain a *muthannā* rendition of verse 13

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>195</sup> "Kat 5 (TSM 13/1185)" in Hülya Tezcan, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Koleksiyonundan Tılsımlı Gömlekler*, p. 58-59.

from the Qur'anic sura, al-Saff (61), which reads, "Help from Allah, and an imminent victory", the full verse of which reads: "'He will also give you' another favour that you long for: help from Allah and an imminent victory. So give good news O Prophet to the believers" <sup>196</sup>. However, the calligrapher who designed the shirt made a decision to render the words Allāh and fath (victory) in red ink and place them in the center of the medallion, whilst the rest of the verse is rendered in a muted gold and remains near the margins. Similarly, at the chest, two medallions filled with a *muthannā* rendition of the prayer, "God is the helper of those who help (others)", are rendered, with the word "helper" rendered in black and placed at the center. Felek has noted that when viewed upside down, these constructions appear to look like faces, an employment of muthannā that has its parallels in Bektāşi iconography<sup>197</sup>. The sleeves meanwhile also contain medallions containing muthannā renditions of two of God's names (al-Havy and al-Qayyūm, "the Ever-living" and "the Self-Subsisting" respectively). The same preoccupation with *muthannā* calligraphy continues on back, which is comprised of a central medallion surrounded by six smaller ones, all enclosed in a circular disk. The central medallion bears a *muthannā* rendition of a prayer that affirms God as sole refuge of mankind, whilst the surrounding medallions bear muthannā renditions of the invocations; "O Allāh!, O Muḥammad!, O Abu Bakr!, O 'Umar!, O 'Uthmān and O "Alī!". The area between this central circle and the edge of the shirt meanwhile is filled with several magic squares.

 <sup>196</sup> Qur'ān, 61:13, accessed at: https://quran.com/61
 197 Özgen Felek, "Fears, Hopes, and Dreams", p. 668.



(Fig. 1.3). TSM 13/1185, Picture copyright: Hülya Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayı Museum

The preponderance of *muthannā*, as well as the use of the exact same designs and motifs on another 16<sup>th</sup> century shirt (TSM 13/1406) suggests that this too is likely to have been made for Murād III<sup>198</sup>. For example, the same medallion containing Qur'ān 61:13—albeit in a more muted gold—from TSM 13/1185 appears on the shoulders here, whereas the medallions of the back of both shirts are also the same in terms of style and content. The same motifs of flowers in vases, which appear inside the central medallion on TSM 13/1185, feature prominently on the back skirt instead in TSM 11/1406. And lastly, *muthannā* renditions of *al-Ḥayy* and *al-Qayyūm*, of a style, which appears on the sleeves in TSM 13/1185, are instead rendered on the shoulder blades on TSM 11/1406. Interestingly, despite such glaring similarities between the two shirts, neither Felek nor

 $<sup>^{198}</sup>$  "Kat 34 (TSM 13/1406)" in Hülya Tezcan, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Koleksiyonundan Tılsımlı Gömlekler, p. 146-149.

Tezcan have identified it as being attributable to Murād III. Rather Tezcan considers another shirt (TSM 13/1186) as being similar to TSM 13/1185 based on its use of *muthannā*, square kufic calligraphy, use of color as well the compositions of its medallions<sup>199</sup>. It is therefore likely, that if we consider TSM 13/1185 to have been made for Murād, so must TSM 13/1186 and TSM 13/1406.

TSM 13/1406 however is not the only shirt that probably belongs in Murād's repertoire but which has not been identified as such. It can be argued that two strikingly similar 16<sup>th</sup> century shirts (TSM 13/1184 and TSM 13/1182), beautifully decorated with red *thuluth* script and gold bronze and blue ink, can also be reliably attributed to Murād<sup>200</sup>. Quite apart from the fact that high quality of the calligraphy and illuminations already mark them out as possibly royal, the shirts are also unique amongst Ottoman shirts in their employment of verses from al-Būṣīrī's *qaṣīdat al-burda* (Ode of the Mantel) in cartouches that run vertically and horizontally around the main talismanic elements in the center. Rose Muravchick has posited that since the *qaṣīda*—when recited, inscribed or simply gazed at—was believed to be able to compel good dreams involving the prophet Muḥammad, its inscription on these shirts suggest they could be nightshirts made for Murād III, a monarch who, as we have seen, was preoccupied with analyzing and recording his own dreams as well as those of others<sup>201</sup>. This interesting argument therefore posits these shirts as talismanic aids that were meant to bring about the kind of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>199</sup> "Kat 36 (TSM 13/1186) in Hülya Tezcan, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Koleksiyonundan Tılsımlı Gömlekler*, p.152-153.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>200</sup> "Kat 22 and Kat 23 (TSM 13/1184 and TSM 13/1182)" in Hülya Tezcan, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Koleksiyonundan Tılsımlı Gömlekler*, p. 114-119.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>201</sup> Rose E. Muravchick, "God is the Best Guardian: Islamic Talismanic Shirts from the Gunpowder Empires", p. 113.

prophetic dreams and visions that we have already seen in our discussion of Murād's Kitābü'l-menāmāt above. However as we have also seen, Murād's linkages to the qasīdat al-burda are even more extensive in that he converted the royal bedchamber in the court of pages into a shrine for the titular mantel of the prophet and other such relics. Moreover, he had tile work made for the chamber that was inscribed with the *qaṣīda*, and later in 1592-3, he had a bejeweled and gold-plated ebony cupboard commissioned for storing the mantel<sup>202</sup>. Last but not least, in his *Kitābü'l-menāmāt*, he recalls a dream in which the prophet Muhammad himself drapes his mantel on Murād's shoulders as a sign of investiture  $^{203}$ . Therefore, it is possible that the *qaṣīda*, and by extension the shirt with which it was inscribed, were meant to evoke Murād's possession of the mantel in both the physical and the dream realm. A final piece of evidence, albeit of an external sort, linking TSM 13/1184 and 13/1182 to Murād III comes in the form of a talismanic shirt in the Al-Thani collection. This item is not only stylistically the same as these two aforementioned shirts, but it is also festooned with the *qaṣīdat al-burda* in similar places. Most importantly for our purposes, it bears the date 991 AH (1583) in the Sotheby's sale description and in the catalog of the Power and Protection: Islamic Art and the Supernatural exhibition held at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, where it was last showcased between 2016 and 2017<sup>204</sup>. It is therefore highly likely that this shirt, as well as TSM 13/1184 and 13/1182 were all made for Murād III in the early 1580s. On this basis it is my argument that the talismanic shirts made for Murād III were almost definitely greater than the six argued by Felek. The three interrelated questions that then

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>202</sup> See Gülrü Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*, p.150-151.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>203</sup> Kitābü'l-menāmāt, fol.14a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>204</sup> See Cat. 50 in Francesca Leoni, *Power and Patronage: Islamic Art and the Supernatural*, (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2016), p. 77.

arise are; (i) what had compelled such an upsurge in royal patronage and commissions of such shirts, (ii) how were these shirts actually used at this time and (iii) in what ways did they contribute to the articulation of Murād III's embodied sacral kingship?

The most obvious answer to the first of these questions is that such patronage for talismanic shirts is in keeping with Murād III's well-known interest in the occult sciences. Whilst this is definitely true, such an answer does not interrogate what such an interest was in aid of. A more satisfactory answer that has been posited by Özgen Felek is that Murād's possible bodily afflictions (epilepsy, impotence and influence of black magic) may have compelled such shirts to be commissioned for him<sup>205</sup>. Thus like the textual production at Murād's court, these shirts, which could have medical-curative properties, can also be seen as interventions meant to respond to the all-important political question of the sultān's physical health. However, as Helga Anetshofer has demonstrated in her paper on references to talismanic shirts in recensions of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Turkish heroic epic, the Danismendname, "the function of the talismanic shirts was, at least in the early period, explicitly military", i.e. for protecting their wearers from harm or injury during battle<sup>206</sup>. Thus while talismanic shirts might hold all manner of curative and baraka-channeling properties, they did seem to also have implied a preparedness for and a willingness to go into battle, even if they were never actually taken out on campaigns. And indeed as noted above with regards to the text of the Kıyāfetü'l-insāniyye, projecting martial strength for a sedentary sultān by recourse to his body seemed to have been a paramount concern for court historians at this time.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>205</sup> Felek Özgen, "Fears, Hopes, and Dreams", p. 665.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>206</sup> Helga Anetshofer, "The Hero Dons a Talismanic Shirt for Battle: Magical Objects Aiding the Warrior in a Turkish Epic Romance", *Journal of Near East Studies*, vol.77 no.2 (2018), pp.178.

Therefore the talismanic shirts, which as Rose Muravchick has argued, of necessity evoked "the body which once filled them"<sup>207</sup>, must have drawn attention to Murād's body as that of a warrior ever ready for battle.

Such a hypothesis however assumes that such talismanic shirts had an audience beyond their intended owners. Given the attention, expertise, cost and manpower required to produce such garments, one can safely assume that the sultān's commissioning of talismanic shirts must have been known to figures at the court. The process of their production itself therefore must have served to bolster an appropriate image of the sultān, not unlike other textual and artistic works destined for the sultan's private library. Moreover, as Muravchick has noted, the way some of these shirts were stiffened with egg whites to achieve a paper-like surface would have made them highly impractical and fragile as undergarments <sup>208</sup>. And indeed a lack of characteristic wear and tear, particularly on those commissioned for Murād, does suggest that they were seldom—if ever—actually worn. This raises the possibility that their utility did not lay so much in their purported use as battle or medical garments but as *objets d'art* meant to convey an appropriate image for their would-be wearer. This hypothesis is further supported by Emilie Savage-Smith's assertion that an unusually long and ornate talismanic shirt attributable to sulțān Süleymān, far from being hidden away under the sulțān's outer garments or in an amulet box, was meant to be worn on the outside and thus may have

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>207</sup> Rose E. Muravchick, "God is the Best Guardian: Islamic Talismanic Shirts from the Gunpowder Empires" p. 170

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>208</sup> Rose E. Muravchick, "Objectifying the Occult: Studying an Islamic Talismanic Shirt as an Embodied Object", *Arabica*, vol. 64 (2017), pp. 682-683.

carried ceremonial significance<sup>209</sup>. It is therefore likely that the shirts made for Murād, as objects of ceremonial significance, could have an audience beyond the sultān and the shirts' producers.

However, apart from carrying martial meanings for those who viewed them, these talismanic shirts, with their elaborate geometric designs, Arabic calligraphy, magical squares, use of number mysticism, Qur'anic passages, and Sūfī iconography also signaled the sultan's ability to mobilize the various esoteric and occult sciences that had become indispensable to virtually all articulations of millennial sacral sovereignty from the Balkans to Bengal in the post-Timurid age. They did so, firstly, by drawing focus upon the laborious processes of their production, which obviously spoke to an active patronage of these occult sciences, not unlike the various physiognomical, astronomical and magical treatises patronized at Murād's court. Secondly, by virtue of this talismanic knowledge being inscribed on a garment intended for the sultan's body, these shirts also alluded to the wielding of such knowledge by the sultan himself, and the divine protection and power that accrued to him therefrom. In other words, I contend that the shirts signaled the sultan as possessed of a thaumaturgically encased body directly connected to divine favor, and thus as the very embodiment of saint-philosopherkingship. I therefore do not view these royal talismanic shirts as intended solely for use on the battlefield or in contexts of magical healing as much of the current scholarship asserts. Rather, instead of positing them as the material components of an apolitical "popular piety" designed to merely deflect harm, I view these talismanic shirts as more

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>209</sup> Emilie Savage-Smith, *Science, Tools & Magic*, p. 117. The shirt in question is TSM 13/1150. See; "Kat 37" in in Hülya Tezcan, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Koleksiyonundan Tılsımlı Gömlekler*, p.154-155.

active agents that, much like the rest of occultist knowledge production at this time, were deeply implicated in the cosmopolitical considerations of the age<sup>210</sup>. I therefore take a wider view that posits these royal objects as discursive assemblages that proliferated contemporaneously with an upsurge in the composition of imperial grimoires, and thus as endeavors that aided the development of what Mathew Melvin-Koushki has termed an "occult-scientific imperialism" that pervaded much of the Islamicate world.<sup>211</sup>

This relationship between the textual apparatus of this "occult-scientific imperialism" and these royal talismanic shirts however is not only one of shared temporality. Rather, as Emilie Savage-Smith, Rose Muravchick and Nazanin Hedayat Munroe have observed, the sizing of the fabric with a glaze, types of illumination as well as the various kinds of epigraphic styles that festoon these shirts suggest that the same scholars, scribes and craftsmen responsible for the production of magical treatises, illuminated texts and talismanic charts—and not textile designers—may also have been behind the production of these talismanic shirts as well<sup>212</sup>. In fact, one of Murād III's shirts (TSM 13/1164), for example, is known to have been made by Mevlevī *şeyh* Sinān Dede in 1575, supposedly as thanks for the sultān's patronage of ten new hermit cells added to Sinān's Şūfī lodge<sup>213</sup>. This connection between the book arts and the material of the talismanic shirts

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>210</sup> For more on the issue of occultophobia in the study of Islam, its origins and its legacy see; Mathew Melvin-Koushki, "Introduction: De-orienting the Study of Islamicate Occultism", *Arabica*, 64/3-4 (2017), pp. 287-693, and "Is Islamic (Occult) Science Science?", *Theology and Science*, vol. 18 (2020), pp. 303-324.

Mathew Melvin-Koushki, "How to Rule the World: Occult-Scientific Manuals of the Early Modern Persian Cosmopolis", *Journal of Persianate Studies*, 11/2 (2018), pp.144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>212</sup> Emilie Savage-Smith, *Science, Tools & Magic*, p. 117, Rose E. Muravchick, "Objectifying the Occult: Studying an Islamic Talismanic Shirt as an Embodied Object", pp.681 and Nazanin Hedayat Munroe, "Wrapped Up: Talismanic Garments in Early Modern Islamic Culture", *Journal of textile design, research and practice*, vol.7 no.1 (2019), p.6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>213</sup> Özgen Felek, "Fears, Hopes, and Dreams", pp. 663.

is also strengthened by evidence from the festivities book made for the 1582 circumcision festival prince Mehmed. In it two illustrated folios depict a procession of *mühreciler*, i.e. the craftsmen responsible for sizing and polishing paper based in the Vezneciler neighborhood of Istanbul, who proceed to show off their craft by parading a group of youths dressed in what look like seized shirts whilst a group of three other youths recited the Qur'ān on a mobile platform<sup>214</sup>. These probably were talismanic shirts based on the similarity of their stiffness, cut, and overall shape, however the lack of writing or any other talismanic element on them suggests that they were still in the process of production within the *mühreci*'s workshop. The book arts and the talismanic shirts therefore likely emerged from the same textual habitus and sites of production. The additional gesture to render such esoteric and occult knowledge into royal shirts with openings for the arms and the neck however does suggest a desire to connect this knowledge more specifically to the body (i.e. the very person) of the sultān, which as we have seen was a key terrain upon which sacral millennial kingship was being articulated.

Crucially however, the relationship between imperial grimoires and the talismanic shirts was also a conceptual one and involved, in particular, 'ilm al-ḥurūf, the science of letters (hereafter referred to as letterism), which Melvin-Koushki succinctly defines as "any type of methodology centered on letters as the key to deciphering (and manipulating) all levels of physical, imaginal and spiritual reality" <sup>215</sup>. This particular branch of esoteric knowledge was predicated on the sacred status of the Arabic language (the language of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>214</sup> Nurhan Atsoy, 1582 Surname-i Hümayun: Duğun Kitabı, (Istanbul: Koçbank, 1997), p.52-53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>215</sup> Mathew Melvin-Koushki, The Occult Challenge to Philosophy and Messianism in Early Timurid Iran: Ibn Turka's Lettrism as a New Metaphysics, *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam*, Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (ed.)(Leiden and Brill: Brill, 2014), p. 250.

the Qur'ān) as a primordial and divine language bequeathed by God to Adam, and as such held within its phonetic and graphical aspects, the key to divining truths about God and his creation. Though it is known to have first developed amongst the early Shi'i *ghulāt*, it also entered into Neoplatonic Ismā'īlī theology and was increasingly systematized within the alchemical corpus attributed to Jābir ibn Ḥayyān (c. 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries) as well as the occult writings of the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā* (the Brethren of Purity, c. 980)<sup>216</sup>. From such beginnings letterism also made its way to Andalusia, where in the Ismā'īlī-influenced Neoplatonist oeuvres of Ibn Masarra (d. 931) and Ibn al-'Arabī (d.1240), it acquired an unprecedented cosmogonic-cosmological dimension, i.e. it became implicated in the very creation and operation of the universe<sup>217</sup>.

Emerging from the same Andalusian-North African intellectual environment as Ibn al'Arabī and sharing a common teacher with him in Tunis was the highly influential Ṣūfī
scholar Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Būnī (d. 1225), who branched out from the purely theologicalphilosophical meditations on the letters of the Arabic alphabet to develop letterism's
more practical applications, such as the production and use of talismans. As Noah
Gardiner has demonstrated however, this use was still predicated on his highly complex
astrological-letterist cosmology that saw the letters of the Arabic alphabet become
associated not only with divine speech and the celestial spheres, but with the four
elemental qualities (heat, moisture, dryness and cold) of matter, as well as the twelve

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>216</sup> Ibid p 251

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>217</sup> See chapter two, "Letters" in Michael Ebstein, *Mysticism and Philosophy in Al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn Al-'Arabi and the Isma'ili Tradition*, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), p.-77-122.

forms of sensory and mental faculties possessed by man<sup>218</sup>. It is this association between celestial, "luciform" letters and the "spiritual" and "corporeal" letters associated with human beings and the rest of material creation respectively that enabled Sūfī adepts and saints—key components of al-Būnī's mystical vision—to mediate God's letterist emanations and use them to manipulate and order affairs on earth<sup>219</sup>. In fact, the earliest mention of a magical shirt (qamīs) appears in one of Al-Būnī's works on the magical properties of the names of God (the kitāb al-ta'līq, extant in two copies dated 1425 and 1556). In it Al-Būnī describes how by writing a magical design on the shirt's collar and reciting an invocation over it, one could gain the affection and favor of another person<sup>220</sup>. Another related example of such operations from Al-Būnī's The Subtleties of the Allusions regarding the Superior Letters include healing parts of the human body using Qur'ānic verses composed of letters appropriate to each body part<sup>221</sup>. Yet another method involved the creation of talismans made by inscribing the letter  $d\bar{a}l$  (associated with God's names that had the letter  $d\bar{a}l$  in them) on piece of white silk thirty-five times and carrying it in a signet ring<sup>222</sup>. Al-Būnī also delineates a method to create a wearable talisman inscribed with magic squares, which Gardiner describes as follows;

"Another, more complex operation evoking the divine names and related forces associated with *dal* is the manufacturing of a talisman featuring a four-by-four mathematical "magic square," which is to say a four-by-four grid of numbers—or their equivalents in letters—in which all the rows and columns tally to the same sum. For this procedure the adept must fast for two weeks, eating nothing but bread, maintaining a state of ritual purity throughout, and regularly invoking

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>218</sup> Noah Gardiner, "Stars and Saints: The Esotericist Astrology of the Sufi Occultist Ahmad al-Buni", *Journal of Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, vol.12, no.1 (Spring 2017), pp.56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>219</sup> Ibid, p.41.

Emilie Savage-Smith, Science, Tools & Magic, p. 118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>221</sup> Noah Gardiner, "Stars and Saints", pp. 59-60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>222</sup> Ibid, pp. 60-61.

God's name while meditating on a sheet of silver. On a Thursday (traditionally the day of Jupiter), in the hour of Jupiter, on a day when the moon is favorably aligned with Jupiter and the sun, and when the ascending lunar node is in Gemini (in which the ascending node is exalted), he is to inscribe the square on the sheet of silver while facing the *qiblah* and burning mastic and white oud. He is then to wear the talisman on Thursdays, and God will make easy for him his religious obligations, provide him with all his necessities, and grant him *barakah* "in all that his hand attempts" (*fi kull ma tuhawiluhu yadihi*)."<sup>223</sup>

While the use of silver is not a dominant feature of the talismanic shirts under consideration, the devising of letterist magic squares on a wearable talisman at an apposite time determined by the movement of the planets and the stars does bear strong similarities to the processes by which talismanic shirts were eventually made in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. And in the absence of specific references to talismanic shirts in occult manuals and Şūfī treatises from the period, works such as these by Al-Būnī can indeed provide us with important clues about the theoretical underpinnings of such processes. It is also interesting to note that the positive effects of this talisman on the wearer, as stated by Al-Būnī, do not merely have to do with preventative care (protection from disease or from harm on the battlefield), though such uses were no doubt important. Rather, in promising the wearer success "in all that his hand attempts" or the affection of a desired person, Al-Būnī posits this talisman as activating God's *baraka* and allowing its power to suffuse all of the wearer's actions, i.e. it not only protects but it also actively empowers.<sup>224</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>223</sup> Ibid, pp. 62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>224</sup> As eluded to earlier, this particular property of letterist talismans as empowering their owners as opposed to merely protecting them has not been dwelt upon by scholars in their consideration of early modern talismanic shirts, owing perhaps to what Melvin-Koushki has described as a tendency to view all occult and esoteric endeavors as apolitical popular religion at best, and the very antithesis of proper (read; scriptural) religion at worst. This in turn has meant that the role of talismanic shirts as embodied articulations of sacral and millennial sovereignty has not been fully explored.

A key 15<sup>th</sup> century figure to draw on the work Ibn al-'Arabī and Al-Būnī was the philosopher and occultist Sā'in al-Dīn 'Alī ibn Muhammad Turka Isfahānī (d. 1432), who, in works produced for early Timurid courts, raised letterism above both Sufism and philosophy and posited it as a universal science that held the keys to the decipherment of the cosmos<sup>225</sup>. These works included the *Risāle-i Hurūf*, a primer on letterism written in Shiraz in 1414 for Iskandar Mīrzā (d. 1415), the 1425 Risāle-i Anjām on the superiority of letterism over philosophy and mysticism, and the Risāle-i Su'l al-Mulūk, a 1426 work on the theoretical foundations and the practical applications of letterism written for Baysunghur (d. 1433), son of the Timurid ruler Shāhrukh (d. 1447)<sup>226</sup>. It was in this latter work that Ibn Turka most comprehensively addressed the practical dimensions of letterism, such as its talismanic uses. In a section highly reminiscent of Al-Būnī's talismanic analysis, he demonstrates the power of letterism as praxis by recourse to its effects on the human body. He states that if a body were to lose its natural balance and become ill, the Qur'anic letters, being as they were "uncreated heavenly substances" could restore that balance and nurture the afflicted body back to full health<sup>227</sup>. However, Ibn Turka goes on to argue that the effect of the Qur'ānic letters is different if they body is healthy. He states;

"...when the body requires no medical treatment, being in full possession of its natural balance and its external and internal faculties; at this point the effusion of divine mercy  $(rahmat-i\ rahm\bar{a}n\bar{\imath})$  fills the cups of one's bodily instruments  $(asb\bar{a}b\ u\ \bar{a}l\bar{a}t-i\ jism\bar{a}n\bar{\imath})$  to the brim with its flow of virtues  $(afd\bar{a}l)$ , such that one is enabled to climb out of the chasms of satanically-inspired incapacity and failure

<sup>225</sup> Mathew Melvin-Koushki, "The Occult Challenge to Philosophy and Messianism", p. 249.

<sup>227</sup> Mathew Melvin-Koushki, "The Occult Challenge to Philosophy and Messianism", p.257.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>226</sup> For editions and translations of these text see; Mathew Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣā'in al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran", (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: Yale University, 2012), p 463-527.

on the ascending rungs of existence and thereby arrive at human perfection. This activates one's preparedness (isti'dād) to receive from the hand of the cupbearer of divine mercy the choicest wine of theoretical inquiry and divine knowledge in the receptacles of the eternal letters and the pots of the primordial molds ( $awd\bar{a}$ ) and quaff therefrom. Through persistence in drinking from these cups one may arrest one's descent into alienation (bu'd) and the deserts of estrangement and ascend to nearness [with God] (qurb) and the sanctuary of union (jam 'ivvat)."228

Thus like Al-Būnī, Ibn Turka in his discussion of letterist praxis also transcends the purely curative/protective functions of letters. However, instead of directly promising the practitioner success in "in all that his hand attempts", Ibn Turka highlights such a person's increased acquisition of knowledge and ability to achieve union with God, all of which carried the same implications for this person's abilities as described in Al-Būnī's treatment of the subject. When understood in this way, a royal talismanic shirt—itself a practical application of the science of letters—also ceases to be a purely protective or curative garment, but rather emerges as an apparatus by which a monarch could cultivate *velāyet* and ascend to the rank of saint-philosopher-kingship.

These objects were thus doubly useful for the sultān; they not only have offered a highly paranoid ruler divine protection at a time when a highly febrile political environment existed at court and the empire at large, but they also functioned as discursive assemblages that, by virtue of manifesting the knowledge of letters, magical squares and divine names on the sultan's body, perpetuated his claims of mastery over this cosmic knowledge. In that way, like the Kıvāfetü'l-insāniyye and the Kitabu'l- menamat, they formed crucial components of a discourse of embodied millennial and sacral kingship that developed and matured during the reign of Murād III.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>228</sup> Qtd in Ibid, p. 258.

## **Conclusion**

By way of a conclusion, it only remains to be reiterated that the study of early modern kingship, particularly of the sacral and millennial sort that Murād III was attempting to cultivate, is not served by analyses of titles or via the study of official histories and treatises on government alone. As Azfar Moin has argued in the context of Mughal South Asia,

"From the perspective of kingship, the science of the millennium was first and foremost a science of the concrete... kings had to learn to embody and enact their sacredness by means of semiotic structures and fragments of myths in circulation. Because these signs and narratives were not altogether coherent or compatible, they had to be repeatedly adjusted and made to fit together in a constant performance that centered on the body of the king."229

What this means for the historian, argues Moin, is a historico-anthropological focus on the embodied "ritual-symbolic complexes" that undergirded such dynastic projects<sup>230</sup>. This chapter has argued that what was true for Mughal kingship was also true for Ottoman kingship, and thus scholarly treatments of Ottoman kingship in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries requires a sustained focus on the body of the sultan as a key terrain on which such discourses on sacral kingship were articulated. In the Ottoman context however, quite apart from the imperatives of the millennium, the challenges posed by a stay-athome monarch plagued by rumors of ill health, protracted military campaigns in the east and the west, and growing fiscal problems had also created a sense of deep political and social crisis amongst members of the ruling elite. Via an analysis of (i) şulţānic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>229</sup> Azfar Moin, "Millennial Sovereignty, Total Religion and Total Politics", *History and Theory*, 56, no. 1 (March 2017), p. 90-91. <sup>230</sup> Ibid, p.91.

physiognomies and portraiture, (ii) the contents of a royal dream and vision log, and (iii) the production of symbolically significant talismanic shirts, this chapter has sought to demonstrate that the reign of Murād III saw the creation of an entire discourse of sacral sovereignty centered on his body, not only to buttress his role as a divinely ordained sulṭān of the millennium, but also as a response to crises of representation that had precipitated at this time. But where scholars and craftsmen were drawing on Ṣūfī and occult knowledge to create novel political theologies centered on the monarch's body, the Ṣūfī orders in the countryside were resorting to similar methods in order to buttress their own local authority in the face of mounting social and political crises. It is these orders that will form the focus of the next chapter.

# Chapter 2

*The Saintly Body*: Hagiography, Embodiment and the Hermeneutics of Crisis in 17<sup>th</sup> century Anatolia and the Balkans

#### Introduction

In his authoritative 1992 study on the genre of hagiography (*menāķībnāme*) in the Islamic context in general and the Ottoman context in particular, the historian Ahmet Yaşar Ocak made the following observation;

"That we see the composition of a great deal of *menakibnames* in these (17th and 18th centuries) is not surprising. The political, social and economic crises within the empire led the common folk further into the mystical life [*mistik hayat*] and accordingly ever greater throngs of the masses coalesced around the *tarikats* [orders]"<sup>231</sup>.

It was only natural then, Ocak argues, "that these centuries constitute the era when the orders were the most numerous and widespread"<sup>232</sup>. In a similar vein, John Curry, in an illuminating 2002 article, discerned an unprecedented growth in Ḥalvetī hagiographies between 1575 and 1630, and asserted that hagiographies and biographical compendia such as those of Yūsuf Sināneddīn bin Ya'kūb, 'Ömer El- Fu'ādī, Münīrī Belġrādī, Muḥyī-yi Gülşenī and Cemāleddīn Maḥmūd Ḥulvī increasingly appeared at this time of great crisis and change in the Ottoman Empire so as to shore up the authority of *ṭarīqa* Sufism against its increasingly vocal detractors in state and learned circles<sup>233</sup>. Beyond Ḥalvetī circles, the multiple hagiographies of Bursa based Ṣūfīs by Ḥūsāmeddīn Bursevī (d. 1632) of the Semerķandīyye order, of the Celvetī 'Azīz Maḥmūd Hudāyī (d. 1628) by Nev'īzāde Aṭāyī (d. 1635), and of the Zeynī Şeyḫ Burhāneddīn of the southwestern

Ahmad Yaşar Ocak , Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Menâkıbnâmeler, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1997), p. 62
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John Curry, "The Growth of a Turkish-Language Hagiographical Literature Within the Ḥalvetī Order of the 16 and 17 Centuries" in *The Turks*, v. 3, 912 -920. Hasan Celal Güzel et al. (eds) (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Press, 2002).

Anatolian town of Eğirdir by his descendant Şerīf Meḥmed (d. 1631) add to the general picture of the growth of hagiographies during this period<sup>234</sup>. And it would appear that this trend was not restricted to only Anatolia and the Balkans. As historian Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh has shown, a significant amount of hagiographic activity, official patronage and urban growth that was centered around the mystical lodge of a local *majdūb* by the name of Abū Bakr ibn Abī al-Wafā' (d.1583) in Aleppo seemed to have coincided with the various social, economic and political upheavals of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>235</sup>. In particular she has argued that the "disruptions in trade and agriculture, and the depopulation of the countryside" that accompanied the career of the rebel governor of Aleppo, Cānbulādoğlu 'Alī Paşa (c. 1606-1607) is matched by "an intensification of mystical piety in Aleppo."<sup>236</sup>

As Ocak himself has also noted though, most of the hagiographies of this period have as their main foci the lives of Anatolian and Balkan Ṣūfīs whose careers did not predate the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>237</sup>. And as Curry has noted, they also seem to be predominantly written in accessible Turkish as opposed to the more elite languages of Persian and Arabic<sup>238</sup>. Both these facts thus invite a more sociologically minded analysis about their turn of the century growth than has hitherto been attempted. Indeed, whilst the intuition within

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>234</sup> For more on Bursevī, see; Mustafa Kara, "Hüsâmeddin Bursevî", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, 18 (1998), p. 511-512. For his hagiography of Şeyḫ Üftāde, see; Aburrahman Yünal, *Menâkıb-ı Üftâde*, (Bursa: Celvet Yayınları-I, 1996). Atāyī's hagiography of Azīz Maḥmūd Hudāyī is located in Süleymaniye Library, (Lala Ismail Pasha), no.706/56. For an analysis on Şerīf Meḥmed and his *Menâkıb-ı Şeyḫ Burhaneddin* as well as the text see; Sadık Yazar, *Eğirdirli Münevver Bir Ailenin Hikayesi Şerif Mehmed'in Menakıb-ı Şeyh Burhaneddin'i*, (Istanbul: Okur Akademi, 2012).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>235</sup> Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, "Deviant Dervishes: Space, Gender, and the Construction of Antinomian Piety in Ottoman Aleppo", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 37 (2005), p. 535–565. <sup>236</sup> Ibid. p. 539.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>237</sup> Ocak, Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Menâkıbnâmeler, p.62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>238</sup> John Curry, "The Growth of a Turkish-Language Hagiographical Literature".

prevailing scholarship that the expansion of Sūfī orders and their hagiographic activity during this period might have had something to do with that era's socio-political and economic challenges is, in my view, correct, what exactly was behind this growth has remained unelaborated. What in particular attracted populations in town and village to flock to Sūfī lodges and shrines? Ocak's use of the term "mystical life" suggests that what he considered to be at the heart of such coalescing around the orders was disillusionment from the increasingly Hobbesian realities of everyday life and a move towards more "mystical" (read; otherworldly) preoccupations on part of the masses. Curry meanwhile sees this growth in hagiographic activity as emerging from a need to respond to the growing anti-Sūfī sentiment of the era, a point of contention that was only one—and that too elite and literate—manifestation of this period's transformations and disruptions. Both authors then have framed this growth in purely intellectual terms. This has meant that the larger socio-economic and governmental reality behind the expansion in hagiographic activity has remained, for the most part, unexamined. After all, the kind of esoteric rituals and practices that could be described as the otherworldly desiderata of Ocak's "mystical life", or indeed the high-level intellectual debates surrounding the legitimacy—or lack thereof—of the cult of saints that are Curry's focus were not, for the most part, arenas for the kind of mass participation indicated by such growth in hagiographic literature and their associated orders. Thus whilst there have been great strides in bringing the social, political and urban-architectural aspects of Sufism front and center of the scholarly agenda in recent years<sup>239</sup>, the overall treatment of this pivotal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>239</sup> Ahmet Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Periods 1200-1500*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, "Subjects of the Sultan, Disciples of the Shah: Formation and Transformation of the Kizilbash/Alevi Communities in Ottoman Anatolia," (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2008), Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction* 

moment at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in the history of Ottoman Sufism has still been hampered by a tendency to view Sufism primarily as an alternative intellectual current within the larger umbrella of Islamic thought.

This chapter builds upon Ocak and Curry's insight that the growth of hagiographic literature in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century was connected to the various crises affecting Ottoman state and society at this time. However it differs from these precedents by suggesting that this growth did not have to do primarily with Sufism's promise of providing otherworldly detachment or a with a need to offer intellectual defenses of Şūfī doctrine and practice against its detractors, but with their promise of salvation against the various hardships of life. I argue that these hagiographies and the miracles contained within them represented active forms of political, social and religious claim making by Ottoman Ṣūfīs through which they sought to fill the vacuums left by deteriorating state and social structures. More specifically, it is my contention that by narrating saintly bodies and their powers of miraculous intervention against calamity and disorder, they powerfully and tangibly posited the saintly cult and its associated lodges and shrines as

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of the Ottoman State (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) John Curry, The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought in the Ottoman Empire: The Rise of the Halveti Order, 1350-1650, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), J. Curry and Erik H. Ohlander (eds.), Sufism and Society: Arrangements of the Mystical in the Muslim World, 1200-1800, (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), Nathalie Clayer, "Quand L'Hagiographie Se Fait L'Echo Des Dérèglements Socio-Politiques Le Menâkibnâme de Münir. Belgrâdî, in Syncrétismes et heresies dans l'Orient seljoukide et ottoman (XIVe-XVIIIe siècle), (Paris: PEETERS Press, 2005), "Les miracles des cheikhs et leurs fonctions dans les espaces frontières de la Roumélie du XVIe siècle" in Denise Aigle (ed.): Miracle et Karâma: Hagiographies médiévales comparées, (Paris 2000), p. 435-58, and "Müniri Belgrâdî: un représentant de la 'ilmiyye dans la région de Belgrade, fin XVIe siècle début XVIIe siècle" in Frauen, Bilder und Gelehrte: Studien zu Gesellschaft und Künsten im Osmanischen Reich, Festschrift Hans Georg Majer, Sabine Prätor & Cristoph K. Neumann (ed.), (Istanbul, Simurg, 2002) Side Emre, Ibrahim-i Gulshani and the Khalwati-Gulshani order: Power-Brokers in Egypt, (Brill, 2017), Dina Le Gall, A Culture of Sufism: Nagshbandis in the Ottoman World, 1450-1700, (New York: State University Press of New York, 2005), and Zeynep Yürekli, Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire: The Politics of Bektashi Shrines in the Classical Age, (Farnham, Surrey: Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012).

conducive to order, stability and community in trying times. By so doing I aim to restore agency to Ṣūfī actors, who via their hagiographic endeavors at the turn of the century, actively responded to the society around them rather than simply being passive receptacles for the disaffected, or perennially on the defensive against a rising tide of anti-Ṣūfī critique. Before we proceed to an analysis of the hagiographies proper however a discussion of the hermeneutical method and the chosen sources is warranted.

## Hagiography, Embodiment and the Hermeneutics of Crisis

The notion of hagiography echoing and responding to societal upheaval is not a wholly unprecedented angle in the context of Ottoman history. Nathalie Clayer's work on the Halvetī Ṣūfī Münīrī Belġrādī's *Silsiletū'l-Mukarrebīn ve Menākıbu'l-Muttekīn* has explored this hagiographical compendium's detailing of the upheavals of the early 17th century in the European marches<sup>240</sup>. Whilst sections of this text empirically detail the nature of crisis in the manner of a *naṣīḥatnāme*, owing perhaps to Münīrī's position and training as a member of the *'ilmiye* hierarchy<sup>241</sup>, a more oblique way of teasing out the shape of social crises from hagiographies has been offered by historian Gottfried Hagen. In a 2014 study, he highlighted how the hagiographies of the 15th century "preserved the voices of those who experienced the fifteenth century...as a time of transition, disorientation and loss, violence and insecurity, suffering and disrupted order" and demonstrated how they "can be read as articulations of social concerns, and how they

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>240</sup> See Clayer, "Quand L'Hagiographie Se Fait L'Echo Des Dérèglements Socio-Politiques".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>241</sup> For his biography see: Clayer, "Müniri Belgrâdî : un représentant de la 'ilmiyye dans la région de Belgrade, fin XVIe siècle début XVIIe siècle".

function as responses to social and cosmic order"<sup>242</sup>. Drawing on narratives in works like the *Salţıknāme*, the *Baţṭālnāme* and the *Vilāyetnāme* of Hacı Bektāş-I Velī, a genre he calls "heroic hagiography", Hagen argues that,

"Heroic hagiography sets its hero-saints against a particular backdrop. The society it depicts presents itself as riddled by insecurity, shaken by the permanent dangers of existence, and despairing of human remedies for that situation...[and] the heroic narrative is a typical and appropriate response to such experiences. This setting is more (and less) than a plain reflection of the realities of the historical hagiographers and their audiences. Instead, this backdrop functions as a plausible contrast to the actions and adventures of the hero; the tension between them is to be taken as reflecting the fears, needs, desires, and hopes of the audience, because of which they resort to the hero-saint". 243

In a similar vein, I posit that the backdrops provided by 17<sup>th</sup> century hagiographies share this quality of being at once *more* and *less* than a plain reflection of the societies they inhabited. *More* because these texts exhibit a greater degree of complexity than a single correlation between one depiction and its corresponding referent can adequately capture, and *less* because these texts do not always narrate the detailed causes and characteristics of the upheavals to which they were responding. These though are hardly grounds to deny that these sources were in conversation with events of their day since they refract real crises through a factually redacted—though symbolically rich—lens. Their aim in writing their narratives was not to explain, argue and detail in the fashion of a modern historian or socio-political commentator but rather to endow what they relate with a myriad of socially and culturally translatable meanings that needed to be readily apprehensible to their intended audience(s). I am positing that it is this system of meaning

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>242</sup> Gottfried Hagen, "Chaos, Order, Power, Salvation: Heroic Hagiography's Response to the Ottoman Fifteenth Century" in *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, 1:1-2 (2014): p. 92-3. <sup>243</sup> Ibid. p. 97-98.

that needs to be uncovered so as to better understand these sources' place in the turbulent 17th century.

There is yet another sense in which the miracle narrative is more than what it first appears to be on the surface. As Peter Brown astutely observed regarding the miracles of holy men in the Late Antique context,

"...just as the miracle demonstrates a hidden, intangible nucleus of power, so the miracle story is often no more than a pointer to the many more occasions on which the holy man has already used his position in society. The miracle condenses and validates a situation built up by more discreet means." 244

Thus each miracle recounted in a hagiography is only the most fantastical manifestation of several more modest instances where the utility and power of a saint had been tested and proven against various trials and calamities, i.e. it is a symbolically dense and meaningful rendering of the social, political and economic worries of its audience and as well as of the concrete role played by the saint—in life but also posthumously through his tomb and his successors—in allying these concerns. For example, a miracle from the *Menāķıbnāme-i Şa'bān-i Velī* (discussed below) in which the saint delivers a supplicant from debt by conjuring silver coins out of thin air not only alerts us to the real socioeconomic fact of indebtedness in 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman society, but also to the function of the saintly lodge or shrine as a place where credit and monetary assistance could be—and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>244</sup> Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity", *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 61 (1971), pp. 87.

indeed was—dispensed to the wider populace at this time<sup>245</sup>. However as opposed to laying bare the mundane nature of this mechanism of wealth redistribution, the hagiography narrates it as a carefully orchestrated miracle narrative with a standard arc that involved the following steps: (1) the unfolding of a specific crisis, (2) the articulation of need by a supplicant in response to this crisis, (3) the positing of the saint as the only means for redress, (4) the delivery of assistance by the person of the saint using a highly encoded and often mysterious bodily performance, and (5) lastly, the supplicant's promise of undying loyalty, service and charitable donation to the saint's lodge or shrine. While each component of this arc is indispensible to the overall effect of the narrative, the dyadic relationship of mutual benefit between the saint and the supplicant that the hagiography seeks to reinforce hinged in particular on the middle section of this arc, i.e. on saint's bodily performances. That such embodied performances deserve greater scrutiny was also hinted at by Brown, who related how a particular 5<sup>th</sup> century hagiographical compendium (the *Historia Religiosa* of Theodret, d. 466) depicted the holy man as the locus of power through its emphasis "on the detail of the stylized gestures by which power was shown" and particularly on "the hand of the holy man—an ancient and compact symbol of power"<sup>246</sup>. I argue that within the early 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman sources as well, such highly stylized performances rendered the miracle narrative as a palpable demonstration of the saint's personal role in the intervention, as well as an enchanted process that pointed to his access to an invisible yet limitless reservoir of power. In other words; it simultaneously rendered the whole transactional

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>245</sup> See page 35-37 below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>246</sup> Ibid, p.87.

exchange between the terrestrial and heavenly realms at once sensibly apprehensible and at the same time utterly baffling and mysterious (hence sacred) to a perceiving audience.

#### The Sources

This chapter will utilize two hagiographies in Ottoman Turkish from the early 17th century, a period that saw a considerable increase in literature of this sort. These would include the aforementioned hagiography of Şeyh Şa'bān-i Velī (d. 1569) who was based in the northern Anatolian town of Kastamonu<sup>247</sup>. This text was written by 'Ömer El-Fu'ādī to shore up and expand Şeyh Şa'bān-i Velī's cult in Kastamonu and the adjacent areas of the Black Sea region. That this was its aim is supported by a number of facts about the text. Firstly, it is an abridged Turkish version of a longer Arabic work (no longer extant) and indeed Fu'ādī highlights its easy to read Turkish in the introductory passages. This decision to use the vernacular suggests that the intended audience for the text and its stories was supposed to be quite broad. Secondly, whilst giving only cursory attention to Şa'bān-i Velī's more important teachers in the Halvetī path, it devotes a full chapter to Seyyid Sünnetī Efendi (d.1459), another Kastamonu based Halvetī in order to tie the former's legacy to that of the latter. And thirdly, Fu'ādī composed an eyewitness narration of the construction of Şa'bān-i Velī's tomb complex interspersed with spirited defenses of the practice of shrine visitation, titled the Risāle-yi Türbenāme ("Tract of the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>247</sup> The text used for this chapter is the printed version published in Kastamonu in 1877. See; 'Ömer El-Fu'ādī, *Menāķīb-i Şerīf- i Pīr- i Ḥalvetī Ḥazret-i Şa bān-ı Velī ve Türbenāme*, (Kastamonu, 1877). The definitive studies on this text, its author and subject matter are: John J. Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought: The Rise of the Order*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010) and "Defending the Cult of Saints in Seventeenth–Century Kastamonu: 'Ömer El-Fu'âdî's Contribution to Religious Debate in Ottoman Society" in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: Volume I*, Colin Imber, Rhoads Murphey and Keiko Kiyotaki (eds.), (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004). p. 148-157.

Tomb") in 1619<sup>248</sup>. As Zeynep Yürekli shown in her work, the writing of a hagiography and the construction of a shrine through patronage often occurred side by side, and were key developments in the establishment of a saint's cult<sup>249</sup>. I believe that it is in relation to the text's intention to shore up and expand this cult in the region as well as in relation to its larger early 17th century context that we must analyze the narratives of embodied miracles it contains. In respect to this text's miracle narratives then, I am more interested in reading them as an assemblage of Fu'ādī's discursive choices in the 17th century rather than a mine of information about Şa'bān-i Velī's life in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Another useful source to gauge how hagiography responded to and echoed the various sociopolitical upheavals of the late 16th and early 17th century is the *Silsiletü'l-Mukarrebīn ve Menākıbu'l-Muttekīn* (The lineage of the men close to God and the vitæ of the religious men), the hagiographical compendium of the Bosnian Ḥalvetī Ibrāhīm bin Iskender, also known as Münīrī Belġrādī (d. 1620-1625)<sup>250</sup>. This work has a particular focus on Ḥalvetī Ṣūfī saints along the border regions of the empire's European provinces in the 16th and early 17th centuries and minutely observes what its author saw as the disintegration of the classical Ottoman order. As Nathalie Clayer has shown, this critique of contemporary society encompasses the sale of offices, the spread of nepotism, corruption, changing patterns of land tenure, currency devaluation and soaring prices. Moreover given that it was written around the years 1603-1604 in the society of the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>248</sup> This text is included in the published 1877 text cited above. For a scholarly treatment of this text see the chapter 7 in Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought* as well as "Defending the Cult of Saints".

Saints". <sup>249</sup> Zeynep Yürekli, "Writing Down the Feats and Setting up the Scene: Hagiographers and Architectural Patrons in the Age of Empires," in *Sufism and Society: Arrangements of the Mystical in the Muslim World*, 1200-1800, p. 94-119.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>250</sup> The manuscript used in this chapter is: Münīrī Belġrādī (d. 1620-5), *Silsiletü'l-Muḥarrebīn ve Menāḥibu'l-Muttekīn*, (Süleymaniye Library, Şehit Ali Paṣa No. 2819).

European marches, that is to say around the time of the "Long War" with the Austrian Hapsburgs, it also discusses at length the dissipation of Ottoman military prowess as part of this crisis<sup>251</sup>. These analyses however are embedded within the larger text detailing the lives of the saints of the frontier towns in the 16th and early 17th centuries and, following Clayer, I view these as discursive elisions rather than unconnected digressions. I am interested in gauging how saintly miracles in this hagiography can be read alongside his pointed critique of early 17th century Ottoman economics, politics, society and culture to yield his larger, cosmologically attuned argument regarding the role of saintly bodies in the maintenance of the social order.

This chapter therefore brings together two hagiographies from two different regions of the empire in order to analyze them under a common theme and in light of their common context of production and proliferation, i.e. their representation of saintly bodies in a context of widespread crisis and change. In so doing this chapter is treading somewhat unchartered ground since much of the scholarship in this field, although a significant foundation that enables me to pose my own questions, still reads 17<sup>th</sup> century hagiographies in isolation so as to furnish facts about individual *şeyḫs* and their *tarīqas* in particular locales, as opposed to bringing them together under unifying conceptual or thematic umbrellas. Moreover, the still prevalent tendency within scholarship to view Sufism as experiencing a progressive degeneration in the post-classical period (roughly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>251</sup> For a detailed discussion of these aspects see; Clayer, "Quand L'Hagiographie Se Fait L'Echo Des Dérèglements Socio-Politiques", "Les miracles des cheikhs et leurs fonctions dans les espaces frontières de laRoumélie du XVIe siècle" in *Denise Aigle (ed.): Miracle et Karâma: Hagiographies médiévales comparées*, (Paris2000), p. 435–58, and "Müniri Belgrâdî : un représentant de la 'ilmiyye dans la région de Belgrade, fin XVIe siècle début XVIIe siècle" in *Frauen, Bilder und Gelehrte: Studien zu Gesellschaft und Künsten im Osmanischen Reich, Festschrift Hans Georg Maje*r, Sabine Prätor &Cristoph K. Neumann (ed.), (Istanbul, Simurg, 2002), p. 549-568.

1200 onwards), as well as an overriding concern within Ottoman Şūfī studies to explore how various schools of Ṣūfī thought were institutionalized and incorporated into the elite circles of the Seljuk and burgeoning Ottoman state has meant that later hagiographies from the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries have faced comparative neglect. As a result, whilst this period witnessed an unprecedented growth of various Ṣūfī orders in many parts of the empire, their active participation and influence in 17<sup>th</sup> century society is largely taken as a given as opposed to explained and historicized. By bringing the work of 'Ömer El-Fu'ādī and Mūnīrī Belġradī under a common thematic and conceptual lens, this paper will attempt to shed light on how Ṣūfī hagiographers used representations of saintly bodies to advance claims to socio-political and religious authority at a time when leadership in these domains was most sorely needed.

# The Saint's Body and Social Intervention in the Black Sea Region: The Menāķibnāme-i Şa'bān-i Velī of 'Ömer Fu'ādī of Kastamonu

Despite being relatively neglected within biographical compendia and Ṣūfī genealogies from the period, the career of the Ḥalvetī Ṣeyḫ Ṣaʻbān-ı Velī Efendi of the north-central Anatolian town of Kastamonu is an ideal case study for the purposes of this project. This however is not due to the qualities of this particular figure himself, but rather because Ṣaʻbān's successor, Ṣeyḫ 'Ömer El-Fu'ādī has fortunately left us not only with a detailed hagiography of the saint (c. 1607), but also a separate text called the *Türbenāme* (c.1619), which details the construction and inauguration of his tomb complex. This aforementioned hagiography is paradigmatic of a late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> century trend that

saw an increase in the number of hagiographies based on the lives of Anatolian and Balkan Sūfī saints of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and which were written in simple Ottoman Turkish for an expressly local audience. Moreover, the Sūfī order that this text sought to buttress and propagate, namely the Şa'bāniyye, expanded in power and influence under Fu'ādī and his immediate predecessors exactly at the time when demographic, law and order and fiscal crises of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries were severely disrupting the sociopolitical order in towns and villages in Anatolia. The two trends seem to have been related since the order, centered around the tomb of its eponymous founder, became a key node of social interaction and communal exchange at this time. As Fu'ādī recalls, the saint's following grew to transcend confessional divides since even non-Muslim supplicants came to the tomb of Şa'bān-ı Velī with offerings of candles and sacrifices claiming that "we request favor and help in our important affairs and in our times of confusion with pain and suffering,"252. In fact, to hear Fu'ādī tell it, he himself—to say nothing of less well-to-do supplicants to the tomb—had also been compelled to turn towards the Sūfī path by "the appearance of increased disorder and weakness when it reached the year 1000 in our time"253 and abandon his previously held hopes for prestigious 'ilmiye positions, which he described as being "frequent in dismissal and notorious for turnover" in his time<sup>254</sup>. And it would appear that his evaluation of the society that he operated in, which was paradigmatic of educated Ottomans and millenarian besides, did not improve much as the 17<sup>th</sup> century wore on since in his commentary on the famous Halvetī liturgical text, the *Vird-i Settār*, he would assert;

 $<sup>^{252}</sup>$  Qtd in Curry, The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought, p. 230, Fu'ādī, Menāķīb, p.86.  $^{253}$  Qtd in Ibid, p. 203.

<sup>254</sup> Otd in Ibid, p. 200.

"Let this be known also: if a tyrant without faith and lacking in generosity were to oppress and torment unjustly a victim deserving of mercy and compassion, the oppression of that tyrant is because of his lack of religion and his faith, or it is on account of great weakness in his faith, since compassion derives from faith...But we now live in a time, in the year 1040/1630-1, when if they were to see this oppression face-to face...the person who would show great compassion and whose heart would ache for that victim would be rarely found. On account of this, very few helpers of the oppressed remain".

Curry, who has analyzed 'Ömer El-Fu'ādī's oeuvre in detail, has argued that this sense that Ottoman society was witnessing a decline in faith also pervades much of the Menāķībnāme-ī Şa 'bān-ī Velī in that one of its main aims was to defend the cult of saints on two fronts. Firstly, it argues vociferously against associating Sa'bān-1 Velī and his order with antinomian and heterodox strains of Sufism that were accused of rejecting orthopraxy and opportunistically amassing wealth and large followings using illicit magic and rituals and dubious claims of spirituality. On the other front, it also sought to counter trenchant criticisms of shrine visitation and other Sūfī practices and beliefs at the hands of equally misguided religious reformers and scholars of the law who saw these as indicative of the various crises of their times (More on this in chapter 5). Thus Fu'ādī viewed both the antinomian tendencies within certain branches of Sufism as well as the rejection of central tenants of sober Sufism by increasingly vocal reformists as being contra to true faith, which he defined as respect both for the ser tat and the cult of saints<sup>256</sup>. Thus, the sense of moral, social, political and economic crisis that seeped through all levels of Ottoman society at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century formed a key part of the backdrop against which Fu'ādī's leadership of the order as well as his hagiographic and building efforts unfolded.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>255</sup> Qtd in Ibid, p. 255.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>256</sup> See in particular, "Defending the Cult of Saints in Seventeenth-Century Kastamonu".

Now, although Curry periodically touches upon the turn of century crisis, he nevertheless confined himself primarily to its more intellectual manifestations, i.e. the religious controversies stoked by the doctrines and practices of the Sūfī cult of saints. Moreover, this controversy features most heavily as a backdrop to his analysis of the *Türbenāme* as well as Fu'ādī's own interjections within the text of the hagiography (i.e. the times in the narrative when Fu'ādī himself is the explicit interlocutor). What is lacking in the analysis however is a contextualization of Şa'bān-ı Velī's embodied miracle narratives themselves against a backdrop the social, political, economic and religious crises of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, since Curry's primary concern was to place the career of this saint within the overall history of the Halvetī order, his analysis seems to place a greater emphasis on mining these embodied miracle narratives for details about Şa'bān-ı Velī's life in the early to mid 16<sup>th</sup> century, as opposed to analyzing them as evidence of Fu'ādī's discursive choices in the early to mid 17th century. However, faced with the lack of corroborating sources on the life of Şa'bān-ı Velī outside of the hagiography itself, what thus emerges from his analysis of these miracle narratives is a set of hypotheses about this saint's inner disposition and his career trajectory that often verge on unverifiable conjecture. At the same time, a more demonstrable analysis of these representations of the saintly body as discursive constructs curated and arranged by Fu'ādī to serve particular functions in the fraught context of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century tends to receive only tangential treatments. Based upon Watenpaugh's valid observation that "representations of a mystical subject are codified productions that relate to a broader cultural field" and thus "do not reveal a single knowable subjectivity" for said subject<sup>257</sup>, I will shift the focus on how these miracle stories might be indicative of the very particular concerns of Fu'ādī and his audience, and thus will situate them in their own context of production and dissemination. In so doing, I will bring the various social, political and economic manifestations of the 17<sup>th</sup> century crisis out of the periphery and right to the center of my analysis of these miracle narratives.

Moreover, in keeping with the central problematic of this project, I will particularly focus on these miracles' representations of Şa'bān-ı Velī's body and its gestures and movements, which I see as the key discursive means through which Fu'ādī advanced his order's claims to religious authority and social leadership to a broad demographic, and thus as an essential step in answering the question about the growth of the Turkish language hagiographic genre as a whole at the turn of the century<sup>258</sup>. In order to explore the ways such bodily representations were expressive of the manifold social pressures of the time however we must transcend the scholarly tendency to simply gloss over and dismiss miracle cures and overt displays of embodied saintly power as "questionable forms of popular practice and folk magic"<sup>259</sup>, which I believe, obscures more than it reveals. Peter Brown's startlingly acute observation on miracle narratives during a crisis of leadership in the late antique context, which prefigures contemporary trends in studies of Islamicate occultism, deserves to be quoted in full here;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>257</sup> Watenpaugh, p. 540.

And since, as we shall see, these embodied miracles were often constructed in such a way so as to enable the saint to subsequently disavow his own act of intervention, I will also demonstrate how Fu'ādī's careful representations also enabled him to address the various anxieties that such claims of bodily power had come to incite in the fraught intellectual and religious climate of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>259</sup> Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought*, p. 140.

Faced by so many accounts of the miraculous, the historian of late antiquity usually relieves the strain placed on his own credulity by vastly inflating the credulity of his subjects. It is possible to say, with Lucian, that "that pair of tyrants, Hope and Fear" account for so widespread a belief in miracles. To be content with such a judgment is of no help to the historian whatsoever. He has to seize the precise and individual character of an age. What we have is of great value—abundant evidence, not of why men sought cures in the way they did, but of what kind of cure satisfied them. The history of what constitutes a 'cure' in a given society is a history of that society's values: for the rhythm of the cure shows what is acceptable in that society as a plausible way of giving form, and so the hope of resolution, to what is experienced—in all ages—as the nebulous and intractable fact of suffering and misfortune. For the Late Roman period the question can be answered quite succinctly. Cures effected by the holy man almost invariably involved a process of 'focussing'. Exorcism was the classic cure associated with the holy man; for it involved both the formal designation of an authoritative healing agent, on which the sufferer and his companions could focus their hopes, and the equally precise isolation and extrusion—often in a satisfactorily visible form—of the disturbing element. Other forms of healing follow the same rhythm. Many are connected with the administration of an innocuous placebo that is charged with the blessing of the holy man. The blessing gives reality and efficacy to what were thought of as the inscrutable workings of providence...To dismiss such practices as a legacy of magical beliefs is singularly unhelpful. The fastidious label obscures both the poignant need of sufferers, in all ages, our own included, to focus their hopes on a single agent of cure; and it ignores the fact that the vesting of the object is merely a minor case of the whole movement of Late Roman opinion which, as we have seen, was towards charging the person of the holy man himself with utterly objective, inalienable power"<sup>260</sup>.

To take seriously therefore the minutia of how the saint's embodied intervention was narrated (in Brown's poetic phrasing, "the rhythm of the cure") allows us to get at what was truly at stake here for the hagiographer and his audience, namely; the ability of a miracle narrative to lend "reality and efficacy to the inscrutable workings of providence" and portray the person of the saint—and by extension the successor to his shrine complex—as the sole, indispensible and seamless mediator between a crisis-ridden world and the limitless grace of God's invisible treasury in "a satisfactorily visible form". Far from reflecting a lapse into, in Curry's words, "more basic levels of religiosity found

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>260</sup> Brown, p. 96-97.

among the local population"<sup>261</sup>, the bodily *coups de théâtre* that abound in hagiographies from the period is revelatory of the stock these hagiographies' interpretive communities had come to place on a singular source of tangible and immediate redress. To wit, the saintly body, as a discursively fertile and tangible medium of messaging, acquired increased import in a context of crisis and change.

Before we turn to the miracle narratives that speak directly of the concerns of a population undergoing a period of crisis, we must consider a couple of miracles that had as their main focus, the need to link Şa'bān-ı Velī with the legacy of the Halvetī order in Kastamonu. Now the third chapter of the Menāķibnāme-i Şa'bān-i Velī was devoted to Seyvid Sünnetī Efendi (d. 1459), a Kastamonu-based Halvetī who had completed his mystical training under Yahyā-yı Şirvānī (d. 1466) in Baku. Though unable to inaugurate an order in his own lifetime, Sünnetī continued to be somewhat revered by the inhabitants of Kastamonu when Şa'bān returned to the town and began attracting adherents. As Curry has noted, it was perhaps with an eye towards linking himself to Sünnetī's legacy that Şa'bān endeavored to undertake a forty-day ascetic retreat in his old meditation cell within the abandoned mosque that bore his name. 262 Whilst the facts surrounding the decision can never be ascertained, it was likely this need to develop continuity between Sünnetī and Şa'bān that compelled Fu'ādī to include mention of it in his hagiography. The associated miracle narrative, related on the authority of 'Abdülvāsi' Dede, the prayer-leader of the order, goes as follows:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>261</sup> Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought*, p. 103.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>262</sup> Curry, The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought, p. 113-114.

My father Eyüb Ḥalīfe was a total devotee of the esteemed [Ṣaʿbān], and undertook the sending of food everyday to his seclusion cell in the mosque. For some reasons he forgot to send [the food], and with utmost regret saying, "Someone help! We forgot the esteemed one and left him hungry in the mosque!", he hurried with food. When he apologized, the esteemed one gave a guidance; "the current situation and the destiny of this place is this: the esteemed one who has passed [Sünnetī] and whose Ṣūfī I could not be had also undertaken this struggle. A few days ago, I found the crumbs of a mouse in the wall, and thinking it should not go hungry as well, I did not eat all of them, and left some amount for it, and I placed my trust in God, and did not show any need for people. Praise be to God, the gifts of God are great and I did not go hungry", and he also revealed he had found nourishment through spiritual food" 263.

Now whilst Curry sees Eyüb Halīfe's forgetfulness in bringing Sa'bān food in the Sünnetī Efendi mosque as proof of the latter's ultimate failure to revive the mosque complex, I do not believe this act of forgetfulness can be taken as an objective historical fact and thus employed to furnish objective details about Şa'ban's life. Rather, it is a narrative detail related by Fu'ādī in order to set up Şa'bān's superhuman feat of going without food for extensive periods. That is to say, what Fu'ādī is attempting to demonstrate here is the status of Sa'bān's body as directly linked to God's invisible treasury and to divine sustenance. Crucially however, such hagiographic narratives involving food or sustenance also tend carry an implication that the miracle-conjuring saint can also channel such "gifts of God" to others, an important quality in the crisesridden early decades of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Fu'ādī also uses this narrative to demonstrate Sa'bān's reliance on God alone, a recurring theme in the hagiography designed to posit him as impartial hinge man (a quintessential outsider figure) for his community as well as to distinguish him from other antinomian Sūfīs who built large followings, not through their adherence to the serī'at and their proximity to God but, as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>263</sup> Fu'ādī *Menāķīb*, p. 47.

Fu'ādī would put it, through garish ostentation. Lastly, in this narrativization by Fu'ādī, Şa'bān's invocation of Sünnetī's struggle as well the locus of this miracle (the isolation cell in Sünnetī's mosque) all serve to underscore the validity of the former's spiritual linkage with the latter. Thus the key themes of this part of the hagiography, namely: Şa'bān's genuine connection with God and his bounty, his consequent lack of need to curry favor with the populace, and his spiritual connection with an illustrious precursor are all demonstrated by recourse to a superhuman bodily feat.

This last point regarding Şa'bān's inheritance of Sünnetī's legacy is also demonstrated via recourse to these saints' bodies in an earlier part of the hagiography. On the authority of his father-in-law and "some old persons from the town", Fu'ādī relates how, in his youth:

"The illuminated grave of Syed Sünnetī Efendi came in the pathway of a flood. From the Gümüşlüce stream a large flood came and ruined the walls of the area. When his noble grave was opened [ostensibly for repairs], it was observed that his graceful body had not decomposed and his eyes were also open, and as for Şaʻbān Efendi, he was buried in the area of the threshold. Since the illuminated grave [of Sünnetī Efendi] fell at his [Ṣaʻbān's] feet, he [Ṣaʻbān's] had done the honorable thing and had turned his feet [away from Sünnetī Efendi]"<sup>264</sup>.

Now, the historicity of the flood and the subsequent exhumation and repair efforts matter less than what Fu'ādī intended to convey with such a narrative was. The image of a sacred body protected from decay is as popular in Islamic hagiographies as it is in Christian ones, owing perhaps to the ways this theme renders saintly bodies impervious to the ravages of time and lends them a certain physical stability. It thus achieves the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>264</sup> Fu'ādī *Menāķıb*, p. 36.

same subversion of decay that is effected by the construction of tombs and shrines, which themselves are properly to be understood as durable extensions of the sacred body buried within them. As a result, the notion that a saint's body had not decomposed within his tomb—not unlike a saint's ability to go without food for extended periods—further bolsters the status of the built environment in question as permanently linked to God's sustaining power. This of course was exactly Fu'ādī's aim in writing his hagiography. It is also worth pointing out that whilst the failure of Sünnetī's body to undergo decomposition is explicitly mentioned, the same seems to be implied for Şa'bān's body. In fact, such lack of decay is an essential precondition for Sa'ban's body to be able to participate in the subsequent embodied performance that involved the soles of his feet turning away from Sünnetī's grave, which in the early modern Ottoman/Islamic context was a sign of deference and respect. To make the body of Şa'bān engage in such a coded manner was Fu'ādī's way of establishing—in clear, unequivocal and tangible terms—a relationship in death between these two bodies that was not possible in life given that they lived generations apart. Thus the communicative and symbolic potential of the body—and in particular of unspoiled dead bodies—is marshaled by Fu'ādī to signal not only the sanctity of the entire Şa'bān-ı Velī tomb complex, but also to stress its continuity with the legacy of Sünnetī Efendi.

But beyond using Şa'bān's body to stress continuity with the memory of Sünnetī, Fu'ādī also sets it against a backdrop of trial and calamity. A surface level reading would view the narrative circumstances that occasioned his help as the generic desiderata of all hagiographies. Such a diachronic reading however can take such backdrops for granted

and do not go a long way in explaining the meaning they might have carried for their intended audience(s). It is my contention that a closer inspection of such miracles' minute narrative details demonstrate how they were, in fact, highly attuned to the context of their circulation and echoed the particular anxieties and fears of their audience. To explore how the use of \$a'bān's body in such miracle narratives relates to the context of early 17<sup>th</sup> century Kastamonu, I will focus first on analyzing in detail, Fu'ādī's employment of a recurring theme, namely; the disembodied hand of \$a'bān-1 Velī. The first of the miracle narratives employing this theme involves a young merchant who pays the *şeyḫ* a visit with gifts of a sheep and some linen cloth. When asked about the circumstances of his visit the merchant relates the following story:

"When [I was] travelling by sea, by command of God a storm appeared. As I pleaded with God most high, I also requested help from the noble one, and said, 'my true one Şa'bān Dede in Kastamonu, if you are a real saint, with the aid of God reach out to us!' With the power of God most High, a hand appeared, gave a smack to our boat and turned it to one side, and from the front it grabbed a side and straightened that boat out like an arrow, and when we stopped at our desired destination, the hand disappeared. In this way, he [the <code>seyh</code>] caused our salvation from calamity. And many people on the boat saw this and vowed to make a sacrifice."

Fu'ādī however goes on to relate how upon hearing this story the *şeyh* tried to feign ignorance of the affair and cautioned the merchant "not to reveal our secret" and to keep quiet about the manifestation of the embodied saintly power he and his travelling companions had witnessed. The two related questions that then arise are: what function does the use of the disembodied hand theme serve in the hagiography? And, what are we

<sup>265</sup> Fu'ādī *Menāķib*, p. 69-70.

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to make this narrative that at once advocates secrecy regarding this story about the saint's intervention and also relates it at length?

Despite appearing at first glance to be a fanciful and internally inconsistent tale of little historical import, this narrative involving the disembodied hand of Şa'bān-1 Velī is, in fact, highly attuned to the local context of its production and dissemination. This is apparent, firstly, in the chosen backdrop to the miracle narrative. Now, whilst storms or inclement weather may also feature in hagiographies earlier than the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century, an analysis such as ours, which attempts to synchronically reconstruct what such a narrative might have meant for the interpretive communities as well as for Fu'ādī in early 17<sup>th</sup> century Kastamonu, requires a less diachronic perspective. At its most basic level, this narrative concerns itself with conveying the divinely sourced power embedded in the seyh's body and his willingness to employ it for the benefit of his followers during a crisis. In this particular case, the crisis is the kind of unpredictable weather that seems to have become more frequent with the onset of "the little ice age" at the turn of the century<sup>266</sup>. Now whilst we in the 21st century have a clearer understanding of the qualitative and quantitative contours of "the little ice age", for our 17<sup>th</sup> century audience such a descriptor could not have meant much. For them, inclement weather of any stripe was an act of God requiring the urgent intervention of those closest to Him. And indeed that is how Fu'ādī pitches it. His aim was not to narrate the climactic conditions of the region in the manner of a modern historian, but in a manner that conveyed what was at stake for his audience; namely the ability of the saint to avert the disastrous effects of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>266</sup> Sam White, *The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

such acts of God. Setting the narrative at sea and during the act of travel, i.e. domains which were particularly marked by uncertainty and danger in the imagination of rural Anatolia, only adds to the general picture of desperation.

Moving on to details of the miracle proper, it is apparent that the overall image of Şa'bān's disembodied hand moving through space powerfully evokes the tangibility and the immediacy of his intervention at a time when both these qualities would have been much sought after. Meanwhile the very use of the motif of the hand—a symbol evocative of power, direct action and willful intent-itself serves to ascribe an agency to Şa'bān that is more active and involved than in less ornate miracle narratives where a saint would simply compel divine intervention by uttering a prayer. Moreover, the actions that the hand engages in are multifarious and sustained: not only does it change's the boat's direction to bring it out the path of the storm with "a smack", it then straightens the boat out "like an arrow" and continues to hold and guide the it until it arrived at the desired destination. And finally by including the effect this miracle had on the merchant's companions, Fu'ādī sought highlight how such interventions had powerful impacts on people and converted them into devotees of the seyh. The sheep and the linen cloth represent the produce in kind that could—and indeed were—gifted to a saint who then might pass some or all of it along to another supplicant as a token of his access to God's "invisible treasury". Thus what the theme of the hand of Sa'bān-1 Velī and its implied connection to sacred power appears to be rendering in a condensed form is a more mundane—but nevertheless essential—material exchange between different segments of Kastamonu's population. The saint's body thus structures a series of subsequent actions and relationships that were conducive to community in trying times.

However the question remains: why is the hand performing the miraculous intervention disembodied, and what is it about this quality that renders it ideal for Fu'ādī's purposes? It would appear this same quality of being disembodied that endows the hand with the mobility to lend immediate saintly assistance to far off supplicants also enables the saint to subsequently distance himself from his own act of grace at a time when such displays of embodied power increasingly incited anxiety and reproach from members of the learned religious hierarchy. Indeed, as we have seen, one of the hagiography's chief concerns was to argue against the Sūfī cult of saints' association with the sort of ostentatious trickery and magic that caused many members of the learned 'ulemā' class to increasingly attack it as being contrary to the seri'at from the later part of the 16th century onwards. Thus whilst Fu'ādī leaves no doubt that the hand belonged to Şa'bān, the fact of its disembodiedness—and the theoretical possibility that it could belong to anyone—creates the essential discursive preconditions for Şa'bān to then display his modesty and his detachment from controversial kinds of spiritual power. Therefore, this apparent contradiction within the text between affirming and denying the saint's powers of intervention within the same miracle narrative, far from reflecting a failure to adapt the old lore about the subject to the new imperatives of the hagingrapher as Curry sometimes suggests, emerges as a deliberate narrative strategy on Fu'ādī's part that allowed him to advertise his forebear's power whilst at the same time painting a more pious and modest picture of him.

In another miracle narrative that followed the one above, Fu'ādī makes the saint's ownership of the hand a more explicit part of the narration. On the authority of Sehrī Hoca, the wife of a dervish named Ibrāhīm Dede, he relates how she had prepared a salve for Sa'bān's hand upon seeing that he had injured it. How the injury came to be remains a mystery until another person arrives and reveals the secret. In Fu'ādī's words;

"Whilst [this person] was traveling by sea, a ship belonging to the infidel came, and as he fought [the infidel], in his entreaties to God he requested one of the miracles of the noble one. When he said, "My true one in Kastamonu, with aid of God reach out to us", with God's command, a hand appeared next to him and a shot from a musket hit it with a puff of smoke. He said, "I knew for certain that the hand was the blessed hand of Sa'ban Dede. With the command of God, he defended this poor one from the gunshot". Afterwards, upon meeting [Şa'bān], he was sent away with the same warning as that given to the young merchant, and with a good prayer. At that time, [this story] became famous, and the fact that the salve that Sehri Hoca had prepared was for a gunshot wound became widely propagated., 267

Here the use of the disembodied hand motif is once again accompanied by the saint's disavowal of his act of grace. The presence however of the actual gunshot wound after the fact serves to make the link between Şa'bān and the miracle unambiguous. It is clear therefore that even as Fu'ādī wanted to showcase Şa'bān's modesty, he also wanted to explicate the instances where the saint's direct interventions had benefited his followers. In this particular case however, the crisis compelling the instance of embodied intervention involved not an act of God, but violence at the hands of mortal men. Now, whilst these circumstances that compelled the intervention of the saint—not unlike like the aforementioned instance of inclement weather on the seas—might appear as generic

<sup>267</sup> Fu'ādī *Menāķīb*, p. 70-71.

details of little value to the historian, they were meant to speak to the particular fears and anxieties of their selected audience in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Whilst it cannot be proven for certain that Fu'ādī's inclusion of this miracle narrative was directly informed by the widespread banditry and rebellion that severely effected Anatolia and parts of northern Syria in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>268</sup>, the sheer scale of these disruptions to settled life in Anatolia for much of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the perpetuation of violence on a mass scale meant that they must have informed the reception and circulation of saintly miracle stories in Kastamonu and its environs. The key place given to the musket<sup>269</sup> within the narrative is particularly illustrative in that this period (late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century) witnessed the widespread utilization of handheld firearms by contingents of the irregular soldiery (levend or sekbān bölükleri). These companies were routinely mobilized and then demobilized according to the needs of the state, a process which fed the growing bands of bandits and rebels in the Anatolian countryside<sup>270</sup>. And when not being harassed, maimed or extorted by such elements, the peasantry often was forced to furnish irregular taxes in cash or even provisions in kind by the same musket-bearing contingents, this time under the employ of chronically cash-strapped governors and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>268</sup> On these see; Mustafa Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası: Celalî Isyanları*, (Ankara: Barış, Platin Basın Yayın, 1999), William J. Griswold, *The Great Anatolian Rebellion 1591-1611*, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, number 83 (Berlin, Klaus Schwarz, 1983), Sam White, *The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, Oktay Özel, *The Collapse of the Rural Order in Ottoman Anatolia: Amasya 1576-1643*, (Leiden: Brill, 2016) and "The Reign of Violence: The Celalis c. 1550-1700," in *The Ottoman World*, Christine Woodhead (ed.), (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 184-202, and Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>269</sup> Curry's translation of *tüfenk* as "cannon" (see; *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought*, p. 140-141) is, in my view, incorrect. Cannon is more correctly translated as *top*, while *tüfenk* is more correctly translated as "any firearm used from the shoulder" (see the entry under "Tüfeng" in Redhouse, *Ingilizce-Osmanlica Sözlüğü*, p. 573), or more succinctly, a musket. This minor detail has major implications for my reading and contextualization of this narrative.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>270</sup> On the question of technological changes in warfare and their relationship to the social order and fiscal situation in particular see the following two works; R.C. Jennings, "Firearms, Bandits and Gun-Control", and Halil Inalcik, "Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire 1600-1700", *Archivum Ottomanicum*, VI, (1980), p. 339-358 and p. 283-336 respectively.

officials<sup>271</sup>. As Inalcik also noted, partial relief from such onerous exactions was often negotiated with by local notables with contacts and influence in state circles<sup>272</sup>, a group that could include heads of the local Sūfī order like Fu'ādī himself. Therefore, whilst Fu'ādī sets up the miracle in a standard way with the well-worn topos of "the infidel at sea" as chief antagonist, the larger reality, which his narrative condenses and which the actions of the saint offer protection against, is the very real threat of violence and extortion at gun-point at the hands of other men. This narrative can therefore also be read as indicative of the concerns and aims of Fu'ādī and the inhabitants of Kastamonu in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

After recalling this miracle story, Fu'ādī then leaves us with a final example where the disembodied hand of Sa'ban comes to the aid of a quarryman who was chiseling out a millstone at a quarry in the Ilgaz mountain range near Kastamonu. While he was fashioning the stone into a millstone, the stone topples and falls into a nearby stream by accident. When the quarryman beseeches Şa'bān for assistance in the matter, his disembodied hand appears and gives the stone a slap whereupon it returns to its original position<sup>273</sup>. Thus the emphasis here is less on the saint's power to ward of specific calamities like inclement weather or piracy on the seas, and more on the overall strength that he could muster from the world of the unseen. Despite this slight difference in the narrative setup, this miraculous act is one again followed by the saint's stern rebuke to the quarryman and a refusal to acknowledge his involvement in the matter<sup>274</sup>. This

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>271</sup> Inalcik, p. 317-322. <sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>273</sup> Fu'ādī *Menāķīb*, p. 71-72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>274</sup> Ibid, p.72.

persistent pairing of the disembodied hand motif with that of the saint's public disavowal of his miracle suggests that the two are intrinsically related. In fact, as has already been mentioned, the very quality of his hand being detached from his body serves as an ingenious workaround that tangibly demonstrates the saint's utility in times of need, whilst at the same time allowing \$a'bān to retain a more self effacing character. Such a characterization protected him—and by implication Fu'ādī as well—from the charge of intentionally amassing power and influence via claims of embodied sacred power that were becoming highly controversial in the fraught socio-political climate of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Now, whilst these miracles were certainly the most dramatic instances of embodied intervention in the hagiography, in other scenarios the embodied quality of the intervention is somewhat differently rendered. For example, when not effecting change at a great distance (a controversial claim to the subversion of the human constraints of space and time) or in areas where saintly help was perhaps better established and less controversial (i.e. in alleviating sickness and indebtedness) the motif of the disembodied hand is dispensed with in favor of the presence of Şaʻbān's whole person. For example, consider the following narrative in which Şaʻbān successfully delivers Fuʻādī's aunt from a painful ailment:

My now deceased mother's sister became ill, and a severe headache came to afflict her. However many prayers were read and written and [however many] doctors attempted to treat her, in truth a cure could not be found. One day my deceased mother consulted with my father. Saying, "Whenever Şa'bān Efendi, the pole of poles whose prayers are always answered, does not pray [for something], it does not come to pass", they went to the noble Ṣulṭān [Ṣa'bān] with pure

intentions. Along with eight women who were [also] in need, they met in his isolation cell. Some of the women, without conveying and expressing their wishes, requested only a prayer and [Ṣaʿbān] read only the Fatiha. When the turn of my deceased mother arrived, the noble one recited not only the fātiḥa, he [also] raised his turban with his right hand and with his blessed hands he touched his forehead once. He performed this sign along with the fātiḥa. Before my deceased mother had even arrived [back] at home, her sister's headache had completely gone. That the promised cure was delivered is established and famous." [Emphases; mine]

Whilst on the surface, this story about the saint praying for a supplicant's good health might appear to be a miracle of the simplest, most uninteresting sort; it is in fact a carefully constructed narrative that is deeply evocative of the concerns of Fu'ādī and his 17<sup>th</sup> century audience. In the first place, Şa'bān's ability to cure ailments where simple prayers, written amulets and skilled doctors all failed is a key claim being made by Fu'ādī at a time when epidemics and disease were rampant. However it is not only this claim that is of interest but also the way Fu'ādī sets it up. As with the previously discussed miracle narratives, Şa'bān's body and some key gestures (see emphasized text above) are rendered indispensible to the functioning of the miracle cure. The question of why this additional detail regarding the saint rubbing his own forehead and curing the headache of a supplicant at a distance might be included is illustrative of the whole argument being advanced by this chapter. Firstly, Şa'bān's gestures accompanying his recitation of the fātiḥa, not unlike the gunshot wound from earlier in the text, serve to link the cure more explicitly to his channeling of God's baraka into the earthly realm. To put it differently, this additional detail serves to lend a more active and palpable role to Sa'ban than would otherwise be the case if he had only offered for Fu'ādī's aunt the simple *fātiḥa* prayer he offered for the other eight women. Secondly, the gesture of rubbing his own forehead, i.e.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>275</sup> Ibid, p. 80.

the location of the pain associated with headaches, but effecting a cure on the forehead of Fu'ādī's aunt from a distance, also serves to highlight his ability to render assistance to his supplicants regardless of their physical distance. This of course was also the key takeaway from the other miracle narratives involving the disembodied hand. Only here, the vantage point for the reader is Şa'bān himself and not the actual site of the miracle.

But as with the previous miracle narratives, this instance of miraculous intervention at a distance is also an ingenious workaround that lends a sense of embodied palpability to the whole episode, while at the same time, working to diffuse the danger inherent in such an encounter between the sexes. Tactile interactions between unrelated men and women, despite the moral rectitude established for \$a^ban throughout the hagiography could still be deemed an unacceptable transgression of established social norms. And sure enough, amongst the many anxieties expressed by the religious reformers of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries was exactly such kind of bodily transgressions—perpetrated by men against women and girls but also particularly against prepubescent and adolescent boys—in milieus associated with \$\bar{u}\$\bar{u}\$\bar{u}\$ activity, such as during one-on-one interactions between a saint and a supplicant but also during \$\bar{u}\$\bar{u}\$\bar{u}\$ rituals like \$sem\bar{a}\$ and \$devr\bar{a}n\$ in which the participation of women was not considered out of bounds<sup>276</sup>. Thus, where we might expect there to be direct contact between a saint and an ill supplicant in any effective

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>276</sup> See "Introduction" and "Chapter 3: Morality Wars" in Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900*, (Berkley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2006). The presence of women during Ṣūfī rituals was also recorded by French aristocrat Jean Antoine du Loir, who in his record of travels to the Ottoman Empire in 1639, witnessed a Mevlevī *semā* 'ceremony and produced a pioneering translation into French of the Mevlevī liturgical hymn "hey ki hezar? aferīn" that accompanied the Sufis' gyrations. See; Giovanni De Zorzi, "In Constantinople Among Music and Dervishes: Reports by European Travellers from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century", *Mawlana Rumi Review*, 2015, Vol. 6, Special Issue on Rumi and the Mevlevi Sufi Tradition (2015), pp. 44-50.

hagiographic narrative, Fu'ādī is careful to narrate a story where the cure is delivered from a safe, religiously sanctioned distance whilst the all important bodily gestures, which lend efficacy to the narrative, are performed by the saint on his own body. Thus the motif of the disembodied hand discussed above, the saint's gestures in this particular narrative, as well as the backdrop against which these motifs are set, represent the sociopolitical pressures and anxieties of the time in manifold ways. They retain the embodied character that lent palpability to the abstract processes by which saints marshaled God's *baraka* into the terrestrial realm, all the while avoiding the controversies that such uses of the body were increasingly inciting in the fraught environment of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

In a similar vein to the above narrative, Fuʻādī also relates a further story of a supplicant who was burdened by a debt of 1200 silver coins and who could not get financial redress from anyone in his social circle. Despairing of his situation, he visits Şaʻbān for the alleviation of his suffering. When he arrives in the saint's presence and narrates his condition, the latter lifts the carpet upon which he is seated with one hand to reveal an amount of money. The supplicant is embarrassed to take all of it and so leaves some behind. Despite the darkness of his cell, Şaʻbān senses that the supplicant had not picked up a portion of the money, whereupon he urges him to take all of it. When the supplicant counts the money later, it turns out to be the exact amount he needed to pay his debt<sup>277</sup>. Now, just as with the aforementioned healing miracle, here too the instance of saintly intervention hinged upon a concrete act of the saint (his lifting of the carpet to reveal the exact amount of money needed by the supplicant, i.e. a conjuring trick) that served to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>277</sup> Fu'ādī *Menāķīb*, p. 85.

tangibly demonstrate Şa'bān's direct involvement in the matter as well as his access to God's invisible treasury. The correspondence between the amount of debt and the quantity of monies subsequently rendered by divine intervention meanwhile serves to highlight the targeted nature of the intervention. To wit, the saint did not acquire some money from worldly sources and then simply passed it along. Rather that money was summoned by the saint from the realm of the unseen explicitly to aid a particular supplicant in need. Thus a most mundane exchange for which saintly cults came to be indispensible nodes at this time is rendered in the form of a conjuring miracle involving an overt action involving the saint's body. To what socio-economic reality does this instance of the saint conjuring up money with a swiping gesture of his hand allude?

Curry reads this narrative as indicative of the kind of services Şa'bān may have rendered in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>278</sup>. Whilst the population increases, urbanization and greater integration of the Ottoman and world economies was already contributing to a degree of monetization in the economy by the time Şa'bān established himself in Kastamonu in the 1530s, the conditions it describes obtained to a greater extent for Fu'ādī and his audiences. This is because particularly by the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the start of the 17<sup>th</sup>, the monetization of the economy had come to acquire levels that meant that large amounts of silver specie was actually being handled by peasants and townsfolk<sup>279</sup>. Moreover, rampant inflation in the prices of basic commodities, falling or stagnant wages and currency debasement (particularly in 1585-86)—some of the earliest manifestations of the 17<sup>th</sup> century crisis—had also created conditions of widespread indebtedness and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>278</sup> Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought*, p. 144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>279</sup> Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) p.127 and 132.

currency circulation in town and village<sup>280</sup>. Thus, the issue of the supplicant's debt and its subsequent resolution that is presented in the miracle narrative must have come to acquire unprecedented poignancy by the time Fu'ādī was writing the hagiography and can go some ways to explaining his inclusion of this narrative. In fact, in another part of the narrative, Fu'ādī even recalls a time in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century when he himself had fallen into debt to his predecessor Seyh Muhyiddīn, who had received an amount of gold coins as a grant from Sultan Mehmed III (r. 1595-1603). When the latter learns by divine inspiration that Fu'ādī was still in dire straits and wished to postpone the payment of it, he proceeds to forgive all of it<sup>281</sup>. Thus, this particular passage also presents the saint's lodge as a locus where gifted money (even from Sultans and high officials) were received and then passed on to locals as either grants or as loans. It is this redistributive material exchange that was so productive of social life and communal relations in towns and villages—particularly during times of economic and social crisis—which this narrative involving the saint's conjuring gesture were rendering in a highly condensed and palpably apprehensible manner.

It only remains to reiterate what Fu'ādī's narration of the saintly body in the condensed drama of the miracle cure seems to be doing. This chapter's analysis of the bodily performances of the saint within the miracle narratives of the *Menāķıbnāme-ı Şa'bān-ı Velī* has sought to demonstrate how, as opposed to yielding a verifiable picture of its main protagonist, they more reliably reflect the imperatives of his successor and hagiographer Fu'ādī, as well as the fears, needs and expectations of the populace of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>280</sup> Ibid, p. 131-148.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>281</sup> Curry, The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought, p. 184, Fuʻādī Menāķib. p. 123.

Kastamonu. By setting the actions of Şa'bān-ı Velī against a backdrop of crises of various sorts, Fu'ādī posits Şa'bān—and by extension the shrine complex that bore his name—as a singular, immediate and tangible source of redress against the social, economic and security woes of the time. In other words, by virtue of its position within Sūfī political cosmology as an intermediary channel between the terrestrial world and a superabundant heavenly realm, the saint's body—in life as well as posthumously—is able to act as a broker for the kind of social, economic and political relations between the inhabitants of Kastamonu that were generative of communal life. The degree of 'Ömer el-Fu'ādī's success in this regard is not, rather fortunately, left to conjecture. By virtue of the *Türbenāme* (Tract of the Tomb) of 1619, we learn how his hagiographic and literary efforts paid off in bringing attention to the key social, economic and political role played by his cult in the black sea region of Anatolia, as well as an influx of wealth and manpower resources—from Ottoman officials as well as local devotees—for the construction of his shrine complex<sup>282</sup>.

Thaumaturgical Presences, Supernatural Armies and the Social Order in the European Marches: The Silsiletü'l-Muķarrebīn ve Menāķıbu'l-Muttekīn of Münīrī Belġradī

In elucidating how Ṣūfī communities in the Balkans may have apprehended the burgeoning crisis of Ottoman state and society at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the hagiographical compendium of the Bosnian Ḥalvetī Ṣūfī and *mūderris* Mūnīrī Belġradī

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>282</sup> See Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought*, p. 223-237.

(real name Ibrāhim ibn Iskender, d. circa 1620) is a singular and indispensible source. In Afact, outside of the *nasihatnāme* genre proper, very few Sūfī works outline what learned Ottomans perceived to be the particulars of the 17<sup>th</sup> century crisis in quite as much detail as Münīrī's 1603-4 Silsiletü'l-Muķarrebīn ve Menāķību'l-Muttekīn. Thieving and rapacious overlords, ignorant judges, mercantile janissaries, greedy statesmen, absent ġāzīs, and an impressionable and indecisive sultan (Murad III) all are the focus of Münīrī's trenchant admonitions. The overall arc of his narrative of crisis is familiar enough: the proper functioning of society depended upon adherence to the Ottoman order, which mandated that each delineated section of society remain in its assigned place and operate with justice and in view of the common good. According to Münīrī, whilst this order was maintained in earlier epochs of Ottoman history, the post-Süleymanic era in general, and the reign of Murād III in particular, saw a corruption of that order. The prices of basic commodities had skyrocketed beyond all reason, revenue-producing farms were in the hands of unworthy overlords who siphoned off most of the wealth and left the  $re'\bar{a}y\bar{a}$  destitute, the janissaries had taken up agriculture and commerce in the place of warfare, the gāzīs of the marches disappeared when campaign season arrived, banditry and rebellion was ubiquitous, the judges paid more attention to the revenue of their appointments than to the application of the şer'īat, whilst in the imperial center, Murād III busied himself with trifles, neglected his duties as sovereign and gave responsibility for the  $re'\bar{a}y\bar{a}$  to the enemies of the state<sup>283</sup>. The result, according to Münīrī, was an empire threatened from within by complete social disintegration, and from without by foreign invasion.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>283</sup> Münīrī Belġrādī (d. 1620-5), *Silsiletü'l-Muḥarrebīn ve Menāḥību'l-Muttekīn*, (Süleymaniye Library, Şehit Ali Paşa No. 2819), fol. 49v-51v 79v-80r, 110r-110v, 118r-118v and 125v-126r. See also the analysis in Clayer, "Quand L'Hagiographie Se Fait L'Echo Des Dérèglements Socio-Politiques".

What sets Münīrī's analysis apart however from other, similar articulations of crisis is its embeddedness within the *vitae* of illustrious Ṣūfīs from the earliest days of Sufism down to Münīrī's own day and context: the Balkans of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Now, if at first glance one is inclined to view this work as primarily a standard hagiographical compendium suitable to be mined for details on Balkan Sufism, Münīrī's damning critiques of Ottoman society may appear as unrelated digressions within the work's numerous entries. However as Nathalie Clayer has argued;

Pour mieux comprendre la vision de Münîrî Belgrâdî, il faut replacer ces extraits dans 1 ' ensemble de 1 ' ouvrage. Ceux - ci sont en effet insérés dans les Vies (menâkıb) de cheikhs dont 1 ' auteur retrace plus ou moins le parcours , et dont il relate surtout les qualités , les états mystiques et les miracles ( kerâmet ) . Bien qu ' ils semblent être autant de digressions , ces passages ne sont en réalité qu ' un des éléments discursifs employés par l ' auteur pour faire passer son message. 284

What is this message or vision that Münīrī is trying to articulate by jostling back and forth between relating the life and miracles of a particular Ṣūfī master and describing the social upheavals of his time? Clayer has argued that by constructing his narrative in this manner, Münīrī was postulating the *melāmī-ḥalvetī* doctrine espoused by the Ṣūfīs as the linchpin of the entire social order of the frontier<sup>285</sup>. Broadly put, Münīrī saw a directly proportional relationship between the extent of corruption, injustice, ostentation, and greed in society and the willingness of Ṣūfī adepts to induce grace and balance in the terrestrial realm. As long as this moral order was upheld, these Ṣūfīs continued to dispense essential services that upheld the communal, societal and military order of the

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>284</sup> Clayer, "Quand L'Hagiographie Se Fait L'Echo Des Dérèglements Socio-Politiques", p.371-372.
 <sup>285</sup> Ibid. p.372-373.

marches. Once this balance became disrupted however, the Ṣūfī masters became exceedingly insular or left the frontier society altogether (as was the case with Münīrī's own master, Şeyḥ 'Alī), with the result that society teetered on the edge of chaos, confusion and injustice. Münīrī's prescription in the face of such calamities, according to Clayer, was a return to the piety and conduct of a *melāmī* (the path of blame) variety<sup>286</sup>, i.e. a mode of being that required one to be introspective about one's own faults, be careful not to reveal one's mystical states to others and endeavor to cultivate personal piety without ostentation and pretentions to power<sup>287</sup>. Only then could God's favor, and the Ṣūfī *şeyḥs* who mediated it, return to the borderlands and restore order and prosperity.

Understood in this way, Münīrī's overall vision appears to concern the indispensability of the *melāmī-ḥalvetī* ethos of righteous belief and self-effacing conduct to the proper functioning of Ottoman society. In this sense, his critique of the society around him is seen to be apiece with what has been termed the "sunnah-minded" impulse in early modern Ottoman religio-political thought, and indeed that is how the most recent scholarly treatment of Münīrī by Ekin Atiyas has chosen to situate him. <sup>288</sup> Such an emplotment of Münīrī's vision as part of a "sunnah-minded" or "*melāmī-ḥalvetī*" preoccupation with doctrinal or moral rectitude however obscures the complexity of his larger cosmological vision of politics and of the social order, which was predicated upon the concrete presences and actions of the powerful bodies of the Şūfī virtuous of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>286</sup> Whilst the early *Malāmatiyya* shunned regular prayers and adherence to societal conventions in an effort to eliminate the pride and satisfaction of having done good works, Clayer argues that Münīrī's brand of Melamiism is more orthodox, concerns not advertising the performance of one's religious obligations for societal praise and influence as well as showing deference to the Ṣūfī cult of saints in the borderlands. <sup>287</sup> Ibid, p. 374-375, 380-381.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>288</sup> See E. Ekin Tuşalp Atiyas' discussion of Münīrī in, "Chapter 6: The "Sunnah-Minded" Trend" in Marinos Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Nineteenth Century*, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018), p. 233-278.

European marches, i.e. it has in my view led to an obscuration of the immanentist dimensions of his broader vision, which was predicated on the thaumaturgical power and unseen forces that Sufi bodies were able to miraculously compell.

Now at its most apparent, this latter vision can be gleaned in Münīrī's overall analytical schema as well as in his treatment of the early life of his own spiritual mentor Şeyḫ 'Alī Efendi. Early in his entry on him, Münīrī remarks;

"The aforementioned became a cause for action and enthusiasm [in the conduct of  $jih\bar{a}d$ ]. He became the basis for the  $g\bar{a}z\bar{\imath}s$  to dispatch their duties with zeal...and however many raids he went and partook in, he became the cause of booty and plunder. In those times, the gaze of the righteous was on the borderlands of Islam since they had not besmirched themselves with the impure deeds of oppression. In fact, in the early days of the Ottoman state, in the Arab lands and in the Persian lands, if there be anyone who had stepped foot in sainthood [ $vil\bar{a}yet$ ], had mastered the exoteric sciences, and wheresoever there be a perfect [ $k\bar{a}mil$ ] person, would flock to the Ottoman lands. God had endowed them with in every sense with power and good fortune."<sup>289</sup>

Thus, he not only attributes success in particular military expeditions and raids to the beneficent thaumaturgical presence and active participation of 'Alī Efendi in the earlier part of the latter's career, he also dates the prosperity of the borderlands as a whole to the arrival there, in the early days of Ottoman rule, of learned scholars and Ṣūfī virtuosos who brought with them "the power and opportunity" (kuvvet u firṣat) that God had given them. He repeats the same analysis earlier in the text when he describes how;

For as long as the men of the external state (*devlet-i zāhirī*) were in Syria, Egypt and Iraq, the utmost famous personages of Iraq from Ḥasan al-Baṣrī to Abū al-Najīb Suhrawardī and Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī circulated along with (the men

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>289</sup> Münīrī Belġrādī, fol. 79r-79v.

of) the external state and assisted the servitors of the righteous path. Most of the *şeyḥs* were in those regions; some were in Baghdad, some in Basra, some in Syria, some in Egypt, and in the places attached to them. When the *Ḥilāfat* became detached from Baghdad, power was in the Persian lands. Most of the *şeyḥs* leading up to Syed Yaḥyā (Shrivānī?) were in the Persian lands. When God Almighty gave power to the Ottomans, prosperity moved in their direction [and] the *şeyḥs* who followed spread out in the lands of Rūm"<sup>290</sup>.

Thus what Münīrī presents is an explanatory scheme in which the shift of God's grace—and with it political power—to different regions of the Islamicate world goes hand-in-hand by an influx of the powerful bodies of Ṣūfī virtuosos, who then compelled further prosperity and order in that particular society by the sheer fact of their presence and activity. In the case of both of the above quoted narratives however, Münīrī quickly moves on to describe how the situation no longer obtained in his own time and how the corruption of officials and state institutions had allowed the power of the saints to atrophy <sup>291</sup>. Thus even as Münīrī considers morality and righteous action to be indispensible to saintly power, he sees the saints' thaumaturgical bodies as the sole means through which divine power is channeled to effect the affairs of worldly men.

Beyond such broad framings, how Münīrī exactly understood the ways in which the thaumaturgical power of saintly bodies maintained the social and political order is most clearly visible in a highly concentrated fashion within the hagiographical entry of Şeyḫ Muṣliḥuddīn (d. 1574-75). Muṣliḥuddīn was a Bosnian Ḥalvetī-Sünbülī şeyḫ who was initiated into the mystical path by Şeyḫ Aynī Dede of Sarajevo (d. 1563-65) and who gained renown in the town of Sremska Mitrovica (present day Serbia) in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century. Within the latter half of Münīrī's text which contains the bio-hagiographies of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>290</sup> Ibid. fol. 49v.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>291</sup> Ibid, fol. 79v-80r, fol. 49v-51v.

the saints of the Balkans from the 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and which is the central focus of this section of the chapter, Şeyḫ Muṣliḥuddīn's entry is the longest and his miracles the most numerous and complex, owing perhaps to his illustrious reputation as well as Münīrī's personal association with him. For our purposes, Şeyḫ Muṣliḥuddīn also has the advantage of being somewhat of a hinge figure who lived and operated right at the cusp of the time of troubles. In fact, the perceived dissipation of Ottoman military superiority in the borderlands, according to Münīrī, began with the death of Şeyḫ Muṣliḥuddīn. As Münīrī remarks;

"In his time, in every direction, lords and monarchs, did proceed under his miraculous influence (*himmetiyle*), and the  $g\bar{a}z\bar{\imath}s$  in struggling with the enemy, and in the conduct of their expeditions, in [his] absence and [his] presence, did beseech him for help. And he himself also was positively inclined towards the troops". <sup>292</sup>

Whilst here Münīrī only implies that the good times did not last after the time of *şeyḫ* Muṣliḥuddīn, he is more explicit a few pages later when he laments;

"The truth of the matter is that while the deceased lived, the condition of the borderlands was good and the  $g\bar{a}z\bar{\imath}s$  related [that] there was no end to the people who said, "we saw the geyh in this battle or that place". And from the war booty they dispatched [wealth] to the geyh. The presence ( $vuc\bar{\imath}ud$ ) of the geyh was a source of power and a cause of courage and endurance to their hearts since they had frequently tested [his power] in the matter of asking for assistance. And after the deceased passed into the hereafter, in three or four years, fortunes had declined in such a way that most of the times the expeditions of the infidel were victorious [and] gradually many fortresses were lost however his spiritual influence and power was never empty of assistance."  $^{293}$ 

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>292</sup> Ibid, fol. 86r.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>293</sup> Ibid, fol. 87v-88r.

Thus, one of the most paramount concerns of the border regions, i.e. the successful conduct of campaigns of conquest and the maintenance of Ottoman military superiority, was contingent upon Şeyh Muşlihuddīn's "presence" (vucūd), which compelled the thaumaturgical benefits of "power", "courage" and "endurance" to accrue to the troops of the marches. Here it is also worth remembering that vucūd also carries the related meaning of "the body of a man", and if understood in this sense is an explicit claim about the power of the saint's thaumaturgical body. However, according to Münīrī, within three to four years of *şeyh* Muşlihuddīn's passing, divine grace did not flow to the borderlands to the same extent. Interestingly, by adding the caveat "that his spiritual influence and power was never empty of assistance" even after his demise, Münīrī is careful to leave some residual power with the *şeyh*'s interred body as well as the material extension of his body that is his shrine. In fact, what follows directly after this passage is a miracle narrative in which the grand vizier Dāmāt Ibrāhīm Pasha (d. 1601) is delivered the conquest of Kanije (c. 1600) soon after Münīrī and one his close associates make a pilgrimage (ziyāret) to the mausoleum of Şeyh Muşlihuddīn, request his help and receive theophanic signs that their request would be fulfilled.<sup>294</sup> Far from an "orthodox" sociopolitical critique concerned with personal morality and belief then, Münīrī's cosmopolitical vision also concerns the indispensability of both living and buried Şūfī bodies to the order of the marches. The case of miraculous buried saintly bodies moreover makes an argument for the saintly shrine, where the rituals of shrine visitation as well as the donation and redistribution of charitable wealth also emerge as indespensible to the power of the entombed saint and hence to the social order of the marches.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>294</sup> Ibid, fol. 88r.

Once we shift our focus away from trying to categorize Münīrī's thought using terms like "orthodoxy" and "sunnah-mindedness" and focus instead on the minute details within the miracle narratives of Seyh Muslihuddīn that he relates, we can also discern the exact processes by which saintly bodies compelled military victories on the frontier. In this regard, it would appear that myriad non-human agents and forces played a vital role. Earlier in Şeyh Muşlihuddīn's entry, Münīrī posits his ability to command *djinn* as one of the qualities of the true *qutb* (pole) of the age and includes a story about the *seyh* curing a calligrapher of his possession by a particularly stubborn one<sup>295</sup>. Building upon this theme of the seyh's control of supernatural beings and forces, Münīrī then goes on to relate a narrative in which the seyh's involvement becomes indispensible for two major, successive Ottoman conquests; that of Gyula (1566) and Szigetvár (1566) in the Hungarian marches. Regarding the first of these Münīrī simply asserts that, after nearly a month of constant bombardment by Pertev Pasha and his forces, "within four or five days of their [the seyh and his dervishes] arrival the castle's conquest was facilitated"<sup>296</sup>. His elaboration of the seyh's miraculous influence (himmet) at the conquest of Sigetvar is more elaborate. Münīrī relates that soon after the victory at Gyula, the seyh expresses a wish to reach Szigetvar in order to aid the campaign there. He commands one of his dervishes to find a covered wagon for the journey, which the latter fails to do on account of them being employed in taking provisions to the front<sup>297</sup>. Seeing that this failure to acquire a wagon was causing consternation in his dervish, the *şeyh* reveals that a strong wind had blown before noon, and that it signaled that supernatural forces had already moved to relieve Şulţān Süleymān's forces at Szigetvár. He further elaborates on this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>295</sup> Ibid, fol. 85r.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>296</sup> Ibid, fol. 87r.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>297</sup> Ibid.

miracle by recourse to a Qur'anic verse, "We sent against them a bitter wind and forces you could not see", which tells of the divinely compelled inclement weather and an accompanying supernatural host that had routed the Arab-Jewish confederacy besieging Medina in 627 CE<sup>298</sup>. He also references a prophetic tradition, "I was aided by the easterly wind and the people of 'Ad were destroyed by the westerly wind", in which the Prophet Muhammad comments on being aided by divine winds as well as on the ancient people of 'Ad (in southern Arabia) who, according to Qur'anic lore, had rejected the Prophet Hud's call to worship the true God and were also decimated by a divine wind<sup>299</sup>. Then, Münīrī goes on to assert that upon the arrival of the seyh and his followers, the castle caught fire and was conquered<sup>300</sup>. To further highlight the active role the seyh played in the conquest, Münīrī then relates yet another corroborating story from a soldier named Koca Şa'bān from the town of Ġarġarofça. The latter narrated to Münīrī how one of his companions on the Szigetvár campaign had seen an auspicious dream in which dervishes clad in white had set fire to the castle and entered it. Later that very day, Seyh Muşlihuddīn arrives, the castle spontaneously catches fire and is subsequently taken by the Ottomans<sup>301</sup>. Münīrī's message then is clear: whilst the *sevh* was physically present. he was able to compel both courage and vigor in the troops of the borderlands as well as muster invisible forces and divine winds to facilitate Ottoman campaigns in Hungary. When the *seyh* was no longer physically present however, such aid was less effective and Ottoman military superiority gradually atrophied, hereby exacerbating the crisis in the borderlands.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>298</sup> Qur'an, 33:9, accessed at: https://quran.com/33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>299</sup> Al-Bukhārī, 3205, accessed at: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3205

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>300</sup> Münīrī Belgrādī, *Silsiletü 'l-Mukarrebīn ve Menākıbu 'l-Muttekīn*, fol. 87v.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

Beyond his military assistance at the macro level of a major siege or battle however, the seyh's physical presence was also able to make a difference at the level of individual troops and during a one on one skirmish. For example, Münīrī relates the story of a young soldier who attacks the front line of the enemy and is martyred. At that very moment, the  $q\bar{a}d\bar{t}$  of the vilāyet who is also at the campaign exhorts the soldier to cease dying before he had killed the opposing combatant. Much to the amazement of the  $q\bar{a}d\bar{t}$ , the soldier stops falling to the ground, unhorses the enemy and kills him, before finally falling to the ground and expiring  $^{302}$ . The  $q\bar{a}d\bar{i}$  even hears the voice of the martyred soldier afterwards, which asks the  $q\bar{a}d\bar{t}$  if he was still in a state of shock about what had just transpired. As Münīrī goes on to relate, the  $q\bar{a}d\bar{t}$  was impacted by this event to such an extent that he abandoned his judgeship to permanently take up the cause of holy war<sup>303</sup>. In a similar narrative written on the margins of the same folio, a headless soldier does not die immediately upon being decapitated by an enemy combatant but instead proceeds to crush the head of his opponent with his own severed head, much to the amazement of an on looking companion<sup>304</sup>. Whilst the *şeyh* is not directly implicated in any of these events, Münīrī does situate them amongst the first of his miracles and prefaces them by describing the time of Şeyh Muşlihuddīn as an age when the saints watched over the warriors of the faith and "prosperity and plenty, and the stock of felicity and even the small moon of miraculous power was in the borderlands of Islam"305. Thus here too, the thrust of Münīrī's narrative concerns the bodily presence of the seyh suffusing the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>302</sup> Ibid, fol.82v. <sup>303</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

borderlands with his miraculous influence such that martyred soldiers did not immediately perish, but lived on to enact one final revenge upon the enemy.

Other miracle narratives shed light on how Seyh Muşlihuddīn's presence functioned to maintain justice and the social equilibrium in the borderlands. The seyh is thus depicted as curing illnesses 306, exorcising djinns 307, compelling the morally wayward to righteousness<sup>308</sup> and preventing childhood morbidity<sup>309</sup>. He also stands up for the rights of the weak and the destitute. For example, he mounts an impassioned defense of orphans who were being harassed into giving up the rights to their property by a rapacious local notable<sup>310</sup>. In other episode, sudden death befalls a local notable who unlawfully seized a boat and firewood being collected by the  $re'\bar{a}y\bar{a}$  of another notable and then refused to return the property at the seyh's request<sup>311</sup>. In yet another episode, an individual who was accused of embezzling the funds of the vakf under his management, and who makes an enemy of the *şeyh* (despite the *şeyh* making him the beneficiary of one of his miracles earlier) compels the upsurge of powerful emotions within the seyh and is dramatically struck down with debilitating epilepsy<sup>312</sup>. In two of the three cases described above, the seyh even ends up advocating for the rights of the weak in an Ottoman court<sup>313</sup>. Thus the society Münīrī describes is continuously at the cusp of moral degeneration, with the seyh being the only thing standing between the dispensation of justice and the reign of injustice. As Clayer has pointed out however, in this respect he differed from Münīrī's

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>306</sup> Ibid, fol. 86v.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>307</sup> Ibid, fol. 85r.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>308</sup> Ibid, fol. 89v.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>309</sup> Ibid, fol. 85r.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>310</sup> Ibid, fol.83r.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>311</sup> Ibid, fol. 90r-90v.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>312</sup> Ibid, fol. 88v-89r.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>313</sup> Ibid, fol. 83r and fol. 89r.

later mentor, Şeyḫ 'Alī, who withdrew from societal engagement, whose miracles primarily benefited his close inner circle of disciples and who in the end moved away from the marches altogether. Societal corruption then had diminished the power of the *şeyḫs* to intervene in society, causing them to physically withdraw from their role as social brokers, all of which further exacerbated the problem.

As with most miracle narratives in early modern hagingraphies however these stories are not to be read as isolated occurrences. Rather, they represent only the most dramatic illustrations of a larger pattern of divine assistance, which was believed to have been facilitated constantly by saints like Şeyh Muşlihuddīn, and which worked to uphold socio-political and military order of the European marches. Moreover, in a similar vein to the aforementioned miracles of Şeyh Şa'bān-ı Velī, the highly fantastical details of Münīrī's narrative do allude to a larger reality of the frontier society that produced and consumed such stories, namely that the Sūfī communities and their ability to organize manpower and material resources lent useful support to Ottoman raids and campaigns of conquest in the Balkans<sup>315</sup>. However, as opposed to relating a mundane reality comprised of military logistics in the manner of a modern observer—though those can also be gleaned from the narrative at times-Münīrī meaningfully embeds figures like Seyh Muşlihuddīn in an enchanted world where the miraculous influence of his physical presence had effects on the bodies of the troops as well as upon the supernatural forces of the the hidden realm.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>314</sup> See; Clayer, "Les miracles des cheikhs et leurs fonctions dans les espaces frontières de la Roumélie du XVIe siècle"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>315</sup> This fact is also borne out by the stories Münīrī tells of the Ṣūfīs who lost their lives fighting on the frontlines of battle.

But why does Münīrī place this emphasis on bodies and bodily presence in his analytical scheme? Just as in the case of 'Ömer El-Fu'ādī's retelling of the life of Seyh Sa'bān-1 Velī, Münīrī's employment of embodied narrations served to render manifest and visible, the otherwise invisible working of providence that Seyh Muşlihuddīn was able to manipulate behind the scenes. Interestingly one of the ways in which Münīrī as narrator provides glimpses into the workings of this invisible realm is via the medium of dreams. In a number of passages such as the aforementioned one about Koca Şa'bān of Gargarofça, the saint's role in bringing about a military victory is done via a narration of the dream narratives of ordinary townspeople, which were treated with the same credibility as other hagiographic narratives circulating in the society of the marches. In so doing, Münīrī was able to reinforce the kinds dyadic relationships between saints and their supplicants and benefactors that we have seen to be operating concurrently in the region of Kastamonu. And by the same token, the breakdown of this mediated web of exchanges—of good conduct, supplication, holy war, pilgrimage, and the conveyance of booty to the shrines in return for divinely sourced assistance and grace—that for Münīrī was the reason for the crises, is rendered in an equally tangible and visible manner, i.e. by means of the exodus, martyrdom or withdrawal of the saints and other Sūfīs from the society of the marches after the time of Şeyh Muşlihuddīn. Therefore in his treatment of socio-political decline as well, Münīrī seems to be arguing for the vital importance of Sūfīs whose sacred bodies mediated the divine grace necessary for the regulation of human affairs on earth.

## Conclusion

By way of a conclusion to the chapter, let us consider how Münīrī's treatment of saintly bodies differs from the aforementioned embodied miracles of Şeyh Şa'bān-ı Velī, as well as some reasons for this difference in approach. In the first place, Münīrī's embodied miracle narratives have a more military-offensive character than those of Ömer El-Fu'ādī. This is of course in line with their respective contexts of production. Whilst the miracle narratives of Şeyh Şa'bān-ı Velī were intended to speak to audiences in Kastamonu, the miracle narratives in Münīrī's text were intended for the spiritual and moral edification of communities embedded not only within the martial culture of defensive fortresses along the Hungarian front, but also of the Bosnian and Serbian towns that served as manpower and resource bases for the campaigns up north. In the second place, the miracles narrated by Münīrī do not depict a saint's body and its various constituent parts as directly involved in the prevention of calamities and injustices in the concentrated and highly stylized manner of the other hagiography. Instead, Münīrī's narrative depicts an enchanted world where the thaumaturgical bodily presence of Sūfī virtuosos compelled a surfeit of miraculous grace that functioned to keep the social and military order of the borderlands in check. The aim of Münīrī's narrative then is not to argue for the indispensability of one shrine or one particular saint to the socio, political and economic equilibrium of one particular locality. Rather, the view from his vantage point is a regionwide, arguably even an empire-wide one, whilst his normative prescription is to gradually reinvigorate the magico-thaumaturgical abilities of Şūfī bodies via a return to a particular moral, spiritual, and ritual code of conduct of Sufism. This more expansive vision is also

evidenced by his discussions about empire-wide societal and institutional decay as well as by the very nature of his text as a bio-hagiographical compendium of several Ṣūfīs across time and space (albeit with a focus on the Balkan provinces). Thus the miracles of bodily presences he relates were also not merely the narratives that happened to be available to him, but rather represented discursive choices that buttressed his idiosyncratic vision of the social, political, economic and military order of the European marches and the place of Ṣūfī bodies within it.

Despite their differences in audience, context of production and overall structure however, the two hagiographies discussed in this chapter represented local attempts to debate social cohesion, communal leadership, mutual assistance, right belief as well as correct practice during times of crisis by recourse to bodies, in particular the bodies of powerful saints. This owed firstly, as has already been discussed, to the fact that the semiotics, metaphors and concepts of the body, being readily transmissible and comprehensible on a mass level, have always, to a greater or lesser extent, formed the discursive field upon which which visions of the social, political and moral order have been consistently articulated. However, it is my further argument that the rendering of such abstract visions in highly tangible and sensory terms—an essential feature of an embodied discourse—acquires particular force in a time of crisis and rapid transformation, a time when questions surrounding order and stability were constantly posed and which mandated the formulation of palpable answers. This is not of course to suggest that representations of the body such as the ones presented here, by virtue of their palpability and tangibility, were somehow unambiguous in their perceived meaning and

wider reception. Rather, what I am suggesting is that these narratives' rendering of the dyadic relationships of mutual obligation between a saint and his supplicants, as well as of the invisible workings of providence in bodily terms lend them a particular efficacy in a context where the vast majority was not equipped to engage with the more abstract and juridico-discursive forms of the Islamic tradition, and at a time when this tradition's associated institutions were increasingly unable to provide focal points for communal life.

## Chapter 3

The Talismanic Body: The Ḥilye-i Şerīfe of Ḥāķānī Meḥmed Bey in its Intellectual and Literary Context

## Introduction, State of the Current Scholarship and this Chapter's Intervention

Sometime in the year 1598-9 the poet Hākānī Mehmed Bey (d. 1606) presented his versified panegyric about the bodily traits of the Prophet Muhammad titled the Hilye-i Serīfe (The Noble Description) to Ottoman grand admiral and one-time grand vizier, Çigalazāde Yūsuf Sinān Pasha (d. 1606). In making the physical properties of Muhammad the focus of his work, Hākānī was building upon earlier precedents like Tirmidhī's 9th century al-Shamā'il al-Muhammadīvya (The Sublime Qualities of Muhammad) as well as an expansive body of oral lore that described the Prophet's facial and bodily features. And yet by showcasing the Prophet's body and character in Ottoman Turkish verse, the *Hilye-i Şerīfe* was part of a more novel impulse. In the first place, whilst religious matters like the lives of the Abrahamic prophets were often composed in the sacred language of Arabic and, sometimes, in literary Persian, the expansion and consolidation of Ottoman state and society in the 15th and 16th centuries saw the rise of a vernacular Turkish religious tradition geared towards the spiritual and moral edification of a more expansive, burgeoning rūmī imperial society. Moreover, by breaking from the prosaic shamā'il tradition and rendering the sacred body of the Prophet in verse, Ḥākānī was endowing it with a literary quality that would enable it to be memorized, recited, copied, and contemplated upon. And perhaps most significantly for our purposes, by promising divine protection from disease, poverty, misfortune and hellfire to anyone who would copy, recite, keep or gaze upon this *hilve*, Hākānī posited his work as a powerful salvific talisman at a time when security of one's person, one's property and one's salvation had become a paramount socio-religious concern. Put simply, he transformed

the accreted lore around the bodily qualities of Muḥammad into a tangible and meaningful religio-cultural artifact, hereby setting the stage for Muḥammad's body to become a key focus of religious devotion in an extremely turbulent era of Ottoman history. It would go on to become one of the most popular works of Ottoman devotional literature in the early modern period, serving not only as the inspiration for other *hilye* of Muḥammad, but also those of other Abrahamic Prophets (*enbiyā'*), Muḥammad's most important companions and some select ṣūfī saints as well. Almost seven decades after Ḥākānī first penned the *Ḥilye-i Ṣerīfe*, the master calligrapher Ḥāfīz 'Oṣmān (d. 1698) would propel this devotional culture even further, when he would render his *ḥilye* in the form of calligraphic panels. These panels would then proliferate to become a key variant of this genre well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

It would be tempting and all too convenient to explain away the proliferation of the genre in the 17<sup>th</sup> century as merely a matter of blanket imitation of a wildly popular work of literature, and indeed that is the sense that most scholarship on the *hilye* conveys. This comes as no surprise since what scattered interest these materials have thus far generated is chiefly amongst art historians owing to the genre's later development into a calligraphic art form. This has meant that these calligraphic *hilye* panels have received most of the scholarly attention whilst select examples of the versified *hilye* are only mentioned in passing as part of the historical backdrop to Ḥāfiz 'Osmān's magnificently rendered oeuvre. This scholarship on the calligraphic *hilye* panels however has mostly confined itself to analyzing these panels' general stylistic and decorative features and

their continual development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>316</sup> As a result, their contextualization within the larger context of Ottoman, social, political, cultural and intellectual history in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries century has not been adequately undertaken<sup>317</sup>. Moreover, a sustained focus on these calligraphic panels alone has also meant that the diversity of material forms that the *hilye* took—such as in prayer books and in foldable paper and cloth talismans—have been mostly neglected.<sup>318</sup>

And despite poetry being the literary undertaking that had pride of place in the Ottoman lands, versified *hilye* works like those of Hākānī and his successors have also not attracted sustained scholarly attention. This may have something to do with the misplaced view that the poetry from the Ottoman era in general and the post-Süleymanic era in particular was subpar compared to the works of the Persian masters that inspired it. This

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>316</sup> Hüseyin Gündüz and Faruk Taşkale, *Hilye-i Şerife: Hz. Muhammed'in Özellikleri*, (Istanbul: Antik A.Ş. Kültür Yayınları, 2006) and Ömer Faruk Dere, *Hattat Hâfız Osman Efendi "Hayatı–Sanatı–Eserleri*", (Istanbul, Korpus, 2009).

<sup>(</sup>Istanbul, Korpus, 2009). <sup>317</sup> Some important steps in this direction however have been taken by Tim Stanley who, citing the fact that many Ottoman Muslims were either converts or decedents of converts from the Orthodox church, links the development of the hilve to that of the Orthodox Christian icon. See his; Sublimated Icons: The Hilve-i Serife as an Image of the Prophet", paper read at the 21st Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies on "The Byzantine Eye: Word and Perception" University of Birmingham, March 21-24, 1987. In a recent 2018 entry on the subject however, Stanley contends "there is a way of understanding how the hilye form came about that has nothing to do with notions external to Ottoman Islam". Towards that end, he discusses Hākānī's Hilve-i Şerīf and the calligraphic hilve's structural similarities to the Ottoman fermān. See; "From Text to Art in the Ottoman Hilye" in Filiz Çağman'a Armağan, (Istanbul: Lale Yayıncılık, 2018, p. 559-570. Much less elaborated in this work however are the hilve's ostensible links to concepts and practices associated with Sufism as well as to the larger culture of talismans, omen books and physiognomy in the Ottoman lands that seem to inform its use. Christiane Gruber has shed more light on these issues. See Gruber; The Praiseworthy One: The Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Texts and Images, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018), p. 285-303, and "The Rose of the Prophet: Floral Metaphors in Late Ottoman Devotional Art," in Envisioning Islamic Art and Architecture: Essays in Honor of Renata Holod, David Roxburgh (ed.) (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), p.227-254

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>318</sup> An exception to this is Christiane Gruber's ongoing work on late Ottoman *hilye* bottles. This formed the basis of lectures delivered at NYU, Yale and Ruhr University Bochum between 2017 and 2019 under the title, "The Prophet as a 'Sacred Spring': Late Ottoman *Hilye* Bottles". A paper on these is forthcoming this year. Her study of an early 19<sup>th</sup> century prayer manual containing two *hilye* diagrams along with many other curative diagrams also opens discussion of the material aspects of the *hilye* considerably. See; ""A Pious Cure-All: the Ottoman Illustrated Prayer Manual in the Lilly Library" in *The Islamic Manuscript Tradition: Ten Centuries of Book Arts in Indiana University Collections*, Christiane Gruber (ed.), (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 116-153.

was certainly the view of the famous 19<sup>th</sup> century orientalist E.J.W. Gibb who in his *A History of Ottoman Poetry* described the *Ḥilye-i Şerīfe* in particular as follows;

"Although it has no great merit as poetry, the work has always been popular on account of its subject. It was printed in Istanbul in 1264 (1847-8), and Ziya Pasha quotes almost the whole of it in the third volume of his Tavern. Speaking of Khaqani [sic] in the preface to that anthology, the Pasha says, playing on his name, that he was the Khaqan [king] of the world of verse, without peer or rival in all Rum (in his own sphere, is surely understood), that though his Hilya [sic] is brief, every word in it from beginning to end is a pearl, that it is written in a style scarcely possible to imitate, and that it is beyond doubt a miracle achieved through the grace of the Prophet. This panegyric seems somewhat overdone and not a little far-fetched". 319

Such an appraisal was consistent with Gibb's unsympathetic judgment of Ottoman poetry as a whole. Writing at a time when nationalism and race colored the study of literature, Gibb saw Persianate Ottoman poetry as occluding the expression of a more rustic "Turkish national character" and thus deemed it defective on account of "its artificiality, its obscurity [and] its exclusiveness". <sup>320</sup> Fahir İz, a notable 20<sup>th</sup> century scholar of Turkish literature, also shared Gibb's appraisal of Ḥākānī's work when he wrote;

"This didactic poem with no literary value became very popular and was often compared with Süleymān Čelebi's [sic] famous *Mewlid* [sic], although it has none of the latter's merits. Strangely enough, even writers of usually balanced judgement like Diyā' Pasha and Nādjī [sic] overpraised the *Ḥilye*, probably because of the sacred character of its subject". <sup>321</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>319</sup> E.J.W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry, vol. III,* (London: Luzac & Co., 1900), printed by E.J. Brill, Leiden. p. 195-196.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>320</sup> Ibid, *vol. I*, p. 31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>321</sup> Fahir İz, "<u>Kh</u>ākānī", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. <a href="http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912">http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912</a> islam SIM 4136>

Both authors then view the basis of the *Hilye-i Şerīfe*'s popularity as deriving only from its sacred subject matter and question why Ottomans intellectuals such as Žiyā Pasha and Mu'allim Nācī should have held a work with "no literary value" in such high regard. Such an assessment on part of Gibb and İz may be due to the fact that Hākānī's verses employed stock imagery that was highly conventional in the  $d\bar{v}$  poetry of the period and did not exhibit a high degree of inventiveness, all of which nonetheless made the work readily apprehensible and useful to Ottoman audiences in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

By following the assessment of Gibb and Iz and gauging the work according to modern literary sensibilities and not according to the sensibilities of the society that produced it, scholars have closed off significant avenues of research on the *Hilve-i Serīfe* as well as on the whole corpus of versified *hilve* that it inspired. Indeed, the extant scholarship on the versified *hilyes* bears the marks of such an approach given that it has primarily confined itself to introducing individual authors and the content of their hilye texts as well as providing complete transcriptions. 322 Whilst these have been enormously helpful secondary sources for this study, they often do not attempt to go beyond description to present a detailed analysis that situates these works in their intellectual, socio-political

<sup>322</sup> Mehtap Erdoğan, *Türk Edebiyatında Manzum Hilyeler*, Osmanlı Edebiyat-Tarih-Kültür Araştırmaları-2 (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2013), Ali Yardım, "Hilye-i Saâdet: Peygamber Efendimiz'in Yaratılış Güzellikleri", Kubbealtı Akademi Mecmûası, vol. 7 no. 1, January, 1978, p. 12-25, Abdulkadir Erkal, "Türk Edebiyatı'nda Hilye ve Cevri'nin "Hilye-i Çâr Yâr-ı Güzîn"i", A.Ü Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi, no. 12, 1999, p. 111-131, Âdem Ceyhan, "Dört seçkin dost'un portresi: Cevrî Ibrahim Çelebi'nin Hilye-i Çihar Yâr-ı Güzîn'i", Sosyal Bilimler, vol. 4 no. 1, 2006, p. 1-28, Sadık Yazar, "Seyyid Şerîfî Mehmed Efendi ve Hilyesi" in Turkish Studies International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic, vol 2/4 (Fall 2007), p. 1026-1044, Mustafa Erdoğan, "Lütfî Mehmed Dede ve Hilye-i Mevlânâ Adlı Eserine Göre Mevlânâ'nm Özellikleri", Erdem: Insan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi, vol. 61 no. 50, 2008, p. 59-82, Mehmet Özdemir, "Türk Edebiyatında Manzum Hilye Türü ve Neccarzâde Rızâ'nın Hilye-i Hâce Bahâüddîn Şâh-ı Nakşibend'i" and Fatih Özkafa, "Hilye-i Şerife'nin Dinî, Edebî ve Estetik Boyutları" in Turkish Studies - International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic, vol 7/3, (Summer 2012), p. 1973-1992 and p. 2041-2053.

and cultural contexts. In other words, scholars of Ottoman literature have often focused more on "the internal world of the poetry than on attempting to reach out and consider how that internal world operates to organize and clarify concerns of the broader world of Ottoman society." Oriented in this way, scholars have been quick to view the traditional vocabulary, symbolic pairings, repetitive nature, and limited semantic range of much *divān* poetry as indicative of poetry employed purely for aesthetic effect and thus unable to shed much light on Ottoman society and Ottoman *mentalités*. However as Walter Andrews has observed, this notion that Ottoman poetry in general and Ottoman sūfī poetry in particular is replete with "symbols of a purely aesthetic character",

"...seems to imply that the symbols lose their meaning when they are contained in poetry—in which case they would cease to be symbols of anything. What their aesthetic value would then be is impossible to say. It would seem quite proper to say that the symbols of religious writing *change* their character when unfolded in the poetry, but that change is more in the direction of including more meaning than in the direction of being reduced to a meaningless state." 324

Reconsidered from this perspective, the "stock epithets" and "stock associations" of the Persian literary tradition that Gibb deemed "an ill-starred dower to the Turks" were not there merely for ornamentation. Rather they did important work in endowing the work with resonance and meaning, i.e. they constituted a coherent system of thought and emotion. Unfortunately as noted above, such an approach has thus far not been utilized to analyze *hilye* poetry, and most scholarship on it continues to display a heavily descriptive character.

Walter G. Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry*, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1985), p. 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>324</sup> Andrews, p. 64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>325</sup> Gibb, p. 30.

The result of these narrow scholarly commitments amongst both historians of art, material culture and scholars of Ottoman literature then has meant that the widespread copying and emulation of Ḥākānī's Hilye-i Ṣerīfe in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century has not usually dwelt upon but rather has been treated, with the benefit of hindsight, almost as a historical inevitability. A further consequence of these scholars' particular aesthetic and literary concerns is that the hilye genre's actual mystical-talismanic content as well as their status as useful objects doing work in the world has also largely been taken for granted. In other words, whilst the calligraphic hilyes have often not been seen as "texts", the literary hilyes have not been seen as anything but. This methodological bifurcation has also meant that a detailed treatment of the hilye form in its entirety and in all its material variation has not been undertaken, which in turn has meant that the positing of broader questions, such as the socio-political and cultural context of their production as well as its implications for our overall understanding of 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman religious transformations, has hardly been attempted.<sup>326</sup>

The two subsequent chapters will attempt to address these lacunae in order to more fully understand the substantive meaning and purpose of the *ḥilye* of Ḥākānī as well as to preliminarily sketch out the implications this has for the social, cultural and religious

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>326</sup> One exception to this is Jonathan Parkes Allen, "Sanctifying Domestic Space and Domesticating Sacred Space: Reading *Ziyāra* and *Taṣliya* in Light of the Domestic in the Early Modern Ottoman World" in *Religions*, vol. 11 no. 59, 2020. In this recent paper Allen traces the emergence of a particularly domestic and private mode of piety in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that saw elements of public shrine and tomb worship brought into the confines of the household. The work is primarily focused on analyzing the illustrated 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman *Dalā'il al-khayrāt* devotional manuals and views the *ḥilyes* included within these manuals as part of the same impulse of creating domestic sacred space. As such Allen's treatment of the *ḥilye* represent the first—and to my knowledge only—attempt at situating these works in discussions of religious change in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This chapter builds upon such insights and offers causative explanations of such religious transformation over a longer period.

contours of the Ottoman 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is my contention that the origins and growth of the Ottoman Turkish *ḥilye* and the pronounced religious preoccupation with powerful sacred bodies they evince represent a multifaceted religious response to the far-reaching social, political, cultural, climatic and intellectual upheavals that were disrupting and remaking the order of the Ottoman *ancien régime*.

## Early Precedents to the Ottoman Turkish *Ḥilye*: Reading the Prophetic Body in the Shamā'il and Dalā'il Literatures

The Ottoman *hilye* tradition as it developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries can be said to have its thematic and conceptual antecedents as far back as the 9<sup>th</sup> century, which saw the beginnings of a process that saw Muḥammad transcend from being a charismatic religious leader to being the very linchpin of both individual Muslim piety and public Muslim law. Indeed, this was the period that saw the development, not only of Prophetic biographies (*sīrah*), but also of an extensive corpus of prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*) as well as an elaborate science to authenticate their veracity ('*ilm al-ḥadīth*). Collectively these various endeavors gave rise to an ideal of pious behavior and belief modeled on the habitual practice (*sunnah*) of Muḥammad, which soon acquired the authority as a source of Islamic law second only to that of the Qur'ān. However the development of a piety centered on Muḥammad did not stop at recording his life and deeds. Deriving from the *ḥadīth* reports of various early Islamic authorities, a broad scholarly consensus on the body of the Prophet had also begun to develop, whilst fragments of his actual hair and

nails also appeared as major relics for the garnering of *baraka* at a more popular level. As Annemarie Schimmel puts it;

"Veneration of the Prophet and the interest in even the smallest details of his behavior and his personal life grew in the same measure as the Muslims were distanced from him in time. They wanted to know ever more about his personality, his looks, and his words in order to be sure that they were following him correctly. The popular preachers enjoyed depicting the figure of the Prophet in wonderful colors, adding even the most insignificant details (thus, that he had only seventeen white hairs in his beard). One sometimes sympathizes with more sober theologians who were not too happy when listening to these pious, well-meant exaggerations. But it was this very genre of literature...that remained favorite with readers and listeners."<sup>327</sup>

This developing veneration of Muḥammad's person was part and parcel of a series of religious developments that sought to employ the charismatic political and religious authority of Muḥammad to bring about a sense of order and coherence to Muslim identity, belief and practice at a time when the Abbasid caliphal state struggled to provide a stable moral and socio-political focal point for an increasingly fractious Muslim urban society. This context is worth bearing in mind since it can provide a valuable point of comparison between the kinds of work this bodily corpus did in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the kinds of work the *hilves* did in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire.

Perhaps the most influential and pioneering work on the Prophetic body to emerge at that time was undoubtedly the 9<sup>th</sup> century *al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya* of Abū 'Īsā Muḥammad al-Tirmidhī (d. 892).<sup>328</sup> In it, the famous *hadīth* compiler takes great pains to

327 Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muḥammad was His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety*, (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p.31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>328</sup> For the isnāds, the Arabic text along with an English translation see; Al-Tirmidhī, *Ash-shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya*, Muhtar Holland (tr.), (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2017). For more on the author see: G.H.A

compile and relate what notable authorities related about the characteristics of the Prophet Muḥammad, from his bodily features down to the very minutiae of how he dressed and comported himself at meal times, during prayer and whilst at rest. Most notable amongst these authorities was Muḥammad's cousin and son-in-law 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, whose description of Muḥammad would provide the content base for both the Ottoman literary and artistic *ḥilyes*. This description went as follows;

"Allāh's messenger (Allāh bless him and give him peace) was neither assertively tall, nor reticently short, and he was an average-sized member of the population. His hair was neither crisply curled nor lank; it was loosely curled. He was neither plump nor chubby-cheeked, and in his face there was a rounded quality. He was white with a reddish tinge, dark black-eyed, with long eyelashes. He had splendid kneecaps, elbow joints and shoulder blades, free from hair. He had a strip of hair from the top of the chest to the navel. The palms of his hands and the soles of his feet were thickset. When he walked, he moved as if he was descending a declivity, and when he looked around, he looked around altogether. Between his shoulders was the seal of Prophethood, for he is the Seal of the Prophets." 329

As is readily apparent from this description, an essential property of the body of the Prophet was the balance of its proportions, which echoed a perfect balance in the soul. Thus far from explicating Muḥammad's body with all its human idiosyncrasies, even early accounts such as those narrated by Tirmidhī abstracted Muḥammad's body into the Aristotelian framework of the golden mean, which stressed that the ideal of beauty and virtue was that nothing be in excess. Also included is a lengthy description by Abū Hāla, which elaborates further on 'Alī's basic description and which is also a named source in

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Juynboll, "al-Tirmidhī", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. <a href="http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912\_islam\_SIM\_7569">http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912\_islam\_SIM\_7569</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>329</sup> Al-Tirmidhī, p. 6.

Hākānī's *Ḥilye-i Şerīfe*. <sup>330</sup> It is in this elaboration that we see the Prophetic description move from straightforwardly descriptive towards one employing similes. For example, when describing Muḥammad's complexion, Ibn Abī Hāla likens it to "the radiance of the full moon", whilst the Prophet's neck is described as being akin to "the neck of a statue shaped in pure silver."

Further on in the al-Shamā'il, an entire chapter is devoted to one particular physical feature of the Prophet Muḥammad known as the "seal of prophethood" (khātam alnubuwwa), which was said to be located between his shoulder blades. This feature, described variously as a "red swelling like the egg of the dove", "a protrusion of skin on his back", "the button of the bridal canopy", "intertwined hairs" and "a clenched fist surrounded by moles", i.e. as resembling a lid or a seal for a letter or a vessel, was an important one since it was the embodied manifestation of Muhammad's title, "the seal of prophecy."332 This title and its physical correlate pointed to a central tenant of Islam that placed Muhammad at the culmination ("the sealing") of the line of Abrahamic Prophets and thus highlighted Islam's abrogation of both Christianity and Judaism. Since Muhammad was the last person to bear direct revelation from God, such lid-like descriptions of the seal were particularly apt. However the seal on Muhammad's body, beyond being a semiotic marker of the cessation of divine prophecy, also pointed to an initiation event in Muhammad's infancy. In a version of this story, narrated in the famous Prophetic biography of Ibn Ishāq (d. 767) on the authority of Khālid ibn Ma'dān (d. 722), Muḥammad whilst living in the desert under the care of his Bedouin wet-nurse Halima, is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>330</sup> Ibid, p. 7-9.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>332</sup> Ibid, p. 15-21.

visited by two eagles.<sup>333</sup> They proceed to take the four-year-old Muḥammad, split open his breast, retrieve two blood clots (the impurity within a fallible human), wash the insides of his body, fill it with the spirit of God, seal his body with the "seal of prophethood" and weigh it<sup>334</sup>. As Uri Rubin has observed,

The actual act of purification as related in the earliest sources forms part of Muḥammad's infancy legends, which means that the event takes place long before his actual prophetic emergence. In this setting, it is not only a story of preparation [for prophecy], but of annunciation as well.<sup>335</sup>

The seal then evokes a widely narrated event that primed the child Muḥammad to receive and embody the word of God. Moreover, in the *sīra* traditions related by Ibn Sa'd (d. 845) and Ibn Hishām (d. 833) and which are subsequently confirmed by al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), this bodily trace becomes the key proof by which Baḥīrā, a Christian hermit encountered by the twelve year old Muḥammad and his uncle whilst on a trade mission to Syria, makes a prediction of his prophetic destiny<sup>336</sup>. Thus the "seal of prophecy" was the embodied marker of events and concepts that were becoming central to the historical development of a Muslim piety centered on the person of Muḥammad. And whilst these reports themselves are not included in Tirmidhī's chapter on the seal, they were sufficiently well established to condition how this feature was apprehended by the pious as they "read" Muḥammad's body for guidance and pleasure. In fact the "seal of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>333</sup> In other versions of the story, the birds are replaced by angles or men clad in white. See; Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder: The life of Muḥammad as viewed by early Muslims, a textual analysis*, (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1995), p. 59-75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>334</sup> Ibid, p. 62-63.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>335</sup> Ibid, p. 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>336</sup> Ibid, p. 50. See also; Abel, A., "Baḥīrā", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;a href="http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912">http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912</a> islam SIM 1050>

prophecy" was so evocative that it came to be depicted in various works with talismanic and apotropaic properties down to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>337</sup>

The bulk of the *al-Shamā'il* then goes on to describe details such as the quality of Muḥammad's clothing, his habits of prayer, ablution and perfuming, the dye of his hair and beard, his dietary habits, his gait, his laughter, his speech, his banter, and his manner of sleeping. These details not only contributed to furnishing a fuller picture of Muḥammad for the community of believers, but also provided examples of Godly and pious behavior that sought to structure and modify the conduct of Muslims. Thus the *al-shamā'il* furnishes both an embodied religious iconography and an etiquette manual, i.e. both a set of ideas as well as a set of practices conducive to the production and maintenance of Islamic society. For example, the longest chapter in the *al-shamā'il* concerns Muhammad's method of worship, of which it relates the following;

"When he entered into the ritual prayer, he said, 'Allāh is Supremely Great [Allāhu Akbar], the Lord of Power [jabarūt], sovereignty [malakūt], magnificence [kibriyā'] and sublimity ['azāma]!" Then he recited the sūra of the cow [al-Baqara]. Then he bowed down, and bowed for approximately as long as he stood erect, saying: 'Glory be to my Lord, the Almighty! Glory be to my Lord, the Almighty!" Then he raised his head, and he stood erect for as long as he had bowed, saying, 'To my Lord, belongs the praise! To my Lord, belongs the praise!" Then he prostrated himself for approximately as long as he stood erect, saying, 'Glory be to my Lord, the Most High! Glory be to my Lord, the Most High! Then he raised his head, and the pause between the two prostrations was approximately

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>337</sup> One of these, the Ottoman Turkish *Tercüme-i Ḥilyetü'n-Nebī 'Aleyhi's-Selām* of Bosnalı Muṣṭafā (MS Süleymaniye Library, Nuruosmaniye, no.2872) was a versified *ḥilye* work composed in 1654 and presented to Meḥmed IV. A discussion of this work and of the diagram of this seal will be taken up in the following chapter. For another 17<sup>th</sup> century (circa. 1661-62) Ottoman example of the seal, see, "Kat. 60, Kur'an-ı Kerim" in Hülya Tezcan, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Koleksiyonundan Tılsımlı Gömlekler*, (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2011), p. 18. For a 19<sup>th</sup> century variant of the seal from Iran see the following item from the Khalili Collection; "No. 48: Talismanic Chart" in Francis Maddison and Emilie Savage-Smith (ed.), *Science, Tools & Magic*, part 1: Body and Spirit, Mapping the Universe (London: The Nour Foundation, 1997), p.116.

as long as the prostrations. During the pause he said, 'My Lord, forgive me! My Lord, forgive me!', until he recited the sūras of the cow [al-Baqara], the family of 'Imrān [al-'Imrān], women [an-Nisā'] and the Table Spread [al-Mā'ida], or cattle [al-An'ām]."<sup>338</sup>

Implicit within this tradition, with its references to scripture as well as its painstaking attention to bodily timing, gesture and incantation, is that all Muslims ought also to remember God in precisely this way. However there are chapters in the al-shamā'il that, beyond seeking to order the behavior of the Muslim community by way of the Prophet's bodily habits, more explicitly convey a political character in how that they directly highlight Muhammad's possession of both religious as well as worldly sovereignty. The work, for example, devotes two chapters to Muhammad's signet ring and its accompanying seal. 339 Another entry, which follows soon after, relates how this ring was subsequently carried by Muḥammad's first three successors (the Caliphs Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman') before it was lost in a well<sup>340</sup>. Subsequent chapters then go on to describe the helmet and silver-pommeled sword Muhammad carried into Mecca after its conquest in 629-30 CE and the chainmail he wore during the battle of Uhud against the Meccans in 624 CE. 341 Thus the traditional desiderata of pre-modern sovereignty and temporal power, i.e. a signet ring to seal official correspondence as well as a sword and armor, are described one after the other in order to stress the this-worldly aspect of Muhammad's mission. What Tirmidhī's al-shamā'il thus seeks to do is to use descriptions of the prophetic body in its physiological, ritualistic and political guises to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>338</sup> Al-Tirmidhī, p. 209-210.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>339</sup> Al-Tirmidhī, p. 64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>340</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>341</sup> Ibid, p.71-77.

condition the conduct of Muslims so as to structure them into a social, cultural, communal and hence political unit.

Another class of texts that developed parallel to and in conversation with the hadīth, sīra and shamā'il literature was the dalā'il al-nubuwwa ("proofs of prophecy") literature. The importance of this category of religious literature in setting up the stage for the Ottoman Turkish *hilve* in the 17<sup>th</sup> century is primarily in its role in the development of Islamic theology (*kalām*) in general and a rich tradition of prophetology (*nubuwwat*) in particular. Emerging from the mid 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards in a context of intense debate on the validity of Muhammad's prophetic mission amongst Muslims, Christians and Jews, the Muslim dalā'il un-nubuwwa works, at their most basic level, attempted to (1) prove the human need for prophets and (2) establish the truth of Muhammad's prophecy by recourse to his miracles as well as to life events that signaled his selection by God. 342 These works were initially developed within scholarly circles associated with the ahl al-hadīth movement and mostly consisted of singular chapters in larger works on hadīth. As such they adhered to the strict rules of *hadīth* scholarship in that they paid meticulous attention to the chain of *hadīth* transmission (*isnād*) and refrained from providing theological commentaries on the traditions they included.<sup>343</sup> From the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards though, the composition of dalā'il became a more expansive and distinct scholarly enterprise, with authors of more varied scholarly backgrounds devoting entire works on the subject and eschewing the strict and narrow methodology of the ahl al-hadīth in favor of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>342</sup> Sarah Stroumsa, "The Signs of Prophecy: The Emergence and Early Development of a Theme in Arabic Theological Literature", *The Harvard Theological Review*, Jan. - Apr., 1985, Vol. 78, No. 1/2, p. 102. <sup>343</sup>Mareike Koertner, "*Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa* Literature as Part of the Medieval Scholarly Discourse on Prophecy" in *Der Islam*, vol. 95, issue 1, (2018), p. 96-99.

more speculative methods of Ash'arī theology. 344 The most famous examples of this later trend were the *dalā'il* works of Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1038) and Abū Bakr Aḥmad bin al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (d. 1066). Whilst their works did draw extensively from reputable *ḥadīth* scholars and transmitters, they also drew heavily from scholars of *isrā'īliyyāt* (biblical sources from before the Qur'ān), as well as from the *sīra* works of Ibn Iṣḥāq and al-Wāqidī (d.823). 345 Pre-empting criticism for this approach from more traditionalist quarters that stressed the inclusion of only the most authoritative *ḥadīth*, al-Bayhaqī argued strenuously that since he was not engaged in jurisprudence but rather in the moral and intellectual instruction of Muslims, his choice to include myriad miracle narratives was valid<sup>346</sup>. It was primarily this eclectic blending of sources as well as their insertion within a robust theological framework that enabled these works to form "the bases for legends and poems in which popular views about Muḥammad were to be reflected throughout the centuries". 347

Whilst these latter works played an influential role in the elaboration of Muḥammad's role in Islamic theology, in terms of cementing his role in popular devotion the most important work arguably, which drew from the *dalā'il* literature, was the *Kitāb al-Shifā bi-Ta'rīf Ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā* (Book of Healing by the Recognition of the Rights of the Selected One) of the Andalusian Mālikī scholar and jurist Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ (d. 1149). 348 In it

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>344</sup> Ibid, p. 99-107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>345</sup> Ibid, 103-104.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Schimmel, p. 32.

<sup>348</sup> Qādī 'Iyād, *kitāb al-shifā bi-ta rīf ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā*', translated by Aisha Abdarrahman Bewley as "Muḥammad Messenger of Allāh: Ash-Shifa of Qadi 'Iyad", (Granada: Medinah Press, 1991). For more on Qādī 'Iyād see; Talbi, M., "'Iyād b. Mūsā", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;a href="http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912">http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912</a> islam SIM 3715>

'Iyad gives a highly detailed description of Muhammad's life as well as his spiritual, miraculous and physical qualities. Regarding the latter, he gives a description very similar to those contained in Tirmidhī and his successors so as to demonstrate the extent of God's favor upon Muhammad. Where he differs from them is in his extensive elaboration of Muhammad as possessor of almost otherworldly attributes. As par his scheme, Muhammad not only possessed perfect physical beauty and a superhuman intellect, but was also unencumbered by having to dispose of his own bodily waste on account of the earth swallowing it up. 349 Moreover, he constantly exuded the scent of musk and ambergris, which arose naturally in his body as a mark of divinity. 350 In keeping with the imperatives of dalā'il literature, the text also heavily focuses on elevating Muhammad above other prophets via discussions of his night journey, his conversations with God, whether he actually witnessed the divine directly, his status as the first of the intercessors whose intercession will be accepted and his various miracles. Perhaps, most importantly for our purposes, we see in this work an elaboration of Muḥammad as God's primordial light via his possession of God's name *al-nūr* (light);

"Know that Allāh bestowed a mark of honour on many Prophets by investing them with some of his names...Yet He has preferred our Prophet Muḥammad, since He has adorned him with a wealth of His names in His Mighty Book and on the tongues of His Prophets...[One of] Allāh's names is the Light (*Al-Nūr*). It means Possessor of Light, i.e. its Creator or the Illuminator of the heavens and the earth with lights, and the One who illuminates the hearts of the believers with guidance. Allāh calls the Prophet "light" when He says, "A light and a clear book has come to you from Allāh" (5:15). It is said that this refers to Muḥammad. It is also said that it refers to the Qur'ān. Allāh also calls him a "luminous lamp" (33:46). He called him that to make his position clear, to clarify his prophethood

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>349</sup> Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, p. 34.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid.

and to illumine the hearts of the believers and the gnostics by what he had brought."<sup>351</sup>

Thus whereas all other prophets only have "some" of God's names, Muḥammad embodied all of God's names and in that way rose above them all in rank. As we will see, such abstraction would be taken up by later writers and artists, and would especially accelerate in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when the development and influence of ṣūfī intellectual thought would expand the cosmological and theological import of Muḥammad in unprecedented ways.

Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ's *Kitāb al-Shifā* had a decisive influence on the popular veneration of Muḥammad, not only in its capacity as a lucid synthesis of the rich *ḥadīth*, *sīra*, *shamā'il* and *dalā'il* literatures, but also by virtue of its physicality, i.e. as an object in the world. Indeed, the title of the work, "*shifā*" (literally healing or remedy) suggests that a complete codex could have been understood to channel Muḥammad's *baraka* into the earthly realm and thus function as an effective talisman for its keeper. This was certainly true for the Ottoman *qāḍi al-quḍāt* of Egypt, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khafājī (d. 1659), who wrote a commentary on the *Kitāb al-Shifā* and promised:

"...if it is found in a house, this house will not suffer any harm, and a boat in which it is, will not drown; when a sick person reads it or it is recited for him, God will restore his health." <sup>353</sup>

<sup>351</sup> Ibid, p.114.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>352</sup> Insight into the use and legacy of this work is forthcoming courtesy of a comprehensive codicological analysis involving numerous manuscript copies of Qāḍi 'Iyāḍ's work spread all over the world. The project titled: *Making Books Talk: The Material Evidence of Manuscripts of the Kitab al-Shifa by Qadi Iyad (d.1149) for the Reception of an Andalusian Biography of the Prophet between 1100 and 1900* has been conducted by Dagmar Anne Riedel and her findings are to be published this year.
<sup>353</sup> Otd in Schimmel, p. 32.

Thus the work as an object, by virtue of its subject matter, was believed to have talismanic properties. As will be discussed, this notion of the description of Muḥammad's physical and spiritual attributes facilitating his intercession with God was also an essential property of the vast *ḥilye* corpus that emerged and developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire.

## Intellectual and Literary Precedents to the Ottoman Turkish *Ḥilye* I: The Prophetic Body as Talismanic Intercessor in the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries

The notion—so central to understanding the Ottoman *hilye*—that descriptions of the prophetic body and his spiritual qualities could function as a channel into the realm of the divine, underwent further development from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries within two closely related realms of scholarly production, namely; devotional poetry and sūfī cosmology. With regards to the former, the famous *Qaṣīdat al-Burda* (Ode of the Mantle), a panegyric poem to Muḥammad composed by the Mamluk poet Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Sa 'īd al-Būṣīrī (d. 1294-7) is perhaps the most significant example of this kind of devotion. It was originally composed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century under the title *al-Kawākib al-Durriyyah fī Madḥ Khayr al-Bariyyah* (Pearly Stars in Praise of the Best of all Created Beings, reportedly as a remedy after al-Būṣīrī came down with hemiplegia that left him half paralyzed. After the act of composition, the poet uses it to summon Muḥammad's intercession with God, which is then followed by a dream vision in which Muhammad appears, strokes al-Būṣīrī's face with his hand and throws his mantle over

him. The poet then awakens to find himself cured. Soon afterwards, he has his dream vision confirmed by a passing sūfī mendicant. Now whilst these circumstances surrounding the work's composition are not directly explicated in the poem, this narrative was nevertheless constantly reiterated by successive medieval commentators, biographers and historians and thus became "virtually inseparable from the poem throughout its literary and religious-liturgical itinerary." <sup>354</sup> In any case, as Stefan Sperl has observed,

"Although the poem makes no mention of a physical illness on the part of the poet it certainly contains evidence of a spiritual crisis: at the beginning of the work, the poet is in a state of despair and expresses bitter remorse over his moral failings. Through depicting and eulogizing the great example of the Prophet, he regains a sense of confidence, and, at the end of the poem, sees grounds for hope that his sins will be forgiven. This therapeutic element, inherent in the very structure of the work, may go some way towards explaining its immense popularity."355

Taking this analysis further, Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych has argued that "the metaphorical leap from spiritual to physical cure" that is attested to in the dream-miracle narrative is also affected by the very structure of the poem, which is that of an Arab panegyric ode of the supplicatory type. 356 Starting off with a classical nasīb (lyric-elegiac prelude), followed by madīh (praise section) before finally culminating in the poet's selfabasement and his supplication, the structure has the effect of rendering the work,

"...an illocutionary act or performative speech act that establishes a mutual bond of obligation between the supplicant and supplicated, that is, between the poet and the mamdūh [the one praised]. In other words, with the poet's recitation of the

<sup>354</sup> Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, The Mantle Odes: Arabic Praise Poems to the Prophet Muhammad, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 83.

<sup>355</sup> Stefan Sperl, "Al-Būṣīrī" in Qasida poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa, Vol II: Eulogy's bounty,

meaning's abundance, An Anthology, (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1996), p. 470-71.

356 Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, "From Text to Talisman: Al-Būṣīrī's Qaṣīdat al-burda (Mantle Ode) and the Supplicatory Ode" in Journal of Arabic Literature, vol. 37, no. 2, (2006), p. 153.

poem before the patron, a mutual contractual obligation comes into effect, and, further, the poem constitutes the documentation of that contract."357

This formal structure of the poem then amounts to, in Stetkevych's formulation, a "ritual

structure" that establishes an exchange in the Maussian sense in that "the poet's gift (the

poem of praise) obligates the patron [in this case Muhammad] to make a counter-gift

(termed in Arabic jā'izah or prize) and the gift and counter-gift then serve as tokens of

the bond of allegiance thereby established between the two." 358 It is this "ritual

structure", she argues, which lends power to the exchange in the dream-miracle narrative,

and thus bolsters the *Oasīdat al-Burda*'s status as a talisman.<sup>359</sup>

Most importantly for our purposes, part of al-Būṣīrī's "gift" in this exchange is his

extolling of Muhammad's physical and moral beauty through the act of both writing it

down and reciting it aloud. The appropriate sections read;

*In him form and essence reach perfection,* 

And mankind's creator chose him as beloved.

*In virtues he is exalted above every peer,* 

And of his beauty's core none can claim a share.

...

Comprehension of his meaning confounds mankind,

All appear dumbstruck, be they distant or near.

Like the Sun which appears small to the eye

<sup>357</sup> Ibid, p. 155.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid, p. 155-156.

359 Stetkevych however only sees the mantle as a tangible testament to the fact that the exchange occurred, i.e. as a token. It is also likely however that Muhammad's touch and his protective mantle were also themselves potent semiotic makers of healing and protection respectively and thus apt for this particular dream-miracle narrative.

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From afar, and blinds when viewed from close at hand.

How in this world can his true nature be grasped By a people of sleepers concerned only with their dreams?

The sum of our knowledge about him is that he is human And that he is the best of all creation.

And that all noble messengers' miracles before him Became theirs only through his light

He is the sun of excellence, they are its stars, Reflecting its rays for people in the dark.

Marvel at the person of the Prophet, with virtues adorned, In beauty clad, with smile endowed,

Fresh as blossoms, grand as the full moon, Generous as the sea, unflinching as time.

He is one, but appears to you in glory, As though in the midst of an army or retinue.

The pearl concealed in its shell seems as though, Made from the mine of his speech and his smile.

No perfume can equal the dust on his bones, Lucky is one who smells its fragrance and kisses it. 360

Though not as systematic nor as explicitly embodied as the Ottoman *ḥilye*, al-Būṣīrī's metaphor heavy description does represent an early attempt to render a portrait of prophet in mystical verse and shares the *ḥilye's* references to its utility in "sudden terror and calamity of every kind." It also draws on Qāḍi 'Iyāḍ's descriptions of the potency of Muḥammad's fragrance as well as his likening of Muḥammad's person to the primordial light, the sun, the moon, and his smile to flashing pearls. And considering that this

361 Ibid.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>360</sup> Translated and presented along with the original Arabic by Stefan Sperl in *Qasida poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa, Vol II: Eulogy's bounty, meaning's abundance, An Anthology,* (Leiden and New York: Brill, 1996) p. 393-397.

section is followed by several verses describing Muḥammad's miraculous feats, one can also read this physical portrait of Muḥammad to be a versified attempt to praise Muḥammad by enumerating the proofs of his prophecy, in a similar vein to the *dalā'il* prose of preceding centuries. As we will see, the notion that praising Muḥammad's physical description could be a means to connect to his powers of intercession at times of crisis—spiritual or physical—would find its fullest expression in the Ottoman *ḥilye*.

The second major development of this period that undoubtedly informed much of the content and function of the Ottoman *hilye* in the 17<sup>th</sup> century pertains to the further elaboration of Muḥammad's status beyond even that of an infallible, miracle-conjuring prophet. Indeed, in the thought of the influential Andalusian mystic Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240) and his interpreters, Muḥammad emerges as (1) a cosmic principle that mediated God's creative emanation, i.e. "the Muḥammadan Reality" (*al-ḥaqīqa al-Muḥammadiya*), as (2) "the Supreme Isthmus" mediating the realm of the spirits and the realms of creation (*al-barzakh al-'alā*), and (3) as the most perfect locus of divine manifestation and microcosm of the universe, i.e. "the Perfect Man" (*al-insān al-kāmil*). With regards to the cosmic import of Muḥammad, Ibn 'Arabī explains in the 27<sup>th</sup> and last chapter of his famous work *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (The Bezels of Wisdom);

His wisdom is unique, because he is the most perfect existent in mankind. For this reason, creation begins and ends with him. He was a prophet when Ādam was between water and clay. Also in his essential structure he is the Seal of the Prophets...He was the greatest proof of his Lord, for he was given all the words, that is, the things named by Ādam."<sup>362</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>362</sup> Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, Binyamin Abrahamov (tr.), (New York and Oxford: Routledge, 2015), p. 172.

Here Ibn 'Arabī refers to a famous—and highly contested—*ḥadīth* ("I was a Prophet when Adam was between water and clay") to place Muḥammad at the beginning of time. Moreover, Ibn 'Arabī developed the idea of Muḥammad as a cosmic principle (the Muḥammadan Reality) which he saw as being the same as the First Intellect (*al-'aql al-awwal*) of Neoplatonic cosmology. In his work *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (The Meccan Revelations), he says:

"There was nothing nearer to Him within that dust [prime matter], in terms of its capacity to receive Him  $(qub\bar{u}lan)$ , than the reality of Muḥammad—may God bless him and grant him peace—which is called the intellect (al-'aql). So he [namely, Muḥammad] is the lord (sayyid) of the whole universe and the first thing to appear within existence  $(awwal\ z\bar{a}hir\ f\bar{\iota}\ al-wuj\bar{u}d)$ ...And the world itself [comes] from his manifestation  $(tajall\bar{\iota}hi)$ ."

Building upon Ibn 'Arabī, and also employing a non-canonical *ḥadīth* ("The first thing God created was the light of your Prophet"), the influential systemizer of Ibn'Arabī's thought, Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 1350), elaborates further on the Muḥammadan Reality. He also equates it with the first intellect and calls its station in the cosmos as "the station of Divine All-Comprehensiveness above which is nothing except the level of the Essence of Exclusive Oneness [i.e. the Godhead]." Moreover, according to Qayṣarī, at this station Muḥammad receives and perfectly embodies all of God's Divine names, and it is from this point that the subsequent creation of the Universal Soul, the rational souls, the starless heaven (i.e. the Throne, 'arsh) and bodily matter are affected Crucially for our purposes, in Qayṣarī's complex cosmographic formulation, it is via this mediating

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>363</sup> Qtd in Fitzroy Morrissey, *Sufism and the Perfect Human: From Ibn 'Arabī to al-Jīlī*, (London and New York; Routledge, 2020), p.98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>364</sup> Qtd in Mohammed Rustom, "The Cosmology of the Muhammadan Reality" in *Ishraq* (2013), p. 540. <sup>365</sup> Ibid, p. 540-544.

Muḥammadan Reality that God's mercy [as embodied in His name the All-Merciful (*Al-Raḥmān*)] eventually permeates to his creation<sup>366</sup>. Thus the status of Muḥammad as the supreme intermediary or isthmus (*al-barzakh al-'alā*) between God and His creation, as well as his status as the most powerful intercessor on behalf of Muslims—ideas that undergird the talismanic power of Muḥammad in Islamic thought—finds it cosmological explanation in the thought of Ibn 'Arabī and Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī.

But beyond establishing Muḥammad as a mediating cosmic reality that channeled God's mercy and grace, Ibn 'Arabī's thought also informed the way Muḥammad's bodily form—a physical manifestation of its timeless cosmic correlate—could be read as amalgam of theophanies (tajalliyyāt) and thus be contemplated upon by sūfīs in order to achieve spiritual connection with the prophet's spiritual entity (rūḥāniyya). In a work titled al-Kamālāt al-Ilāhiyya fi'l-Ṣifāt al-Muḥammadiyya (The Divine Perfections in the Muḥammadan Attributes), the 14<sup>th</sup> century sūfī scholar 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 1409) draws heavily from the descriptions of Muḥammad character, status and body in Qāḍi 'Iyāḍ's Kitāb al-Shifā, as well as from Ibn 'Arabī's conceptions of the "Perfect Man", the "Supreme Isthmus", and the "Muḥammadan Reality" to argue that Muḥammad possessed all of the Divine Names by virtue of his creation from the light of God's essence, whilst the world and all created things in it were only created from the light of God's attributes. Thus "the world is the manifestation of the theophanies of the attributes, and the Beloved [i.e. Muḥammad], God's blessings and peace be on him, is the manifestation of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>366</sup> See; Ibid, p. p. 544. Indeed, it is within this context that Qayṣarī understood the Qur'ānic verse, "And we sent you not (O, Muḥammad), except as a mercy to the worlds (21:107)", a verse which would become a prominent part of virtually all *ḥilye* panels from the 1680s onwards.

theophanies of the essence." <sup>367</sup> Being of Godly essence, it follows that a Divine perfection was manifested not only in Muḥammad's character but also in the composition of his body as well, which now emerges as an amalgam of theophanies to be read and deciphered.

The practical, ritualistic implications of these conclusions were then fleshed out in a short subsequent work titled *Qāb al-Qawsayn wa Multaqā al-Nāmūsayn* (A Distance of Two Bow-Lengths and the Meeting Point of the Two Realms). In it al-Jīlī, drawing heavily from sections of Ibn 'Arabī's Futūḥāt, argues that since the extent of one's ability to connect with the Divine essence is based on one's innate capacity  $(q\bar{a}biliyya)$  for such, only Muhammad, as light of His light and the "Perfect Man", could ever know the Divine in the most complete way. Others, he argues, might believe that they have witnessed the Divine, but they see only a distorted vision according to their own imperfect constitution, which is incapable of witnessing the Divine essence directly. They can however, by virtue of being created by God in Muhammadan form, become privy to the Divine mysteries if they use Muhammad as a mirror that reflects some aspects of the Divine, since Muḥammad is closer to them in his form and constitution than they are to the Divine essence. 368 To use Muhammad as a mirror is to contemplate his physical form as a constantly unfolding series of the ophanies. Accordingly, the Qāb al-Qawsayn describes Muhammad's physique so as to, in Al-Jīlī's words;

"enable you to picture it in your mind [lit., "between your eyes"], so you can

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>367</sup> Qtd in Valerie J. Hoffman, "Annihilation in the Messenger of God: The Development of a Ṣūfī Practice" in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Aug., 1999), pp. 354.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid, p. 356.

observe it in every hour, until its image takes shape for you. Then you will have reached the rank of those who witness him, may God bless him and grant him peace. Then you will achieve the supreme happiness and join the Companions, may God be pleased with them all. If you cannot do this constantly, then at least summon this noble image in all its perfection while you are blessing him, may God bless him and grant him peace." 369

Thus what Al-Jīlī elucidates here is the outline of a practice whereby a ṣūfī could achieve annihilation within the messenger of God (fanā' fī'l-rasūl) via a meditative contemplation of his physical form so as to facilitate a subsequent union with God.

Though long considered a practice associated with the neo-ṣūfī movement of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, Valerie Hoffman's analyses of Ibn 'Arabī and Al-Jīlī has convincingly demonstrated that the practice long predated the neo-ṣūfīs. Hoffman also finds evidence of this practice as well as an elaboration of its intellectual foundation in a 1717 work on the sayings of North African ṣūfī 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dabbāgh (d. 1719-20).<sup>370</sup> It is also crucial to note the similarities of this practice with the widely practiced ṣūfī ritual of *rābiṭa* (linkage), which entailed a ṣūfī adept concentrating upon a mental image of his *ṣeyh* 's physical form whilst in a solitary retreat so as to be able to achieve a spiritual bond *with* and eventual annihilation *into* the latter in order to achieve progress in mystical training <sup>371</sup>. In fact, it was widely accepted that such connection to the spiritual energy of a ṣūfī master was essentially a tapping into the spiritual entity of Muḥammad, since this was the source of the spiritual power of all Abrahamic prophets and all ṣūfī saints. What

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>369</sup> Otd in Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>370</sup> See; ibid, p. 359-365.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>371</sup> For more on this see; Paul B. Fenton, "Chapter VIII: The Ritual Visualization of the Saint in Jewish and Muslim Mysticism" in *Entangled Hagiographies of the Religious Other*, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019), and the chapters by Michel Chodkiewicz and Butrus Abu-Manneh in *Naqshbandis: Historical Developments and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystical Order* (Varia Turcica 18), Marc Gaborieau (ed.) (Istanbul: Isis, 1990).

Hoffman had not considered was how the intellectual bases of such uses of sacred bodies informed a much religious and cultural endeavor with a much wider constituency in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire, namely the creation and proliferation of the Ottoman *hilye* tradition.

Now, by the time Hākānī began to compose his *Hilye-i Şerīfe*, the aforementioned ideas about Muhammad's cosmic position and his superhuman nature had become widespread and well elaborated. And while, as we shall see, the actual bodily content of the Hilye-i Serīfe is informed by this mystical prophetology, Hākānī also directly explicates Muhammad's place in the story of creation and in the cosmos in the introductory sections of his work. Such hand (praise for God) and na't (praise for Muhammad) sections formed a standard part of most Ottoman verse compositions in the mesnevī form, and as a consequence, they are often treated as formulaic constructions of little historical import. However, such sections could provide the essential intellectual backdrop to the main body of work not unlike the introductions and prefaces of contemporary works. This is particularly true for the *hamd* and *na't* sections of the *Hilye-i Şerīfe* since their religious subject matter is the same as the main sections of verse. They are therefore inseparable from the main body of the text and have direct implications for how Muḥammad's body—as rendered in the main text—ought to be read by 17<sup>th</sup> century audiences. In one of these preliminary sections titled "On the One-ness of the Lord of Creation, May His name by exalted", Hākānī describes the entire process of creation thusly;

Like a hidden treasure from eternity (God) dwelt alone on His unity

Of the devotion of angles or humanity His most perfect majesty felt no necessity

(But) when that unencumbered one so required (That) the creation of existent things be inspired

In that moment was His love revealed In a word, a light in the world was unveiled

God loved that light, and called it "my beloved" And of that sight He undoubtedly became enamored

The visible realm engrossed the Lord
And with fortune and glory came forth the world

The universe was filled with the voice of Aḥmed And from this, Divine love was excited <sup>372</sup>

A number of ideas that have already been discussed with reference to Islamic cosmology and Sufism are elaborated here. For example, the idea of God being a hidden treasure is from a famous *ḥadīth qudsī*<sup>373</sup> ("I was a hidden treasure and I loved to be known so I created creation that I might be known"). This conception enjoyed enormous popularity amongst ṣūfī thinkers influenced by Neo-Platonist thought, most notable amongst them being Ibn 'Arabī who saw God as a super-abundant singularity whose full reality is beyond human apprehension, i.e. He was a hidden treasure, and whose act of creation was a succession of self-disclosures whereby this hidden treasure was manifested in the physical world.<sup>374</sup> Also poetically rendered by Ḥākānī are the interrelated ideas that were developed in Qāḍi 'Iyāḍ's *Kitāb al-Shifā* as well as in the work of Ibn 'Arabī and his

Hākānī Mehmed Bey, Hilye-i Şerīf, MS, Süleymaniye Library: Laleli, no. 1715, fols. 3a-4b.
 This category of hadīth refers to an utterance of God delivered via the voice of Muḥammad.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>374</sup> For a detailed treatment of the origins and development of the idea of the "the hidden treasure" in Ṣūfī thought see; Moeen Afnani, "Unraveling the Mystery of The Hidden Treasure: The Origin and Development of a Hadith Qudsi and its Application in Ṣūfī Doctrine", (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: University of California, Berkley, Spring 2011).

successors, namely that; Aḥmed (i.e. Muḥammad) was the first thing God created, that this first creation took the form of a brilliant light ( $n\bar{u}r$ ) and that love (' $i\bar{s}k$ ) between God and Muḥammad was the motive force compelling God's creative emanation. He then goes on to further detail how the sub-lunar world found existence;

And when a glance from the All-Merciful [upon Muḥammad] transpire That light from bashfulness and modesty did perspire

And when upon the world of spirits fell that sweat Each drop turned into a prophet

And when once again the God above Looked upon (the light of Muḥammad) with overflowing love

He caused it to copiously perspire anew
And turned that beloved into a rose filled with dew

From a drop thereof that master of eternity Fashioned a pearl fit for a king of exalted majesty

And at it directed a glance full of glee Such that it melted and formed the sea

The cloud of His grace rained like the sea And waves appeared and a vapor was set free

And then that God of purity bade That from (the sea's) foam the earth and from the vapor the sky be made

And with a mallet-like hand did God smite
The globe of the earth into existence with all His might<sup>375</sup>

Thus in Ḥākānī's rendering as much as in those of Ibn 'Arabī and his successors, not only did Muḥammad mediate God's creative emanation and thus acquired the function of the first intellect of Neo-platonic cosmology, but it was from his light that the spiritual

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>375</sup> Ḥākānī Meḥmed Bey, fol. 3b-4a.

entities of all the Abrahamic prophets as well as the very stuff of matter from which the world was constituted first found existence. By implication, the body, which encases the spiritual entity of Muḥammad, was also not a normal human body but one, which, like the cosmos and the sub-lunar world around it, could be read as a collection of theophanies.

## Intellectual and Literary Precedents to the Ottoman Turkish *Ḥilye* II: The Poetic Body and the Prophetic Body in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Century Ottoman Literature

These two interrelated notions of Muḥammad as a primordial cosmic intermediary between God and His creation, and that of his body being a collection of divine theophanies constituted one set of intellectual ideas that undergirded the creation and operation of the talismanic *hilye*. The question that then emerges is this: how were these abstract ideas about the cosmological-theological importance of Muḥammad and his body rendered into meaningful and tangible cultural artifacts in the 17<sup>th</sup> century? What genres and conventions were conducive to this process? And what precedents to Ḥākānī's *hilye* existed in Ottoman Turkish? It is only after a consideration of these questions that we can begin to fully appreciate the *hilye*, not just in its continuities with preceding centuries of Islamicate intellectual history, but also as a particularly Ottoman religious and cultural endeavor responding to particularly Ottoman circumstances.

Whilst Ḥākānī's Ḥilye-i Şerīfe draws much content from earlier shamā'il and dalā'il works, a close examination of the poem reveals a much more expanded work that

diverged significantly from the latter in strikingly innovative ways. In the first place and most obviously, the language of composition is an Ottoman Turkish highly laden with Persian and Arabic grammatical devices and literary imagery. In this the *Hilve-i Serīfe* was at one with the prevailing literary and aesthetic conventions of the time, which stood at the culmination of a long process of Ottoman Imperial and cultural consolidation from the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards. This process not only created a political enterprise, which after 1517 spanned three continents, but also yielded an ornate and layered imperial language to match the burgeoning urban culture of the empire.<sup>376</sup> As in other early modern Turkic "gunpowder" polities such as those of the Safavids, Mughals and Uzbeks, the Ottomans too shared in the cultural norms and aesthetic preferences of the Persianate world <sup>377</sup>. A concise snapshot that succinctly illustrates this linguistic and cultural shift, according to scholar of Ottoman literature Hatice Aynur, is poet, calligrapher and hilye author Ibrāhīm Cevrī's (d. 1655) reworking of influential Turkish texts from the early 15th and 16th centuries by replacing Turkish words with their Persian and Arabic equivalents so as to align them more closely with the prevailing fashion.<sup>378</sup> It would however be wrong to assume that the use of Arabic and Persian were intended merely to be aesthetic choices. Rather, the complex grammatical and vocabulary borrowings from Arabic and Persian also served to enrich the meaning a text could convey by embedding

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>376</sup> Selim S. Kuru, "The literature of Rum: The Making of a Literary Tradition (1450–1600)" in *The Cambridge History of Turkey vol. 2: The Ottoman Empire as a World Empire, 1453-1603*, Suraiya N. Faroqhi and Kate Fleet (ed.)(Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 548-592.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>377</sup> For more on the Persiante world see; Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam volume II: The expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 293-294. For case of the Ottoman Empire see Murat Umut Inan, "Imperial Ambitions, Mystical Aspirations: Persian Learning in the Ottoman World" in *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca*, Nile Green (ed.) (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019). p. 75-92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>378</sup> Hatice Aynur, "Ottoman Literature" in *The Cambridge History of Turkey vol. 3: The Later Ottoman Empire*, 1603-1839, Sūraiya N. Faroqhi (ed.)(Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 483-484.

its content in a complex web of associations and metaphors. As writer and poet Mehmed Nergisī (d. 1635) asserted with regards to the Ottoman language;

"...the Turkish [sic] language of pleasing expression [is] distinguished by its gathering from the surrounding green meadows of various languages the choicest flowers of meaning approved by men of eloquence and, through collecting thence the fruits of clarity, [is] admired for its natural qualities of pure and sound measure agreeable to the palate." 379

Thus, whilst being "agreeable to the palate" was indeed an important quality, the incorporation of the "choicest flowers of meaning" compounded "the fruits of clarity" that made Ottoman Turkish the preferred language of poetry and prose at the time.

The second way the *Ḥilye-i Şerīfe* differs from most of the earlier *shamā'il* and *dalā'il* works was that it was set in verse. This once again was entirely in keeping with the fact that poetry more than prose was the prime literary undertaking in the Ottoman Empire at the time as well as the focus of much courtly patronage. Moreover, Ottoman Turkish eulogies praising Muḥammad and detailing his prophetic career had already constituted an established genre of Ottoman and Islamic poetry by the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the most influential religious text from the mid 15<sup>th</sup> until the late 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and one that heavily influenced Ottoman religiosity in the early modern period was just such a text, namely the *Muḥammediyye* of the scholar and mystic Yazıcızāde Meḥmed (d. 1451). Whilst most examples of such poetry could be subsumed under the general umbrella of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>379</sup> Qtd in Christine Woodhead, "Chapter 10: Ottoman Languages" in *The Ottoman World*, Christine Woodhead (ed.)(London and New York: Routledge, 2011) p. 152

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>380</sup> See; Aynur cited above, p.481.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>381</sup> On this work, its author and the author's family see; Carlos Grenier, "The Yazıcıoğlus and the Spiritual Vernacular of the Early Ottoman Frontier, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: The University of Chicago, June, 2017).

na't, more specialized sub-categories that dealt with specific aspects of Muhammad's life and prophetic mission were also composed in great numbers. These included the mi 'rāciyye/mi 'rācnāme that described Muhammad's night journey to Jerusalem and the heavens, the *mevlid* poems that were recited to commemorate the day of Muhammad's birth and the mu'cizāt-i nebī that narrated Muhammad's miracles. 382 Indeed, so established was the na'at genre that it became a standard feature of the introductory sections of most *mesnevīs* by the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It can therefore be said that when Hākānī started composing the *Ḥilye-i Şerīfe*, he was operating in a literary context where poetic renditions of Muhammad's life were ubiquitous. But the creative gesture of setting the physical characteristics of Muhammad in Turkish verse was not simply a case of emulation of earlier works or adherence to prevailing fashion. Rather, based upon the historical employment of na'ats and mevlids as liturgical linchpins for religious communal life, the composition of the Hilye-i Şerīfe may also have been compelled by a desire to make the prophetic body readily apprehensible to a wide audience as well as to enable it to be recited, memorized and ultimately ritualized, an observation supported by Hākānī's exhortations to his readers not only to copy and gaze upon the hilye, but also to recite it for salvation. This process of turning the *Ḥilye-i Şerīfe* into a cultural artifact was also aided by its structure as a megnevi, a form which exhibited considerable flexibility in incorporating various poetic elements as well as addressing a whole range of thematic concerns ranging from epic romances to religio-philosophical ideas and current events, and which consequently was also well suited to Hākānī's blending of the theme of divine

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>382</sup> See; Mustafa İsmet Uzun, "Mi'rāciyye" in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi (İA)*, vol. 30 (Istanbul: Türk Diyanet Vakfi, 2005), p. 135-140, Ahmet Özel, "Mevlid" in *İA*, vol. 29, p. 475-479 and Mehmed Şeker, "Osmanlılar'da Mevlid Törenleri" in ibid, p. 479-480. For a treatment of the literature and ceremonies surrounding the birth of Muḥammad in the Islamic world more generally see; Marion H. Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet Muhammad: Devotional Piety in Sunni Islam*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2007).

love with descriptive factual content. 383 Moreover, the megnevī form's flexibility with regards to maximum length also meant that it could be fruitfully employed to address a topic as extensive as the physical description of Muhammad.

Apart from differences in language and genre, the treatment of the prophetic body in Hākānī's Hilve-i Şerīfe also differs markedly from earlier precedents in that it is concerned almost exclusively with the body. Indeed, as we have seen, whilst Tirmidhī's initial chapters contain vital information on the physical constitution of Muhammad, the bulk of the text concerns itself with other details that, whilst enabling Muhammad to be visualized in the mind of the reader, do not concern the parts of the body per se. These include his armor, his way of laughing, his way of dressing and his way of comporting himself in everyday life. In contrast, Hākānī's Hilye-i Şerīfe is divided into chapters that move sequentially from the various parts of the head down to the neck, chest and limbs. And whilst the text makes frequent references to the nobility of Muhammad's character, the thematic focus always remains on the physicality of Muhammad's flesh and body. The only references to Muhammad's body in action is a section that described the manner of Muḥammad's turning and walking. Thus the view of the prophetic body in the *Ḥilye-i* Serīfe is that it was akin to a mystical autopsy. That is to say, the reader's gaze is not drawn to a body in movement or in garb, but rather hovers from organ to organ over a stationary body suffused with mystical symbolism and resemblances to nature.

When one looks at these details about the chapter structure and progression of the *Hilye-i* Serīfe as well as at a great deal of its poetic and metaphorical content, the work's striking

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>383</sup> Kuru, p. 572-576.

similarities to Sharaf al-Dīn Rāmī Tabrīzī's famous mid 14<sup>th</sup> century treatise on poetics, the Anīs al-'ushshāk (The Lovers' Companion), become readily apparent. This treatise, one of the most innovative scholarly works to be produced under the Jalayirid dynasty (1335-1432) of Iraq and western Persia, describes the ideal physical properties, "from head to foot"<sup>384</sup> of the poetic beloved (male or female). It consists of nineteen chapters dealing with the hair, forehead, eyebrows, the eyes, the eyelashes, the face, the down on the lips and cheeks, the beauty spot, the lips, the teeth, the mouth, the chin, the neck, the bosom, the arm, the fingers, the figure, the waist and the legs of the beloved respectively. 385 Rendered in prose from, each chapter lists the Arabic and Persian attributes and metaphors for the body part in question and demonstrates their poetic usage by citing examples from Persian poetry. Whilst it is possible that Hākānī, owing to the work's popularity in the whole of the Persianate world, was directly inspired by the Anīs al-'ushshāk, it is more likely that his was work was more directly informed by commentaries and recensions of the Anīs al-'ushshāk produced in the Ottoman Empire. These included the Persian *Hevesnāme* (Book of Desires) composed by the poet Kutbī Giyāseddīn Mehmed Efendi (d.1521) also known as Paşa Çelebi in 1487, a famous 1549 Ottoman Turkish work on poetics titled the Bahrü'l-Ma'arif (Sea of Knowledge) of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>384</sup> The "head to feet" (Sarāpā[y] and sartāpā[y]) detailing of the poetic beloved, though evidenced even in the earliest examples of Persian poetry such as that of Firdawsī, was particularly well developed and widespread in Indian Sūfī poetry. This may be due to its similarities to the "head to toe-nails" (nakha-śikha varnana) descriptions of the beloved already prevalent in Indic literature. See; Aditya Behl, Love's Subtle Magic: An Indian Islamic Literary Tradition, 1379-1545, Wendy Doniger (ed.)(Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 23. For a selection of Indian texts in translation in this tradition and for Sunil Sharma's comments that were circulated at a workshop on the subject held at Columbia University in April, 2006, see: http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00urduhindilinks/workshop2006/index.html 385 Sharaf al-Dīn Rāmī Tabrīzī. *Anīs al-'ushshāk.* 'Abbās Igbāl (ed.) (Tehran: Shirkat-i Sahāmī-i Chāp. 1946). For a French translation see; Anîs el-'ochchâq; traité des termes figurés relatifs à la description de la beauté, par Cheref-eddîn Râmi, Clément Huart (tr.)(Paris: F.Vieweg, 1875). For information on Rāmī Tabrīzī see; Berthels, E. and Bruijn, J.T.P. de, "Rāmī Tabrīzī", in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. Donzel. Heinrichs. <a href="http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912">http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912</a> islam SIM 6214>

poet Muşliḥuddīn Muṣṭafā Sürūrī (d. 1562) and the late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> century *Miftāḥu't-Teṣbīh* (The Key to Similitudes) of the poet Muʻīdī. A large number of extant manuscript copies of the *Baḥrū'l-Maʻārif* in particular attest to its status as a key reference work for ambitious poets of the later 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

One such poet was Manastırlı Celāl who, even before Ḥākānī, sequentially set the bodily characteristics of an Abrahamic prophet in Ottoman Turkish verse. Operating under the patronage of Sultan Selīm II (r. 1566-1574) and employing an organizational scheme ("head to feet") inspired directly by Sürūrī's *Bahrū'l-Ma'arif*, Celāl set the physical attributes of the prophet Yūsuf (the biblical Joseph) in a collection of *ġazels* called the *Ḥūsn-i Yūsuf* (the Beauty of Joseph). That Yūsuf was thusly rendered is apt given that his legendary beauty constituted a key element, not only of the Biblical and Qur'anic story of Yūsuf but of a whole poetic tradition popular from "the Balkans to Bengal" that retold the story of Yūsuf's attempted seduction by Züleyḥā (his master Potiphar's wife), namely the Yūsuf and Züleyḥā epic. For pre-modern audiences Yūsuf's resistance to temptation became the ultimate show of pious forbearance and reliance upon God. In the hands of Persian masters like Sa'dī Shirāzī (d. 1292) and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d.1492) meanwhile, Züleyḥā's passionate lusting for the beautiful Yūsuf became a mystical allegory for the soul's yearning for union with God. See Patronamical pa

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>386</sup> Kuru, p. 581-582. See also; Yakup Şafak, 'Sürûr î'nin Bahrü'l-Maârif'i ve Bu Eserdeki Teşbih ve Mecaz Unsurları' in *Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergis*i, n.4 (1997), p. 217-235, and İsmail Hakkı Aksoyak, 'Manastırlı Celâl'in Hüsn-i Yûsuf Adlı Eseri', in *Edebiyat ve Dil Yazıları: Prof. Dr. Mustafa İsen Armağanı*, ed. Ayşenur Külahlıoğlu İslam and S. Eker (Ankara, 2007), p.1–16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>388</sup> See; Ísmail Hakkı Aksoyak cited above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>389</sup> For a study on Jāmī's influence in the Islamic world in general and of his Yūsuf and Züleyḫā narrative in particular see; Thibaut d'Hubert and Alexandre Papas (eds.), Jāmī in Regional Contexts: The Reception of 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's Works in the Islamicate World, ca. 9th/15th-14th/20th Century, Series:

of Yūsuf in verse, Celāl too invites his readers to partake in feeling the same mystical yearning for divine beauty that incited Züleyḫā's passions. It is difficult to say whether or not Ḥākānī was aware of Manastırlı Celāl's work, though the possibility must be entertained that the Ḥūsn-i Yūsuf provided another route via which Rāmī Tabrīzī, Paṣa Çelebi, and Sürūrī's ordering of the poetic beloved's body may have made their way into Ḥākānī's Ḥilye-i Ṣerīfe. Suffice is to say at this point that by the time Ḥākānī began to pen his work, explication of the beloved's body "from head to feet" was a wellestablished poetic convention.

Now, whilst Ḥākānī's *Ḥilye-i Şerīfe* was certainly the most influential and paradigmatic example of *ḥilye* literature, it was not the first attempt to render the physical qualities of Muhammad in Ottoman Turkish under the title of *ḥilye*. Sometime before 1562, ṣūfī scholar and son of the Eğirdir based Zeynī *şeyḫ* Seyyid Burhāneddīn Efendi, Seyyid Şerīfī Meḥmed Efendi (d. c. 1570s) composed his *Risāle-i Ḥilyetii'r-Resūl*, which was probably the first example of such a work and which he dedicated to Sulṭān Süleymān's son, prince Bāyezīd (d.1561). Like its more influential successor, it promised to be a protective talisman since it offered protection against hellfire, misfortune on the seas, disease and inauspicious events more generally to anyone who would memorize and read the *ḥilye*. <sup>390</sup> And like Ḥākānī's *Ḥilye-i Şerīfe*, it does explicate the body of Muḥammad using elaborate ṣūfī imagery. It is not however a *ḥilye* of the form that would subsequently come to be seen as definitive. In the first instance, it only devotes seven out

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Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1 The Near and Middle East, Volume: 128, (Leiden and Boston: Brill 2018)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>390</sup> Sadık Yazar, "Seyyid Şerîfî Mehmed Efendi ve Hilyesi" in *Turkish Studies International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, vol 2/4 (Fall 2007), p. 1030.

of its two hundred and fifty-three verses towards describing the prophetic body explicitly, and those are not arranged in the "head to feet" sequence that would become typical of the prophetic *hilve*. The rest of the poem is devoted to describing God as the supreme creator of everything, to Muhammad's conversations with the four classical elements of matter (earth, wind, water and fire), to the importance of giving respect to Muhammad's family, and finally to honoring and making direct appeals to prince Bāyezīd. 391 Now whilst it certainly did not catch on in the way Hākānī's Hilve-i Serīfe did, some of its bodily content did find its way into the Semā'ilü'n-Nübüvveti'l-Aḥmediyyeti'l-Muḥammediyye, a mixed Arabic-Turkish shamā'il work composed by the famous founder of the Celvetī sūfī order, 'Azīz Mahmūd Hüdā'ī (d. 1628). 392 Yet another work that bears the title of hilye but which did not have the structure nor the influence of Hākānī's work was the Hilve-i Celivve ve Şem'āil-i 'Ālivve of the sevhülislam Hoca Sa'deddīn Efendi (d. 1599). This work, which he wrote for his student sultān Murād III, was a straight up compilation and Turkish translation of various hadīth on the shamā'il. 393 As such it was a prose work probably intended for the sultan's private use and not for mass audience. It is worth bearing these early hilye examples in mind, since their content, form and structure, the circumstances of their production as well as their diminutive influence can provide us with important counterpoints to the content, form and eventual success of Hākānī's work.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>391</sup> Ibid, p. 1039-1042.
 <sup>392</sup> MS Süleymaniye Library, Fatih, no. 5385.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>393</sup> MS Süleymaniye Library, Laleli, no. 1715, fols. 34-61.

## The Prophetic Body and the Structure of Knowledge in Hākānī's Hilye-i Şerīfe

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, much of the scholarship on the versified *hilye* works from the 17<sup>th</sup> century has seemingly operated under the assumption that *divān* poetry's use of stock metaphors, images and tropes was done in slavish adherence to aesthetic convention and thus its primary purpose was simply to engage in ornate wordplay. Taken from this perspective, such "illogical" and "fanciful" poetry could not possibly be seen as a reliable window into the beliefs and concerns of the society that produced it. It is my contention however, not only that such interpretive work *can* be done, but also that it *must* be done if we are to understand how exactly Muḥammad's body—as rendered in the *Ḥilye-i Şerīfe*—was read by 17<sup>th</sup> century audiences for guidance, blessing and protection. To once again quote Walter Andrews regarding Ottoman poetry;

"...Questionable is the assertion that "one cannot derive a mystical system" out of poetry or "see in it an expression of experiences to be taken at face value." Although it is true that the poetry as a whole does not contain a rendering of any particular mystical system it does, nonetheless, appear to reflect a mystical view of existence, which can be systematized as well as any such view. The question of "experiences" is, likewise, problematical. Poetry is not autobiography and so the question of whether or not the poet actually had the experience described is irrelevant...the issue is not the actuality of experiences but the ways in which experiences are interpreted by poetry."

As this section will demonstrate, the content of Ḥākānī's Ḥilye-i Şerīfe was informed by a coherent structure of knowledge (or *episteme* in Michel Foucault's framing), a discussion of which is merited here since it will allow us to discern how the categories, symbolism

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>394</sup> Andrews (1985), p.64.

and analogies employed within *hilye* texts constituted a broadly intelligible order, and how this order both *informed* and was in turn *informed by* an expansive field of knowledge that also included Sufism, Qur'anic exegesis, physiognomy, medicine, alchemy, calligraphy, politics and poetics to name but a few. It is only through drawing a preliminary sketch of the Ottoman/Islamicate *episteme* that we can decipher the *hilye's* descriptive taxonomies and advance discussions about how they might have been meaningfully perceived by an educated audience. This discussion will therefore allow us move beyond the purely aestheticized and descriptive treatments that have dominated the scholarly treatment of the Ottoman *hilye*.

Perhaps a helpful way to begin fleshing out the *episteme* underlying the *Ḥilye-i Şerīfe* is via a broad look at the breakdown of its bodily content, which can be listed as follows:

- 1. Muḥammad's face and its perspiration
- 2. Muḥammad's eyes
- 3. His manner of turning
- 4. On redness in his eyes
- 5. His eyelashes
- 6. His eyebrows
- 7. His nose
- 8. His teeth and his smile
- 9. The roundness of his face
- 10. The fleshiness of his face
- 11. The moon like radiance of his face
- 12. The broadness of his forehead
- 13. The quality of his hair
- 14. The quality of his beard
- 15. His height
- 16. His chest and his belly
- 17. The broadness of his chest
- 18. The broadness of his shoulders
- 19. His big-boned frame
- 20. The fleshiness of his extremities
- 21. The fullness of the palms of his hands and the balls of his feet

- 22. The quality of his fingers
- 23. On his radiance being unblemished
- 24. A line of hair extended from his chest to his abdomen
- 25. The coherence and shape of his body
- 26. The characteristics of his flesh
- 27. His stature
- 28. His manner of walking
- 29. Some of his qualities according to close companions

As can be readily discerned from this cursory snapshot, whilst drawing extensively from the *shamā'il* corpus, Ḥākānī's *Ḥilye-i Ṣerīfe*, is more narrowly focused on Muḥammad's body. Thus this *ḥilye* is a more body-centric religious work than all its predecessors. Moreover, it offers a more detailed, systematic and poetic rendering of the prophetic body than any work before it in that it moves sequentially 'from head to feet', explicating each facet of Muḥammad's body using an elaborate scheme of symbols, metaphors, and concepts derived from mystical poetry. And importantly, Ḥākānī's rendition of the prophetic body seems to be disproportionately concerned with the face and its various constituent parts. Zooming further into some of these sections on the visage yields the following picture:

- 1. Muḥammad's face and its perspiration: His face had whiteness, purity, clarity, it had resemblance to the red rose, it was an allusion to the light verse (sūrat al-nūr in the Qur'ān), it was the Qur 'ān itself, it had cheek down which was a revealed verse, it had radiance such as that of the sun, it incited shame in the fountain of life (āb-i ḥayāt), it was the light of the heavens, its cheeks were two flames. In perspiration his face resembled a rose full of dew, his perspiration was rose-scented, it was musk-scented, amber-scented. His face resembled the petals of the rose and his beauty would force the pond of abundance (kevser) in paradise to drain its tributary.
- 2. Muḥammad's eyes: They witnessed divine manifestations, his eyes were akin to two falcons on the hunt in terms of discernment, his eyes were dark even without kohl, his glances were coquettish, his eyes were doe-like and blood-shot, the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>395</sup> Ḥākānī Meḥmed Bey, fols.10a-10b.

whiteness and blackness of his eyes was extreme, they were wide, beautiful, elegant and always the witnessing place of the divine. 396

- 3. On redness in his eyes: Eyes were weary, languid, intoxicated in love, inclined towards redness, his two blood shot eyes would drive his grief-stricken seekers to sacrifice themselves and seduce the inhabitants of the heavens. He was the luster of Abraham's eye, the redness of his eyes was the wine glass of union with the divine, these heroic eyes drew the Rustems of the world and his image would invigorate the opening to their souls, his eyes were lined with the Kohl of the verse Qur'ān 53:17 (which talks about what Muḥammad saw on the *mi 'rāc*), his eyes were falcons that flew in the highest heavens.
- 4. His eyebrows: They were akin to the crescent moon, they were open like the new moon, they were swords that conquered the lands of beauty, they were akin to the written *bismillāh* in their length, they were *miḥrābs* (arched prayer niches) and thus were the *qibla*-markers of the world, and they were akin to two hooks.<sup>398</sup>

This cursory snapshot of the *hilye* provides us with a window into the work's intellectual, poetic and religious concerns, and thus into overall the intellectual framework (or *episteme*) that informs it. This *episteme* been described by Michel Foucault variously as the "the positive unconscious of knowledge" as well as "the historical *a priori*" that constituted the "conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether expressed in a theory or silently invested in a practice." <sup>399</sup> In other words, it is the underlying set of assumptions and premises of a culture that divide that which is deemed true/scientific/meaningful from that which is deemed untrue/unscientific/meaningless. <sup>400</sup>

Now just as in the case of medieval and early modern Europe which was explicated by Foucault in his work *The Order of Things*, the *episteme* of the Islamicate world in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>396</sup> Ibid, fols.11a-11b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>397</sup> Ibid. fol. 12b-13a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>398</sup> Ibid, fol. 14a-14b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>399</sup> Foucault, Michel, *The Order of Things*, (New York: Vintage Books), 1994, p. xi-xxii and p.168.

<sup>400</sup> The concept of *episteme* is thus analogous to Thomas Kuhn's concept of paradigm though Kuhn saw his concept as applicable only to scientific knowledge as it is defined in the modern period. See; Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

general, and the Ottoman Empire in particular was also predicated upon the principle of resemblance. That is to say, the guiding force that enabled the interpretive apprehension of all things, visible and invisible, of texts and of geographical forms, of flora and fauna, of the highest celestial formation and of the simplest subterranean organism, was a principle that saw a world "folded in upon itself", with the "earth echoing the sky, faces seeing themselves reflected in the stars, and plants holding within their stems the secrets that were of use to man."401 This principle of resemblance operated in in four key ways, which Foucault terms; convenience, emulation, analogy and sympathy. The first type, convenience, is a form of similitude by virtue of spatial proximity between things, which is at once the cause of further resemblances as well as the effect of an initial, deep resemblance within a cosmic hierarchy. It is this *convenience* that "brings like things together and makes adjacent things similar" in space, and in doing so, yields a world that is—to use a concept popularized by Arthur Lovejoy—a "great chain of being", extending from the Godhead down to His most basic creation, with an infinite number of creatures and forms in between, resembling and mirroring one another in a descending order. 402 The second type, *emulation*, is essentially *convenience* liberated from the precondition of spatial proximity, and thus is resemblance between things operating across space. This though does not automatically denote the negation of the importance of any kind of distance. Rather, the image of the chain that is associated with *convenience* is replaced by that of a set of concentric circles, in which "two confronting figures seize upon one another. Like envelopes like, which in turn surround the other, perhaps to be enveloped

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>401</sup> Foucault, p. 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>402</sup> Ibid, p. 18-19. For an elaboration of the idea of the great chain of being see; Arthur Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1936, 1964).

once more in a duplication which can continue *ad infinitum*." The third form, *analogy*, is the one that enjoys even more latitude since it concerns itself not with mere direct resemblance between things but with almost endless number of analogous relations that may exist between them. 404 Lastly, *sympathy*, perhaps the most unencumbered and mobile of the four forms "has the dangerous power of assimilating, of rendering things identical to one another, of mingling them, of causing their individuality to disappear" while its accompanying antithesis, *antipathy*, counterbalances it so as to not "reduce the world to a point, to a homogeneous mass, to the featureless form of the same." Moreover for Foucault, the first three types, in the western *episteme* of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, "are resumed and explained" by the sympathy-antipathy dualism;

"The whole volume of the world, all the adjacencies of 'convenience', all the echoes of emulation, all the linkages of analogy, are supported, maintained and doubled by this space governed by sympathy and antipathy, which are ceaselessly drawing things together and holding them apart. By means of this interplay, the world remains identical; resemblances continue to be what they are; and to resemble one another. The same remains the same, riveted onto itself."

A kind of interplay between these types of resemblances moreover also manifests itself in the signs meant to hint at similitude, for these signs never neatly overlap with the resemblances they are meant to convey. Rather, what we have is the potential of "the sign of sympathy to reside in an analogy, that of analogy in emulation, that of emulation in convenience, which in turn requires sympathy for its mark of recognition."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>403</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

<sup>404</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>405</sup>Ibid, p. 23-24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>406</sup>Ibid, p. 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>407</sup> Ibid, p. 29.

The ideational base for this epistemic system of resemblances derived from centuries of developments in philosophical, theological and mystical thought to which the educated Ottoman elite of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries was also heir. This base essentially derived from the Neo-Platonist philosophy of Plotinus (d. 270) and Porphyry (d. 309) and their ideas on emanation and hypostases. As par this framework, itself derived from Plato's Timaeus, the Godhead (the One) emanated creation via two successive hypostases; the intellect (nous) and the soul (psyche), which then subsequently informed the creation of the material world<sup>408</sup>. Later commentators developed on this idea and added further intermediaries between the Godhead and the soul so as to reconcile this framework with various cosmological schemes. One such modified version of this emanationist scheme subsequently acquired a dominant place in Islamic philosophy via an Arabic recension of Porphyry's commentary on Plotinus' Enneads, which was erroneously called The Theology of Aristotle. 409 Taken to its logical conclusion by successive thinkers this scheme yielded an idea of all creation as arranged on a "great chain of being" that stretched in a continuous form from God to the most basic unit of matter. Being on this graded continuum meant that all creation—angels, jinn, men, animals, plants, fungi mirrored itself and the divine forms which gave rise to them to varying degrees of perfection. Thus man, being the closest material manifestation of the divine forms, could be readily described, in Platonic terms, as a microcosm of the universe, with his various constituent parts bespeaking divine truths about God, the cosmos, and the rest of material creation. To divine, interpret and know within this early modern episteme therefore was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> Loveiov, p. 24-66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>409</sup> See Peter Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus: A Philosophical Study of the "Theology of Aristotle"*, (London: Duckworth, 2002).

to draw such similitudes and see such resonances. <sup>410</sup> As we have already seen, developments within sūfī thought drew heavily from this Neo-Platonist cosmology and positioned Muḥammad as an indispensable part of this framework. On this *episteme* were based two kinds of knowledge that held authoritative status in the Ottoman Empire and which directly concern the prophetic body as it is described in the *Ḥilye-i Şerīfe*; These were physiognomy ('*ilm al-firāset*) and the mysticism of letters ('*ilm- al-ḥurūf*).

Within the Ottoman/Islamicate episteme, physiognomy, defined here as the discernment of internal character from the outward appearance, was well established. As Emin Lelić has comprehensively shown in his work on Ottoman physiognomy, this was not just an exact science that was used to winnow out those with unpleasing physical qualities (and ergo compromised morals) from being considered for high office, but was also apprehended in a more general way by larger Ottoman society. That is to say, outer form was connected to internal character in a variety of ways without necessarily having conscious recourse to the exact scientific equivalencies and measures found in physiognomy treatises. And sure enough physiognomical analyses of varying standards of exactitude found their way in dynastic histories, encyclopedic compendia, political reform literature and treatises on etiquette and poetry. The epistemic base for the general mass apprehension of physiognomy (as well as for the exact science) was resemblance, via the subcategory of *convenience*. To once again quote Foucault;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>410</sup> Such a view has its most obvious corollary in the idea of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) associated with Ibn al-'Arabī.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>411</sup> See the introduction to Emin Lelić, "Ottoman Physiognomy ('Ilm al-Firâset): A Window into the Soul of an Empire", (Unpublished PhD dissertation: University of Chicago, June 2017), p.1-8.

"Body and soul, for example, are doubly 'convenient': the soul had to be made dense, heavy, and terrestrial for God to place it in the very heart of matter. But through this propinguity, the soul receives the movements of the body and assimilates itself to that body, while 'the body is altered and corrupted by the passions of the soul."<sup>412</sup>

Thus, "against a background of a discovery that things in general are 'convenient' among themselves", it stood to reason that "man's face and hands must resemble the soul to which they are joined."413 It is with this intellectual backdrop in mind that we must approach the following description of the prophetic body in Hākānī's *Hilye-i Şerīfe*;

The whiteness of his face was exceedingly pure His cheeks were unadulterated (and) clarity was their attribute

The color of his face was one with rose (That is to say) like the rose, it inclined towards a reddish hue

A light of joy covered his face, Was it the Light Verse or was it the ascent of the sun?<sup>414</sup>

Now, when this verse describes the clarity of Muḥammad's complexion, it simultaneously points to the purity of his soul as well. This connection need not have been made explicit by the author. Rather, the semiotic association between an unadulterated face and an unadulterated soul was an automatic inference in the mind of the reader by virtue of the very way the body was "read" in an early modern context. More explicitly elaborated however is the connection between the luminous quality of his face and the soul's possession of virtue, spiritual charisma and divinely sourced

<sup>413</sup> Ibid, p. 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>412</sup> Foucault, p. 18.

<sup>414</sup> Hākānī Mehmed Bey, fol. 10a.

knowledge. Here the reference to Muhammad's face being the Qur'anic "Light verse"

(sūra al-nūr) aids in making this connection. A major inspiration for Islamic

illuminationist philosophy as well as for much mystical discourse, this verse derives its

name from a section that alights on the nature of God's light. It reads;

"Allāh is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp: the Lamp enclosed in Glass: the glass as

it were a brilliant star: Lit from a blessed Tree, an Olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it: Light

upon Light! Allāh doth guide whom He will to His Light: Allāh doth set forth

Parables for men: and Allah doth know all things."415

Thus to say that Muhammad's face shone with the light of the "Light Verse" is to say that

it shone with the light of God as manifested in His uncreated book. This same notion that

Muhammad's face was illuminated, and that the light it exuded was the light of God

reappears in a later section of the *Ḥilye-i serif* centered on the roundness of Muḥammad's

face. After stating on the authority of 'Alī ibn Abī Talib that Muḥammad's face was

perfectly round, the text compares it with the perfect roundness of the full moon. 416

Building upon this image, the text then moves onto drawing parallels between the light of

the moon and the light of Muhammad's face. The section reads as follows;

His face resembled the globe of the moon

Truly, it was a mirror for God

His moon-like face illuminated the world,

Akin to the sudden reversal of bad fortune

<sup>415</sup> Qu'rān, Al-Nūr, 24:35. Translation by Abdullah Yusuf Ali. Accessed at: https://quran.com/24/35?translations=84,21,85,102,101,22,20,19,17,18,95 416 Ḥākānī Meḥmed Bey, fol. 17b.

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Here the first verse plays upon the metaphor of a reflecting mirror and the fact that the moon's light is a reflection of the light of the sun so as to suggest that Muhammad's face shone with God's borrowed light. It therefore evokes Ibn 'Arabī and Al-Jīlī's aforementioned ideas about Muhammad being a mediating mirror reflecting God's essence to the rest of creation. In the next verse, the image of a luminous moon casting its light in the dark of night is employed as a metaphor for the prophecy of Muhammad as a divine mercy that saved humanity from the *jāhiliyya* (the pre-Islamic "age of ignorance") and the ill fortune of eternal damnation. Echoing the earlier sections, the next verse then situates the key to understanding Muḥammad's reality in the verse "fīhā miṣbāh". Translated literally as "wherein is a lamp", it refers to the aforementioned Light verse's depiction of God's light being akin to a crystal lamp, set in a niche. Thus the concept of God's light being reflected on Muhammad's face, the notion that this light illuminated a dark and ignorant world, and the idea that his face was perfectly round are all explained using analogies and similitudes to the moon. Thus far from being merely an aesthetic gloss then, such correspondences not only allowed readers to picture Muḥammad in their minds, but also to understand the nature of his mission on earth and to appreciate his import in sūfī cosmology.

The notion of the Qur'anic text being manifested upon Muḥammad's face though contains a further layer of meaning related to the mysticism of letters, which Ḥākānī alludes to immediately after the first reference to the Light verse;

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

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Here the good book is none other than the Qur'an whilst the wisps of black down on Muhammad's white cheeks are likened to a line of revealed verse on a white page. Drawing such parallels between parts of the face and the Arabic script was a common usage in poetry and belles-lettres. But such usage was not merely a blind imitation of convention conducted for purely aesthetic reasons. Rather such resemblances between the word and the world drew their intellectual and poetic force from the mystical and cosmological import of the written word within the Ottoman/Islamicate episteme of resemblance. As par this framework, the relationship between letters and their meaning, i.e. between signifier and signified, was not a human construct but a thoroughly natural and primordial one since letters, as abstract forms, sounds and marks on vellum, were things in the world and thus partook in the interplay of resemblances that made up the world. But whereas this primordial language that named God's creations (before the destruction of the tower of Babel) in the Judeo-Christian Weltanschauung was Hebrew, Arabic carried this status for the Muslim world. Though this idea was articulated quite early in Islamic intellectual thought 419, the most developed elaboration of the primordiality of the Arabic alphabet, and one most pertinent to the Ottoman context, was that of Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1240). In the *Futūhāt* in particular, he details an entire narrative

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>418</sup> Hākānī Mehmed Bey, fol. 10a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>419</sup> This conception was articulated as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century by the Shi'i scholar Jābir ibn Ḥayyān (d. 812) whose alchemy was predicated on the decipherment of the chemical properties of natural elements by analyzing their Arabic names. Ibn Hayyān's thought was based on Galen (d. 210) and on Neo-Platonist ideas such as emanation and hypostases which subsequently found their way into Islamic philosophy. Ibn Hayyān also had a decisive influence of the thought of Ibn al-'Arabī. See; Syed Nomanul Haq, *Names, Natures, and Things: The Alchemist Jābir ibn Hayyān and his Kitāb al-Ahjār (Book of Stones)*, (Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994).

of genesis and cosmology that posits the letters of the Arabic alphabet as the building blocks of the universe and central to the scheme of creative emanation from God to His creation. The letters of the Arabic alphabet are thus abstract realities that precede the world of matter but which contain in their sensible manifestations aspects of divine cosmic truths. Thus fate, the cosmos and the world was often likened to a book, whilst God was the master scribe who wrote them into existence. By the same token, drawing parallels between the face and the sounds and shapes of letters of the Arabic alphabet was not an empty similitude added for stylistic effect but the very stuff of mystical divination itself.

## Muḥammad as Poetic Beloved in Ḥākānī's Ḥilye-i Şerīfe

The aforementioned reference to the down on Muḥammad's cheeks though presents us with an anomaly. Muḥammad was known to have a full beard, a fact that Ḥākānī knew full well since he devotes an entire chapter to its qualities later on in the work. In it the beard is described with allusions to the Qur'ān and to already familiar concepts like the Aristotelian mean;

His pure beard was perfect in its symmetry

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>420</sup> This scheme can be summarized thusly; The breath of God uttering the divine fiat "be" (*kun*) leads to the creation of the universal intellect from which emerges the universal soul. From the soul emerge twenty-six further levels or "lunar mansions" (a total of twenty eight letters corresponding to twenty eight lunar mansions), each containing several celestial spheres. It is the movement of these spheres and their relationship to specific letters of the Arabic alphabet that give rise to the four natures (heat, dryness, coldness, wetness) and creation of the material world. See; Ibn 'Arabī, *The Meccan Revelations*, vol. II, trans. Michel Chodkiewicz, in collaboration with Cyril Chodkiewicz and Denis Gril, (New York: Pir Press, 2004). p. 108 and p. 168, and see Micheal Ebstein's discussion of this in; *Mysticism and Philosophy in al-Andalus: Ibn Masarra, Ibn al-'Arabī and the Ismā ʿīlī Tradition*, (Leiden: Brill, 2013). p. 62, 80-81, 92-93.

With not a hint of white, it was dark and dusky

Of that blessed beard, this should be conveyed

Hardly seventeen hairs had ever grayed

And about this the men of God were unanimous

His black beard, scented with musk

Was neither curly nor extremely long

And from every side, it was uniform

...

The Night of Power was his beard

Or else was the Night Verse that beard?<sup>421</sup>

The question that arises here and one that can help open up discussion of another key

facet of the bodily descriptions in the Hilye-i Şerīfe is this; why does Hākānī describe the

hair on Muḥammad's face as wispy down in the earlier passage and as a thick beard in a

later one? There are other anomalies as well. Consider the following verse on the

radiance of Muhammad's face;

The sun-like radiance of his face made,

Even the fountain of life embarrassed of itself<sup>A22</sup>

Whilst a surface level reading of the verse may not hint at anything more than a

straightforward description of the brightness of Muhammad's face, the verse is given an

added layer of meaning by the reference to "the embarrassment of the fountain of life",

which was a trope that was often used to describe the overpowering beauty of the

<sup>421</sup> Hākānī Mehmed Bey, fols. 20a-20b.

Hākānī Mehmed Bey, fol. 10a. Ottoman Turkish: Gün yüzünden utanıb āb-ı hayāt.

adolescent male beloved. Consider, for example, the following passage from Aşık Çelebi's (d. 1572) famous *Meşā'ir üş-Şu'arā*, in which he describes a poet called <u>Sānī</u> who in his youth was a beloved himself;

He was to such a degree the possessor of beauty that it is not known if there exists his like among the tribe of *jinn* or the line of mankind. He saw his equal only in the mirror and was never accurately depicted as he is. The aforementioned's fame occupied the far horizons like the sun, and, while the Messiah's mortals were brought back to life in the heavens, the people of the world found what they desired here on earth. The appearance of his life-giving ruby (lip) made people *wash their hands of the fountain of life* and instead made them drink up the font of their own lives. If he took a glance into the mirror, he would say, "What do you have to compare to me?", and for that reason, *if the mirror of the fountain of life came face to face with him, it would be embarrassed*" (emphases: mine). 423

The references to the fountain of life ( $\bar{a}b$ -i  $hay\bar{a}t$ ) in both  $\bar{H}\bar{a}k\bar{a}n\bar{1}$  and  $\bar{A}$ sik Çelebi are particularly apt in discussions of beauty since the fountain of life (also known as the fountain of youth) was a magical spring that could restore a person's youth and grant them immortality in both Christian and Islamic thought. Within the Islamic world the legend of the fountain of life was particularly associated with the Alexander romance as retold by figures such as Ibn Hishām (d. 833), the poet Firdawsī (d.1020) and the poet Nizāmī (d. 1209)<sup>424</sup> whereas in the Ottoman lands, the most famous rendering of this epic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>423</sup> This translation is from: Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 49. For the original Ottoman entry on Sānī see; 'Āṣɪk Çelebī, *Meṣā 'ir Üṣ-Şu'arā*, G.M. Meredith-Owens (ed.), (London: E.J.W Gibb Memorial Series XXIV, 1971), fasc.258b-259a. <sup>424</sup> See; Paul Weinfeld, "The Islamic Alexander: A Religious and Political Theme in Arabic and Persian Literature", (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: Columbia University, 2008), and Richard Stoneman, "Persian Aspects of the Romance Tradition" and Haila Manteghi, "Alexander the Great in the *Shāhnāmeh* of Ferdowsī" in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, Richard Stoneman, Kyle Ericson and Ian Netton (ed.) (Groningen: Barkhius Publishing and Groningen University Library, 2012), p.3-18 and p.161-174.

was the *İskendernāme* of the poet Tāceddīn Aḥmedī (d. 1413). 425 As per this legend, Alexander the great (associated in Islamic lore with the Qur'anic figure Dhū'l-Qarnayn, "the two-horned one") sets out to find the water of life so as to acquire everlasting youth but ultimately he fails in his quest. In some versions of this story however, his companion and advisor al-Khidr ("The Green One"), a mysterious figure from the Qur'an who acted as a guide to Moses as well as to subsequent figures in numerous religious and literary epics across the Islamic world, is able to locate it and acquire immortality. The fountain

of life was therefore the very reservoir of youthful beauty and to suggest that someone

could shame it was to suggest that such a person possessed beauty of the most perfect

form. The usage in Hākānī therefore also suggests that Muḥammad was endowed with

radiant beauty akin to that of an adolescent male beloved.

Similar allusions to the characteristics of the poetic beloved abound in the *Ḥilye-i Şerīfe*. For example, consider the following verse that describes Muhammad's glances, his eyes and eyebrows;

The manner of his necessarily coquettish glance Became the most distinguished in the world

Those gazelle-like eyes would be drowned in blood In the a manner redolent of the deer of Khotan<sup>426</sup>

Because those languid eyes were intoxicated in love They tended towards redness to an extent (were bloodshot)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>425</sup> Dimitri Kastritsis, "Chapter 8: The Alexander Romance and the Rise of the Ottoman Empire" in *Islamic* Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Anatolia. A.C.S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız (ed.), Istanbuler Texte und Studien 34. (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2016), p. 243-283. <sup>426</sup> Hākānī Meḥmed Bey, fol. 11a.

Sorrowful seekers with breasts rend open by grief Would be willing to sacrifice themselves for those two bloodshot eyes

Yet God's will did not permit Those exalted eyes to witness any save Him

Those who dwelt in heaven's sanctuary Became seduced by those bloody eyes

He (Muḥammad) was the luster of Abraham's eye To him was bequeathed as inheritance the attraction of hearts

And if one were to say what the redness in his eyes was, Then it would be the wine glass of union (with God)

Those eyes meant prosperity for religion And for the houris in heaven too they meant good fortune<sup>427</sup>

. . .

The miḥrāb (prayer niche) of those splendid eyebrows Were the qibla-markers of the world<sup>428</sup>

Once again, coquettishness, i.e. flirtatious behavior that alternated between shyness and playfulness, was a behavior pattern associated with adolescent male (and sometimes female) beloveds. In poetry, this coquettishness makes apparent the beloved's knowledge of the lover's condition, heightens the lover's ardor, and brings an element of play in the courtship drama. It also opens up consideration of the beloved's cruelty in refusing the lover's laments for union. To modern sensibilities however, conditioned as they are by a sharp division between the secular/profane and religious/sacrosanct realms, the use of this epithet for any of Muḥammad's manners seems out of place. The same goes for Muḥammad's eyes, which in the verses above are described as languid, blood-shot, and being like those of the gazelle (commonly used to refer to the male beloved), and for his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>427</sup> Ibid, fols. 12b-13a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>428</sup> Ibid, fol. 14b.

eyebrows which are likened to *miḥrābs*. 429 These once again were features of the young male beloved of the urbane world of poetic sensibility and ṣūfī mystical piety, not those of a middle-aged prophet-ruler of bedouin tribes in late antiquity. It would thus appear that whereas the descriptions of Muḥammad's appearance and behavior in early works like that of Tirmidhī cut quite an austere and restrained figure that was in keeping with early Islamic standards of comportment and masculinity, Ḥākānī's descriptions use the language and styling of *divān* poetry to cultivate an altogether more amatory view.

What might Ḥākānī's intention have been in presenting an image of Muḥammad as the poetic-mystical beloved? Was he merely following literary convention with no desire to actually ascribe these physical characteristics to Muḥammad? Or does his description actually represent how the body of Muḥammad could have been conceived in the early modern period? The answer might lie somewhere in the middle. In the first place, despite the existence of works such as that of Tirmidhī, the relative absence of verbal and pictorial descriptions of Muḥammad outside the rarified context of some Persian artistic workshops and the Islamicate scholarly *milieu* meant that a single, mass apprehension of what Muḥammad might have looked like did not exist in the Islamicate world. As a consequence, Ḥākānī did have significant leeway to build up on the broad descriptions that had come down over the centuries. In the second place, conventional literary imagery did not necessarily exist outside of the society that produced it. In fact, texts were constituted by, and in turn constituted the socio-cultural context of their production in a

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 $<sup>^{429}</sup>$  This usage was widespread in Ottoman and Persian poetry. It conveyed the similarity between the arc of the  $mihr\bar{a}b$  to the arc of the eyebrow, and alluded to the idea that whilst the  $mihr\bar{a}b$  marks the direction to Mecca to which all Muslims must pray, the lover devotes his worship in the direction of the  $mihr\bar{a}bs$  of the beloved's visage.

mutually reinforcing fashion. Thus if arched eyebrows like *miḥrābs* and eyes like those of gazelles were widely accepted markers of outward beauty—which in an early modern worldview also pointed to a perfect soul—it would stand to reason that Muḥammad, the pure soul *par excellence*, should also have these features. The notion that the images presented in the *Ḥilye-i Ṣerīfe* were mere aesthetic flourishes with no real connection to their referent in the mind of its author only obtains if we uphold the anachronistic separation of the religious and secular spheres.<sup>430</sup> In our considerations of early modern devotional poetry however, what is important is "providing an understanding of a context in which the distinctions between the religious and the profane, the mystical and the sensual, the experiential and aesthetic become less important than the way all these work together to create meaning."<sup>431</sup>

It is also true however that Ḥākānī's imagery and symbolism are not only about the sensible referent (i.e. the man Muḥammad), as he existed in the world. Rather, they are part of a structure of thinking that, in the words of art historian Christiane Gruber, stresses the need to transcend beyond "the formal image (sūrat) to its more elevated meaning or inner reality (maˈnī), that is, from the phenomenal world to a visionary encounter with the unseen." Muḥammad after all was not just a mere mortal in early modern conceptions. Rather as we have already discussed, as Islamic theological, exegetical, philosophical, and cosmological thought developed and became increasingly

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>430</sup> For a detailed articulation of this issue of the modern separation of the religious and the secular profane see; "Chapter 3: Morality Wars: Orthodoxy, Ṣūfī sm, and Beardless Youths" in Dror Ze'evi. *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900*, (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), p. 77-98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>431</sup> Andrews (1985), p. 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>432</sup> Christiane Gruber, "Between Logos (Kalima) and Light (Nūr): Representations of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Painting" in *Muqarnas*, vol. 26 (2009), pp. 233.

suffused with the developing discourse of Sufism in the Middle periods, Muhammad too became increasingly implicated in understandings of God's creative emanation, as a light-filled entity  $(n\bar{u}r)$  that had always existed outside time. Thusly situated, Muhammad became variously identified with the first intellect (al-'aql al-awwal), as the perfect man (insān al-kāmil), the quintessential spiritual guide (murşid), the channel (wasīla) between the sub-lunar world of materiality and the celestial world of divine forms, and crucially for our present considerations, as God's beloved (mahbūb). As Gruber has effectively demonstrated in her work on descriptions of Muhammad in medieval Persian painting, these developments in how Muhammad was framed in Islamic intellectual thought also entailed a fundamental shift in the pictorial descriptions of Muhammad from the veristic to the figural after 1400 CE. Within the latter category of work;

"...depictions of the Prophet were reflective of pre-modern mystical and popular sentiments calling for a visualization of Muhammad through the twin procedures of remembrance and evocation. Sūfī writers discussing the subject in particular believed that the Prophet had both a human  $(n\bar{a}s\bar{u}t)$  and superhuman  $(l\bar{a}h\bar{u}t)$  nature united into one being, and that his corporeal form occurred only after the physical appearance of his primordial light. Therefore, Muhammad's physical manifestation in corpore can be understood as an ongoing process of theophany, oftentimes beyond the visual reach of the believer's eyes. In order to convey the antipodes of disclosure and exposure, artists likewise seem to have experimented with various motifs and techniques to communicate visually the Prophet's exceptional status. In turn, such explorations crystallized into specific pictorial traditions that could be given new meanings in different contexts, be these Shi'i, Sunni, Ṣūfī, or some combination thereof."

In contradistinction to the Persian paintings, Gruber however sees the calligraphic hilve as a manifestation only of a thoroughly modern development based more on aniconism as opposed to "an allegorical desire to represent a more "metaphorical Muhammad." "434 This may have something to do with the fact that the actual bodily content of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>433</sup> Ibid, p. 231.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>434</sup> Ibid, p.230-231.

calligraphic *hilye* is mostly (though not completely as we will see) shorn of the kind of abstract imagery present within Persian portraiture in favor of the standard straightforward description attributed to 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib. However, when it comes to the versified *hilye* of Hākānī that is the subject of this chapter, it can be argued that a similar desire to abstract Muhammad seems to be at play here. To be sure, this is not to deny Gruber's assessment that aniconist anxieties may have contributed to the textual and script-based form of the hilve genre as a whole, but rather to refute the notion that the same desire to transcend veristic depictions to capture the superhuman qualities of Muhammad did not inform the writing of the literary prophetic hilyes. Indeed, by rendering the prophet as the poetic-mystic beloved with bodily proportions corresponding to the Aristotelian mean, Hākānī too was abstracting Muḥammad into a rich tapestry of forms and symbols that evoked a resemblance between parts of his body and the rest of creation, and which highlighted his status as the object of God's desire and the sole reason for His creative emanation. Going beyond concerns of strict verisimilitude then, what actually mattered was that such allusions to the poetic-mystical beloved were discursively fertile, i.e. they were readily understood and were "good to think with" to use Claude Levi Strauss' famous phrase<sup>435</sup>. Thinking and knowledge in the context of the early modern Islamicate world, as already discussed, was to divine resemblances in nature so as to apprehend all of creation as reflections of the same divine source.

In its organization and use of certain poetic topoi then, the *hilye* encourages its reader to cultivate a certain kind of *nazar* (gaze) or a way of seeing. The appropriate subject for this gaze was almost always an adolescent male beloved, the contemplation of whose

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>435</sup> Claude Levi-Strauss, *Totemism*, Rodney Needham (tr.)(Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), p.89.

form and features in an intellectual milieu informed by mystical poetry and philosophy was akin to the contemplation of the divine. Also It is this discursive gesture that points to the function of this hilye, not just as a talisman to be kept, gazed at and rubbed for good luck, but also as an aid in mystical contemplation of the timeless Muhammadan reality, of which the man Muhammad was only the final physical manifestation. Meanwhile, the operating principle of this kind of mystical hermeneutic is the inculcation of passionate love in the reader. Indeed, Hākānī cites Muhammad as declaring that to be "eager" (mūteṣeviķ olsa) for him, to be "enamored of his beauty" (hūsnūme 'āṣik olsa) and have "intoxication of yearning arise in the heart" (kalbīna neṣve'yi ṣevk etse hulūl) were the condiciones sine quibus non for the text's ability to channel Muhammad's intercession in worldly affairs. How such an affective disposition of desire enables access beyond the material world was perhaps best described by the 12th century Persian ṣūfī and preacher Muzaffar ibn Ardashīr 'Abbādī (d. 1152);

"Desire is the quality of longing and affliction in the heart, which is activated by the representation of the beauty of its goal. This creates an inner movement and an emotion in the heart inviting it to go on until the goal will be attained. The wish for the beloved sets the heart into motion and makes it desirous. That desire attracting the heart carries on the body and helps the seeker to set out on his way until he sees that there is a better stage than one he aspires to. Then he will see how he should move to reach that higher stage and orbit."

Moreover in suffi cosmology and view of the world, such desire represented a doublemovement, not only from man to God, but also from God to man since as we have seen in

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>436</sup> See; Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500–1800*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). Also see; Dror Ze'evi (2006) and Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı (2005) cited above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>437</sup> Hākānī Mehmed Bey, fol. 7b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>438</sup> Qtd in Johannes Thomas Pieter de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi poetry: An Introduction to the Mystical use of Classical Poems*, (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997), p. 52.

Hākānī's prolegomena to his work, it was mutual desire between God and the Muhammadan light which was the driving force behind all creation. 439' Abbādī's idea of the activation of desire via "the representation of the beauty of its goal" thus seems to evoke the aforementioned visualization practices of fanā' fī'l-rasūl and rābiṭa that would later come to be advocated by Ibn 'Arabī, Al-Jīlī and the Nagshbandis, and which would later inform the composition of Hākānī's *Ḥilye-i Ṣerīfe* as well.

It is also important, however, to consider the differences in context and constituency between these various modes of visualization and the *hilve*. In the first place, such practices of *rābiṭa* were regimented rituals devised to aid an initiated ṣūfī seeker in his training during a period of isolated contemplation. On the other hand, suff and nonsūfī alike could use the *hilves* on an everyday basis, not only to cultivate a certain mode of piety but also as cultural artifacts to entertain and enthrall themselves and others. Secondly, the desired outcome for rābita was the annihilation of the self to the point that all sensation and consciousness of the physical world ceased and was replaced by a state of witnessing divine forms, after which the subject returned back to him or herself fully transformed. No such ecstatic states or spiritual mastery were involved in the use of the hilve. Rather the only outcomes that were promised were the inculcation of love for the holy personage described followed by this-worldly and otherworldly salvation through the latters' intercession. Despite these differences however, the underlying ideational bases for both are remarkably similar in that bodily depictions were marshaled to connect with a superabundant celestial world in both instances. This implied a direct relationship between the outward physical form of a spiritual guide and his celestial spiritual entity, a

<sup>439</sup> See p. 29-32 of this chapter.

relationship that also goes a long way to explain why such sacred bodies were believed to carry miraculous powers and never decay within their tombs whilst their spiritual entities thrived. Both practices thus illustrate how polyvalent bodily representations were readable texts by which divine blessing could flow into the world.<sup>440</sup>

#### Conclusion

As has been already been noted, the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century *Risāle-i Ḥilyetü'r-Resūl* of Seyyid Şerīfī Meḥmed Efendi, which is the first known example of a versified *ḥilye* also promised talismanic protection against hellfire, misfortune on the seas, disease and inauspicious events more generally. We also know that the talismanic use of a panegyric verse to Muḥammad is also evidenced by the lore surrounding the composition of the famous *Qaṣīdat al-Burda* of al-Būṣīrī, and by its outsized afterlife. And we have also seen how Qāḍi 'Iyāḍ's *Kitāb al-Shifā*, beyond being a source for scholars, acquired a sanctity of its own as a material object with talismanic and curative properties. Thus tying a talismanic function to liturgical texts and verses about Muḥammad preceded Ḥākānī and the particular socio-political circumstances of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century. As this chapter has demonstrated however, Ḥākānī's *Ḥilye-i Ṣerīfe* differs from all these precedents, not only in terms of how it extensively it details the various body parts of

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<sup>440</sup> All this is not to suggest that the link between the two was only at the level of conceptual foundations and that *hilyes* could never have been used for the purposes of *rābiṭa*. In fact, as we shall see one of the two *hilyes* of Ṣūfī *ṣeyḥs* to have survived up to the present was composed by the Naqshbandi Ṣūfī poet Neccārzāde Rizā (d. 1746) and described the physical form of Bahā al-Dīn Naqshband, the spiritual guide *par excellence* of the Naqshbandi order. The possibility must be entertained therefore that this *hilye* could have been used as an aid for the purposes of *rābiṭa*.

Muḥammad and makes them the primary focus of the work, but also in how it quotes Islamic authorities at length in order to establish its talismanic properties. In these respects, the <code>Ḥilye-i Şerīfe</code>, despite its debt to centuries of accreted concepts, vocabulary and rituals, comes off as a novel work responding directly to novel circumstances. The question that then emerges is this: why was there a need to access such divine intercession and blessings via the prophetic body at this time? What qualitative and quantative dimensions did this yearning for the prophetic body take? And what are the implications of all this for our understandings of the patterns of religious chance and the nature of Ottoman piety at this time? It is to these questions that we will now turn.

# Chapter 4

The Portable Body: The Afterlife of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries

## Introduction

When the traveler Evliyā Çelebī (d. 1682) begins his monumental *Seyāḥatnāme*, an account of his forty years of travel over three continents, he does so by relating a dream set in the mosque of Aḫī Çelebī in Istanbul. In it Evliyā encounters a sacred host led by the Prophet Muḥammad, his nephews Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, and the future "rightly guided" caliphs, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī. After leading a congregation of these figures in communal prayer, Evliyā goes around kissing the hands and taking the blessings of each person present in the mosque. In fascinating instances of "oneiricolfaction", he details the fragrance that wafted from each blessed hand he kissed. It is at the juncture that he describes the scent of Muḥammad as being of "the saffron coloured rose" Hākānī." He also claims that Muḥammad's appearance in the dream was "as described in the *hilye* of Ḥākānī."

Whilst I have analyzed such olfactory instances in the *Seyāḥatnāme* in more detail elsewhere 443, what is most interesting for the purposes of this chapter is Evliyā's aforementioned citation of "the *ḥilye* of Ḥākānī". In particular, the cursory manner in which Evliyā references Ḥākānī suggests that by the time Evliyā was compiling his text in the early 1680s, Ḥākānī's versified description of the body of Muḥammad were so widely known as to not merit any further elaboration. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the details of how and why the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* came to acquire such an outsized

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>441</sup> Evliyā Çelebī, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi* , (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003) ed. Robert Dankoff, Seyit Ali Kahraman and Yücel Dağlı, vol. 1, fol. 7b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>442</sup> Ibid. vol. 1, fol. 7a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>443</sup> A Fragrant Dream and Odiferous Caves: Tracing the Olfactory Imagination of a 17th Century Ottoman Traveller, *Senses and Society*, (Forthcoming).

presence in the Turcophone parts of the empire has not been fully investigated. Indeed, once transcribed by modern day scholars using authoritative copies and placed within the reifying ambit of "Turkish literature", the status of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* as a talismanic artifact and a religio-cultural touchstone for 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman society seemed not to invite any further comment. Thus whilst narratives like that of Evliyā convey the importance of a work like Ḥākānī's in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the exact contours of this corpus' growth, and its purported function during this time remain murky.

This chapter will fill this lacuna in the scholarship by comprehensively tracing the considerable afterlife of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī*. This not only includes analyzing attempts to emulate and build upon this work by later authors, but also codicologically considering the later copies of this work, which number more than 200 in the various manuscript and museum archives of Turkey. By so doing, this chapter will excavate an entire culture of religious devotion and practice centered around the talismanic power of sacred body of Muḥammad that developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire.

# **Speaking of the Codex, Speaking of the Body**

The utility of examining the known manuscript copies of a work is being increasingly recognized for the study of the Islamic world. The pioneering work of Francois Deroche and Adam Gacek not only provide applied examples of such an approach, but also glossaries of key terms and methods that are currently being used by scholars of the book

in Islamic studies<sup>444</sup>. This growing interest in and use of codicology has inspired further research on the global afterlives of semi-canonical texts. For example, Dagmar Riedel's recent codicological research into the extant manuscript and printed copies of the Kitāb al-shifā' bi-ta'rīf huqūq al-Mustafā (The book of healing concerning the truth about the chosen one) of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Maliki jurist Qādī 'Iyād (d. 1149) sought to uncover how this famous work was transmitted, and how it informed pious reading practices across the Muslim world up to the present day<sup>445</sup>. Within the field of Ottoman studies, the work of Derin Terzioğlu, Nelly Hanna, and Dana Sajdi has shed light on how the urbanization and demographic growth of the 16th century, coupled with the pressing intellectual and practical concerns of the following centuries, led to the emergence of new reading publics as well as new religious and socio-political discourses in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman world<sup>446</sup>. More recently, this growing interest in the history of the book in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman world has also informed Nir Shafir's work on the interrelationship of patterns of religious change and material-textual circulation between the Anatolian-Balkan and Arabophone parts of the Ottoman Empire in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and Aslıhan

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>444</sup> Francois Déroche, *Islamic Codicology: An Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts in Arabic Script,* (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2005), and Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers, Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1 The Near and Middle East, Volume: 98,* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

<sup>445</sup> Dagmar Riedel, Making Books Talk: The Material Evidence of Manuscripts of the *Kitāb al-shifā* 'by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>445</sup> Dagmar Riedel, Making Books Talk: The Material Evidence of Manuscripts of the *Kitāb al-shifā* by Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ for the Reception of an Andalusian Biography of the Prophet between 1100 and 1900, (Forthcoming). See project summary at: <a href="https://blogs.cuit.columbia.edu/islamicbooks/category/marie-curie-fellowship-project/">https://blogs.cuit.columbia.edu/islamicbooks/category/marie-curie-fellowship-project/</a>

fellowship-project/
446 Derin Terzioğlu, "Where İlm-i Hal Meets Catechism: Islamic Manuals of Religious Instruction in the Ottoman Empire in the Age of Confessionalization," Past and Present, 220 (2013), 79-114, Nelly Hanna, In Praise of Books: A Cultural History of Cairo's Middle Class, Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), and Dana Sajdi, The Barber of Damascus: Nouveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

Gürbüzel's work on public preachers and the public sphere in 17<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul<sup>447</sup>. In terms of the all significant material dimensions of this new culture of readership, a dissertation by Meredith Quinn, which drew inspiration from Ismail Erünsal's scholarship on endowment libraries and book culture in the Ottoman Empire, has shed greater light on the copying, binding, circulation, and reception of books in 17<sup>th</sup> Istanbul<sup>448</sup>.

There is growing recognition therefore that the material and codicological makeup of a textual corpus might be as important in understanding the way a text was received and employed as the content of the text itself. Whilst this is important to bear in mind for all texts, it is particularly essential for studying works like the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī*, which acquired semi-canonical status amongst Anatolian and Balkan Muslims (not unlike the *Muḥammadiyye* of Yazıcızāde Meḥmed from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards), and whose talismanic power was predicated upon embodied engagement with the material codex. As described in the previous chapter, beyond simply reading the work verse-by-verse, Ḥākānī also placed a premium on copying, touching, gazing at, or simply carrying the *ḥilye* on one's person. As opposed to merely being a Turkish recension or translation of earlier *ḥadīth* compilations on the physical characteristics of Muḥammad as some of the scholarship holds, the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* was an attempt to make the body of the prophet culturally apprehensible, portable, and amenable to being engaged with for protection and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>447</sup> Nir Shafir, "The Road from Damascus: Circulation and the Redefinition of Islam in the Ottoman Empire, 1620-1720", (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: University of California, Los Angeles, 2016), and Aslıhan Gürbüzel, "Teachers of the Public, Advisors to the Sultan: Preachers and the Rise of a Political Public Sphere in Early Modern Istanbul (1600-1675)", (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: Harvard University, 2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>448</sup> Meredith Moss-Quinn, "Books and Their Readers in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul", (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: Harvard University, 2016).

<sup>449</sup> Ms Süleymaniye: Halet Efendi, no. 182, fol. 5a-5b.

good fortune. The meaning(s) of the work thus extended beyond its content to include its status as a material artifact doing or enabling useful work in the world. As we shall see this key aspect of this work of magical-talismanic poetry has profound implications for understanding its widespread copying, illumination, dissemination, and emulation in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries Ottoman Empire. Moreover given that no outside sources apart from the aforementioned *Seyāḥatnāme* and biographical dictionaries of poets make explicit reference to the work, a sustained look at the extant *ḥilye* corpus must, of necessity, yield clues as to how it was received and used by Ottoman society.

# The Afterlife of the Hilye-i Hākānī

As already mentioned at the start, the copies of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* within the manuscript libraries of Turkey are numerous. Searching for the text in the database of the Süleymaniye Library yields some two hundred and forty-five results, more than two hundred of which are manuscript copies, whilst the rest are print versions from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A portion of this manuscript corpus cannot be accurately dated given the lack of scribal colophons, whereas for some only terminal dates can be reliably established from endowment seals on their opening folios. However, a significant sample can be dated, either by looking at the colophon, or by looking at the colophons of adjacent texts copied in the same hand and included with the same *mecmū'a* (miscellany).

Within this sample, a copy from virtually every decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century can be found. It is to be expected that the number of copies from the 18<sup>th</sup> century exceed in number those copied in the 17th century, since the former had a greater chance of surviving down to the present day than the latter, and since the hilve tradition had acquired greater maturity by then. That being said, a good copy from as early as 1601-02 has survived<sup>450</sup>. Other early copies are from 1607<sup>451</sup>, 1617<sup>452</sup>, 1621<sup>453</sup>, 1623<sup>454</sup>, 1629<sup>455</sup>,  $1631^{456}$ ,  $1632^{457}$ ,  $1633^{458}$ ,  $1640-41^{459}$ , and  $1642^{460}$ . These copies are only from the sample that had a colophon and could be reliably dated. It is almost certain that the copies produced in the first half of the 17th century, and which are extant in the various repositories of Turkey greatly exceed the ones listed here. In any case, this sampling can begin to give us a sense of how copying the *Hilye-i Hākānī* was already being undertaken to a significant degree at this time. Another feature of the early copies from this early period is that they have survived as part of larger mecmū'as. However as we move into the later 17<sup>th</sup> century and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, single-bound books containing either only the Hilye-i Hākānī, or this work plus the Hilye-i Çihār yār-ı Güzīn of Cevrī, and the Hilye-i Enbiyā' of Neṣāṭī become common. It would appear that texts from this early period are more likely to have survived as part of a mecmū'a than texts from the later period, since the practice of collating quires from earlier periods with those from later

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>450</sup> Ms. Millet Kütüphanesi, A.E. Şeriyye, no. 530.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>451</sup> Ms. Süleymaniye Ktp; Yazma Bağışlar, no. 03252-003.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>452</sup> Ms.Hacı Selim Ağa Ktp: Kemankeş, no. 00442.

<sup>453</sup> Ms. Süleymaniye Ktp: Laleli, no. 01713.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>454</sup> Ms.Beyazıt Ktp: Veliyyüdin Efendi, 3685-140/3, and Sivas Ziya Bey Ktp: Sivas Yazma, no. 363/1.

<sup>455</sup> Ms. Süleymaniye Ktp, Halet Efendi, no. 00082.

<sup>456</sup> Ms. Süleymaniye Ktp; Fatih, no. 05427-005.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>457</sup> Ms. Amasya Bayezit Ktp, no. 1771/07.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>458</sup> Ms.Milli Ktp: Yazmalar Köleksiyonu, no. A7731/2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>459</sup> Ms.Konya Yusuf Ağa Ktp, no. 440000007607.

<sup>460</sup> Ms. Kütayha Vahid Paşa: Vahid Paşa, 1563.

periods for personal use was a common practice. That being said, early texts have survived as stand alone, leather-bound books, such as the copy from  $1601-02^{461}$ , a finely written copy from  $1617^{462}$ , one from  $1629^{463}$ , and one from  $1642^{464}$ .

## Hilye "Prayer Books"

Can we make anything of the fact that many hilve copies, right from the earliest days to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, have come down to us as stand alone leather or cardboard-bound books, i.e. not as part of a mecmū'a? As Quinn has pointed out, the decision to bind a copied text was not an insignificant one, and probably reflects the fact that a particular work had a quality that justified the expense and labor of binding<sup>465</sup>. This quality could be a mundane one, such as the work's length. For example, whilst the longer Hilve-i Hākānī was often bound into a discrete codex, the much shorter Hilve-i Cihār yār-i Güzīn of Cevrī was almost always preceded by the *Hilye-i Hākānī*, often in the same hand. After the composition of the *Hilye-i Enbiyā* of Neṣāṭī, it was also invariably included in a collection containing the *hilves* of Hākānī and Cevrī. Thus it may be that the brevity of the works by Cevrī and Neṣāṭī did not justify the expense of binding them alone in leather without the accompaniment of the Hilve-i Hākānī. A work being bound into discrete volumes may also have to do with a text's overall prestige in a given social and intellectual context, which would make ownership of a beautifully written and illuminated copy desirable. This was particularly true for canonically important works

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>461</sup> Ms. Millet Kütüphanesi, A.E. Şeriyye, no. 530.

<sup>462</sup> Ms.Hacı Selim Ağa Ktp: Kemankeş, no. 00442.

<sup>463</sup> Ms. Süleymaniye Ktp, Halet Efendi, no. 00082.

<sup>464</sup> Ms.Kütayha Vahid Paşa: Vahid Paşa, 1563.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>465</sup> Moss-Quinn, "Books and their readers", p. 38.



(Fig 1.4) *Ḥilye* codices of varying quality and decoration from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, kept at the Süleymaniye Library.



(Fig 1.5) Binding decoration of a *Ḥilye* codex.



(1.6) Hilye codex, Süleymaniye: Fatih no. 4328, fol. 2b-3a (detail)

like the Qur'ān, hadīth compilations, historical epics like the Shāhnāme, and books of religio-cultural import like the Kitāb al-shifā' of Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ. Indeed as the photos and scans I took in the archives attest, many of the bound hilye volumes from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries were immaculately produced, with their writing and illumination representing the highest standards of bookmaking. They could thus have acquired the status of objet d'art. On the other hand, several codices extant in the various manuscript libraries of Turkey were copied simply in a legible but non-expert hand, bound in cheap cardboard binding, and remained undecorated, all of which suggests that a hilye codex was often quite a utilitarian object.

Regardless of their quality or cost of production, the proliferation of these hilves as discrete codices raises another, more tantalizing hypothesis. As historian of medieval European magic Richard Kieckhefer's observed, "a book of magic is also a magical book" <sup>466</sup>. That is to say, the numinous power that inheres in the liturgy, spells, treatises, or magical squares of such a codex tends to seep out and extend to the physical object itself<sup>467</sup>. As discussed in the previous chapter, this was true of copies of al-Būṣīrī's Oasīdat al-Burda and Qādi 'Iyād's Kitāb al-Shifā, the two other great works that sought to bring Muhammad and his powers of intercession closer to the individual believer. In a similar vein, the Hilye-i Hākānī, being not just any book of magic but a versified description of the sacred body of the Prophet Muhammad himself, could have been bound into discrete codices in order to endow the paper and leather material of the codex with the apotropaic power of the flesh, bone, and organs of the prophet. To engage tactically with such a *hilve* codex was akin to engaging the body of Muhammad himself. Considered from this perspective, the continued production of 18<sup>th</sup> century codices containing the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* without any other *ḥilye* works may reflect the special status of Muḥammad's versified body as a powerful textual-talisman in its own right. It is also likely that the frequent decision to bind Cevrī and Neṣāṭī's texts with that of Ḥākānī may also indicate a desire to maximize the talismanic and amuletic potential of a hilye volume by including as many apotropaic works in it as possible. The talismanic properties of hilye codices will become clearer when we consider the diagrams, illuminations, and calligraphy that accompanied these texts later on in the chapter.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>466</sup> Richard Kieckhefer, Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p.4.
 <sup>467</sup> Ibid.

### Hilyes as part of Mecmū'as

Having considered these texts as part of single bound codices and its implications for their status as talismanic objects, it now remains to analyze these hilves as part of mecmū'as. In particular, it is worth looking at what kinds of works and themes these hilyes appear with in such compilations so as to discern something about the knowledge categories to which such works might belong for the copyist/compiler. However, one has to be cautious regarding one's choice of mecmū'a, since many of these were the result of ownership by various people, all of who might have added texts to the compilation over a number of years in a more or less ad hoc manner. In such cases, the ability of a mecmū'a to yield a single author's interests and preferences becomes difficult—if not outright impossible—to discern. To avoid this potential pitfall, this section will focus on a few mecmū'as that were copied throughout in the same hand, on the same quality of paper, and over roughly a small period of time (at most a decade), and which were supposed to be kept as a single volume or anthology. Whilst such a choice might more reliably illuminate something about the *hilyes*' usage and categorization for a selected number of authors/compilers, it can also open one up to the accusation of selection bias, since such organized anthologies were often painstakingly produced and illuminated and thus represent the higher end of miscellany production. Moreover, by virtue of being arranged in an anthology according to some pre-determined criterion, they foreclose opportunities to observe if the *hilyes* were part of other, more diverse knowledge constellations that could be discerned from more informally arranged notebook mecmū'as. There is thus a tradeoff involved in such a choice, and future analysis of hilyes included in personal

miscellanies might yield more nuanced understandings of how such texts were disseminated and consumed. That being said, comparing such single author miscellanies yields some concrete and discernable patterns.

The miscellanies consulted for this section for which dated colophons exist were produced in  $1632^{468}$ ,  $1704^{469}$ ,  $1707^{470}$ ,  $1732^{471}$ ,  $1749^{472}$ ,  $1750^{473}$ , and  $1753^{474}$ . One other mecmū'a had notes dating 1656 and 1655 on the last folios, as well as few notes in a different hand recording births in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century 475. There are yet others for which no discernable dates exist though it is likely that they are also either from the late 17th or 18<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>476</sup>. The sample, can thus provide a reliable picture of how *hilves* were grouped together in mecmū'as, and thus provide us with clues as to how they might have been read by an early modern audience. Now, whilst the extant scholarship has a tendency to group the versified *hilves* within the milieu and practice of *divān* poetry, I encountered very few examples where *hilves* were included in single-author anthologies of a decidedly literary-mystical though non-liturgical bent<sup>477</sup>. It seems it was more common was for *hilyes* to be included with anthologies of litanies and prayers. The most consistently included work in these mecmū 'as was al-Būṣīrī's Qaṣīdat al-Burda, either in the form of the original Arabic ode with a Turkish translation, or the ode with a full Turkish commentary (serh). As described in the previous chapter, the Hilye-i  $H\bar{a}k\bar{a}n\bar{i}$  has

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>468</sup> Amasya Bayezıt Kütüphanesi, no. 1771

Millet Kütüphanesi, A.E. Manzum, no. 1383

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>470</sup> Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa, no. 00646

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>471</sup> Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, no. 00791

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>472</sup> Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hamidiye, no. 001156

Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, no. 00793

<sup>474</sup> Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Halet Effendi, no. 00355

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>475</sup> Hacı Selim Ağa Kütüphanesi: Hüdai Efendi, no. 1875

<sup>476</sup> Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi: Laleli no. 01588 and Süleymaniye: Sehid Ali Pasa, no. 02850

<sup>477</sup> Şehid Ali Paşa, no. 02850 fits this description.

significant thematic and talismanic carryover with the *Qaṣīdat al-Burda*, and thus such pairings come as no surprise. Another text that seems to have featured frequently in such anthologies is the *Hizbü'l-bahr* (Litany of the Sea) attributed to the 12<sup>th</sup> century Maghribi scholar and founder of the Shādhilī Şūfī order, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (d. 1258). Believed to have been inspired by the Prophet Muhammad himself, the Hizbü'l-bahr came to possess talismanic and theurgical properties for subsequent generations of Muslims across the Islamic world. This is readily apparent from its invocations to God to provide security and well-being in the conduct of worldly life, and in the conduct of religion, and to subject the sea to its reciter<sup>478</sup>. This later invocation made it popular as a protective prayer recited by those making journeys by sea, and al-Shādhilī himself is known to have claimed that had this litany been with the defenders of Baghdad, the city would not have fallen to the Mongols<sup>479</sup>. The presence of the *muqatta*  $\bar{a}t$ , the mysterious letters that opened and closed certain *suras* of the Qur'an, as well as other isolated letters in the liturgy within the text also served to heighten its talismanic qualities. Thus like the Hilye-i Hākānī and the Qasīdat al-Burda, this text was also seen as a way to marshal divine forces to avert all manner of trials and calamities. Perhaps the best-produced anthology containing only these three texts is Nuruosmaniye no. 00793, which was finished in 1750 by a calligrapher named Ahmed El-Kāstamonī Dedezāde. Interestingly, this prayer book also opens with beautifully rendered calligraphic *hilyes* of the Hāfiz 'Osmān variety. It would thus appear that these calligraphic *hilyes* were not confined to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>478</sup> For the Arabic text and an English translation see; Marco Di Branco, "Some Observations on the Ḥizb al-baḥr (the Littany of the Sea)", *Ein Meer und seine Heiligen: Hagiographie im mittelalterlichen Mediterraneum*, Nikolas Jaspert, Christian A. Neumann, Marco Di Branco (eds.), (Paderborn: Fink; Schöningh, 2018).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>479</sup> D.B. MacDonald, "Hizb", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

wall panels, but became a prominent part of prayer books and textual-talismans in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

It is also worth mentioning some other works that seemed to have been included with these aforementioned texts in some *mecmū'as*. The *Qaṣīde-i Munfarija* (The Ode of Relief), another 11<sup>th</sup> century Maghribi litany penned by a ṣūfī, and which promised relief and protection, was sometimes included alongside the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* and the *Qaṣīdat al-Burda*. Also sometimes included in these *mecmū'as* was the *Qaṣīde-i Ṭanṭarāniyye* of the poet Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Razzāk al-Ṭanṭarānī (d. 1092), which he wrote in praise of the famous Seljuk vizier Nizām-ul-Mulk (d. 1092). Whilst this work may seem to be an outlier based on its primary subject matter, in the Ottoman Empire the work's long elegy to the Prophet meant that, in addition to being celebrated example of poetic wit and wordplay, it was often included amongst liturgical *na't* works<sup>480</sup>. Based on this grouping together of texts, it would appear that the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* might also have been recited out loud.

Another theme that seems to have structured some of the *mecmū'as* under consideration is the life, sayings, deeds, and properties of the Prophet Muḥammad. This is particularly true for one *mecmū'a* from 1750<sup>481</sup>, which not only contains the *ḥilyes* of Ḥākānī, Cevrī, Neṣatī, and the *ḥilyes* of Ḥasan and Ḥūsayn, but also Ḥākānī's treatise on Muḥammad's forty most essential sayings (*tercūme-i ḥadīṣ-i erba'īn*), a translation and an abridgment of the *Qaṣīdat al-Burda*, a commentary on Muḥammad's youth and genealogy (*ṣerḥ-i* 

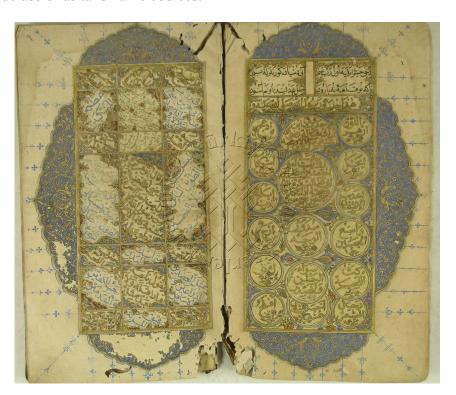
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>480</sup> Ismail Durmuş, "et-Tantaraniyye", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi v. 39*, (2010), p. 576-577. For online version see; https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/et-tantaraniyye

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>481</sup> Süleymaniye: Halet Efendi no. 00355

ecdād-ı faḥr-ı kā'ināt), and the Mi'rāciyye (Book of the Ascension of Muḥammad to the heavens) written by the poet and calligrapher 'Ārif Süleymān Bey (d. 1769). Considering that Muḥammad was the ultimate cosmic intercessors for all of mankind, these mecmū'as' focus on him only adds to their use as talismanic, liturgical, and commemorative aides.

#### Diagrams, Illumination, and calligraphy in Hilye Codices

Having considered the *hilyes* as single leather-bound codices, and as part of  $mecm\bar{u}$  'as, we can move on to consider the diagrams, rubrication, and illumination that came to accompany them in the  $17^{th}$  and  $18^{th}$  centuries. Such elements, far from being mere decoration, can provide important clues about how these texts might have been conceived and made use of as talismanic codices.



(Fig 1.7) Talismanic folio from Yahya Tevfik no. 291

The folio (figure 1.7 above) is from a *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* codex kept at the Süleymaniye<sup>482</sup>. The work contains no colophon but is probably from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, considering that use of such magnificently illuminated use of Arabic descriptive phrases describing Muḥammad are a prominent feature of *ḥilye* books of this later period. The content of this folio also bears resemblance to a panel (*levha*) created by the calligrapher Ḥāfīz 'Osmān in 1668 (see figure 1.8 below).



(Fig 1.8), Ḥilye panel by Ḥāfīẓ 'Osmān (c. 1668); Image courtesy of Professor Faruk Taşkale

Therefore, all such panels that sought to evoke the bodily qualities of Muḥammad through calligraphic representation of the Arabic adjectival phrases can, with caution, be

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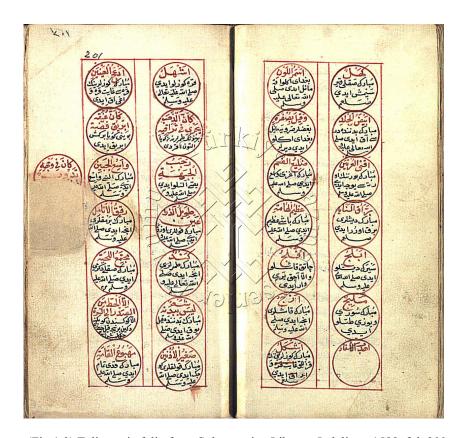
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>482</sup> Yahya Tevfik no. 291.

dated to at least after 1668. What such devices within codices of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākān* index is that such codices were indeed intended to function as textual-talismans. Instead of laboriously making one's way through the poem, the reader could more readily acquire a sense of the bodily qualities of the prophet by simply gazing at the adjectives rendered within circular medallions. Where this example differs from illuminations inspired by Ḥāfiz 'Oṣmān panels is its inclusion of illuminated renderings of the sayings of Muḥammad's personal interlocutors like Hind ibn Abī Hāla, Abū Hurayrah, 'Ā'ishah, and Umm Ma'bad regarding his physical characteristics. This opens up the possibility that all written traditions about Muḥammad's body could also serve as access points to the talismanic and apotropaic power of his spiritual entity. Why should this be? As Irvin Schick's discussion of Islamic calligraphy has attested; Arabic calligraphy does not only refer to things symbolically but also iconically, i.e. it is both a graphical representation of a word, but also an image of it<sup>483</sup>.

However, not all such elements were as colorfully or as artistically rendered at the example discussed above. The folio in question (figure 1.9 below) is from a  $mecm\bar{u}$  'a catalogued as Süleymaniye: Laleli no. 1588. The folio itself cannot be dated, though the surrounding texts in the miscellany bear early  $18^{th}$  century dates. While it is an otherwise unremarkable example of hilye illumination, what is most interesting about this example is how it is situated within its section of Laleli 1588. It forms the major part of a section called  $serh-ihilye-ires\bar{u}l$ . Whilst a section from the  $Hilye-iH\bar{u}k\bar{u}n\bar{t}$  is included here, it is only the introductory section that describes the benefits of beholding the hilye

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>483</sup> İrvin Cemil Schick, "The Iconicity of Islamic Calligraphy in Turkey", *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, vol. 53/54, (Spring-Autumn, 2008), p. 211-224.



(Fig 1.9) Talismanic folio from Süleymaniye Library: Laleli no. 1588, fol. 200a.

"from time to time", 484. The substantial sections of Ḥākānī's poem that describe the bodily characteristics of Muḥammad are replaced by medallions containing Arabic adjectives and adjectival phrases in red, each of which is accompanied by a translation into simple Turkish in black ink. Whilst such a text is not a complete copy of the Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī per se, it is important in that it does serve to highlight how Ḥākānī's work was adapted and redacted to enable it to render its stated talismanic function as effectively as possible.

The way these medallions are inserted in this miscellany then suggest that such elements could function as stand-ins for entirety of the body of the prophet Muḥammad as

 $^{484}$  Süleymaniye Kûtûphanesi: Laleli no. 1588, fol. 200a. Ottoman Turkish: kimke yazıp nazar etse ġahī.

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rendered into verse by Hakani, and not just as accompaniments. We can also conclude that the function of these circular medallions was explicitly talismanic, since what follows immediately after them is a passage that describes how they ought to be read or used. After discussing the how plagues  $(t\bar{a}'u\bar{n})$  are caused by angels from the heavens attacking the populace with their spears (t'an), it goes on to relate how;

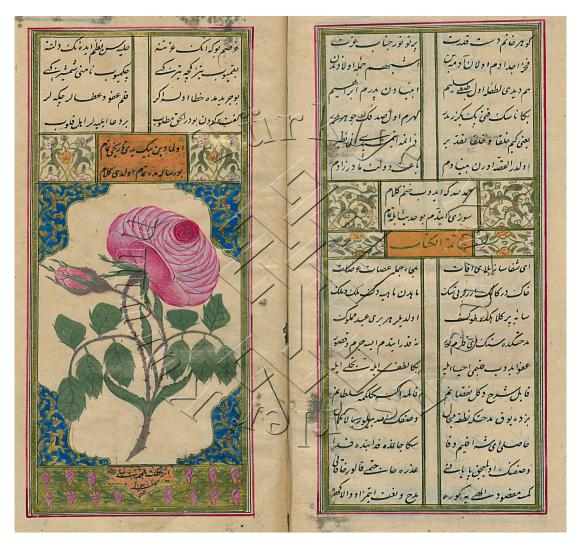
"Everyone who writes down this prayer  $(du \,\dot{a})$  and bears it or sticks it up on the walls or on the door of the house, the injury of those angels will not afflict them. By the noble command of God Almighty, such is the prayer".

What is interesting here is the appellation of the hilye medallions as a du  $\dot{a}$ , which is consistent with its categorization within the  $mecm\bar{u}$  'as discussed in the previous section. Moreover, the above-quoted passage, with its exhortation to stick this prayer on the walls or the door of one's house, once again points to the status of the such hilye as a discrete talismanic objects and not merely decoration. And lastly, the fact that these circular shapes were meant to extenuate their talismanic content is further supported by the reappearance of identical medallions in a text (titled, "the properties of the names of the companions of the cave") that followed after the aforementioned  $hilye^{486}$ . This time however, they contained the names of the sleepers of the cave of Ephesus, which were common apotropaic elements on a wide variety of talismanic and divinatory texts and objects across the Islamic world.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>485</sup> Ibid, fol. 201b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>486</sup> Ibid, fol. 202a-202b.



(Fig 2.0) Rose of Muḥammad from Süleymaniye; Hamidiye, no. 1075, fol. 21b-22a.

Manuscript copies of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* do not often contain painted illustrations. Exceptions to this rule are the paintings of the rose of Muḥammad (*gül-i Muḥammad*) in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century copies (see fig 2.0)<sup>487</sup>. As Christiane Gruber has shown, such use of floral motifs drew upon Ḥākānī's comparison of Muḥammad's smell and stature to that of the rose, and through such synesthetic evocation, served as aides to the contemplation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>487</sup> Süleymaniye; Hamidiye, no. 1075, fol. 21b-22a.

of his timeless reality<sup>488</sup>. Painting therefore was not merely decorative but, like the talismanic medallions discussed above, were extensions of the text, and served the same purpose of inculcating love and veneration in the beholder, which then compelled the flow of Muḥammad's divinely-sourced beneficence into the earthly realm. It is in this light that we ought to approach to the only other instance of painting in Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī codices that I discovered in the Turkish manuscript archives (see fig 2.0 below).



(Fig 2.1) Sun burst over a dark landscape from Ms. Milli Library: Yazmalar Collection, no. 7694/1, fol. 9b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>488</sup> Christiane Gruber, "The Rose of the Prophet: Floral Metaphors in Late Ottoman Devotional Art", *Envisioning Islamic Art and Architecture: Essays in Honor of Renata Holod*, David J. Roxburgh (ed.) (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014).

Inserted within a two-text volume (dated 1757)<sup>489</sup>, the painting depicts the radiance of the sun bursting out from behind dark clouds onto a similarly dark landscape. Judging from the thin line of white that once separated two sections of verse (and which now divides the two halves of the painting), and from the fact that it entirely replaces a chunk of Hākānī's original text that describes the luminous and rose-hued complexion of Muhammad, it can be concluded the painting was added to the manuscript after the text had been fully copied. Moreover, the decision to leave the separator exposed also seems to suggest that the painting is, in a sense, a visual stand-in for the section of verse it covers. This is also borne out by the obvious correspondences between the subject matter of the painting and the section of verse it obscures, i.e. the sun-like brightness of Muhammad's complexion. But there is more to this painting than just this. The landscape and the sky that the painting depicts are rendered in dark and muted colors, and thus stand in stark contrast to the brightness of the rays of the sun, which bursts from behind dark clouds. The painting thus appears to evoke a later section of the text, in which Hākānī moves from discussing the roundness of Muhammad's moon-like face to discussing, once again, its luminosity. The relevant verse reads:

His moon like face illuminated the world, Akin to the sudden reversal of bad fortune<sup>490</sup>

As discussed in the previous chapter, this verse uses the image of Muḥammad's face casting its light onto the world as a metaphor for Muḥammad's mission to bring enlightenment—and thus good fortune—to a dark age characterized by ignorance

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>489</sup> Ms. Milli Kütüphanesi: Yazmalar Koleksiyonu, no. 7694/1, fol. 9b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>490</sup> Hākānī Mehmed Bey, *Ḥilye-i Şerīf*, Ms, Süleymaniye Library: Laleli, no. 1715, fol. 17b.

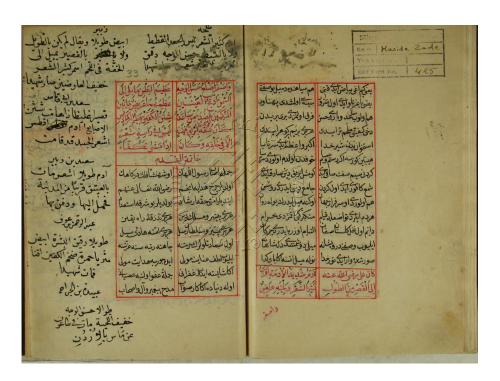
(jāhiliyya). Despite using the sun and moon as starting points respectively, these two distinct yet related sections of Ḥākānī's work are cleverly brought together in this painting. Not unlike the rose imagery discussed above, it could enable the beholder to visually apprehend the multiple levels of meaning contained within the text of the poetry, and in so doing activate its magical potential.

## **Bodies in the Margins**



(Fig 2.2) Marginalia from Amasya Bayezıt Library: Bayezıt, no. 1771/07, p. 87.

Sometimes when a text did not include the Arabic adjectives or adjectival phrases in the main text or as an introduction, copyists could add them later in the margins as well (see fig 2.2 above) <sup>491</sup>. As recent scholarship on manuscript codices has increasingly recognized, such marginalia can be incredibly helpful in gauging how a text was received and engaged with by an interested audience. In the particular case of this simply copied example bearing the early date of 1632, it is likely that the margins of one full folio were later filled out with the Arabic adjectives so as to enable a reader to additionally—and perhaps more efficiently—access the magical-talismanic properties that inhered in such calligraphic renditions of Muḥammad's body.



(Fig 2.3) Marginalia from Süleymaniye, Kasidecizade, no. 00425, fol. 33a

In another case<sup>492</sup>, in the margins of a manuscript (dated to 1674) containing the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* and the *ḥilye* of the four Rāshidūn caliphs by Cevrī are inscribed short *ḥilye* entries in Arabic for other companions of Muḥammad who were part of the *al-'asharatu'l-mubāshara*, i.e. the ten companions of Muḥammad who had been informed

<sup>491</sup> Amasya Bayezit Kütüphanesi: Bayezit, no. 1771/07, p. 87.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>492</sup> Süleymaniye, Kasidecizade, no. 00425, fol. 33a.

that they were destined for heaven within their lifetimes. Clearly the owner of this *hilye* codex (or a subsequent owner) felt that it was useful to include this additional material alongside Hākānī and Cevrī's versified *hilye*. Whilst it cannot be determined whether this inclusion was done to enhance the magical properties of this codex, it is possible that a desire to access the spiritual energies of the ten chosen companions through their bodily descriptions was behind these marginal inscriptions. After all, this period also saw the emergence of a versified *hilye*, written by the poet 'Alī Güftī (d. 1677) in imitation of Ḥākānī, that took the bodies of Muḥammad's grandsons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, and the companions from the *al-'asharatu'l-mubashara*, as its subject matter<sup>493</sup>.



(Fig 2.4) Marginalia from Süleymaniye: Fatih, no. 427. fol 1b-2a.

In the final example in this section (see fig 2.4 above), the  $\cancel{H}ilye-i \ \cancel{H}\bar{a}k\bar{a}n\bar{\iota}$  is copied (dated 1630) in a simple hand in the margins of a central text (dated earlier to 1627). The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>493</sup> A copy of this text is included in Süleymaniye, Laleli, no. 1715, fol. 140b-152b.

latter is a copy of a *hilye* of Muḥammad composed by *şeyḥ 'ūl-Islām* Ḥoca Sa'deddīn Efendi (d.1599) for Murād III. A short work that was essentially a Turkish translation of early traditions on the *shamā'il*, it was probably intended for the private use of the sulṭān. However given its inclusion in a number of later *mecmū'as*<sup>494</sup>, it would appear that it became a widely disseminated work. Whether or not this text was actually consulted by Ḥākānī in the drafting of his poem, it seems that the owner of this particular *mecmū'a* felt that it was useful to have both texts together in one place. This is also true for whoever commissioned or copied Laleli no. 1715, which also contains both texts as well as the *ḥilyes* of Cevrī, Neṣāṭī, and Güftī.

### The Seal of Prophethood in Hilye Manuscripts

Sometimes, the extra-textual elements within copies of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* or recensions of this work utilize one highly evocative part of Muḥammad's body, namely the seal of prophethood/seal of the messenger of God. Tobias Heinzelmann, in a forthcoming article on the diagrams and calligraphic elements within copies of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* and the *Shamā'il* works that inspired them, has looked at some examples of these<sup>495</sup>. These include the following example (fig 2.5)<sup>496</sup>, which is notable both for its cryptic pseudoscript and a note that reads:

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>494</sup> See; Süleymaniye: Fatih 5427 fols, 2-11, and Laleli 1715 fols. 34-61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>495</sup> Tobias Heinzelmann, "Ḥākānī's Ḥilye in Context: Text-text versus text-image configurations in Ottoman manuscripts", Article forthcoming (2022).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>496</sup> Ms. Süleymaniye, Şehid Ali Paşa, no. 2755 20a.



(Fig 2.5) Seal of Prophethood from Ms. Süleymaniye, Şehid Ali Paşa, no. 2755 20a.

"Everybody who bears this image [mühr-i nebevī] upon him/her and looks at it from time to time will be saved from the fire of hell, and he/she will be respected among the people, and God will not deny those who write it and bear it upon them, Muhammad's intercession".

As Heinzelmann has noted, whilst the text in the outer most rim and in the four corners is intelligible as the Muslim profession of faith, and as prayers on Muḥammad, his progeny, and his companions respectively, the inner rim and the central medallion is comprised of an unintelligible smattering of individual letters, or letters combined to yield non-words<sup>498</sup>. As with the aforementioned *Ḥizbū'l-baḥr*, the presence of such letters evoke the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>497</sup> This translation is from Heinzelmann; forthcoming (2022).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>498</sup> Ibid.

fact that beyond the conventional meanings carried by words, the letters themselves also carried esoteric meanings by virtue of being part of God's divine speech, a meta-language implicated in Islamic understandings of cosmogony.

Another of these seal diagrams (see fig 2.6 below) comes not from a copy of Hilye-i Hākānī but from a copy of another hilye work on Muḥammad. Inspired by Hākānī but written by the poet and royal halberdier Bosnalı Mustafā sometime in 1658-1659, his Tercüme-i Ḥilyetü'n-Nebī (translation of the ḥilye of the prophet) was dedicated to Mehmed IV (r. 1648-1687)<sup>499</sup>. In its seal diagram two distinct concepts, namely: "the seal of prophethood", which was the physical mark between Muhammad's shoulder blades, and "the seal of the messenger of God", which was his official seal for foreign correspondences (it reads: "Allāh Muḥammad Rasūl"), are fused together to yield one highly effective apotropaic talisman. This however does not represent a misplaced confusion of two distinct concepts on part of copyists and artists. Recalling the epistemic scheme of resemblance from the previous chapter, such merger represents a meaningful creative gesture that draws resemblances between Muhammad's status as the last of the line of Abrahamic prophets (a metaphorical seal), the physical mark on his body left behind from his initiation into his mission by non-human forces (a literal seal), and a signet ring motif that proclaims his status as apostle of God (a literal and symbolic seal). To bring these elements together therefore is to evoke in the beholder a sense of the deeper similitudes between these disparate elements that operated at the levels of convenience, sympathy, and analogy, and by so doing enabled him or her to form a powerful connection with the salvific potential of these elements. In other words, like the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>499</sup> Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, no. 2872, fol. 51b.

text of *hilye* itself, this seal is cultivating a certain way of seeing in which various aspects of Muḥammad's person as well as his this-worldly and otherworldly sovereignty are brought together so as to aide contemplation and compound their combined talismanic power.



(Fig 2.6) Seal of Prophethood [mühr-i nübüvvet] ]from Nuruosmaniye Library, no. 2872, fol. 51b.

Yet another facet of this particular seal that adds to the complex interplay of meanings is the flame-like overall shape of the central motif and the application of gold pigment on it, all of which could evoke the idea of the light of Muḥammad. As was discussed in the previous chapter this idea had a long history, and beyond being a mere metaphor of Muḥammad's enlightening effect on an otherwise dark world, was actually understood as

being one with Muhammad's cosmological nature, and his position at the very culmination of God's creative emanation. Another interesting facet of such seals, and one which Heinzelmann has also noted with respect to the aforementioned seal from Sehit Ali Paşa 2755, is their structural resemblances to the calligraphic *hilve* panels of Hāfiz 'Osmān. However, given that the miscellany is dated well before Hāfiz 'Osmān's panels were first devised, we can conclude that a central circular element surrounded with four other elements in the corner was a general feature of talismanic illustrations of the period and thus cannot be attributed solely to Hāfiz 'Osmān. What is not certain is whether these seals were considered to be condensed versions of the hilve. Whilst their overall arrangement and their manner of juxtaposing different themes and motifs might suggest that this was the case, the seals also share these qualities with other talismanic objects and motifs such as manuscript frontispieces which were decidedly not hilve. It is therefore likely that these seals, just like the aforementioned rose and sun-burst paintings, were included in *hilve* texts to enhance the power of the whole codex, and not as stands-ins for the whole *hilye* text as was the case with the aforementioned circular medallions of Laleli no. 1588 and Yahya Tevfik no. 291.

#### Prose Hilyes: Two Examples from the Süleymaniye Collection

Yet another phenomenon that has been left unexamined in the nascent scholarship on the *hilye* is the number of prose *hilyes* that have come down to us. This includes the aforementioned prose *hilye* composed by Hoca Sa'deddīn Efendi. Interestingly, there are also prose *hilyes* from the 17<sup>th</sup> century that seem to have been inspired by Hākānī's work

or which were responding directly to the widespread yearning for the prophetic body that his work had inaugurated. This section will look at two examples of such works.

The first of these, located in the Hacı Mahmud Efendi collection of the Süleymaniye Library, is dated 1687, and seems to be a straight up prose summary of Hākānī's text<sup>500</sup>. This is clear from the arrangement of its constituent parts, which roughly follow that of Hākānī's text. For example, it opens by explicating how visual engagement with the hilve could lead to "deliverance from the torments of the world and the hereafter" (necāt-i 'azāb-ı dünyā vu āhiret)<sup>501</sup>. Like the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* it then moves on relate the tradition from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib that related how gazing at the physical attributes was akin to gazing upon the prophet himself, and would invite his intercession. Then, once again just like the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī*, it relates the story of the *ḥilye* given to Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd by a dervish clad in black<sup>502</sup>. Then, it gives each Arabic adjectival phrase describing Muḥammad (and which function as section headings in Hākānī's text) from "head to feet" in red ink, followed by a very plain Turkish elaboration of each term in black ink. What is most interesting about the text, apart from its prose set up, is how these Turkish elaborations of Muhammad's body are completely shorn off the elaborate symbolism and imagery that were part and parcel of Hakani's text, and which have been extensively dealt with in the previous chapter. Gone are the elaborate allusions to Muhammad as the poetic beloved, to the resemblances between celestial bodies and the prophetic body, and the resemblances between the Qur'anic script and Muhammad's physiognomy. In their place are more or less veristic descriptions, usually not more than a

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>500</sup> Süleymaniye, Hacı Mahmud Efendi, no. 4102..

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>501</sup> Ibid. fol. 33b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>502</sup> Ibid, fol. 34a.

couple of lines, of each part of Muḥammad's body. What are we to make of this? Is this textual economy merely a matter of a shift in genre from poetry to prose, or is there more at work here?

It should be stated right at the outset that there is nothing about prose in the Ottoman context that should necessitate such a expunging of Persianate literary vocabulary. Indeed, it does not even necessitate the abandonment of rhyme, let alone a simplification of the text, as the widespread use both rhymed prose (sec ') and of poetic imagery outside of poetry attest. It makes more sense, therefore, to relate this simplification to the wider trends in Ottoman textual production in the 16th and 17th centuries, which were characterized by the emergence and proliferation of religious texts in simple easy-to-read Turkish as opposed to Arabic, Persian, or some highly elite registers of Ottoman Turkish. As stated earlier in the introduction, this was spurred on by the development of Ottoman urban society in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the expansion of basic literacy to wider sections of the population, such as the burgeoning numbers of craftsmen, traders, shopkeepers, petty officials, and preachers who constituted the Ottoman "middling sorts". These individuals had reading and writing abilities that could enable them engage with simplified texts such as the increasingly popular catechistic 'ilm-i hāls, but not with more complex religious texts in Arabic, the poetical oeuvres of the Persian masters, or the highly ornate forms of court Ottoman Turkish. This abbreviated summary in prose therefore probably represented an attempt to make the prophetic body, and the talismanic and apotropaic potential that inhered within it, accessible to a more lay and less poetically inclined reading public. Therefore it can be also be considered part of the same impulse that

compelled the author of the aforementioned Laleli no. 1588 hilve to replace almost the

entire text of the *Hilve-i Hākānī* with circular medallions containing the Arabic adjectives

in red and simple Turkish translations in black, namely making the apprehension of the

prophetic body for the reader—of whatever educational background—more efficient.

Though it is also true that not all renderings into prose were done with an eye towards

making the prophetic body readily accessible. A prose hilve composed in 1607 by

sūfī scholar Zileli Muḥarrem Efendi (d. early 17<sup>th</sup> century) for example frequently breaks

into Persian verse that requires more than a nodding acquaintance with the language<sup>503</sup>.

Moreover, it seems to exhibit a greater degree of originality than the aforementioned

prose hilye, since it is not a blanket summary of the Hilye-i Hākānī. The text opens with

the assertion that the single biggest cause for forgiveness by and nearness to God

(magfiret ve kurbet) was loving and inspiring love for the beloved prophet of God

(Ḥażret-i maḥbūb-i Ḥudāyi sevmek ve sevdirmektir), and that this love was more readily

inculcated through witnessing  $(suh\bar{u}d)^{504}$ . After citing the inculcation of love through

such witnessing as his reason for composing the work, Zileli says;

"Although [the translations of the *hilye*] have been done, nevertheless in the transcription is error (*ġalat*) and in the traditions is dispute (*tenāzu*'). They have not done reconciliation through comparison (*tathīk*) and an opening of the veil

not done reconciliation through comparison  $(tatb\bar{\imath}k)$  and an opening of the veil  $(ke\$f-\imath niq\bar{a}b)$ . I have thus taken up the skill of eloquence, [and] with an eye to correcting the fragments, ten texts and the recurring pearls from commentators

were tied together",505.

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<sup>503</sup> Süleymaniye: Servili, no. 145.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid, fol. 1b.

<sup>505</sup> Ibid, fol. 1b.

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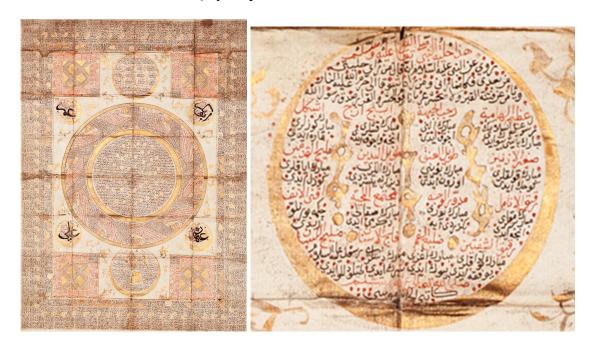
What is most interesting in this quote from Zileli is his assertion that despite the fact that the hilve of Muhammad had already been translated, there were mistakes and inconsistencies in the source base, all of which prompted him to reconcile and correct these errors. It is not clear whether he thinks the *Hilye-i Hākānī* is also faulty because he does not mention the text or the author by name, nor does he cite it as a source. However given the almost immediate popularity of Hākānī's version after he presented it in 1598, it is likely that Zileli was offering a scholarly correction to the burgeoning lore about the body of the prophet in Turkish, of which the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* was the definitive example. As to the content, it was clearly intended for a more rarified and mystically inclined audience than the other prose *hilye* since Zileli often explicates the complex mystical symbolism denoted by each body part. For example, in his discussion of the hair of Muḥammad, he describes it as a chain the righteous had to hold on to in order to achieve salvation 506. Elsewhere he sometimes goes to great lengths to reconcile apparent contradictions in the early reports about Muhammad's body. For example, on the contentious question if whether the prophet's eyebrows were disjointed or continuous, Zileli carefully weighs each tradition and reconciles the contradiction by suggesting that although there was a gap between his eyebrows, it was so minute as to be imperceptible to those who did not look at the prophet's face carefully, or to those who avoided staring at him because they were in awe<sup>507</sup>. Far from making the *hilve* of Muhammad readily apprehensible, Zileli's text seems to be a scholarly correction of an often-contradictory source base.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>506</sup> Ibid, fol. 2b-3a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>507</sup> Ibid, fol. 4a-4b.

## Material variation in the Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī: Al-Khalili MSS 0759





(From left to right, Fig 2.7-2.9) (1) Al-Khalili Cloth *hilye* in full relief, (2) Detail of the upper medallion, and (3) Detail of the lower medallion. Images courtesy of the Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London, UK.

It would appear that the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī*, in a redacted and condensed form, made its way out of the codex and into other varieties of talismans. In the Nasser D. Khalili Collection

of Islamic Art in London is a paper talismanic chart with a silk backing made of dark green silk bearing a completion date of April-May 1712<sup>508</sup>. Considering the fold creases visible on its surface, it was likely folded several times, possibly so as to fit in an amulet case (8.5cm by 5.9 cm) that is no longer extant. It was thus probably meant to be portable and wearable. Apart from the obvious parallels between its overall structure (which as we can see comprised of a central circular medallion surrounded by four smaller medallions formed out of crescent moons), and that of the calligraphic *hilye* panels first developed by Hāfiz 'Osmān in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* also seems to have provided some of this object's key apotropaic content. In the two circular medallions above and below the central medallion (see image details above), the Arabic adjectives and adjectival phrases, which as we have seen formed the section headings, illuminated content, and marginalia of numerous manuscript copies of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī*, are rendered in red. And just as with the manuscript codices discussed earlier in the chapter, Turkish translations are provided for each adjective in black.

This chart's connection to the  $\underline{Hilye-i}$   $\underline{H\bar{a}k\bar{a}n\bar{\imath}}$  however is even more explicit. The entry for this object in the Khalili online catalog, the entry for it in a volume on the arts of the pen by Nabil F. Safwat, and the entry in Francis Maddison and Emilie Savage-Smith's catalog of occult and scientific materials from the Khalili collection do not mention the  $\underline{Hilye-i}$   $\underline{H\bar{a}k\bar{a}n\bar{\imath}}$  at all<sup>509</sup>. The latter also describes the lower circle as containing text "that

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>508</sup> For the Al-Khalili online catalog see: <a href="https://www.khalilicollections.org/collections/hajj-and-the-arts-of-pilgrimage/talismanic-chart-with-a-hilyah-mss-759/">https://www.khalilicollections.org/collections/hajj-and-the-arts-of-pilgrimage/talismanic-chart-with-a-hilyah-mss-759/</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>509</sup> Nabil F. Safwat, *The Art of the Pen. Calligraphy of the 14th to 20th Centuries*, The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, volume V, London 1996, cat.27, pp.52–3, and Francis Maddison and Emilie Savage-Smith, *Science, Tools and Magic*, Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, vol XII, Part One, London 1997, cat.43, p.108–9.

concerns the name of the Prophet in Arabic and Turkish". Even a cursory examination of this content reveals this assessment to be wrong<sup>510</sup>. In fact, the text in the upper half of the lower circle is a continuation of the bodily descriptions that began in the top most circle. The lower half meanwhile contains verses taken straight out of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī*. More specifically, it extracts verses from two successive sections of Hākānī's work: one where he relates a tradition attributed to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib regarding the rewards for looking at the *hilye* "from time to time", and one where he relates a tradition about the benefits of looking at the *hilye* attributed to the scholar and mystic Sadr al-Dīn Qūnavī (d. 1274). Whilst these sections will be analyzed in detail later in the chapter, it is worth noting how, as opposed to relating these sections in order, one after the other, the inscriber of this *hilve* mixes up the verses from the two sections and ascribes them totally to 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib. Infidelity to the source therefore was not seen to be deleterious for the talisman's apotropaic power. As long as lines penned by Hākānī were included on the chart, its magical potential could be harnessed. It is also interesting to note that these lines from Hākānī surround a central motif that the Al-Khalili record and Safwat describe as the hand of Muhammad's daughter Fātima, but which is Savage-Smith identified as the qadam al-nabī, the footprint of the prophet. Given that the slight curvature of the right most digit suggests a thumb the former assessment is most likely correct. In any case, both these motifs were common on talismans and occult books on prognostication and it is not surprising to find either one here. The inclusion of other content like the esmā-i hüsnā (the beautiful names of God) and esoteric numbers all around the perimeter of the central medallion only added to this object's talismanic and magical potential.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>510</sup> Francis Maddison and Emilie Savage-Smith, p.108.

Apart from its obvious debt to Ḥākānī's text, this talismanic chart is also interesting because of the unusual amount of detail with which its use is described in the central medallion. It reads;

"It was begun at the hour of the Moon, and it was completed at the hour of Venus in the year AH 1124, on a Sunday in the month of Rabi' I [April-May 1712]. There is a tradition by Ibn Abbas, one of the noble Companions, May God be pleased with him, that God, May He be praised and exalted, will grant 100 different wishes of anyone who copies out this fürkān tilsimi in the following manner and carries it [on his person]: 70 of them for the next world and 30 for this. What is more. He will keep him safe and protect him from 1001 disasters and misfortunes, because of His benevolence and generosity, for all 1999 Beautiful Names are included in it several times over. Furthermore, the Beautiful Names, the noble name of God's messenger, his noble description, and the 114 surahs of the ancient word [the Qur'an] have been written with letter-numerals according to jummal-i kabir. But he must be diligent, and he must hold it and wear it with respect and reverence and unalloyed credence. For if this talismanic document is at someone's side, his difficult affairs will be made easy, and his bad affairs will turn to good, with God's permission—May He be exalted! Whereas, if someone does not believe, he will have bad luck, and he will be a hypocrite—We take refuge in God from that! For the angels will be the guardians of the man who carries this talismanic document upon his person; disaster, misfortune and mishap will not befall him, if God so wills. May He be exalted. So, do not give it to men who do not know its power, nor to hypocrites, and do not let them copy it, so that they do not become the victims of extreme torment. It is not something that should enter their possession: let there be no negligence. For someone who carries this talismanic document on his person will not be [one who] does not see the blessed beauty of God's messenger or his own place in paradise. He will be free of the punishment of the grave and the fire of Hell, if God so wishes it—May He be exalted! 'Moreover God—May He be exalted will protect the person who carries this talismanic document at his side from the evil works of jinns and Satan, from the misdeeds of his enemies and oppressors, from brigands, from water, from fire, from snakes, from scorpions, and from animals that bite. In addition. He will protect him from magic, from binding spells [ribāt] from being tongue-tied, from false accusations, from weapons of war, and from fear. What is more. He will keep him safe from the malicious look, from the [wagging] tongue, from the evil eye, from a ruined reputation [balā-i esmā'], from plague, from paralytic stroke, from the simoom, from the fury of the thunderbolt, from sudden death, and from all misfortunes and disasters. He will make him honoured and respected among His creatures, an object of awe and blessed by good fortune; He will bless his life and livelihood; at his last breath He will bring it to an end in true belief; and He will make him a beneficiary of the intercession of God's messenger -[all this] because of His benevolence and generosity, [concerning which] there can be no doubt or hesitation. What is more, if a slave carries this talismanic document, he will soon be manumitted, if a prisoner of war carries it he will be freed, and if a pregnant woman carries it, she will give birth quickly. Moreover, if a timid man carries it, he will be safe from fear, with God's permission -May He be exalted! Furthermore, God—May He be exalted!—will cause a person who carries this talismanic document on him to attain the path of righteousness, good fortune, and virtue, and [in addition] advantages in this world and the next will be forthcoming. 'No one knows the end of the explanation of this talismanic document apart from God—May He be exalted! Herein many particulars have been listed. From day to day, of course, they become better known. If a person wishes to obtain eternal good fortune and felicity, he should not allow it to leave his side while he is alive. In a short time its advantages will become apparent. [These are] among the blessings of this talismanic document, with God's permission—May He be exalted! 'If he recites one of the names of God—the name of God which is in conformity with his own name—and reads it every day after the five canonical times [of prayer] for the rest of his life, God—May He be exalted!—will bless his life and livelihood and [will reward] him with good fortune in both worlds, if He wills—May He be exalted!"511

This excerpt, much like the explanatory notes appended to the aforementioned seal of prophethood included with Şehid Ali Pasha no. 2755 or the one included after Laleli 1588 are vital sources that can enable us to ascertain what early modern Ottomans intended to do with such texts and objects. Quite contrary to their treatment in much of the contemporary scholarship, such renditions of the prophetic body—described here as part of a *furqān tilsimi* (Qur'anic or discriminating talisman)—are to be understood as stand-ins for the prophetic body itself that enabled supplicants to appeal to Muḥammad's cosmic sovereignty and invite his intervention into their affairs. Moreover, in the threats that this excerpt promises protection against (namely; hellfire, disease, misfortune, brigandage, inclement weather, weapons of war, fear, dark magic, oppression and so forth) we are given a glimpse into the anxieties of an age. It is this key question of how

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>511</sup> This translation is from Tim Stanley and is included in Francs Maddison and Emilie Savage-Smith, p.108.

such body-centric devotion is related to the concerns of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire that the last section will engage.

Material variation in the Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī II: Three Talismanic Shirts from the Topkapı Palace Museum

There were also instances where elements of Hakānī's text go on to appear on talismanic shirts, which are now kept at the Topkapı Palace Museum. Three shirts (TSM 13/1396, TSM 13/1140, and TSM 13/1178) not only contain lines of verse taken directly from the *Hilye-i Hākānī* but also borrow the medallions and other extra-textual elements contained in the codices<sup>512</sup>. For example TSM 13/1396 (shown below in Fig 3.0) bears striking similarities to Laleli no. 1588 (Fig 1.9) in not only the shape and appearance of the medallions and their content (Fig 3.1), but also based on the selection of verses on the uses of Hākānī's text which appear on top. It also shares another quality with some of the *Hilye-i Ḥākānī* codices we have already seen in that it contains a rendering of the seal of prophethood (Fig 3.2) that is similar to the one contained in Nuruosmaniye; 2872 (see; figure 2.6).

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<sup>512</sup> For detail on and images of these objects see; "Kat 14", "Kat 15", and "Kat 16" in Hülya Tezcan, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Koleksiyonundan Tılsımlı Gömlekler*, (Istanbul: Timaş, 2011). p. 90-97.



(Fig 3.0) TSM 13/1396, 77cm, seized cotton, ink, and gold gilding, Copyright: Hülya Tezcan and the Topkapı Sarayı Museum



(Fig 3.1) Detail from the *Ḥilye* portions of TSM 13/1396, Copyright: Hülya Tezcan and the Topkapı Sarayı Museum

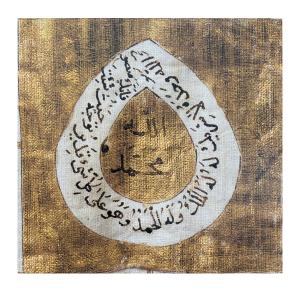


Fig 3.2, Detail of the Seal of Prophethood from TSM 13/1396, Copyright: Hülya Tezcan and the Topkapı Sarayı Museum

The same verses can be found on TSM 13/1140 (see fig 3.3 and 3.2 below), though they are followed this time by lozenges containing the Arabic adjectival headings about the prophet's body and by more lines from the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī*. Two Ḥāfiẓ 'Oṣmān style crescent moon *ḥilyes* appear at the top.



(Fig 3.3 above) TSM 13/1140, 88cm, seized cotton, ink, and gold gilding, Copyright: Hülya Tezcan and the Topkapı Sarayı Museum



(Fig 3.4) Detail from *ḥilye* portion of TSM 13/1140, Copyright: Hülya Tezcan and the Topkapı Sarayı Museum

The final example (TSM 13/1178; shown below in fig 3.5 and 3.6) also contains the Arabic adjectival phrases about the prophet's body contained in lezonges as section headings, which then open up to lines from Hakanī's work. The notable extra-texual

element on this shirt is the footprint of Muḥammad (fig 3.7), which is also commonly found in *hilye* codices from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.



(Fig 3.5) TSM 13/1178, seized cotton, ink, gold gilding, Copyright: Hülya Tezcan and the Topkapı Sarayı Museum





(Fig 3.6). Detail from hilye portion of TSM 13/1178 (Fig 3.7) Footprint of Muhammad from TSM 13/1178

What are some general implications for this apparent carryover between talismanic shirts and *hilye* books? In the first place, it places all these shirts, which Hülya Tezcan incorrectly estimates as originating sometime between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, firmly within the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is because the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* was only composed and presented to Cigalazāde Sinān pasha between 1598-1599, and Ḥāfīz 'Osmān only finished the crescent moon *ḥilyes* that are observable on TSM 13/1140 in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. We can thus rule out a 16<sup>th</sup> century and even an early 17<sup>th</sup> century provenance for these shirts.

More significant is the fact that such renditions of the Muḥammad's body were placed on talismanic objects that were made to deliver their thaumaturgical powers to the body for which they were intended. Thus they make explicit the Hilye-i Hākānī's empowering and protective function for individual bodies, a function that, as we have seen, is also implied by the several extant portable single-text codices as well as by the foldable cloth hilye kept in the Al-Khalili collection (see fig 2.7). The difference here is that whilst the latter two types delivered their talismanic potential by virtue of their proximity to the body of their user or via intellectual engagement with the substance of the text, the function of these shirts—which were likely never worn—was likely pedicated on a perceived resemblance between their shape and the shape of the body of their intended owner. There is thus little cause to categorize such objects as shirts or garments. Rather it is more appropriate to consider them as an amalgamation of talismanic devices that bears a resemblance to the shape of the body. The carryover in content between between

talismanic shirts and *hilye* books also affirms the fact—one which also has major implications for my reading of similar shirts in chapter 1—that shirts belonged to the same intellectual and production habitus as magical treatises, grimores, and prayer books, and not to production of wearable garments per se<sup>513</sup>. And finally tracing the flow of content and magical devices such as *hilye* verses, the seal of prophethood, and the footprint of Muḥammad from the textual medium and onto talismanic shirts provides, in the absence of particular treatises devoted to their production, clues about how these shirts were produced as well as their purported function in the early modern context. Within these objects the power of the prophetic body comes to merge with the body of their owner.

# Hākānī's Hilye-i Şerīfe and the Religious, Social and Political Landscape of the Long 17<sup>th</sup> Century

Now the *Ḥilye-i Şerīfe* of Ḥākānī bears similarities to its early *shamā'il* precursors not only in terms of its rendering of Muḥammad and his body, but also in terms of the context of its composition. Indeed, just as the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE saw the parallel development of Islamic urban society and the destabilization of the political center, in the long 17<sup>th</sup> century the development of Imperial societies and cultures undergirded by robust dynastic ideologies of legitimation reached an advanced stage alongside the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>513</sup> See; Anetshofer, "Hero dons a talismanic shirt", p.185. That these domains were distinct is also underscored by the fact the of the hundreds of royal kaftans and garments made out of cloth which are cataloged and extant in the Topkapı Palace Museum, not a single one contains verses froms scripture or any other kind of magical device. What we find instead are fashionable motifs such tulips, blossoms, or half or crescent moons. See; Hülya Tezcan and Selma Delibaş, *The Topkapı Saray Museum: Costumes, Embrioderies, and other Textiles*, J.M. Rogers (tr.), (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986).

unfolding of a 'general crisis' in much of the Eurasian landmass. As noted in the introduction, in the case of the Ottoman Empire in particular, the centralization of the Ottoman State and the development of a particularly Ottoman high imperial culture in the  $16^{th}$  century gave way to imperial crisis and a pervasive "decline consciousness" amongst the Ottoman elite in the late  $16^{th}$  and early  $17^{th}$  century.

That it is within this historical backdrop of religious, social and political crisis that we must situate the emergence and growth of the *hilye* genre is readily apparent when we consider some of the introductory verses of Hākānī's work. Using various authorities like 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib, Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnavī as well as a story involving the 'Abbāsid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, Hākānī gives us an insight into his intentions behind the composition and how it ought to be approached by its audience. To 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib, Muḥammad's cousin, son-in-law and—according to some viewpoints—his rightful successor, Hākānī attributes the following Prophetic tradition;

"After me whomsoever sees my pure bodily attributes It would be as if that person has seen me

And if that person be eager and is enamored of my comeliness And if that person is desirous and the intoxication of yearning arises in the heart

The fire of hell shall become forbidden for such a person And that person shall enter paradise with blessings

And from the trials of the grave, that man of God Shall be safe, until the day of resurrection

And God shall not gather such a person naked on the day of resurrection, (Rather) that person shall be attached to God's forgiveness

And if a traveller keeps [the hilye] safe on his person, The Prophet Muhammad says he shall not be harmed

What stands out from this section is the level of salvation anxiety it exhibits with its references to hellfire, the torments of the grave, the shame of the naked sinner on judgment day and being connected to God's forgiveness. Such panic, though never absent from the minds of the pious in previous centuries, was a particularly omnipresent part of the "turn to piety" of the late 16th and 17th centuries, when socio-political crises and instability gave way to widespread introspection about the moral rectitude of the life choices, beliefs and the personal conduct of oneself and others. And indeed, the religious literature of the period bears out such anxieties.

For example, one class of religious texts which, like the *hilve*, speaks to this kind of religious anxiety and which also found mass appeal and circulation in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries is the Turkish 'ilm-i hāl. 515 These were essentially short manuals that listed the basic tenets of Islamic faith and ritual practice and were written for the religious instruction of a lay audience unacquainted with the more elaborate religious literature in Arabic and Persian. 516 As Derin Terzioğlu has pointed out, whilst the earliest Turkish 'ilm-i hāl texts were composed in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries for the religious instruction of non-elite and recently converted populations in Anatolia and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>514</sup>Ms Süleymaniye: Halet Efendi, no. 182, fol. 5a-5b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>515</sup> Derin Terzioğlu, "Where 'Ilm-i hāl meets Catechism: Islamic Manuals of Religious Instruction in the Ottoman Empire in the Age of Confessionalization, Past and Present, no. 220, (August, 2013), p.79-114. and Tijana Krstić, "From Shahāda to 'Aqīda: Conversion to Islam, Catechization, and Sunnitization in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Rumeli," in A.C.S. Peacock (ed.), Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives *from History*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), p. 296-314.

516 In that way, they were similar to Protestant and Catholic catechisms, which emerged and proliferated in

Europe at roughly the same period.

Balkans, the late 16<sup>th</sup> century upsurge in 'ilm-i hāl composition owed itself to a broader turn to piety associated with the processes of sunnitization of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but also to "the heightened shariah consciousness of the seventeenth century" which emerged as "a response to the social, political and economic crisis that had struck the empire at the turn of the century." In one notable example of such a text written in 1633 titled the mebḥas-ı īmān (Discourse of Faith), a sūfī and scholar by the pen name of Nuṣḥī el-Nāsihī (Advice-Giver) explicitly frames the social and military crises of the empire as primarily crises of morality and faith, and posits his work on the fundamentals of faith as a remedy<sup>518</sup>. Similar diagnoses and remedies also abound in the 'ilm-i hāl texts penned by figures associated with the Kadızādeli movement, such as Birgili Mehmed (d. 1573) and Üstüvānī Mehmed (d. 1661).<sup>519</sup>

Moreover, once we collapse contemporary scholarship's artificial separation between religion and politics in the early modern period, we can begin to appreciate how an acute sense of moral and religious crisis also permeated much of the political advice literature (naṣīḥatnāme) that proliferated in this period. Indeed as Derin Terzioğlu, Nir Shafir and Ekin Tuşalp Atiyas have recently pointed out, whilst the naṣīḥatnāmes that have dominated the scholarly discussion were those penned by Ottoman statesmen, military commanders and judges, and which explicitly commented on the changing structure, social make-up and practice of the Ottoman government in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. these were only a fraction of the advice literature from the period. Far more numerous were the *naṣīḥatnāmes* penned by pious individuals such as ṣūfīs and lay preachers which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>517</sup> Terzioğlu (2013), p. 86. <sup>518</sup> Ibid, p. 89-107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>519</sup> Ibid, p. 86-88.

implored people to lead a moral life and which were not as detailed in their knowledge of Ottoman state institutions and practices. 520 A prime example of such a nasīhatnāme that frames the crisis of Ottoman state and society as a primarily a moral and religious crisis was written by a minor Istanbul-based sūfī figure by the name of Eskici Ḥasan Efendi (d. 1638-39) and addressed to sultan Murad IV. He starts by flagrantly chiding the sultan about his failure to effectively exercise his royal power to curb Ottoman society's ills and schools him regarding society's need for an effective leader and guide during times of chaos and uncertainty. He stresses that the sultan ought to cultivate a pious disposition, hold firmly to the precepts of the Qur'an and the sharia, practice consultation in matters of government, improve adherence to the sharia across government ranks and root out governmental corruption, ostentation, sodomy and unlawful innovations such as tobacco and coffee<sup>521</sup>. Other examples of advice literature by the sunnah-minded also included the Tuḥfe-i Ṣāhān of the scholar Ebu' l-Beḥā el-Kefevī (d. 1684), which focused heavily on a sharia-based moral reform of the family unit and the famous *Hayriyye* of the poet Yūsuf Nābī (d. 1712), in which he moves between "intertwining chapters that " forbid" an evil trait or class of society and "enjoin" good qualities until he slowly builds a screed damning the whole of Ottoman society."522

Whilst this expanding corpus of morality literature is a strong indication of such a "turn to piety", the content of biographical compendia can be another window into the concerns

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<sup>520</sup> Derin Terzioğlu, "Sunnah-minded Şūfī Preachers in the Service of the Ottoman State: The Naṣīḥatnāme of Hasan Addressed to Murad IV", *Archivum Ottomanicum*, vol. 27 (2010), p. 242, Nir Shafir, "Moral Revolutions: The Politics of Piety in the Ottoman Empire Reimagined", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 61 no. 3 (2019), p. 599–600, and E. Ekin Tuşalp Atiyas, "Chapter 6: The "Sunna Minded" Trend" in Marinos Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century*, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018), p.234.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>521</sup> Terzioğlu (2010), p. 260-282.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>522</sup> Shafir, p. 605-614.

and anxieties of an age. Aslı Niyazioğlu's recent study of dream narratives in Nev'īzāde 'Atā'ī's famous 1634 biographical compendium of prominent 'ulema, sūfīs and scholars from 1558 to 1634, the *Hadā'iku'l-hakā'ik fī tekmīleti's-şekā'ik*, relates stories of notable Ottomans who were compelled to abandon the crowded, nepotistic and corrupt career ladder of the 'ilmiyye in favor of the sūfī path of renunciation after witnessing terrifying dreams of hellfire and eternal damnation. 523 Niyazioğlu points out that though such instances of repentance and renunciation are standard features of sūfī initiation stories throughout Islamic history, 'Ata'ī employed such a narrative arc only for figures casting aside careers in the 'ilmiyye hierarchy. 524 One of these dream narratives involved the aforementioned 17<sup>th</sup> century Celvetī sheikh 'Azīz Maḥmūd Hüdā'ī. 'Aṭā'ī relates how he abandoned his deputy judgeship after witnessing a terrifying dream in which exceedingly pious men from his professional circles—including his teacher and mentor Nāzırzāde Efendi, the *kadı* of Istanbul—whom he had imagined as destined for the highest stations in heaven, were instead burning in the fiery pits of hell. 525 Niyazioğlu argues that 'Aţā'ī's dream narratives ought to be situated in a context where the Ottoman bureaucratic apparatus had become increasingly specialized, crowded, nepotistic, and difficult—not to mention dangerous—to navigate, all of which must have prompted biographers to engage "in a close examination of career choices and the social networks that sustain them" during late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century. 526 Whilst this observation of a prevalent career anxiety amongst the Ottoman elite is certainly valid, what Niyazioğlu does not really dwell upon is the fact that beyond being merely career choices, the paths described in the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>523</sup> Aslı Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives in Ottoman Istanbul: A Seventeenth Century Biographer's Perspective*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2017).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>524</sup> Ibid, p.75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>525</sup> Ibid, p.79-80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>526</sup> Ibid, p.4.

Hadā'ik also entailed a particular moral and religious orientation (being a state appointed functionary versus choosing a life of renunciation). In fact, in both of the dream narratives related here, the depictions of the day of reckoning and of hell as a terrain where social ties broke down, father abandoned son and where the seemingly pious were marked for eternal damnation echo the particular socio-religious anxieties of the community that produced them. As such the career anxieties which form the backdrop to some of the Hadā'ik's most vivid dream narratives were also fundamentally crises of conscience regarding one's piety and life choices that were consistent with the "turn of piety" sweeping the empire at this time. Not unlike his contemporaries who composed 'ilm-i ḥāls and naṣīḥatnāmes, 'Aṭā'ī viewed the 'ilmiyye path in particular as no longer conducive to a morally upright existence. Where he differs from some of them is in his particular advocacy of ṣūfī affiliation and the path of renunciation as a remedy.

It is my contention that the *Ḥilye-i Ṣerīfe* also spoke to the prevalent salvation anxieties of the age, though it differed from the 'ilm-i ḥāls, naṣīḥatnāmes and tezkire dream narratives in that it sought to allay such salvation anxieties through the talismanic and amuletic power of Muḥammad's body. This fact about the ḥilye form in general and the *Ḥilye-i Ṣerīfe* in particular however has not garnered enough attention in scholarship on religious change in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire. This may have something to do with the way standard treatments of religion in the Middle East have often viewed it primarily as a set of beliefs and practices derived from normative sources such as the scriptural and legal tradition. And even when the source-base has been broadened to include such popular sources as the 'ilm-i ḥāl and the naṣīḥatnāme texts,

historical treatments of religious change remain firmly wedded to its more juridicodiscursive aspects, i.e. they are concerned with questions of increased "orthodox" vigilance around adherence to the *sharia* or lack thereof. Whilst such questions are indeed important, other means of tapping into divine beneficence that derived from a widespread culture of talismans, amulets and magic also provided a storehouse of beliefs, practices and objects that were marshaled in response of crises and their attendant anxieties.

Now, though concern with otherworldly salvation is also repeated in the sections of the *Ḥilye-i Şerīfe* that follow, the stress upon this-worldly calamities that it safeguards against becomes more pronounced. Consider for example Ḥākānī's incorporation of a tradition attributed to one of Ibn 'Arabī's most illustrious students, Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnavī, regarding one "who copies the *ḥilye* and looks at it from time to time";

"This hilye of a rank sublime Whomsoever copies or looks at from time to time

Shall Keep him safe from all disasters, God His Majesty Even if the face of the earth is filled with calamity

In a house where it is found, there would be no poverty or grief or fear Nor will Satan the accursed enter there

At every moment shall provide the Lord As for Pilgrimage and manumission (of slaves), the same reward

Disease to his flesh, will not reach And the tower of his body shall not breach",527

Thus, whereas the tradition attributed to 'Alī promises protection on the road but

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>527</sup> Ms, Süleymaniye: Halet Efendi, no. 182, fol. 5b.

otherwise stresses other-worldly salvation, the tradition attributed to Qūnavī stresses the effectiveness of such a written rendition of the prophet's body against "all disasters" (cümle belālar) and goes on to tout the hilve's effectiveness against the "injuries of this world" (serr-i dünyā). Indeed, it is hard not to read his all-encompassing conditional phrase, "even if the face of the world is filled with calamity" (pür-belā olsa eğer rūy-ı zemīn) as intending to speak to the sense of crisis that pervaded virtually all levels of Ottoman society at this time. Similarly, its particular references to homes threatened by "poverty, grief or fear" (fakr u ġam u bīm) and to bodies vulnerable to diseases (emrāż) could also be read as corresponding to the actual economic hardships, plague epidemics and the incessant banditry and military rebellions of the period. It is also tantalizing to ponder if at least some part of the above tradition can be reliably attributed to Qūnavī. For our immediate purposes, the point is ultimately not that consequential since Hākānī undoubtedly chose the exact wording and the themes, all of which speak to the particular concerns and anxieties of his own age. However, it is difficult to rule out the possibility that the substance of this tradition might have indeed come down from Qūnavī especially since the visualization of the Muhammad's form for the purposes of connecting with his baraka is clearly attested to in the work of his master Ibn 'Arabī. If the attribution of this tradition is true, Qūnavī can be said to have developed a practical application of Ibn Arabī's teachings on Muḥammad's physical form well before Al-Jīlī in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

But beyond pointing to general crises of faith and community in broader Ottoman society, the *sebeb-i te'līf* (reason for composition) section of this *hilye* can also be understood as speaking directly to the pervasive sense of crisis and political instability

that existed within Hākānī's more immediate networks, and within those of Çigalazāde Yūsuf Sinān Pasha, the statesman to whom the *Hilve-i Serīfe* was presented. The section of interest here comes immediately after those dedicated to the aforementioned traditions by 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib and Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnavī and relates a story about how the early 9th century 'Abbāsid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 809) received a wandering dervish at his court. The dervish extracts a sheet on which the "pure attributes (of the prophet) (hilve)" were inscribed from one of the folds of his turban and offers it to the caliph. This pleases the caliph enormously and incites him to lavish gifts and riches upon the dervish. That very night the caliph is rewarded for his largesse and for gazing upon the hilye with veneration when he sees the Prophet Muhammad in a dream. In it Muhammad promises the caliph future success and happiness as well as protection from the torments of hellfire. 528 Similar to the aforementioned sections then, the lessons that Hākānī wants to impart on his readers are that Muhammad's intercession can be channeled to ward off all manner of calamity via a contemplation of his physical form, and that the composition and use of such *hilyes* was not current innovation but already a well-established practice in the earliest centuries of Islamic history.

However, this story with its narration of a beneficial patron-client exchange between the 'Abbāsid caliph and a wandering dervish may also have been intended to draw a direct parallel to Hākānī's presentation of his *hilye* to Çigalazāde Yūsuf Sinān Pasha during his second tenure as kapūdān-i deryā (grand admiral of the Ottoman fleet) in 1598-99. In other words, this story of a caliph expressing his appreciation of the dervish's gift of a written *hilye* by enriching the latter enormously and in so doing securing both his worldly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>528</sup>Ms, Süleymaniye: Halet Efendi, no. 182, fol. 5b-6a

and other-worldly prosperity seems to make a case for why Hākānī should also be remunerated generously for his hilve by the pasha. And indeed there is evidence to suggest that Hākānī benefited from this connection since sources on his life relate that he held a sancakbeylik. 529 Whether his connections to Çigalazāde Sinān were directly involved in getting him this position or whether his descent from mid-16<sup>th</sup> century grand vizier Ayās Mehmed Pasha (d. 1539) and his status as müteferriķa (roughly equivalent to gentry) were more significant factors to his professional success is not altogether clear. What is clear however is that Hākānī's professional links with Çigalazāde Sinān were fairly sustained between 1598 and 1603 given that another subsequent work titled the Miftāh-i Fütūhāt, which was a Turkish versified commentary on the forty most important ahādīth of Muhammad composed in 1603, was also presented to the latter. 530 This along with the fact that Hākānī had also managed to secure a position as a muhāsebeci (treasurer) to the dīvān-ı hümāyūn (Imperial Council) in the last years of his life suggest that his connections with Çigalazāde Sinān may have played a part in getting him the latter position<sup>531</sup>.

What prompted Hakanī to present his particular work to this Ottoman statesman is impossible to answer definitively, though it is likely that Hakanī deemed a work with such powerful talismanic properties an appropriatly practical gift at a time when the larger socio-economic and military troubles of the empire led to a highly febrile political situation characterized by intense factionalism and uncertainty at the political center.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>529</sup> See the note on the author by Iskender Pala, "Hakanî Mehmed Bey (ö.1606)" in "Hilye-i Saadet", Iskender Pala (ed.), (Istanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2016), p.7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>530</sup> İz, Fahir, "<u>Kh</u>āķānī".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>531</sup> Pala, p. 8.

Çigalazāde Yūsuf Sinān Pasha, as a prominent military man and one time grand vizier who had the ear of Mehmed III in particular, was right at the center of these court intrigues and as a consquence his career was marked by significant ups and downs. 532 Born into the noble Cicala family of Genoa sometime in the 1540s, Yūsuf Sinān (then Scipione Cicala) was taken prisoner at sea by the Ottomans in the autumn of 1561 along with his father. Thereafter he was gifted to the imperial palace where he converted to Islam and began his education in the palace school. 533 In 1571 he became *cesnīgīr* (imperial taster) to sultān Selīm II, and soon after he became kapīcībasī (the head of the palace gatekeepers and porters). After quashing an anti-Ottoman rebellion in Moldovia and taking the *voivode* John III prisoner in the june of 1574, he rose to become the ağa of the Janisarries, a group of considerable import in late 16<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman politics. In October 1576, he married a grand-daughter of the famous mid-16<sup>th</sup> century grand vizier Rüstem pasha and Mihrimāh sultān (sultān Süleymān's daughter), and used this connection to acquire influence in the palace. After his wife died in 1580, he married her younger sister so as to maintain the networks he had so painstakingly built. 534 During the Ottoman-Safavid war (1578-1591) he ascended to the position of vizier and served with distinction as governor of Yerevan. Then, undettered by his failure to gain the office of grand vizier despite reportedly being tipped for the position by the previous grand vizier Özdemiroğlu 'Oşmān pasha (d. 1585), he continued to build alliances in the palace and cultivate relations with the English and French ambassadors. Notably however, he also

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>532</sup> For more on how Ottoman grand admirals (such as Cığalazāde Sinān Pasha) in particular navigated such a fraught political milieu animated by *realpolitik* and factional politics from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to the mid 17<sup>th</sup> centuries see; Evrim Türkçelik, "Meritocracy, Factionalism and Ottoman Grand Admirals in the Context of Mediterranean Politics" in *A Europe of Courts, a Europe of Factions: Political Groups at Early Modern Centres of Power (1550–1700), (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), p. 88-108.* 

<sup>533</sup> Levent Kaya Ocakaçan, "Cıgalazade Yusuf Sinan Pasha (c. 1545-1606)" in *Un Mare Ottomano: An Ottoman Sea, Mediterranea - ricerche storiche*, no. 34 (August, 2015), p. 327-328.
534 Ibid, p. 328-330.

made dangerous enemies in Ferhād Pasha, the chief white eunuch Gażanfer Ağa and the queen mother Şafiyye Sultān. Despite the challenges posed by factionalism of the time and concerns about his continued familial (and religious) links with his Italian family, he ascended to the rank of kapūdān-i deryā (Grand admiral of the Ottoman fleet) in 1591, though Sultān Mehmed III removed him from this post at the urging of Ferhād Pasha and Safīve Sultān in 1595. 535 Ferhād Pasha's military failures and his subsequent execution improved Cigalazade Sinan's prospects temporarily though court intrigue landed him in exile first in Karahisar and then in Malkara. His rehabilitation came as a consequence of some decisive military action that led to a Hapsburg defeat in 1596 during the Ottoman-Habsburg war. This led to his hasty designation as grand vizier for some forty five days before he was dismissed from the post, possibly due to reports of his own mismanagement as well as at Şafiye Sultān's urging<sup>536</sup>. A brief stint as governor of Syria was followed by a second stint as grand admiral between 1598 and 1604. There were times during these years when he was urged to take the position of grand vizier again but he came to see it as a life-threatening career move and successfully managed to avoid being raised to that position. The years before his death in 1606 by natural causes were spent commanding the Ottoman forces at the eastern front against the Safavids, and alternating between supressing and making alliances with the Celālī rebels in eastern Anatolia.537

This snapshot of Çigalazāde Yūsuf Sinān Pasha's life and career is representative of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>535</sup> Ibid, p. 330-334.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>536</sup> Ibid, p. 334-336. For an account of his actions as grand vizier on the European front also see; Mahmut H. Şakiroğlu, "Cigalazâde Sinan Paşa" in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi (İA)*, vol. 7 (Istanbul: Türk Diyanet Vakfi, 1993), p.525-526.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>537</sup> Ibid, p. 336-339.

reality of court and state politics at the turn of the 16th century. Whereas competing networks of patronage and influence centered around the sultan had always been important in Ottoman politics, the late 16<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup> century was a time where the rise of elaborate networks and power blocs operating quasi-independently of the sultan i.e. the vizier households, the imperial harem, the Janissaries, the prebendal cavalry (sipāhīs), the 'ulemā' class and the sūfī orders—became particualrly prounounced. These developments, meant that Ottoman political culture at the center and the provinces became increasingly factional and competitive<sup>538</sup>. Viziers, military commanders and other state functionaries educated in the palace, who now commanded greater parts of the patrimony of the state through their control of the burgeoning number of tax farms, became power brokers in the provinces. 539 At the same time, palace networks of the vālide sultān (queen-mother) and chief black and white eunuchs monopolized access to increasingly palace-bound and juvenile sultans and thus played unprecedented roles in state appointments and international diplomacy<sup>540</sup>. In order to curb the power of variously allied actors, these powerful factions within the imperial divān and the harem of Murād III, Mehmed III and Ahmet I dismissed, rotated and even executed officials and statesmen with alarming frequency so as to prevent the development of rival loci of power. This shuffling of personnel at the top stood in sharp contrast to the long and stable

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>538</sup> See; Günhan Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites at the courts of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-17) and his immediate predecessors", (Unpublished PhD dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2010), and with Şefik Peksevgen, "Court and Favorites" in *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters (ed.), (New York: Facts on File, 2009), p. 151-154.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>539</sup> I. Metin Kunt, The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550-1650, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>540</sup> Leslie Peirce, "Part II: Women and Sovereign Power" in *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 153-286, Maria Pia Pedani, "Safiye's Household and Venetian Diplomacy", *Turcica*, vol.32, 2000, p.9-32, and Levent Kaya Ocakaçan, "The Changing Dynamics of the Ottoman Patronage Networks", *Archivum Ottomanicum*, vol.34, 2017, p. 9-18.

tenures of powerful 16<sup>th</sup> century grand viziers like Dāmād İbrāhīm Pasha, Rüstem Pasha and Sokollu Mehmed Pasha under Sultān Süleymān and his son Selīm II. In other words, fortunes repeatedly rose and fell and groups constantly made alliances and abandoned these same alliances when the situation demanded it. And whilst such furtive intrigue operated at the highest levels of the Ottoman establishment, details of it also passed into public knowledge. For example, the historian Selānikī notes that when Çiġalazāde Sinān was dismissed from the position of kapūdān-i deryā in favor of Halīl Pasha in 1595, Istanbul public opinion came out as highly critical of the decision to remove a "famous and comptent grand admiral"541. Considered under this light, the hilye's promises of future success, prosperity and protection from grief and "the injuries of this world" can be read as directly speaking to the turbulent and dangerous political *milieu* of this time. Here one might even speculate if (a) Çigalazāde Yūsuf Sinān Pasha had asked for such a work to be comissioned for his personal use, and (b) if his Catholic-Christian upbringing and familiarity with icons may have led him to seek an object with similar talismanic powers, albiet one heavily adapted to and drawn from the poetry-centric and aniconic intellectual and cultural environment of the Ottoman Empire. Definitive answers to these questions however remain virtually impossible to answer given the paucity of information available on Hākānī's life and the circumstances under which he composed his work.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>541</sup> Qtd in Evrim Türkçelik, p.96.

#### Conclusion

This chapter built upon the discussion of the *Hilve-i Hākānī* begun in the previous chapter by conducting a codicological survey of the extant manuscript codices, miscellanies, and objects kept in the libraries and museums of Turkey (and in the case of the Al-Khalili cloth talisman, in London). The need for such an analysis was obvious given that Hākānī put his work forward, right from the outset, as an artifact to be gazed at, touched, copied, or simply kept on one's person. To not trace the material dimensions of this work therefore would be to miss crucial aspects of its appeal, its function, and its reception in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire. Moreover, given the relative paucity of written accounts outside of Evliya Celebi and biographical dictionaries that attest to its popularity or describe its use, we must turn to the corpus of manuscript and material objects themselves to yield evidence about its reception and its circulation in Anatolia and the Balkans. In this respect, the *Hilye-i Hākānī* is no different from other magical texts and objects produced at this time which have survived in large quantities, but whose creation and use cannot be attested to in the extant grimoires or other scholarly literature of the period.

Whilst the broader sample of two hundred or so copies that formed the basis of this chapter's analyses is by no means exhaustive, it can nevertheless allow us to make some worthwhile conclusions. Firstly, copies of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* have survived from every decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. from before Ḥākānī's death in 1606 down to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Whilst copies from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century have tended to survive as part of

mecmū'as, the survival of a few copies as bound single-text codices opens up the possibility that a codex containing the *Hilye-i Hākānī* had already become an object of veneration at this early stage. The practice of having a hilve text lavishly copied, illuminated, and bound in leather then picks up pace from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century onwards in particular. These *Hilye-i Hākānī* "prayer books" reach a zenith in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, by which time the place of this text in Ottoman devotional culture was cemented and Hāfiz 'Osmān's calligraphic compositions from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century were inspiring imitation and an experimentation with form. Such copies with illumination, calligraphic elements, and expensive bindings however constituted the higher end of codex production. More numerous are copies of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* that were copied simply in a non-expert hand and bound with an inexpensive cardboard binding. The existence of such otherwise unremarkable and inexpensive copies (often without colophons thus not cited extensively in this study) suggests that copying the Hilve-i Hākānī was not confined to people with means, but might have extended to a new burgeoning class of officials, traders, shopkeepers, and artisans who could read Turkish, but perhaps not Arabic or Persian. Secondly, an examination of few 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century mecmū'a anthologies containing the Hilye-i Hākānī suggests that this text was often included with texts of liturgical or talismanic nature. These almost invariably included the Qaṣīdat al-Burda (Ode of the Mantel), and often included the Hizbü'l-bahr (Litany of the Sea), Qaṣīde-yi Munfarijah (The Ode of Relief), and Qasīde-yi Tanṭarānīyye. Sometimes these texts were accompanied by commentaries and translations of these Arabic texts into Ottoman Turkish in the same *mecmū* 'a. What is common to all these works is that they all were all litanies endowed with the magical ability to marshal God's intervention in moments of crisis and need when recited, or whose physical copies could function as textual-talismans in their own right. This opens up the possibility that the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* may also have been recited aloud as liturgy. What was far less common, though not entirely absent, was the inclusion of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* in single owner *mecmū 'as* dedicated to *divān* poetry of a secular bent. Thus whilst modern scholarship has predominantly analyzed this text under the secularizing ambit of "Turkish Literature", the proper place of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* is as a source of early modern religious history.

That the *Hilye-i Hākānī* codex was a received as a textual-talisman and not just as poetry is also supported by the extra-textual elements within the codices. These included calligraphy, paintings, devices such talismanic circles, and diverse renditions of the seal of prophethood. These features were intended to be engaged with visually—perhaps, even tactically—and would have facilitated the contemplation of both Muhammad's earthly physicality and his timeless cosmic reality. These elements and the content of the *Hilye-i Hākānī* also seem to have made their way out of the codex and onto other materials, like the early 18<sup>th</sup> century folding cloth talisman preserved in the Al-Khalili collection. Whilst we find the *hilye* of Muḥammad of the kind produced by Ḥāfiz 'Osmān taking material forms such as a folding talismanic compendium produced in 1738-1739<sup>542</sup>, and within glass bottles containing healing water in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as Gruber has recently shown<sup>543</sup>, the lack of overlap between these objects and the content of the *Ḥilye-i Ḥākānī* meant that they fell outside the scope of this chapter. Such objects

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>542</sup> See; <a href="https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2017/arts-of-the-islamic-world-117223/lot.44.html?locale=en">https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2017/arts-of-the-islamic-world-117223/lot.44.html?locale=en</a>

<sup>543</sup> Christiane Gruber, "The Prophet as a Sacred Spring: Late Ottoman Hilye Bottles", *The Presence of the Prophet in Early Modern and Contemporary Islam*, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2021), p. 535-582.

nevertheless highlight the diversity of material forms that made up a fully developed devotional culture centered on the body of Muḥammad, whose origins can be traced back to  $\mbox{H}\Bar{a}\mbox{k}\Bar{a}\mbox{n}\Bar{a}$  and to the anxieties and concerns of the late  $16^{th}$  and early  $17^{th}$  centuries.

# Conclusion: The Different Registers of Crisis

At the broadest level this dissertation has sought to respond to two questions that have also acquired particular relevance during its own period of composition (2020-2022). These questions are: How do people understand and conceptualize crisis and societal upheaval? And where do they turn for redress and assistance at such times? Whereas we might imagine our own current struggle with viruses, political instability, and a changing climate in terms of science and state policy, we can also readily appreciate that crisis is also an affective dispensation. It is a lingering feeling that all is not right, not only with the earth but with the heavens as well. And indeed, if we look at past societies we often find that periods of crisis were also interpreted as cosmic upheaval and the drying up divine favor. It stood to reason therefore that assistance and redress also had to be sought, not from the often distant and precarious institutions of the bureaucratic state nor indeed from the legal precepts of scriptural religion, but from more immanent sources of divine redress. This redress could not be accessed directly however. Rather it could only be accessed through the sacred bodies of entombed saints and holy men, but also sultans, and other prophetic figures. Sacred bodies then, in their various discursive and material manifestations, tend to acquire importance during times of crisis and transformation.

This dissertation project has argued that the sacred bodies of a sultān, provincial ṣūfī saints, and of the prophet Muḥammad, in their various discursive manifestations required renewed importance as cosmic access points during a time of crisis and uncertainty in the

Ottoman lands during the long 17<sup>th</sup> century. To make the case, it brought together royal portraiture and physiognomy, dream narratives, talismanic shirts, sūff hagiographies, as well as books and objects containing talismanic poetry into a single explanatory framework. In so doing, it endeavored to tell a new story of "the 17<sup>th</sup> century Crisis" in the Ottoman lands. As opposed to detailing the climactic upheavals, rebellions, regicides, banditry, economic collapse, and state contraction during this period, this study has sought to explicate how early modern Ottomans themselves conceptualized and responded to this time of troubles. In other words, it has actively eschewed studying the implications of these upheavals for the Ottoman state's tax base or for the patterning of state-society relations during this period. Whilst these aspects are undoubtedly important and as such continue to deserve more pointed studies, other considerations also deserve our attention. These include the effects of such large-scale disruptions and transformations on Ottoman articulations of cosmic kingship, on saintly power, and on talismanic piety, as well as the place of sacred bodies in all these endeavors.

Why should these aspects warrant the attention of Ottoman historians? It is the project's argument that these domains of socio-political, religious, and cultural activity represented answers to questions that were of paramount importance at this time, namely: (1) the effective articulation of the role of the chief dynast in the Ottoman order, (2) the role of local saintly shrines in the maintenance of communal life in the provinces, and (3) the talismanic protection of one's life and property against all manner of disasters. These concerns therefore had to do with concrete questions surrounding the survival of the polity, of local communities, and of the individual. Thus what this project enables is an

appreciation of the various registers of the 17<sup>th</sup> century crisis. This is an important point since what we as modern historians call the global 17<sup>th</sup> century crisis was not apprehended and experienced by all peoples at all times in the same way. In the imperial center, the crisis as it emerged during the late 16<sup>th</sup> century was a crisis of dynastic representation compelled by the slowdown of conquests on east and west, the onset of fiscal troubles particularly from the 1580s onwards, the seclusion of sulṭān Murād III within the palace, the circulation of rumors about his various bodily ailments, the rise of powerful factions of bureaucrats, eunuchs, royal women, clerics, and janissary leaders as alternative loci of power, and a pervasive sense of apocalyptic expectation attending the onset of the millennium. These already added to a sense of crisis that emerged before and continued to persist long after the worst decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century

Whilst, as we have seen, the ways in which Murād III used to comport himself in the palace did concern Mūnīrī Belġrādī as he wrote his bio-hagiography of Balkan saints, the overall concerns in the provincial towns of Anatolia and Balkans were different from those of the center. These broadly speaking had to do with the maintenance of community in difficult circumstances. As the analysis in chapter two shows, the embodied miracle narratives in the hagiographies from these regions reflect and echo these concerns. The narratives, once they are read as carefully scripted demonstrations of the power of saintly bodies that were set against particular backdrops, yields a picture of provincial societies in need of centering personages who could effectively broker in disputes, redistribute wealth, heal the sick, organize security at the local level, and through the thaumaturgical effect of their very presence, compel divine favor, blessings,

and even spiritual armies from the heavenly sphere into the terrestrial realm. It comes as no surprise that these centering personages are none other than local sūfī saints and their associated disciples, all of who were seen to provide essential services when official state capacities were indoubtedly impaired. Thus in exploring the question of how communities weathered the storm of the multi-faceted crisis that engulfed the empire at this time, historians would do well to closely read local hagingraphies in addition to other kinds of archival data. This use should not however be restricted to mining these texts for facts and names alone, as has often been the case in the extant scholarship, nor should their use be confined to fleshing out the biographical details of important sūfī personages. Rather the miracle narratives contained within them should be read against the grain as indicative of and responding to the concerns of the broader society from which they emerged. Maybe then, as opposed to only seeing the ingenuity and dynamism of bureaucrats, tax collectors, judges, and statesmen, we can also appreciate the active role played by the sūfī orders in the maintenance of communal life, and thus to the empire's remarkable longevity well into the twentieth century.

Apart from concerns raised at the level of the broader community, this age also presented profound dilemmas for the individual believer. Whilst the existing scholarship has focused on questions of personal rectitude, i.e. the correctness of inner belief and outward practice of others and of oneself as the defining religious concerns of the period, there were also other pressing questions that demanded somewhat more immediate answers. Who or what is going to protect me from bandits and highwaymen during travel? Who or what is going to deliver me from illness and black magic? Who or what is going to save

from poverty and misfortune? And who or what will ensure my easy passing into the afterlife? It is true that the answers to such questions could be (and indeed were) posed in terms of "belief": after all personal faith could be the armor of the pious in this life and the next. Just as often though, people resorted to technologies, techniques, and ritual practices that promised to bring an almost limitless reservoir of divine redress closer to earth and make it readily accessible to avert immediate threats and dangers. As we have already seen, these techniques could involve visits to saintly shrines and appealing to the sovereignties of those "friends of God" whose unspoiled remains were interred there. It could also involve the use of personal talismans, which provided access to other unearthly powers.

Whilst a fuller historical study of Ottoman talismanry during "the long 17<sup>th</sup> century" still remains to be written, chapters 3 and 4 shed light on a specific sub-section of this vast topic: a particular genre of talismanic verse that extolled the body of the prophet Muḥammad. Chapter 3 explores how the lore around the body of Muḥammad that had accumulated over the centuries was rendered into verse by the poet and chancery official Meḥmed Ḥākānī in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. In particular it analyzes how Ḥākānī's work cultivated a mystical view of Muḥammad's body as a cascade of theophanies that could be read and imaged in order to connect to his cosmic entity and invite his intervention into the earthly realm. Chapter 4 stays with this source but shifts the focus on the proliferation of this work across the Turkophone parts of the empire as (a) single-text talismanic codices, (b) as part of liturgical and thematic anthologies, and (c) on objects such as talismanic charts and shirts from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The chapter ends

with a section that situates Ḥākānī's text, in all its various material iterations, as a response to the uncertain social, political, intellectual, and religious landscape of "the long 17<sup>th</sup> century".

There are of course many more sources and cases studies that could add to the picture of widespread yearning for scared bodies than this dissertation has presented. And indeed in light of all that can and still remains to be done, this contribution to early modern Ottoman religious history is at best a modest one. What I do hope this work has demonstrated however is that an openness with regards to sources, methodology, and theoretical frames can yield fresh insights into the myriad apprehensions of our historical interlocutors. Whilst these worries may mirror our own in surprising ways, the responses they compelled were radically different and observable to the modern historian only when he or she embraces a multitude of vantage points.

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