

Encounter after the Conquest:
Scholarly Gatherings in 16th-Century Ottoman Damascus

Helen Pfeifer
University of Cambridge

Abstract: This article examines the extensive intellectual and social exchange that resulted from the Ottoman incorporation of Arab lands in the 16th century. In the years immediately after the 1516-7 conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate that brought Egypt, Greater Syria and the Hijaz under Ottoman rule, Turkish-speaking Ottomans from the central lands (Rumis) found that their political power was not matched by religious and cultural prestige. As the case of Damascus shows, scholarly gatherings called *majālis* (sing. *majlis*) were key spaces where this initial asymmetry was both acutely felt and gradually overcome. As arenas for discussion among scholars on the move, literary salons facilitated the circulation of books and ideas and the establishment of a shared intellectual tradition. As occasions where stories were told and history was made, they supported the formation of a common past. In informal gatherings and in the biographical dictionaries that described them, Rumis and Arabs came together to forge an empire-wide learned culture as binding as any political or administrative ingredient of the Ottoman imperial glue.

The Ottomans were no strangers to conquest when they first entered the gates of Damascus in 1516. Just two years prior, they had defeated the Safavid army at Chaldiran and temporarily occupied Tabriz; six decades earlier, they had put an end to the Byzantine Empire and taken their bite of the Red Apple; and for the century and a half before Constantinople, they had been riding fur-clad and victorious into cities and towns across Anatolia and the Balkans. But the conquest of the Mamluk Empire in 1516-7 was different. This was no piecemeal occupation of a shrubby frontier, no subjection of an upstart Anatolian beylicate, no capture of a former Christian capital. This was an almost instantaneous incorporation of an entire empire, one that stretched from Cairo across the ancient and holy cities of Damascus, Aleppo, Mecca and Medina, one that claimed inheritance to the caliphate and to the centuries-old scholarly and religious traditions of Islam, and one whose inhabitants had often looked down on the Ottomans from their perch up in the lap of Cairo, “the mother of the earth.”¹

For viewed from the Mamluk Sultanate (1250-1517), the Ottomans were the newcomers of the Eurasian Islamic elite. At least until the conquest of Constantinople, the lands of *Rūm*, as the former territories of the Eastern Roman Empire continued to be called, were seen by many Muslims elsewhere as a backwater, marginal to the history and development of Islamic high culture.² Indeed, for the predominantly Turkish-speaking “Rumis” that inhabited these territories, Islam was only one of several sources of cultural inspiration, political legitimacy and social cohesion.³ Well into the 15th century, Ottomans and the rulers of other Anatolian principalities were still just setting up an Islamic-inspired institutional framework and high cultural canon, often upon Byzantine foundations.⁴ This article examines elite social gatherings in the half-century after the Ottoman conquest of Arab lands to document the persistence of perceived Arab scholarly preeminence over Rumis, and the mechanisms by which this asymmetry was eventually overcome.

The expansion of 1516-7 precipitated one of the greatest instances of knowledge transmission and cultural encounter in the history of the Ottoman Empire.⁵ Yet, whereas the reorganization of provincial bureaucracies was orchestrated from the imperial center, in non-state scholarly gatherings called *majālis* (sing. *majlis*) ideas often traveled against the grain of political domination. In the first decades after the Ottoman conquest, the prestige of Arabic and of late Mamluk scholarship meant that Rumis serving in the new provinces often struggled to meet the intellectual standards of the local Arab scholars over whom they presided. By the second half of the 16th century, this had begun to change. Elite social gatherings were key arenas where the cultural scales were recalibrated, as the interactions between Kınalızade ʿAli, the Rumi chief judge of Damascus from 1562 to 1566, and Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi, the esteemed Shafʿi mufti of the same city, illustrate. By offering open-ended but regulated spaces of intellectual encounter,

literary salons encouraged the development of pan-Ottoman learned debates and a shared scholarly canon. As such, they played a key role in the integration of new territories.

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

I. Cultural Asymmetries

Ottoman officials were subject to considerable scrutiny when they first arrived in Arab-dominated cities like Damascus in the 16th century. Only rarely did the educated provincial elite call the political legitimacy of Ottoman appointees into question; their intellectual credentials, on

the other hand, were another matter. Although the Rumi chief judges (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*) of major urban centers were usually drawn from the best-educated men in the empire, the respect they enjoyed in the lands of *Rūm* was not always echoed in the Arab provinces. In cities like Damascus, scholarly gatherings put a premium on eloquent Arabic and on the Arab-Islamic scholarly tradition, domains where Turkish-speaking Rumis were often at a disadvantage.

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

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

While usually formed around a core group of people living in the same city, literary salons were an integral part of elite travel.¹⁵ One of the first things that Ottoman learned men did when they came to a new city was join such gatherings. As a result, *majālis* functioned as a key venue in which men from different parts of the empire encountered one another. This was never more true than in the wake of the Ottoman incorporation of Arab lands in 1516-7.

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

Yet Arab-Rumi encounters were not evenly distributed across the region. Prior to the conquest, Arabs rarely attended gatherings in Ottoman lands. Although by the 15th century, Ottoman elites had become increasingly powerful patrons of arts and letters, scholarship was still fledgling compared to the venerable tradition of Mamluk Cairo and Damascus.²² Ottoman madrasas may have been growing in number and in productivity, but the scholars that defined the

cutting edge of Islamic scholarship mostly operated outside of the Ottoman lands.²³ As a result, only few Arab scholars traveled to *Rūm* in the late Mamluk period.²⁴

With the Ottoman conquest, the nature, direction and volume of regional travel changed. For the first time, learned Arabs encountered Ottomans in significant numbers as patrons and power-holders.²⁵ With the incorporation of Arab lands into the Ottoman legal and administrative system, two elite groups especially began to travel back and forth between the new provinces and the imperial center: Arab scholars and Rumi chief judges.²⁶ Where the former had once gone to Cairo for patronage and protection, they now attended the *majālis* of high-ranking Rumis in Istanbul, demonstrating their worthiness for office through their knowledge and etiquette.²⁷ Salons also played a key role for Rumis serving as chief judges in the Arab provinces. On the one hand, gatherings allowed them to meet local elites upon whom the success of their tenures relied. But they also produced high-pressure situations in which judges themselves were judged, both on their intellectual prowess and on their ability to engage in polite conversation.

When Kinalizade ʿAli arrived in Damascus as chief judge in 1562, only two men did not rush to meet him: ʿAlaʿ al-Din ibn ʿImad al-Din al-Shafiʿi, who was dying, and Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi, who “abstained from frequent visitations of qadis and others.”²⁸ Instead Kinalizade himself sought out the two men—first al-Ghazzi, and only thereafter the sick man, who died six days later.²⁹ The fact that both Sharaf al-Din Ibn Ayyub al-Ansari (d. 1592), al-Ghazzi’s student, and Najm al-Din al-Ghazzi (d. 1651), his son, mentioned this incident in their biographies of Kinalizade ʿAli suggests just how significant the politics of visiting were. Paying respect to incoming qadis upon their arrival in the city was the custom of the Damascene elite, and the tally of who did and did not do so offered a measure of the qadi’s stature.³⁰ From the perspective of local scholars and deputy judges (*nāʾibs*), on the other hand, such receptions could determine

professional careers. As the head of the provincial justice system, the chief judge could appoint and remove his own deputies. Moreover, because many chief judges of Damascus later went on to serve as military judge (*kāzī ʿasker*) of Anatolia, a role with oversight of madrasa appointments in Anatolia and the Arab provinces, establishing good relations was a professional investment. Al-Ghazzi's decision to abstain from visiting Kınalızade was an unequivocal sign of his independence, and bordered on an affront.³¹

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

Nevertheless, al-Ghazzi had something of an equal in Kınalızade °Ali. For Kınalızade was no small fish in the Ottoman pond. Rather, when he arrived in the city to take up the position as chief judge, he already had a distinguished teaching career behind him. Sent from his hometown of Isparta to Istanbul as a young boy, Kınalızade, like all of his fellow Rumi °ulama°, was educated from a young age in Arabic and the Islamic sciences.³⁷ After completing his education, he made the rounds of *Rūm*, teaching in Edirne, Bursa and Kütahya before returning to Istanbul to become instructor first at one of Mehmed II's Eight Madrasas, and finally, in 1559, at one of the madrasas of the just-finished Süleymaniye mosque—two of the most prestigious institutions of higher learning in the empire.³⁸ In all of these places, Kınalızade consistently found himself in the company of the most educated and powerful men of his time.³⁹ In Istanbul he had been a frequent host to literary *mecālis*, and he could recite poetry and extemporize effortlessly in Arabic as well as in Persian and Turkish.⁴⁰

In spite of his towering political and intellectual standing, when Kınalızade °Ali first met with Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi and other local scholars, he had to prove himself. For when Kınalızade sat in a room full of Damascenes, he did so as a representative of the Ottoman state, and as a Rumi, and neither inspired immediate confidence. On the one hand, many scholars had a healthy mistrust of state functionaries. Al-Ghazzi's decision to retreat from the world of social gatherings was not just that of a tired, overworked scholar, but of a man wary of politics and power. Spending too much time with representatives of the state, al-Ghazzi's student and biographer Hasan al-Burini (d. 1615) explained, could compromise one's independence and integrity.⁴¹ Though qadis were devoted to learning in a way that governors were usually not, their intellectual merits could not be taken for granted, as Sharaf al-Din Ibn Ayyub noted in his biographical compilation of the chief qadis of Damascus. Silence was a polite way of expressing

reservation, but in extreme cases Ibn Ayyub did not mince his words: Ahmed Çelebi, appointed in 1550, “was called Ahmad with [the letter] *qāf* because of the harshness of his disposition, his stupidity and his abuse of his adversaries. So he was called Ahmad with a *qāf*, that is, *aḥmaq* [‘stupid’].”⁴²

Supplementing this general suspicion of state functionaries was Arab scholars’ persistent feeling of their own preeminence in matters of learning. Though a formidable and ever-growing Ottoman tradition of scholarship and belles-lettres flourished, the portions of it in Turkish and in Persian remained inaccessible to most Arabs in the first decades after the conquest.⁴³ In any case, what mattered in the Arab lands was one’s ability to excel in the Arabic-language Islamic sciences, a requisite for the learned regardless of linguistic or ethnic background. Yet this arena had been dominated in the century or two leading up to the conquest by scholars of the Mamluk realms, and it showed in the first decades that followed it.

While many Arab scholars were known in the lands of *Rūm*, Arabs were less familiar with the lives and works of their Rumi contemporaries. The Islamic biographical tradition enjoyed immense popularity under the Mamluks, boosting the reputations of contemporary scholars and encouraging the canonization of their predecessors. Though often universal in intent, in practice these compilations profiled only few scholars outside of Mamluk territories; scholars educated or working in Ottoman lands were all but absent.⁴⁴ In the Ottoman Empire, in contrast, there was no Arabic-language biographical dictionary of Rumi scholars that curious Arab scholars could consult until 1558, when the Istanbul-based scholar Taşköprüzade completed *Al-Shaqa’iq al-Nu‘maniyya fi ‘Ulama’ al-Dawlat al-‘Uthmaniyya*. In his introduction, Taşköprüzade lamented,

while historians have recorded the great deeds of the ‘ulama’ and the a‘yan...none of them attended to the compilation of the news of the ‘ulama’ of these lands. Hence their names and their image barely remain on the tongues of all those present and passed away [*hādir wa bād*].⁴⁵

Indeed, in the first decades following the conquest, scholars famous in *Rūm* need not have been known in Damascus.⁴⁶

The circulation of books exhibited an equal asymmetry. While there is no evidence of Arab scholars acquiring books on a large scale in Istanbul, Rumis ploughed ravenously through the intellectual riches of the Arab lands. Kınalızade ‘Ali commissioned Ibn Ayyub to prepare a copy of the medieval scholar Ibn Khallikan’s (d. 1282) famed biographical dictionary.⁴⁷ He also acquired the works of contemporary Arab scholars, including a work by one of his teachers in Damascus.⁴⁸ Some contemporaries claimed that Kınalızade ‘Ali brought no less than five thousand books from the Arab lands back with him to Istanbul.⁴⁹

Patterns of instruction reflected the initial reservations that Arab scholars felt about Rumis as well. Many Rumi chief judges continued their studies upon their arrival in the Arab lands, despite being full-fledged professors in their own right. A list of Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi’s Rumi students includes some of the most powerful figures of 16th-century Ottoman jurisprudence, including Çivizade Mehmed Efendi (d. 1587) and Mehmed Bostanzade (d. 1598), both of whom would go on to serve the Porte first as military judge and then as *şeyhülislām*; Fevri Efendi (d. 1571), a famous poet and one-time companion of Sultan Süleyman; and finally, Kınalızade ‘Ali himself.⁵⁰ The reverse was much more rare in the early period, although Arab scholars also continued their studies at a ripe age while traveling.⁵¹ When al-Ghazzi traveled to Istanbul in 1530, for example, he wrote extensively about all that he taught his Rumi contacts, but was silent

on what they had taught him—although he met with many scholars more senior than himself (including Ebu’s-Su’ud Efendi, who later became Sultan Süleyman’s trusted *şeyhülislam*).⁵²

For much of the 16th century, Arab scholars rarely articulated these reservations openly. In part, this was because they often relied on Rumis for their positions, as the statements of the Meccan scholar Qutb al-Din al-Nahrawali (d. 1582) suggest. Passing through Damascus in 1557 on his way to Istanbul, he wrote a praise poem for Muhyiddin Mehmed Çelebi (d. 1564), the son of Ebu’s-Su’ud and the chief judge of the city at the time. In it, al-Nahrawali called Mehmed “the incomparable one of his age [...] whose virtue hath spread/a protective shading o’er the parting of days and o’er nations.” It was only after “nothing of consequence came my way from this ode” that al-Nahrawali editorialized that the poem, “didn’t particularly delight him [Mehmed], because of his inadequate sophistication in literature and lack of experience with diction among eloquent Arabs.”⁵³

In the early decades after the expansion, there was often a disparity in how scholars were evaluated in Damascus and in Istanbul. The Skopje-born İshak Çelebi (d. 1537), for example, was rewarded by two Ottoman sultans for his poetry, scholarship and pleasant company.⁵⁴ In a Turkish-language biography of İshak written just a year or so after his death, the biographer Sehi Bey (d. 1548) explained,

he was distinguished amongst the paragons of the time and the virtuous of the age, and was respected amongst the people of learning [*ehl-i ‘ilm*] for all sorts of virtues. He gave so much care and attention to fluidity of language, firmness of speech and matters of meaning that it is impossible to describe.⁵⁵

Damascene historians were more reserved in their praise. Muhammad Ibn Tulun probably met Īshak when the latter served as chief judge in Damascus from 1536-7. Although he recognized Īshak’s skill in Persian poetry, his evaluation was otherwise tepid:

he had a great interest in reading *Al-Hidāya* [that is, *Al-Hidāya fī al-Furūʿ*, the compendium of Hanafi law by Burhan al-Din al-Marghinani] to his students but he was not able to. He was linked to learning but had little skill in jurisprudence [*durbat al-qaḍāʾ*]. For that reason he often stayed in his house.⁵⁶

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

II. Intellectual Exchange

Scholarly gatherings may have initially worked to the disadvantage of Rumis, but in time they worked to moderate the intellectual imbalance between political center and province. As some of the main spaces where mature scholars could exchange ideas, salons helped to integrate the written and social worlds of the Arab and Anatolian lands. More and more, men like Kinalizade ʿAli held their own against their Arab interlocutors.

Around 1563 or 1564, Kinalizade ʿAli attended the *majlis al-khatm* (closing session, or literally, sealing), held by al-Ghazzi in honor of his versified Qurʾan commentary *Al-Tafsir al-Manzum* (The Versified Qurʾan Commentary).⁵⁷ *Majlis khatms* were common in early modern Damascus, and could have the character of either a graduation ceremony or a book release party. Al-Ghazzi’s son Najm al-Din reported, “if he [Badr al-Din] finished teaching or writing a book, he held a banquet and made its completion festive. He invited the important people and the poor [*fuqarāʾ*]. He hosted them and was equally hospitable to the poor as to the amirs.”⁵⁸ In this case,

al-Ghazzi celebrated the completion of the teaching of the commentary to a group of students (he had finished it almost a decade earlier, in 1555).⁵⁹

However inclusive the attendant banquets may have been, the intellectual heart of these gatherings was more exclusive and serious. Composed of a group of invited senior scholars and the students whose coursework was being celebrated, *khatms* gave young men the opportunity to watch mature scholars in action. Although it is unclear who was present at the particular gathering that Kinalızade attended, it would have been the city's intellectual heavyweights.⁶⁰ The setting for the event lent it additional gravity; while most Damascene scholars hosted gatherings in their homes and gardens, al-Ghazzi held his at the holiest sites of the city, namely the shrine of Yahya ibn Zakariyya (John the Baptist) in the prayer hall of the Umayyad mosque.⁶¹ Al-Ghazzi presided, with the participants gathered around him in a semi-circle. Far from haphazard, the seating arrangement would have mapped out a hierarchy onto the floor of the mosque.⁶²

Attendees would have waded through a wide sea of scholarly topics, debating and relating poems in turn. Al-Ghazzi may have discussed his commentary, and intrepid listeners would have offered responses. Perhaps in this way, Kinalızade became entangled in a disagreement with al-Ghazzi over a debate between the late medieval grammarian Abu Hayyan al-Garnati (d. 1344) and his student, Al-Samin al-Halabi (d. 1355), regarding the *i^crāb*, or inflectional endings, of certain words in the Qur³an. Abu Hayyan had criticized a number of the *i^crāb* in the widely read Qur³an commentary by Abu al-Qasim al-Zamakhshari (d. 1144). Al-Samin, disagreeing with his teacher, had defended al-Zamakhshari.⁶³ In the debate's 16th-century continuation in the Umayyad mosque, al-Ghazzi took the side of Abu Hayyan against al-Zamakhshari; Kinalızade sided with al-Samin against the criticisms of Abu Hayyan.⁶⁴

After the debate was cut short in the *majlis*, Kınalızade went home to his library and found that both al-Suyuti and Ibn Hajar al-°Asqalani (d. 1449) had, like him (and al-Samin), found the criticisms of Abu Hayyan groundless.⁶⁵ So Kınalızade composed some verses in which he presented his findings to al-Ghazzi and challenged him to respond. Wrapping al-Ghazzi in illustrious garments of praise, punning on his name, Kınalızade wrote, “oh, my sayyid, whose mastery of learning is famous ...[whose] superiority over other scholars towers as the full moon [*badr*] towers over the rest of the shining stars...” Al-Ghazzi’s response adopted Kınalızade rhyme and formulated his praise in equally absolute terms: “oh Sayyid, rising above the people of the age without exception/well-known in every science to a great extent/Oh imam, high above the heads in your height...”⁶⁶ Several more exchanges ensued, and, as each was unable to convince the other, each eventually penned a treatise outlining the points in defense of his position.⁶⁷

The debate remained public as the scholars of Damascus weighed in on who they thought had prevailed. While Badr al-Din’s son Najm al-Din was silent on this point in his biographical dictionary, according to both Kınalızade’s son Hasan Çelebi and the Egyptian biographer Taqi al-Din al-Tamimi, the majority of Damascene scholars favored the arguments of Kınalızade °Ali.⁶⁸ The fact that both sons of the men involved in the debate included it in their biographical compilations suggests just how important the encounter was to the two families (although Najm al-Din mentions it only in his biography of °Ali, not in that of his own father). For the Kınalızade family, the gathering demonstrated °Ali’s learning, especially in the context of Arab skepticism regarding Rumi intellectual achievements. Hasan Çelebi summed up his father’s time in Damascus: “in gatherings and parties [*mecālis-ü mehāfilde*] the grandees and people of rank recited most solemn assurances of praise and encomium, each of them testifying [here he

switched to Arabic] ‘indeed he is a sign of the wonders of God.’”⁶⁹ The fact that scholars not present that day recorded the dispute suggests the weight that others likewise gave such occasions.⁷⁰

Period accounts of the incident indicate the tension contemporaries sometimes felt between the universal Islamic tradition on the one hand and particular ethnic communities on the other. Usually scholars formulated their praise in absolute terms: the language of al-Ghazzi and Kınalızade’s letter exchange implied a single group of Islamic scholars, scholars who were in competition, to be sure, but who measured themselves by the same standards. Yet Hasan Çelebi formulated his father’s victory as one not only over al-Ghazzi personally, but over Arab scholars generally: “because the Arab ‘ulama’ did not have these sorts of particulars, they were vanquished and dispirited in the arena of discussion and argument, and all of them agreed with the virtue of Ali and said [again, switching to Arabic], ‘he is the one that did that which those before him were unable to do.’”⁷¹ Hasan Çelebi’s explanation suggests the particularist logic that coexisted with Islamic unity: a particular scholar’s performance within the Islamic tradition did reflect at least in part upon the virtue of his ethnic or linguistic community.

Nevertheless, gatherings like al-Ghazzi’s helped to weave the intellectual fabric of the Turkish- and Arabic-speaking worlds more closely together. The two treatises that resulted from the Ghazzi-Kınalızade debate were included, usually side by side, in several Ottoman scholarly anthologies, making them inseparable to readers for generations to come.⁷² In these collections, the exchange sat alongside the works of individuals at the very pinnacle of 16th-century Rumi scholarship, like Ebu’s-Su‘ud and Kemalpaşazade Ahmed Çelebi (d. 1534). They thus secured al-Ghazzi’s place, however modest, in the body of authors and works that were read and copied in the central Ottoman lands.⁷³ Nearly a century later, the Istanbul-based scholar Katib Çelebi

would record the debate twice in his bibliographical dictionary *Kashf al-Zunun ‘an Asami al-Kutub wa-l-Funun*, including particulars like the location of the *khatm* and, of course, who ultimately was said to have won the debate (i.e., Kinalızade).⁷⁴ Such works helped to focus scholarly attention across the empire on a common set of texts and issues.

III. Book Circulation

Informal gatherings encouraged the post-conquest integration of the Ottoman scholarly tradition by aiding the circulation and reception of books. Salons helped to spread not only the reputations of certain works, but primed audiences for their reception, sparking debate or encouraging consensus around their meaning. Indeed, al-Ghazzi’s gathering left its mark on Ottoman learned circles in other ways as well: the book it celebrated, *Al-Tafsir al-Manzum*, itself occasioned an empire-wide controversy. The commentary’s composition in verse offended many. The Qur’an, after all, was emphatically *not* poetry, but superior to it: “we have not taught him [Muhammad] poetry; it is not seemly for him.”⁷⁵ Many argued that al-Ghazzi had not only made the word of God poetry by quoting phrases of the Qur’an in poetic meter (in order to gloss them). By adding an *alif* at the end of a Qur’anic verse, he had committed the far more serious offense of altering the verses of the Qur’an.⁷⁶ The book polarized the scholars of Cairo as “some of them permitted it, others denied its permissibility, others rejected it, others recognized it and praised it.”⁷⁷ Qutb al-Din al-Nahrawali, whom al-Ghazzi hosted during his time in Damascus, mentioned the scandal in his short profile of al-Ghazzi.⁷⁸

Likely through men such as al-Nahrawali, who carried the news of such books as he traveled, the controversy finally reached the very top of the imperial learned hierarchy: the *şeyhülislām* Ebu’s-Su‘ud and, according to some accounts, even Sultan Süleyman himself.

According to the much later biography of Yemeni scholar Muhammad al-Shawkani (d. 1834), discussions of the *tafsīr* were so vehement that Süleyman eventually convoked a meeting of the city's ʿulamaʾ to evaluate it—likely under the direction of Ebuʾs-Suʿud.⁷⁹ The *şeyhülislām* himself was no stranger to Badr al-Din. The two had met in Istanbul in 1530, when Ebuʾs-Suʿud was an instructor at one of Mehmed II's Eight Madrasas. They had gotten along well at the time, and had entered into animated discussion about the nature of the food served in hell.⁸⁰ It is thus likely that Ebuʾs-Suʿud would have received the reports of al-Ghazzi's irreverence with skepticism, having witnessed his piety and learning firsthand. Nevertheless, Ebuʾs-Suʿud cautiously condemned the book, probably under public pressure, when he heard of its premise.⁸¹ Yet when the commission convened, it found nothing wrong with the work, and rewarded al-Ghazzi with money and great honor.⁸² Though al-Shawkani's account may well be exaggerated, period sources do report that Ebuʾs-Suʿud himself eventually reviewed and accepted the work.⁸³

Nevertheless, the book remained so infamous that Rumis passing through the city would question al-Ghazzi about it. "I did not versify the Qurʾan, and I did not change anything in its expressions. I just quoted them in verse; *I did not versify them,*" al-Ghazzi would retort angrily. Al-Burini regretted that the book was composed in verse, because people avoided it for that reason, whereas if it had been in prose "there would have been plenty of people who would have spread it around the land." Others were of the opinion that the controversy was merely the result of jealousy and resentment.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, if it was not read, the book was at least discussed, as al-Burini said, by all "the ʿulamaʾ of his age."⁸⁵ Al-Ghazzi's commentary provoked one of a growing number of empire-wide intellectual controversies following the 1516-7 conquest.⁸⁶

The attention bestowed upon *Al-Tafsir al-Manzum* resulted in no small part from the gatherings that publicized the book. Whether or not al-Ghazzi had anticipated the criticism he

would receive, he himself in fact contributed to his work's notoriety through the multiple *khatms* he held for it.⁸⁷ Given al-Ghazzi's prestige and his mass of contacts all across the Ottoman lands, it is easy to understand how the work was sealed into the minds and memories of so many scholars.

But if these assemblies encouraged the conflagration of the scandal, they were equally important in resolving it. Scholarly gatherings offered al-Ghazzi an opportunity to promote his own interpretation of his work to potential readers. Yet more broadly, the trust al-Ghazzi had won in his face-to-face encounters with influential Rumi scholars, not least Ebu's-Su'ud, surely contributed to their begrudging acceptance of his controversial project by convincing them of his integrity and goodwill. It has long been recognized that the Islamic tradition privileged the personal authorization of works over the transmission of knowledge in writing.⁸⁸ In the Ottoman Empire, in Istanbul as much as in Damascus, this process extended beyond the teacher-student relationship. Learned men used gatherings to influence the reception of books among mature colleagues.

This meant that, when Ottoman scholars wrote, they often did so for an audience that was very immediate and real. Mustafa 'Ali (d. 1600) boasted that his *Kava'idü'l-Mecalis* ("The Etiquette of Salons") "became quite well known at gatherings of all educated people, grandees who are persons of refinement, eloquent persons, and poets."⁸⁹ The Arab scholar Muhibb al-Din al-Hamawi (d. 1608) not only presented his travel account to a circle of friends in Damascus, he incorporated their comments into its final pages.⁹⁰ As men traveled through the empire's cultural centers attending scholarly gatherings, they learned not only of the existence of certain books, but of their reception by various learned communities. As they traveled onwards, they took the news of these books and their reception by contemporaries along with them. Al-Ghazzi's

sixteenth-century commentarial controversy suggests that in the dense and well-connected Ottoman scholarly community, books rarely traveled without a reputation in tow.

Literary salons thus reveal a very dynamic process of Ottoman canon formation. A number of historians have seen the development of a more self-aware imperial culture in the literary, artistic and scholarly domains during the 16th century.⁹¹ In 1565, when Kınalızade was still in Damascus, Sultan Süleyman issued a firman, or imperial rescript, laying out a curriculum for Ottoman imperial madrasas. Surely this was an unprecedented show of educational centralization, as Shahab Ahmad and Nenad Filipovic rightly argue. And yet, as the two note, the document contains evidence of considerable openness, including the incorporation of the work of Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti: “the fact that al-Suyuti died only sixty years before the present syllabus was drawn up is expressive not only of how swiftly he became recognized as a scholar of historic standing, but also of the receptiveness of the Ottoman canon to new works.”⁹²

Majālis go a long way in explaining this flexibility. Al-Suyuti was known among Rumi scholars before the 1516-7 conquest, and indeed, Kınalızade °Ali adduced him as an authority in his debate with al-Ghazzi.⁹³ Nonetheless, because of al-Suyuti’s importance in late Mamluk scholarship, traveling Rumis like Kınalızade °Ali probably encountered his works to a far greater extent in Arab lands than they had at home. In our example, Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi was the holder of an *ijāza* from al-Suyuti, and was fancied by some the al-Suyuti of his age.⁹⁴ The 1565 *ferman* also included Ibn Hajar’s commentary on al-Bukhari—the same Ibn Hajar who had taught al-Ghazzi’s teacher, to whom al-Ghazzi was compared, and whom Kınalızade cited in his dispute with al-Ghazzi.⁹⁵ In including people like al-Suyuti and Ibn Hajar, the *ferman* likely responded to an ongoing conversation within the empire, not only in madrasas but in a host of other scholarly gatherings. Seen in this light, its curriculum seems less of an order than a

reaffirmation. It was part of a process of canon formation guided not by the Sultan and his advisers alone, but by a greater number of scholars all across the Ottoman Empire.

IV. History Writing

In addition to acting as spaces of learned debate, social gatherings were opportunities for gossip, story-telling and autobiography. They thus helped to generate a repertoire of stories, and eventually written histories, that became common to members of the learned elite across Ottoman lands. The dispute between al-Ghazzi and Kınalızade was recorded in biographical dictionaries produced not just in Damascus, but in Istanbul and Cairo, by people who were not present that day themselves. Some of these heard the story second-hand from men who had participated in the event (especially Kınalızade himself).⁹⁶

Informal gatherings were a serious source of information for 16th-century historians, Rumi and Arab alike. One of the prerequisites for being a good biographer was the cultivation of a healthy social network. When historians set out to profile the great men of the past, they relied mostly on written evidence evaluated through careful textual criticism. When they profiled their contemporaries, however, they often had no recourse to such written data. Rather, anecdotes gathered as men traveled across the empire's *majālis* provided much of the meat for biographical entries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This is why men like Hasan al-Burini were well-poised to compile such works. Al-Burini was widely appreciated for his ability to captivate salon audiences with his eloquence: "he was never at a scholarly majlis [*majlis ʿilm*] without being its nightingale."⁹⁷ He hosted gatherings in his own garden and often spent nights in the homes of statesmen.⁹⁸ These occasions allowed him to cultivate close relations with Arabs and Rumis alike, whether they were state officials, military men or scholars.⁹⁹ Indeed, al-Burini's

biographical dictionary *Tarajim al-A‘yan min Abna’ al-Zaman* (1601-15) featured many men the biographer had met personally in Damascus gatherings. This included local scholars, of course, but also Rumis who had passed through the city on one pretext or another. From al-Burini’s perspective, what gave unity to the disparate men treated in the dictionary was a common location, firstly in Damascus, and more specifically, within a particular set of social gatherings (and hence, social circles).

Al-Burini’s dictionary was not exceptional in relying on *majālis* for information—so did his fellow biographers in the Arab and Rumi lands. As we have seen, many of the occurrences cited in Hasan Çelebi Kınalızade’s biographical dictionary of poets were based on the gatherings that his father had attended. In Damascus, Ibn Ayyub’s *Al-Rawd al-‘Atir fi ma Tayassara min Akhbar Ahl al-Qarn al-Sabi‘ ila Khitam al-Qarn al-‘Ashir* (1590) and Najm al-Din al-Ghazzi’s *Al-Kawakib al-Sa‘ira bi A‘yan al-Mi‘a al-‘Ashira* (1624) both relied heavily on salons, as spaces where history was made, as sources of information on historical actors, and for the very identification of those actors. Although Ibn Ayyub’s *Al-Rawd al-‘Atir* featured many scholars of centuries past, the biographies of his contemporaries contained frequent mentions of gatherings he had attended. His detailed biography of Kınalızade ‘Ali was possible because Ibn Ayyub had “visited him [Ali] frequently” during his time in Damascus.¹⁰⁰ The title of one of Najm al-Din al-Ghazzi’s biographical dictionaries reflects the deep reliance on such gatherings in the genre: *Lutf al-Samar wa Qatf al-Thamar min Tarajim A‘yan al-Tabaqat al-Ula min al-Qarn al-Hadi ‘Ashar*, or, “The Sweetness of Nightly Conversation and the Fruitful Harvest of the Biographies of Notables of the First Class of the Eleventh Century.” Reading about great men was a fruitful conversation, the title suggested, but the book itself also emerged from such conversations, as the text itself revealed repeatedly. As skeptical as Arabs may have initially been of the intellectual

merits of some of their Rumi visitors, by memorializing their lives and binding them together with those of reputable Arabs, they helped to build a single learned community that spanned the Ottoman lands.

V. Conclusion: Imperial Integration

The 1516-7 Ottoman conquest of the Mamluk Empire propelled enormous social and intellectual exchange across the Middle East. Although connections between Anatolia and the Arab lands had already existed prior to the conquest, the integration of the two regions into a single empire prompted a sharp acceleration of contact between their learned populations. Informal scholarly gatherings were central to this process. By permitting gatherings less narrowly circumscribed than those held in madrasas, *majālis* facilitated exchange amongst the more mature Ottoman ‘*ulama*’. As arenas welcoming to scholars on the move, salons aided the creation of pan-Ottoman scholarly networks; as venues for discussion and debate, they facilitated the circulation of ideas, books and written histories. The result was something akin to an Eastern Mediterranean ‘republic of letters’—an intellectual community that self-consciously cut across political or ethnic divisions.¹⁰¹ Scholarly gatherings were the physical foundations of interpretative communities that linked men to one another long after they set off for the next city.

The meetings of mature scholars shaped many different phases of the social lives of books, from their creation, to their presentation, to their evaluation. Nowhere in their twin treatises did al-Ghazzi and Kinalızade mention the encounter from which their disagreement arose. Recovering the personal exchanges that preceded their writings suggests that even some of the most recondite works of the Ottoman period emerged from specific disputes held in specific moments. Not only was early modern Islamic learning dominated by a delight for debate,

Ottoman writing was the product of live gatherings and responded to particular controversies. We often focus on formal instruction in the *madrasa* in order to understand knowledge transmission. However, in the early modern period, a wide range of other occasions allowed mature scholars to meet and exchange ideas.

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

The post-conquest convergence of Rumi and Arab scholarly communities depended upon a shared culture of scholarly sociability. Al-Ghazzi's debate with Kīnalīzade and the treatises it generated helped to secure al-Ghazzi's place in the expanded academic sphere of the 16th century: although he spent only a year or two in *Rūm* over the course of his life, his face-to-face interactions with Rumis passing through Damascus established his reputation in the new imperial center. The same is true for the biographical accounts of Kīnalīzade °Ali: were it not for his time in Damascus and his skilled participation in its social circles, he might have never found his place in the Arabic-language biographical compilations of the era—and certainly not such an honorable place as he did find. Although the °*ilmiyye* had expanded considerably from its modest

beginnings in Anatolia and the Balkans, a shared culture of social gatherings meant that the community remained grounded in the physical, face-to-face interactions of individuals.

In all of these ways, informal social gatherings acted as a key motor in the engine of imperial integration. Qadis, as the case of Kınalızade ʿAli has shown, were central not only in the dispensation of (Hanafi) justice in accordance with the standards set by the Porte, but for the circulation of knowledge as well.¹⁰² When judges returned to Istanbul after serving in the provinces, books were only the most tangible of the things that they brought back with them: their ideas and contacts formed a durable web that tied them to the places they had visited. Even in the 16th century, when Ottoman bureaucracy was at its finest, timars and taxes alone did not ensure imperial cohesion. Of equal importance was an empire-wide salon culture that aided the integration of individuals upon their arrival in a new city.

Viewed from the perspective of informal, non-state gatherings, imperial incorporation emerges as a process driven as much from the bottom-up as from the top-down. In the realm of law and bureaucracy, policy was undoubtedly directed from the center. In matters of intellectual culture, power was more dispersed. Arabs did much of the hard work of constructing a single, pan-Ottoman community of scholars through their acceptance of Rumis into local scholarly circles and their compilation of biographical dictionaries based on these circles. This process was not matched by the Rumi biographical tradition, Turcophone and Persianate as it was in its orientation.¹⁰³ By writing Rumis into their histories, Damascene authors made Ottoman sovereignty locally legible.¹⁰⁴ This may have parallels in other parts of the empire, including the Grecophone lands conquered by the Ottomans in earlier centuries.¹⁰⁵ If so, the willingness with which local cultural elites integrated the Ottomans into their local literary traditions, and the Ottoman support of this project, was one of the keys to the empire's legitimacy.

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

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

Figure 1. Left: Literary Gathering at the Palace, Sultan Selim I, *Divan*, 1515-1520 (detail). Image courtesy of Istanbul University Library, F. 1330, fol. 28a. Right: The Ruler Visits an Immoral Judge, Sa°di, *Gulistan*, 1565. Image courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, F. 1949.2, fol. 110a. The two images illustrate the varying character of 16th-century social gatherings. The first depicts the young sultan reading a book with two companions. The second, which accompanies a fictional story of a judge fallen in love with a boy, features elements common on less restrained occasions, including wine and courtship.

Author’s Note: I would like to thank Alexander Bevilacqua, Michael Cook, Anthony Grafton, Molly Greene, Christian Sassmannshausen, Sara Nur Yıldız and the anonymous reviewers of this journal for their invaluable feedback on earlier versions of this article. Portions of the article were circulated at the 2013 Mediterranean Research Meeting and at the 2014 workshop, “Manuscript Cultures in the Ottoman Empire.”

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

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

³ Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Heath Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany: University of New York Press, 2003). In using the terms “Arab” and “Rumi” I have followed the conventions of the period. For “Rumi” see Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversion to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), pp. 3-6, 51-74; Cemal Kafadar, “A Rome of One’s Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum,” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 7-25; Salih Özbaran, *Bir Osmanlı Kimliği: 14.-17. Yüzyıllarda Rûm/Rûmi Aidiyet ve İmgeleri* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004); Nadia El Cheikh and C.E. Bosworth, “Rum,” *EI2*; Halil İnalcık, “Rumi,” *EI2*. For Arabs, who referred to themselves as a collective as either *‘arab* or *awlād al-‘arab*, see Bruce Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516-1918: A Social and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 14-15; Michael Winter, “Ottoman Qadis in Damascus During the 16th-18th Centuries.” *Law, Custom, and Statute in the Muslim World*, ed. Ron Shaham (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 102-3; Jane Hathaway, “The *Evlād-i ‘Arab* (‘Sons of the Arabs’) in Ottoman Egypt: A Rereading,” in Colin Imber and Keiko Kiyotaki, eds., *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West I* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), pp. 203-216.

⁴ Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, “Ottoman Educational and Scholarly-Scientific Institutions,” in *History of the Ottoman State, Society and Civilization*, vol. 2, ed. idem, (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002), p. 372; Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press) 2011, Chapters 1 & 2; Sara Nur Yıldız, “From Cairo to Ayasuluk: Hācī Paşa and the transmission of Islamic learning to western Anatolia in the late 14th century,” *The Journal of Islamic Studies* 25:3 (2014): 263-297, pp. 270-272.

⁵ The intellectual consequences of the conquest have only recently begun to receive the attention they deserve. Guy Burak, “Faith, Law and Empire in the Ottoman ‘Age of Confessionalization’ (Fifteenth-Seventeenth Centuries): The Case of ‘Renewal of Faith,’” *The Mediterranean Historical Review* 28:1 (2013): 1-23; Reem Meshal, “Antagonistic Sharīʿas and the Construction of Orthodoxy in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Cairo,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 21:2 (2010): 183-212; Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Egypte*; Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), chapter 7. See also Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, p. 96; Andreas Tietze, “Ethnicity and Change in Ottoman Intellectual History,” *Turcica* 23 (1991): 385-395, pp. 385-6; Andrew Hess, “The Ottoman Conquest of Egypt (1517) and the Beginning of the Sixteenth-Century World War,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4:1 (1973): 55-76.

⁶ Among others, Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Emine Fetvacı, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Rhoads Murphey, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty: Tradition, Image and Practice in the Ottoman Imperial Household 1400-1800* (London: Continuum, 2008); Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam - Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Shirine Hamadeh, *The City’s Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008); Hakan Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski, eds., *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Cornell Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleyman,” in ed. Gilles Veinstein, *Soliman le Magnifique et son Temps* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), 159-177.

⁷ For social and cultural aspects of the incorporation of the Arab provinces, see Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire*; Alan Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Benjamin Lellouch, *Les Ottomans en Egypte: historiens et conquérants au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Peeters, 2006); Çiğdem Kafesçioğlu, “‘In the Image of Rum’: Ottoman Architectural Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Aleppo and Damascus,” *Muqarnas* 16 (1999): 70-96; Jane Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: The Rise of the Qazdaglis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment to Ottoman Rule: Institutions, Waqf, and Architecture in Cairo (16th and 17th centuries)* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); Albert Hourani, “Ottoman Reform and the Politics of the Notables,” in *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 83-110.

⁸ C.f. Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur* (Berlin: Emil Ferber Verlag, 1902), 2:267.

⁹ A small selection of this expansive literature includes: Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Marcy Norton, “Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics,” *American Historical Review* 111:3 (2006): 660-691; Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006); Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 31:3 (1997), 735-762.

¹⁰ Samer Ali calls the literary salon “one of the primary mechanisms for forming Abbasid society and literature,” Dominic Brookshaw argues that “it was largely within the framework of *majālis* that much of the intellectual, cultural and social life of medieval Muslims took place,” and Maria Subtelny describes the *majlis* as “the main forum for literary, particularly poetical, expression in the late Tīmūrid period.” Samer Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons in the Islamic Middle Ages* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 13; Dominic P. Brookshaw, “Palaces, Pavilions and Pleasure-gardens: The Context and Setting of the Medieval *Majlis*,” *Middle Eastern Literatures*, 6:2 (2003): 199-223, 199; Maria Subtelny, “Scenes from the Literary Life of Tīmūrid Herāt,” *Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens; Papers in Mediaeval Studies 6*, Roger Savory and Dionisius Agius, eds., (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), 137-155, p. 144. See also Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, Mark R. Cohen, Sasson Somekh and Sidney H. Griffith, eds., *The Majlis: Interreligious Encounters in Medieval Islam* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999).

¹¹ “*Madjlis*.” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed; George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), pp. 10-12.

¹² For Ottoman salon culture, see Zeynep Tarim Ertug, “Entertaining the Sultan: *Meclis*, Festive Gatherings in the Ottoman Palace,” in *Celebration, Entertainment and Theater in the Ottoman World*, Suraiya Faroqhi and Arzu Öztürkmen, eds., (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2014); Halil İnalçık, *Has-Bağçede ‘Aş u Tarab* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011), chapters 4-8; Halil Çeltik, “Halep’te Kınalızade Hasan Çelebi’nin Şairler Meclisi,” *Gazi Türkiyat* (2007): 137-147; Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), esp. pp. 144-6; Haluk İpekten, *Divan Edebiyatında Edebî Muhitler* (Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1996), pp. 227-237; Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat*

and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600) (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1986), 22-23.

¹³ Female poets only very rarely took part in Istanbul *mecālis*. For an exception, see Latifi, *Tezkire-i Latifi* (Istanbul: İkdam Matbaası, 1896-7), 321. Much earlier, al-Ghazzali discouraged scholars from attending the *majālis* of not only kings but also commoners, suggesting that non-elite groups held them as well. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, “Preface,” in *The Majlis*, ed. Lazarus-Yafeh et al, 11.

¹⁴ Salons continued to play an important role in Ottoman cultural life in later centuries. Henning Sievert, “Eavesdropping on the Pasha’s Salon: Usual and Unusual Readings of an Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Bureaucrat,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 41 (2013): 159-195; Nelly Hanna, “Culture in Ottoman Egypt,” *The Cambridge History of Egypt* vol. 2, ed. M.W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 98-99; Rainer Brömer, “Scientific Practice, Patronage, Salons, and Enterprise in Eighteenth Century Cairo: Examination of Al-Gabartī’s History of Egypt,” *Multicultural Science in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Kostas Chatzis, and Efthymios Nicolaidis (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003); Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) 94.

¹⁵ This was true in the medieval period as well. Sarah Stroumsa, “Ibn al-Rāwandī’s *sū’ adab al-mujādala*: the Role of Bad Manners in Medieval Disputations,” in *The Majlis*, ed. Lazarus-Yafeh et al., p. 70; Benjamin Kedar, “The Multilateral Disputation at the Court of the Grand Qan Möngke, 1254,” in *idem*, 162-183.

¹⁶ İlker Evrim Binbaş, “A Damascene Eyewitness to the Battle of Nicopolis: Shams al-Dīn Ibn al-Jazarī (d. 833/1429),” *Contact and Conflict in Frankish Greece and the Aegean, 1204-1453*, Nikolaos Chrissis and Mike Carr, eds., (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 153-175; Francis

Robinson, "Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals: Shared Knowledge and Connective Systems," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8 (1997): 151-184, esp. 156; Carl Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 61-8.

¹⁷ Of 115 scholars employed in Ottoman madrasas between the 14th and 16th centuries, about 43% had been educated in Iran, 23% in Egypt, 15% in Anatolia, 9% in Transoxiana, 8% in Syria, and 2% in Iraq. İhsanoğlu, "Institutions," 372. See also Ertuğrul Ökten, "Scholars and Mobility: A Preliminary Assessment from the Perspective of *Al-Shaqāyiq Al-Nuḥmāniyya*," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 41 (2013): 55-70, p. 62; Yıldız, "From Cairo to Ayasuluk" and İsmail Erünsal, "Ottoman Libraries: A Survey of the History, Development and Organization of Ottoman Foundation Libraries," *Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures* 84 (Cambridge: The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, Harvard University, 2008), pp. 9-10.

¹⁸ Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi, *Al-Durr al-Nadid fi Adab al-Mufid wa-l-Mustafid*, ed. Abu Yaḥyā Nabḥāt al-Misri (Giza: Maktabat al-Tawḥīdiyya al-Islamiyya, 2006), 116.

¹⁹ Men like Badr al-Din al-ʿAyni (d. 1451), a Turkish speaker from eastern Anatolia. Jonathan Berkey, "Culture and Society During the Late Middle Ages," *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, Carl F. Petry and M.W. Daly, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 375-6. See also Carl Petry, "Travel Patterns of Medieval Notables in the Near East," *Studia Islamica* 62 (1985): 53-87, pp. 75-6; Yıldız, "From Cairo to Ayasuluk," 265-7.

²⁰ See, for example, Husayn ibn Muhammad al-Husayni, *Majalis al-Sultan al-Ghawri: Safahat min Tarikh Misr fi Qarn al-ʿAshir al-Hijri*, ed. ʿAbd al-Wahhab ʿAzzam (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqafa al-Diniyya, 2010); Barbara Flemming, "Şerīf, Sultan Gavri und die 'Perser'," *Der Islam* 45:1/2 (1969): 81-93. On live performances of hadith commentary in late Mamluk Cairo, see Joel Blecher, "*Hadīth* Commentary in the Presence of Students, Patrons, and Rivals: Ibn Ḥajar

and *Şahîh al-Bukhârî* in Mamluk Cairo,” *Oriens* 41 (2013): 261-87. For pre-conquest cultural contact on the imperial level see Cihan Yüksel Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks: Imperial Diplomacy and Warfare in the Islamic World* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

²¹ Hacı Paşa met with scholars in Damascus on his way to Cairo, and the Rumi poet Behiştî attended the *majâlis* of Ali Shir Nava’î in the Persian lands. Yıldız, “From Cairo to Ayasuluk,” 265; Mehmet Çavuşoğlu, “Kanunî Devrinin Sonuna Kadar Anadolu’da Nevâyi Tesiri Üzerine Notlar,” *Gazi Türkiyat* 8 (2011): 23-35, p. 24.

²² Istanbul became a serious destination for the ambitious in the reign of Bayezid II, although the unrest in the Timurid lands of the 15th century sent many Persian scholars westwards earlier as well. Sooyong Kim, *Minding the Shop: Zati and the Making of Ottoman Poetry in the First Half of the Sixteenth Century* (Chicago: Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, 2005), 64-5; Hanna Sohrweide, “Dichter und Gelehrte aus dem Osten im osmanischen Reich (1453-1600): Ein Beitrag zur türkisch-persischen Kulturgeschichte,” *Der Islam* 46 (1970): 263-302,

²³ Only two works in the 16th-century Ottoman madrasa curriculum discussed below were written by authors working under Ottoman rule. Shahab Ahmed and Nenad Filipovic, “The Sultan’s Syllabus: A Curriculum for the Ottoman Imperial *medreses* Prescribed in a fermân of Qânûnî I Süleymân, Dated 973 (1565),” *Studia Islamica*, 98/99 (2004): 183-218, p. 216. İhsanoğlu, “Ottoman Educational and Scholarly-Scientific Institutions,” 372; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Anadolu Beylikleri ve Akkoyunlu, Karakoyunlu Devletleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1969), 209-223, 259-262.

²⁴ According to Petry, only about three percent of Egyptian scholars and bureaucrats traveling in the 14th century made trips to *Rûm*. Petry, “Travel Patterns,” 81, 86.

²⁵ Some scholars of Rumi origins did move to Cairo in the 15th century and remained there as revered scholars and teachers. Petry, “Travel Patterns,” 74-5.

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

²⁷ Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi, *Al-Matali^c al-Badriyya fi al-Manazil al-Rumiyya* (Beirut: al-Mu^oassasa al-^cArabiyya li-l-Dirasat wa-l-Nashr, 2004), 128-9.

²⁸ Najm al-Din al-al-Ghazzi, *Al-Kawakib al-Sa^oira bi A^cyan al-Mi^oa al-^cAshira* vol. III, ed. Jibra^oil Jabbur (Beirut: American Press, 1945), 187.

²⁹ Sharaf al-Din Ibn Ayyub, *Al-Rawd al-^cAtir fi ma Tayassara min Akhbar Ahl al-Qarn al-Sabi^c ila Khitam al-Qarn al-^cAshir*, MS, Berlin Staatsbibliothek, Wetzstein II 289, 204a; al-Ghazzi, *Al-Kawakib* III, 187.

³⁰ Al-Ghazzi, *Al-Kawakib* III, 27-9; Sharaf al-Din Ibn Ayyub, *Nuzhat al-Khatir wa Bahjat al-Nazir* (Damascus: Manshurat Wizarat al-Thaqafa, 1991), 153; idem., “Dhayl Qudat Dimashq hatta Sanat al-Alf li-l-Hijra,” in *Qudat Dimashq: al-Thaghr al-Bassam fi Dhikr man Wuliyya Qada^o al-Sham*, ed. Salah al-Din al-Munajjid (Damascus: al-Majma^c al-^cIlmi al-^cArabi, 1956), 333.

³¹ A few years later, another chief qadi of Damascus punished al-Ghazzi for a similar incident. Hasan al-Burini, *Tarajim al-A^cyan min Abna^o al-Zaman* vol. II, ed. Salah al-Din al-Munajjid (Damascus, 1959-63), 99; al-Ghazzi, *Al-Kawakib* III, 29-30.

³² For biographies of Badr al-Din al-Ghazzi, see: Najm al-Din al-Ghazzi, *Al-Kawakib* III, 3-10; Ibn Ayyub, *Al-Rawd*, 239b-245a; al-Burini, *Tarajim* II, 93-105; Muhammad b. Ibrahim Ibn al-Hanbali, *Durr al-Habab fi Tarikh A^cyan Halab* vol. II, ed. Mahmud Fakhuri and Yahya ^cAbbara

(Damascus: Wizarat al-Thaqafa wa-l-Irshad al-Qawmi, 1973), 436-9; and Ralph Elger, “Badr al-Din Muhammad al-Ghazzi,” *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography, 1350-1850*, ed. Joseph Lowry and Devin Stewart (Wiesbaden: Otto Hassarowitz Verlag, 2009), 98-106; idem, “Badr ad-Din al-Gazzi und der Verrat seiner Freunde” in *Glaube, Skepsis, Poesie: Arabische Istanbul-Reisende im 16. Und 17. Jahrhundert* (Beirut: Ergon Verlag 2011); Fatih Çollak and Cemil Akpınar, “Gazzi, Bedreddin,” in *TDVİA* vol. 13 (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1996), 537-9.

³³ Al-Burini, *Tarajim* II, 98; al-Ghazzi, *Al-Kawakib* III, 4-5.

³⁴ Al-Ghazzi, *Al-Matali^c al-Badriyya*.

³⁵ Hasan Çelebi Kınalızade, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu^cara*, ed. İbrahim Kutluk (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1978), 669; Al-Burini, *Tarajim* II, 93; Richard Blackburn, *Journey to the Sublime Porte* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2005), 49.

³⁶ Al-Ghazzi, *Al-Kawakib* III, 5.

³⁷ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 21-33.

³⁸ Mustafa İsen, “Kınalızade Ali,” *Türk Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* v. 25, 417; R.C. Repp, *The Müfti of Istanbul* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986), 43-4.

³⁹ İpekten, *Edebi Muhitler*, 233.

⁴⁰ Kınalızade, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu^cara*, 658; Oktay, *Kınalızâde Ali Efendi*, 59; İsen, “Kınalızade Ali,” 417.

⁴¹ Al-Burini, *Tarajim* II, 94.

⁴² Ibn Ayyub, “Dhayl Qudat Dimashq,” 326.

⁴³ For example, Damascene biographers ignored Kınalızade’s Turkish-language *Ahlak-ı ‘Alai*, despite the fact that it was written in Damascus and is considered one of Kınalızade’s most important works to this day. Instead, they often mentioned two Arabic-language works, that were

“in the fashion of Ibn Nubata and Ibn al-Wardi” i.e. medieval scholars from greater Syria. Ibn Ayyub, *Al-Rawd*, 204b. See Ahmad Al-Khafaji, *Hadha Kitab Rayhanat al-Alibba wa Zahrat al-Hayat al-Dunya* (Cairo: al-Matba‘a al-Wahbiyya, 1877), 321-327. For *tezkires* and other Turkish-language literature, see Selim Kuru, “The Literature of Rum: The Making of a Literary Tradition (1450-1600),” in *The Ottoman Empire as a World Power, 1453-1603*, Suraiya Faroqhi and Kate Fleet, eds., vol. 2 of *The Cambridge History of Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 548-592. For Persian-language historiography, see Sara Nur Yıldız, “Ottoman Historical Writing in Persian, 1400-1600,” in *Persian Historiography*, Charles Melville, ed., (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012).

⁴⁴ Rare exceptions include Molla Gürani and Muhammad al-Kafiyaji, who both spent many years in Mamluk lands. C.f. Muhammad al-Sakhawi, *Al-Daw‘ al-Lami‘ li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tasi‘* (Beirut: Dar Maktabat al-Hayat, 1934-1936), 7:259-61, 1:241-3.

⁴⁵ Taşköprüzade, *Al-Shaq‘iq al-Nu‘maniyya fi ‘Ulama‘ al-Dawlat al-‘Uthmaniyya* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabi, 1975), 5.

⁴⁶ Ibn Ayyub explained of Çivizade Muhyiddin Mehmed Efendi, “he was one of the *mawlās* that was famous in those lands [around Istanbul].” Ibn Ayyub, *Al-Rawd*, 259b.

⁴⁷ I.e., *Kitab Wafayyat al-A‘yan*. Ibid, 204b.

⁴⁸ Al-Ghazzi, *Al-Kawakib* III, 187.

⁴⁹ Ibn Ayyub, *Al-Rawd*, 205a.

⁵⁰ Kınalızade studied Qur‘an commentary and recitation, hadith and rhetoric while in Damascus. Ibid, 204b; al-Ghazzi, *Al-Kawakib* III, 6, 187.

⁵¹ One early exception was Ibn Hilal al-Hanafi, a scholar from Homs who studied with Kınalızade ‘Ali. Ibn Ayyub, *Al-Rawd*, 270b.

-
- ⁵² Al-Ghazzi, *Al-Matali[°] al-Badriyya*, 263-275.
- ⁵³ Al-Nahrawali, *Journey to the Sublime Porte*, 37-40.
- ⁵⁴ Hamdi Savaş, “*İshak Çelebi, Kılıççızâde*,” *TDVİA XXII*, 527-528.
- ⁵⁵ Sehi Bey, *Heşt Bihişt: Sehî Beg Tezkiresi: An Analysis of the First Biographical Work on Ottoman Poets With a Critical Edition Based on MS. Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya, O. 3544*, Günay Kut, ed., (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1978), 158.
- ⁵⁶ Ibn Tulun, *Qudat Dimashq*, 319.
- ⁵⁷ Katib Çelebi, *Kashf al-Zunun[°] an Asami al-Kutub wa-l-Funun* (Beirut: Dar Ihya[°] al-Turath al-[°]Arabi), 730-1. Al-Ghazzi wrote two versions of this book, one full and one abbreviated.
- ⁵⁸ Al-Ghazzi, *Al-Kawakib III*, 5-6. Another prominent Damascene held a *khatm* each year at his home for *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Ibn Ayyub, *Al-Rawd*, 45b.
- ⁵⁹ Taqi al-Din Al-Tamimi, *Kitab Tabaqat Taqi al-Din*, Süleymaniye, MS Ayasofya 3295, 239a.
- ⁶⁰ In another *khatm*, the men first discussed and then ate together with al-Ghazzi. This session had featured the influential Damascene scholars Abu al-Fath al-Maliki, Shihab al-Din al-Tibi the elder and Isma[°]il al-Nabulusi (the great-grandfather of [°]Abd al-Ghani) as well as the Rumis scholars Fevri Efendi and Çivizade Mehmed Efendi. *Ibid*, 95-97; *idem*, *Tarajim I*, 11-2.
- ⁶¹ The Umayyad mosque had been used to hold reading circles already earlier. Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012) 32-82.
- ⁶² Biographers often recorded seating arrangements in detail. Al-Burini, *Tarajim II*, 95-6; Ibn Ayyub, *al-Rawd*, 115a-b. Also, Hirschler, *The Written Word*, 47-50.
- ⁶³ Ibn Hajar al-[°]Asqalani, *Al-Durar al-Kamina fi A[°]yan al-Mi[°]a al-Thamina I-IV* (Hyderabad: Da[°]irat al-Ma[°]arif al-‘Uthmaniyya, 1929-31) 1:339; Claude Gilliot, “Kontinuität und Wandel in

der ‘klassischen’ islamischen Koranauslegung (II./VII.-XII./XIX. Jh.) *Der Islam* 85 (2010): 1-155, pp. 63-4.

⁶⁴ For a detailed summary of their debate, copied from Kınalızade’s own notes, see al-Tamimi, MS Ayasofya 3295, fol. 239a

⁶⁵ Kınalızade, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu‘ara*, 669; al-Ghazzi, *Al-Kawakib* III, 188; al-Tamimi, MS Ayasofya 3295, fol. 239a; Ibn Hajar, *Al-Durar* I, 339-340.

⁶⁶ Al-Ghazzi, *Al-Kawakib* III, 188.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁶⁸ Kınalızade, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu‘ara*, 669-670; al-Tamimi, MS Ayasofya 3295, fol. 239a; Katib Çelebi, *Kashf al-Zunun*, 730-1.

⁶⁹ Kınalızade, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu‘ara*, 670.

⁷⁰ The debate was also recorded in 1571 by a certain al-Faridi, who did not attend the *majlis* but met Kınalızade later. Al-Faridi, “Nukat ‘ala Ma Waq‘a bayn al-Qadi ‘Ali Çelebi wa Ibn al-Shaykh Radi al-Din,” Library of the Escorial, MS Escorial 1318, fols. 14b-33a.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Extant copies of the two treatises include Süleymaniye Library, MS Esad Efendi 3556, fols. 1-29; Süleymaniye Library, MS Mihrişah Sultan 39, fols. 45b-70b; Princeton University Library, MS Garrett 3817Y, fols 93b-106b; Leiden University, MS Leiden 1666.

⁷³ Süleymaniye Library, MS Mihrişah Sultan 39.

⁷⁴ Katib Çelebi, *Kashf al-Zunun* I, 122-3, 730-1.

⁷⁵ Ya Sin 36:69.

⁷⁶ Al-Burini, *Tarajim* II, 94-5; Katib Çelebi, *Kashf al-Zunun* I, 454.

⁷⁷ Al-Burini, *Tarajim* II, 94.

⁷⁸ Al-Nahrawali, *Journey*, 48. Al-Nahrawali had studied with al-Ghazzi on the latter's pilgrimage in 1542-43. Ibn Ayyub, *Al-Rawḍ*, 262a-b.

⁷⁹ Al-Shawkani's account is not entirely reliable. He claims that al-Ghazzi was in Istanbul when the manuscript was reviewed, although no other contemporary account corroborates this. There is an autograph of *Al-Tafsir al-Manzum* in the Süleymaniye library dated 1554-5 (962).

Muhammad al-Shawkani, *Al-Badr al-Tali^c bi-Mahasin Man Ba^cda al-Qarn al-Sabi^c* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Sa^cada, 1929-30), vol. 2, p. 252; MS Hüsnü Paşa 11, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi.

⁸⁰ Al-Ghazzi, *Al-Matali^c al-Badriyya*, 268.

⁸¹ Al-Burini, *Tarajim* II, 94, 104.

⁸² Al-Shawkani, *Al-Badr al-Tali^c* II, 252.

⁸³ Al-Burini, *Tarajim* II, 104.

⁸⁴ This was the opinion of ^cAbd al-Latif al-Shafiⁱ (a student of Najm al-Din al-Ghazzi) in the 1630s. See MS Süleymaniye Library, Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1390, fol. iia. For a similar opinion, see MS Süleymaniye Library, Kemankeş 240, fols. 70a-b.

⁸⁵ Al-Burini, *Tarajim* II, 94.

⁸⁶ Coffee and the works of Ibn ^cArabi were others. C.f. Ibn Tulun, *Al-Tamattu^c bi-l-Iqran*, 118, 174-5, 216-7, 264, 266, 280.

⁸⁷ Al-Ghazzi held another *khatm* for the piece in 1569-70. Al-Burini, *Tarajim* II, 97; idem., *Tarajim* I, 11-2.

⁸⁸ William Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam: An Essay in Interpretation," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23:3 (1993): 495-522, pp. 512-4. For the controversial nature of the written tradition in the early years of Islam, see Michael Cook, "The Opponents of the Writing of Tradition in Early Islam," *Arabica* 44:4 (1997): 437-530.

-
- ⁸⁹ Mustafa ʿAli, *The Ottoman Gentleman of the Sixteenth Century. Muṣṭafā ʿAlī's Meva'idu'n-nefa'is fi kava'idil mecalis (tables of delicacies concerning the rules of social gatherings)*, trans. Douglas Brookes (Cambridge: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 2003), 4.
- ⁹⁰ Süleymaniye Library, MS Ragıp Paşa 1474, fol. 190b ff.
- ⁹¹ Kuru, "The Literature of Rum"; Gülru Necipoğlu, "A Kanun for the State, a Canon for the Arts: Conceptualizing the Classical Synthesis of Ottoman Art and Architecture," *Soliman le Magnifique et son Temps*, pp. 195-216; Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah"; Walter Feldman, *Music of the Ottoman Court: makam, composition and the early Ottoman instrumental repertoire* (Berlin: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 1996), 24.
- ⁹² Ahmed and Filipovic, "The Sultan's Syllabus," 210-11.
- ⁹³ Al-Suyuti himself boasted during lifetime that his fame had spread across the Islamic world. Marlis Saleh, "Al-Suyūṭī and his Works: Their Place in Islamic Scholarship from Mamluk Times to the Present," *The Mamluk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 73-89, p. 77.
- ⁹⁴ Al-Ghazzi, *Al-Kawakib* III, 4, 7.
- ⁹⁵ Ahmed and Filipovic, "The Sultan's Syllabus," 200.
- ⁹⁶ Al-Tamimi, MS Ayasofya 3295, fol. 239a.
- ⁹⁷ Al-Ghazzi, *Lutf al-Samar*, 359.
- ⁹⁸ Al-Burini, *Tarajim* I, 17, 21; *Tarajim* II, 103; Al-Ghazzi, *Lutf al-Samar*, 358.
- ⁹⁹ Cf, Ibn Ayyub, *Al-Rawd*, 113a; Al-Burini, *Tarajim* I, 73
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibn Ayyub, "Dhayl Qudat Dimashq," 329.

¹⁰¹ C.f. Anthony Grafton, “A Sketch Map of a Lost Continent: The Republic of Letters,” in *Worlds Made by Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009) 9-34.

¹⁰² Guy Burak, “Dynasty, Law and the Imperial Provincial Madrasa: The Case of al-Madrasa al-‘Uthmaniyya in Ottoman Jerusalem,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45 (2013): 111-125.

¹⁰³ Scholars and poets of Arab descent are rare in *tezkires* like Hasan Çelebi’s or in Taşköprüzade’s *Al-Shaqa’iq al-Nu‘maniyya*. Even Kınalızade ‘Ali’s 1566 *Al-Tabaqat al-Hanafiyya*, which constructed a single scholarly lineage from Abu Hanifa to Kemalpaşazade, included no contemporary Arab scholars.

¹⁰⁴ Sometimes this meant a literal translation. Al-Burini’s biography of a *danişmend* contained a detailed review of the meaning, pronunciation and etymology of that word. *Tarajim* I, 77.

¹⁰⁵ Michael Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, trans. Charles Riggs (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954). For other examples, see Baki Tezcan, “Ethnicity, Race, Religion and Social Class: Ottoman Markers of Difference,” in *The Ottoman World* ed. Christine Woodhead (London: Routledge, 2012), 163 n. 18.