

## A Damascene Shāfi‘ī Professor-Mufti in Istanbul: Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī’s Travelogue (1032/1623)

### Dımaşklı Bir Şâfiî Müderris-Müftünün İstanbul Serüveni: Necmeddin el-Gazzî’nin Seyahatnamesi (1032/1623)

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#### ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to introduce Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī’s (d. 1061/1651) Istanbul travelogue, which until recently was considered to be lost, as a new primary source for the examination of early modern Ottoman history. As an eminent Shāfi‘ī professor-mufti in Damascus, Najm al-Dīn traveled to Istanbul in 1623 with the intention of petitioning the Imperial Council to regain his teaching position that he had lost to a rival local scholar. His journey took him four and a half months, during which time he penned an account in the form of a travelogue, adhering to the literary conventions established by previous Arab travelers. This article examines the content of the autograph copy of the travelogue highlighting Najm al-Dīn’s views on cities, architectural structures, individuals, and significant socio-political events in Damascus, Istanbul, and other Anatolian towns on his way. It also scrutinizes Najm al-Dīn’s narrative strategies throughout the travelogue, including his use of language and poetic composition as well as inclusion of dream and fortune-telling anecdotes. This article also considers the relationship between Najm al-Dīn’s work and previous Arabic travelogues to highlight continuities and divergences, as well as new information provided. Najm al-Dīn’s travelogue offers a vivid description of Anatolian towns in the early seventeenth century. It also provides insight into the multi-faceted imperial factionalism in Istanbul in the post-Osman II (d. 1031/1622) period. Furthermore, the narrative elements within the travelogue shed light on the mindset and vision of an early modern provincial Shāfi‘ī professor-mufti in the Ottoman center.

**Keywords:** Ottoman History, Damascus, Istanbul, Travelogue, al-Ghazzī

#### ÖZ

Bu makale Necmeddin el-Gazzî’nin (ö. 1061/1651) yakın bir tarihe kadar kayıp olduğu düşünülen İstanbul seyahatnamesini erken modern Osmanlı tarihi için yeni bir kaynak olarak tanıtmayı amaçlamaktadır. Dımaşk’ta saygın bir Şâfiî müderris-müftü olan Necmeddin, müderrisi olduğu medresenin başka bir yerel âlime verilmesi üzerine 1623 tarihinde İstanbul’a seyahat etti. Toplamda dört buçuk ay süren bu seyahatin ardından, önceki Arap seyyahların seyahatnameleri tarafından oluşturulan yazım geleneğini

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dikkate alarak bir seyahatname kaleme aldı. Bu çalışma söz konusu seyahatnemenin müellif nüshasına odaklanarak Necmeddin'in Dımaşk, İstanbul ve yolu üzerinde bulunan Anadolu şehirlerindeki mekanlar, mimarî yapılar, kişiler ve önemli siyasi-sosyal olaylar hakkındaki mülahazalarını incelemektedir. Ayrıca Necmeddin'in seyahatnamesindeki kelime seçimi, şiirler, rüya ve fal anekdotları gibi anlatı unsurlarını değerlendirmektedir. Çalışma, önceki Arapça seyahatnamelere ve mevcut Osmanlı araştırmalarına atıfta bulunarak, Necmeddin'in seyahatnamesi için tarihsel bağlam oluşturmakta ve bu kaynağın sunduğu yeni bilgilerin altını çizmektedir. Necmeddin'in seyahat anlatısı, dönemin Anadolu şehirlerinin canlı bir tasvirini sunmakta ve II. Osman'ın (ö. 1031/1622) katli akabinde İstanbul'da yükselişe geçen hizip mücadelelerine yeni bir pencereden bakmaya imkân vermektedir. Ayrıca, seyahatnamedeki anlatı unsurları on yedinci yüzyılın ilk yarısında Osmanlı merkezini ziyaret eden bir Şâfiî eyalet müftüsünün zihniyeti ve bakış açısı hakkında önemli ipuçları sunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Osmanlı Tarihi, Dımaşk, İstanbul, Seyahatname, el-Gazzî

## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Seyahatnameler, gerek canlı dil ve anlatılarıyla gerek imparatorluğun farklı etnik, dini ve kültürel gruplarının algılarını doğrudan yansıtan öznel içerikleriyle, erken modern Osmanlı tarihinin önemli kaynaklarından. On altıncı yüzyılda bir diploması, ticaret ve kültür başkentine dönüşen İstanbul'u ziyaret eden birçok yerli ve yabancı şahıs, gözlem ve değerlendirmelerini içeren seyahatnameler kaleme aldılar. Bu şahıslardan bazıları, 922-923/1516-1517'de Memlük topraklarının Osmanlılar tarafından ele geçirilmesinden sonra yeni idare ve himaye merkezi olan İstanbul'a yolculuk eden Arap gezginlerdi. Modern araştırmacılar bu gezginlerin seyahatnamelerine dayanarak İstanbul ve Anadolu şehirlerinin topografyası ve sosyokültürel hayatı, Osmanlılar ile Arap elit arasındaki kültürel alışveriş ve güç mücadeleleri, kitap kültürü ve bilgi üretimi gibi muhtelif konular üzerine çalışmalar yapmışlardır. Bu makale, Dımaşklı bir alim olan Necmeddin el-Gazzî'nin (ö. 1061/1051) yakın bir tarihe kadar kayıp olduğu düşünülen İstanbul seyahatnamesinin ulaştığımız tek nüshasına odaklanarak bu literatüre katkı sunmayı hedeflemektedir.

Makale altı bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölüm, Gazzî'nin İstanbul seyahatinin tarihi bağlamını vermekte ve seyahatnamesinin mevcut nüshasını tanıtmaktadır. İkinci bölüm, Gazzî'nin Dımaşk'taki seyahat hazırlığından bahsetmektedir. Sonraki iki bölüm; şahıs, yapı ve sosyopolitik olayları merkeze alarak Gazzî'nin, sırasıyla Anadolu şehirleri ve İstanbul'a dair gözlemlerini incelemektedir. Beşinci bölüm Gazzî'nin Dımaşk'a dönüş yolculuğuna ve seyahatinin sonuçlarına odaklanmaktadır. Daha tematik olan altınca bölüm seyahatnemenin dili ve üslubu ile içerdiği rüya ve fal anekdotları gibi anlatı unsurlarını incelemektedir. Son sözde ise bu seyahatnemenin araştırmacılar için neden önemli bir kaynak olduğu tartışılmaktadır.

Necmeddin el-Gazzî, on dördüncü yüzyıldan itibaren Dımaşk'ta birçok âlim yetiştirmiş olan Gazzî ailesine mensuptu. Kırklı yaşlarının ortasında, Dımaşk'ın en bilgili Şâfiî fakihine meşrut olan Şâmiyye Berrâniyye Medresesi müderrisliğine atandı ve bir Şâfiî müftü olarak

öne çıktı. Ancak görev yaptığı medresenin 1032/1623 tarihinde şehirdeki başka bir âlime verilmesi üzerine pozisyonunu geri alabilmek amacıyla İstanbul'a seyahat etti. Dört buçuk ay süren (4 Mart–16 Temmuz 1623) bu macerasını *el-İkdu'l-manzûm fi'r-rihle ile'r-Rûm* isimli eserinde anlattı. Yakın bir zamana kadar günümüze ulaşmadığı düşünülen bu eserin müellif nüshasının Halep Vakfiyye Yazma Eserler Kütüphanesi'nde, bu nüshaya ait bir mikrofilmin ise Dubai'daki Merkezi Cum'atu'l-Mâcid li's-Sekâfe ve't-Turâs'da bulunduğunu tespit ettik. Bu makale söz konusu nüshayı kaynak olarak kullanmaktadır.

Görünüşe bakılırsa Gazzî, İstanbul'a ikbal ümidiyle değil mecbur olduğundan gitmekteydi. Dımaşk'taki yüksek enflasyon sebebiyle geride bıraktığı ailesi için duyduğu endişe, mevsim şartları sebebiyle yolculuğun zorlu olması ve Türkçe konuşan Osmanlı merkez coğrafyasında kendi kültürel konfor alanının dışına çıkacak olması Gazzî'nin gözünde İstanbul seyahatini çekici olmaktan çıkararak unsurlardan bazılarıydı.

Gazzî yolculuğa çıkmadan önce şehirdeki Osmanlı otoritelerini (vali, kadı, defterdar, Hanefî müftü vb.) ziyaret etti ve İstanbul'daki pozisyon mücadelesinde elini güçlendirecek destek mektupları topladı. İstanbul'a ilk yolculuğu olmasına rağmen önceki Arap seyyahların seyahatnameleri gibi Osmanlı merkezi hakkında bilgi sunan yazılı kaynaklara sahipti. Üstelik on altıncı yüzyılın ikinci yarısından itibaren Bilâdu's-Şam'ın Osmanlı merkezine idari ve ekonomik entegrasyonu Dımaşk-İstanbul arasındaki resmî ve gayriresmî hareketliliği artırmış, dolayısıyla şehirde imparatorluk başkentine dair bilgi veren çok sayıda sözlü kaynak ortaya çıkmıştı. Bu yazılı ve sözlü kaynaklar, Gazzî'nin Bilâdu'r-Rum olarak zikrettiği Osmanlı merkez topraklarının idari ve kültürel coğrafyasına dair bakışını seyahatinden önce büyük ölçüde şekillendirmişti.

Buna rağmen Gazzî'nin gördüğü Anadolu şehirleri, on altıncı yüzyıl Arap gezginlerin gördüğü Anadolu şehirlerinden oldukça farklıydı. Her şeyden önce Dımaşk ve İstanbul'u birbirine bağlayan güzergâhta bulunan hemen hemen her menzilde seyahati güvenli ve rahat kılmayı hedefleyen nispeten yeni sayılabilecek bir külliye bulunmaktaydı. Tüm bu imar faaliyetinin yanı sıra Gazzî, "Büyük Kaçgun" da denilen Celâlî İsyanları'nın Anadolu şehirlerinde yarattığı tahribatı da yakından gözleme fırsatı buldu.

Gazzî 22 Cemaziyelahir 1032/23 Nisan 1623'te İstanbul'a ulaştı. On ay önce Sultan II. Osman'ın katline şahit olan imparatorluk başkenti hizip mücadeleleri içindeydi. Gazzî şehirde vaktiyle Dımaşk kadılığı yapıp Osmanlı bürokrasisinde üst düzey makamlara yükselmiş olan birçok kişiyi içeren geniş bir ilişki ağına sahipti. Bu ağda en önemli isim şeyhülislamlık makamındaki Zekeriyazade Yahya Efendi (ö. 1053/1644) idi. Gazzî on yedinci yüzyılda Osmanlı ilmiye teşkilatında en yüksek pozisyonu elinde tutan şeyhülislamın desteğini almasına rağmen İstanbul'daki hizip mücadeleleri ve güç dengeleri sebebiyle hedefine ulaşamadı. Gazzî'nin seyahatnamesi II. Osman'ın katliyle IV. Murad'ın tahta çıkışı arasında İstanbul'daki hizip mücadelelerini dışarıdan gözlemeleme imkânı vermektedir. Bu dönemde sultan, şehzade, sadrazam, hanım sultan, şeyhülislam, ulema, saray ağaları, yeniçeriler gibi nüfuzlu aktörler

arasındaki güç dengeleri ve ittifaklar hızla değişmekteydi. Nitekim, Gazzî henüz Dımaşk yolundayken İstanbul'da dönemin Osmanlı müelliflerinin Cemiyet-i Câmi Vakası dedikleri bir kriz yaşandı. Gazzî'nin bu krizden güçlenerek çıkan İstanbul'daki dostları, Gazzî adına Şâmiyye Berrâniyye Medresesi için bir tayin kararı çıkarabildiler. Ancak bir süre sonra IV. Murad'ın tahta çıkışıyla güç dengeleri tekrar değişti ve medrese tekrar Gazzî'nin elinden alınmaya çalışıldı. Gazzî Dımaşk'a döndükten sonraki iki yıl içinde kaleme aldığı seyahatnamesini, on yedinci yüzyılda artık iyice belirginleşen ve "Arapça İstanbul seyahatnameleri" denebilecek bir alt yazım türünün şekil ve içerik alışkanlıkları içinde üretti. Seyahatname, Gazzî'nin çoğu seyahati sırasında gördüğü mekânlar ve şahıslar hakkında üç binden fazla beyit içermektedir ve bu özelliğiyle âdeta müstakil bir divan hüviyetindedir. Şiirlerin yanı sıra, Gazzî okuyucuları ile birçok rüyasını ve tefeülünü paylaşmaktadır.

Sonuç olarak bu seyahatname hem İstanbul'un iç karışıklıklara sahne olduğu bir döneme merkezden uzak bir eyaletten bir pencere aralaması hem de bir taşra Şâfiî müderris-müftüsünün değerlendirmeleri ve iç dünyasını sunması açısından önemli bir kaynaktır.

Travel accounts, both official and non-official, are significant sources for the study of the early modern Ottoman Empire.<sup>1\*</sup> These accounts often provide useful detailed information about people, places and historical events that might hardly be found in contemporary official documents. Moreover, unlike the monotonous bureaucratic language of the latter, these accounts usually have a vibrant narrative and contain subjective authorial observations and interpretations that directly reflect diverse perceptions of the empire by various ethnic, religious and cultural groups and people.<sup>2</sup>

The expansion of the Ottoman territories in the sixteenth century, along with concurrent imperial policies and investments, led to the transformation of Istanbul into a lively diplomatic, commercial and cultural center. This, in turn, multiplied the number of Ottoman subjects and foreigners who visited the city and subsequently recorded their journeys.<sup>3</sup> Among these, Ottoman subjects in the Arab provinces constituted more than a tiny minority. Many Arab travelers, particularly scholars seeking appointment and patronage, visited the Ottoman capital that replaced Cairo as the new imperial hub following the takeover of the Mamluk lands in 922-923/1516-1517, and composed travelogues upon their return to share their experiences and observations of Anatolian cities and Istanbul with others.<sup>4</sup> Among the most well-known figures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (d. 984/1577, travel in 936/1530), Qutb al-Dīn al-Nahrawālī (d. 990/1582, travels in 943/1536 and 965/1558), Muhibb al-Dīn al-Hamawī (d. 1016/1608, travel in 983/1575), Alī al-Tamghrūtī (d. 1002/1594, travel in 998/1589), Hāfız al-Dīn al-Qudsī (d. 1055/1645, travel in 1013/1604), Muhammad al-Kibrīt (d. 1070/1660, travel in 1039/1630), Fadl Allāh al-Muhibbī (d. 1082/1671, travel in 1051/1641), and Ibrāhīm al-Khiyārī (d. 1083/1672, travel in 1080/1669).

Modern researchers have utilized the travelogues of the abovementioned names to shed light on various aspects of early modern Ottoman history. Some have portrayed the architectural topography and socio-economic life in contemporary Istanbul and Anatolian cities based on comparative readings of these travel accounts.<sup>5</sup> Others have employed them as the main source

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- 1 \* Note on transliteration: I gave personal names in Ottoman Turkish context with their modern Turkish equivalents, and employed a modified version of the transliteration guidelines recommended by the *The Isnad Citation Style 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* for personal names, book titles and texts in Arabic or Persian contexts, without dots.
  - 2 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Approaching Ottoman History: An Introduction to the Sources* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 110-143; Nida N. Nalçacı, "İstanbul'un Tarihsel Kaynakları Olarak Seyahatnameler", *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 8/16 (2010), 523-562.
  - 3 Metin And, *Istanbul in the Sixteenth Century: the City, the Palace, Daily Life* (Istanbul: Akbank, 1994); Emrah Safa Gürkan, "The Early Modern Istanbul as a Center of Diplomacy", *From Antiquity to the 21st Century History of Istanbul*. (Accessed 24 November 2022).
  - 4 Ralf Elger, *Glaube, Skepsis, Poesie: Arabische Istanbul-Reisende im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag in Kommission, 2011). Also see, Elger, "Istanbul in Early Modern Arabic Literature", *From Antiquity to the 21st Century History of Istanbul*. (Accessed 24 November 2022).
  - 5 For example, see Ekrem Kâmil, "Gazzi-Mekki Seyahatnamesi: Hicri Onuncu-Milâdi on Altıncı Asırda Yurdumuzu Dolaşan Arab Seyyahlarından Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad al-Nahrawālī ve Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazzī", *Tarih Semineri Dergisi* 2/1 (1937), 3-90; Mustafa S. Küçükaşçı, "İki Arap Âliminin Gözünden XVI. Yüzyılda İstanbul", *I. Uluslararası Osmanlı İstanbulu Sempozyumu Bildirileri, 29 Mayıs-1 Haziran 2013*, eds. Feridun M. Emecen and Emrah Safa Gürkan (Istanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2013), 71-86; Abdulrahim

to present a vivid picture of the Ottoman sociability, mindset and power relations as observed in the encounter between the Ottomans and Arab elite of the former Mamluk lands.<sup>6</sup> Still others have scrutinized these works within the framework of book culture and production.<sup>7</sup> This article aims to contribute to this literature formed around the travel notes of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century itinerant Arab scholars by introducing a manuscript of Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī's (d. 1061/1651) travelogue, detailing his journey from Damascus to Istanbul, which has long been considered lost. This travelogue was partially utilized in a recent study to throw light on Najm al-Dīn's network of relationships in Istanbul but has not yet been fully examined.<sup>8</sup> Thus, this article presents Najm al-Dīn's travelogue as a newly discovered primary source, offers an analysis of its linguistic and thematic elements, and critically evaluates its significance for the field of Ottoman studies.

The following part consists of six sections. The first section provides an authorial and historical context for Najm al-Dīn's travelogue and introduces the manuscript copy examined. The second section depicts Najm al-Dīn's preparations for the journey. The subsequent two sections deal with his travel experience and observations respectively in Anatolian towns and the Ottoman capital with a particular focus on architectural structures, contemporary elites and important socio-political events. The fifth section handles the author's return to Damascus and the outcome of his journey. The sixth section, which is rather a thematic one, concentrates on narrative elements in the travelogue such as the choice of vocabulary, poetry, and dream anecdotes. Finally, the epilogue highlights the significance of Najm al-Dīn's work as a source for future studies.

### **Najm al-Din al-Ghazzī (977-1061/1570-1651) and his Istanbul Travelogue (1032/1623)**

Najm al-Dīn was born into a learned Shāfi'ī family known as Ghazzīs, which, though originally hailing from the city of Gaza, resided in Damascus from the mid-fourteenth century. He was the fifth generation of his family to live in Damascus. His father, grandfather and great grandfathers had held important scholarly posts in the city for the previous two centuries,

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Abu Husayn - Tarek Abu Hussein, "On the Road to the Abode of Felicity: Observations of a Damascene Scholar in Anatolia and Istanbul in 1530", *Ostour* 3/6 (July 2017), 33-44; Abdulsattar Elhajhamed, "Kadı Muhibbüddin el-Hamevî'nin Bevâdî'd-Dumû'il-'Andemiyye bi-Vâdî'd-Diyâr'ir-Rûmiyye Adlı Seyahatnamesi Üzerine Bir İnceleme", *Nüsha Şarkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 19/48 (2019), 203-26; Ayşe Türkhan, "Arap Seyahatnamelerinde Osmanlı İstanbul'u ve Türkler: İbrahim el-Hiyârî Seyahatnamesi" (Ph.D. diss., Istanbul, Istanbul University, 2021).

6 For example, see Yehoshua Frenkel, "The Ottomans and the Mamluks through the Eyes of Arab Travelers (in 16th–17th Centuries)", *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition: Continuity and Change in Egypt and Bilād Al-Shām in the Sixteenth Century*, eds. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2016), 275-293; Helen Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons: Conquest and Community in Early Modern Ottoman Lands* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022).

7 For example, see Nir Shafir, "The Road from Damascus: Circulation and the Redefinition of Islam in the Ottoman Empire, 1620-1720" (Ph.D. diss., Los Angeles, University of California, 2016), Ch. V.

8 See Gürzat Kami, "Damascene Scholars in the Mamluk–Ottoman Transition: History of Three Generations of the Ghazzī Family (1450–1650)" (Ph.D. diss., Istanbul, Marmara University, 2023), Ch. VII.

including a professorship, a judgeship, and a muftiship.<sup>9</sup> His father was the abovementioned Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, the Shāfi‘ī mufti of Damascus, who traveled to Istanbul in his youth in 936/1530 and composed a travelogue thereafter.

Najm al-Dīn appeared as an influential scholar in Syrian society and politics in the early decades of the seventeenth century. For example, he assumed a critical role in the trial and execution of a regional Sufi figure accused of heresy in Damascus in 1018/1610.<sup>10</sup> In 1025/1616, he joined a delegation committee of Damascene notables who visited Ottoman authorities in Aleppo to request a reduction in the extraordinary taxes (*awārid*) imposed on Damascenes to finance the Safavid campaign.<sup>11</sup> That same year, he replaced his father-in-law in the professorship of the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa, one of the most prestigious and lucrative Shāfi‘ī educational institutions in Damascus dating back to the Ayyubid era, whose endowment deed stipulated the professorship to be “the most knowledgeable Shāfi‘ī scholar (*a ‘lam ‘ulamā’ al-Shāfi ‘īyya*)” in the city.<sup>12</sup> After the successive deaths of the leading Damascene muftis including his father-in-law, he eventually appeared as one of the few Shāfi‘ī jurists in Damascus from the 1620s.

After seven years of teaching at the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa, Najm al-Dīn lost his professorship to another distinguished local Shāfi‘ī scholar, Shams al-Dīn al-Maydānī (d. 1033/1624), who managed to receive an appointment diploma (*barāt*) to Najm al-Dīn’s post thanks to his powerful connections in Istanbul in early 1032/1623.<sup>13</sup> This compelled Najm al-Dīn to travel to the Ottoman capital, where he would endeavor to reclaim his position. His Istanbul adventure took him four and a half months in total (4 March–16 July). He organized his travel notes in the following two years, and completed his travelogue entitled *al-‘Iqd al-manzūm fī al-rihla ilā al-Rūm* (The Arranged Necklace in the Travel to [the Lands of] Rūm) on 18 Dhū al-Hijja 1034 / 21 September 1625.

9 For the history of the early generations of al-Ghazzī family in Damascus and Najm al-Dīn’s life story prior to his travel, see Kami, “Damascene Scholars in Mamluk-Ottoman Transition”.

10 This Sufi was Yahyā b. ‘Isā al-Karakī. For his biography, see Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Lutf al-samar wa qatf al-thamar min tarājim a ‘yān al-tabaqa al-ūlā min al-qarn al-hādī ashār*, ed. Mahmūd al-Shaykh (Damascus: Wizāra al-Thaqāfa wa-l-Irshād al-Qawmī, 1981), 698-707. For al-Karakī’s ideas, see Khaled El-Rouayheb, “Heresy and Sufism in the Arabic-Islamic World, 1550–1750: Some Preliminary Observations”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 73/3 (2010), 357-80.

11 al-Ghazzī, *Lutf al-samar*, 322. Also see Abdul-rahim Abu-Husayn, *Provincial Leadership in Syria 1575-1650* (Lebanon: American University of Beirut, 1985), 37-41.

12 al-Ghazzī, *Lutf al-samar*, 314. For the endowment stipulation concerning the competency of the professor of the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa, see Ibn Tūlūn, *Tārīkh al-Shām fī matla’ al-ahd al-uthmānī: 929–951 h. / 1520–1544 m.* (Abu Dhabi: Dār al-Kutub al-Wataniyya, 2009), ed. Ahmad Ibesch, 356; Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib al-sai’ra bi-a ‘yān al-mi’a al-āshira*, ed. Khalīl al-Mansūr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1997), 2/112, 3/110-111. For the history of the madrasa and other endowment stipulations, see Harun Yılmaz, *Zengi ve Eyyubi Dimaşk’ında Ulema ve Medrese (1154-1260)* (Istanbul: Klasik Yayınevi, 2017), 79-80.

13 For al-Maydānī’s biography, see al-Ghazzī, *Lutf al-samar*, 172-187. Najm al-Dīn reports that al-Maydānī made payments for the professorship of the Shāmiyya to certain Ottoman officials in Istanbul, who were engaged in the sale of endowed positions (*al-mutājara fī ikhrāj wazā’if al-nās li-l-nās*). See *ibid*, 177-178. Yet al-Maydānī’s connections in the Ottoman capital seem to be stronger than this as will be highlighted in the following pages.

Until recently, it was believed that Najm al-Dīn's travelogue had not survived. Mahmud Sheikh, who writes a detailed biography for Najm al-Dīn in the preamble of his critical edition of *Lutf al-samar*, claims that his Istanbul travelogue was lost (*mafqūd*).<sup>14</sup> More recent studies repeat this assertion giving reference to Sheikh.<sup>15</sup> Michael Winter states that "a copy of this travelogue (...) is believed to be located in Köprülü Library (Istanbul), ms. no. 1390 and there is apparently also a Turkish translation of the work."<sup>16</sup> However, Winter seems to have been mistaken because the given reference leads to a manuscript copy of the travelogue of Najm al-Dīn's father.<sup>17</sup>

An extant manuscript copy of Najm al-Dīn's travelogue is located at the Waqfiyya Library in Aleppo and a microfilm version of this copy is available in Juma al-Majid Center for Culture and Heritage in Dubai.<sup>18</sup> It consists of 181 folios. A handwritten note on the opening page states that it was written by the author himself (*hāzihī al-nuskha bi-khatt mu'allifihā al-Sheikh Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī al-Āmirī*). The colophon page repeats the same information writing "this copy was completed on Monday morning on 18 Dhū al-Hijja 1034 by its author (*bi-khatt mu'allifihā*)."<sup>19</sup> The resemblance between the handwriting in this copy and the author's handwriting in his other works reinforces the prediction that the surviving manuscript of the travelogue is an autograph copy.<sup>20</sup> Several corrections in the text further suggest it was a master draft copy of the travelogue.<sup>21</sup> There are also many marginal notes in different handwritings giving information about the vocabulary and people mentioned in the text, most probably added by the successive owners of the copy.<sup>22</sup>

14 al-Ghazzī, *Lutf al-samar*, 107.

15 For example, see Tarek Abu-Husayn, "Historian and Historical Thought in an Ottoman World: Biographical Writing in 16th and 17th Century Syria / Bilad al-Sham" (MA Thesis, Istanbul, Sabancı University, 2010), 46. Also see, Cevat İzgi, "Necmeddin el-Gazzī", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Accessed 27 November, 2022).

16 Michael Winter, "al-Gazzī", *Historians of the Ottoman Empire* (Accessed 27 November 2022).

17 It is Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli' al-badriyya fī al-manāzil al-rūmiyya*, ed. al-Mahdī Īd al-Rawādiyya (Amman: Dār al-Fāris, 2004).

18 Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *al-Iqd al-manzūm fī al-rihla ilā al-Rūm* (Aleppo: The Waqfiyya Library, 180). Ibid (Dubai: The Juma al-Majid Center for Culture and Heritage, 238096). I would like to express my gratitude to the personnel at the Juma al-Majid Center, who helped me to obtain a pdf copy of this manuscript.

19 *al-Rihla*, 181a.

20 For example, see Najm al-Dīn's handwriting in the manuscript copy of his *Itqān mā yahsun min al-akhbār al-dā'ira 'alā al-alsun* located in Dār al-Kutub al-Misriyya ms. no. 29902-b, microfilm no. 49511. Also, see ibid, ed. Khalīl b. Muhammad al-'Arabī (Cairo: al-Fāruq al-Hadītha, 1995) 16-17, 21-22.

21 For examples of authorial corrections, see *al-Rihla*, 34b, 46b, 47a, 51a, 62b, 68a, 89a, 90a, 94a, and 162a.

22 For examples of explanations and derivations of some Arabic words, see *al-Rihla*, 23b, 58b. For examples of biographical references, see *al-Rihla*, 75a, 100a.



## Preparations for the Journey

If we rely on his words, Najm al-Dīn was disinclined to make a journey to Istanbul. In the preamble of his travelogue, he frankly writes:

*Traveling had never come to my mind, neither for position nor for fortune, except making pilgrimage to Mecca or visiting Jerusalem. I was content with my residence in Damascus (...) by learning and teaching and issuing fatwa to those asking for religious rulings; and I was satisfied (...) by the income from the professorship of the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa.*<sup>23</sup>

However, his dismissal from this teaching post forced him to travel to Istanbul to guarantee his financial survival in Damascus. Najm al-Dīn writes about the aforementioned al-Maydānī, the new professor at the Shāmiyya Madrasa, saying “he took over our sustenance and took away our morsel.”<sup>24</sup>

As a Shāfiʿī mufti teaching in the non-imperial madrasas of Damascus, Najm al-Dīn was a semi-independent provincial scholar. Thus, unlike contemporary Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats, who routinely traveled across the empire to fill hierarchically ordered teaching and judicial cadres, he had much less geographical mobility.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, this would not be his first trip outside Damascus—as mentioned above, he had traveled to Aleppo previously, and had also made several pilgrimages.<sup>26</sup> It would appear, then, that his uneasiness with the idea of traveling stemmed rather from the fact that this would be his first venture outside the Arab cultural domain. The main Ottoman lands (the Balkan-Anatolia complex usually labelled as the lands of Rūm) differed in language, culture, and ethnicity from the Arab provinces of the empire, and a journey to Istanbul would require Najm al-Dīn to leave his comfort zone. His poetry throughout the travelogue repeatedly conveys his reluctance to travel to the Ottoman capital. For example, he reiterates in a verse:

*By God, neither the earlobe of Rūm's prosperity  
Nor my longing for it drove me to this journey*<sup>27</sup>

There was high inflation in Damascene markets, and Najm al-Dīn was apparently worried about the family he left behind.<sup>28</sup> None of his family members except his eldest son Suʿūdī (d. 1071/1661), who was at his thirties, accompanied him to Istanbul.<sup>29</sup> In the travelogue, he

23 “*qad kāna al-safar lā yakhtur lī ‘alā al-bāl lā li-tahsīl jāh wa lā li-kasb māl illā an yakūn safaran li-l-haj al-sharīf aw li-ziyāra Bayt al-Maqdis al-munīf wa innā rādin bi-l-iqāma fī Dimashq al-Shām (...)* ‘*alā al-ishṭighāl bi-talab al-‘ilm wa ifādatihī li-tālibihī wa i’tā’ al-fatwā li-sā’il al-hukm al-sharī’ (...)* mim mā yāhsul min ‘ulūfa al-tadrīs bi-l-Madrasa al-Shāmiyya al-Barrāniyya”, *al-Rihla*, 1b.

24 “*zafira bi-rizqatinā wa qabada bi-yadihī ‘alā luqmatinā*”, *al-Rihla*, 2b.

25 For the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats and their career tracks and mobility, see Yasemin Beyazıt, *Osmanlı İlimiye Mesleğinde İstihdam (XVI. Yüzyıl)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014); Abdurrahman Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

26 Najm al-Dīn performed twelve pilgrimages in his life, and at least five of them took place before his Istanbul travel. See, al-Ghazzī, *Lutf al-samar*, 86-89.

27 “*wallāhī mā harrakanī fī rihlatī / rawm al-ghinā bi-l-Rūm lā wa la-l-sibā*”, *al-Rihla*, 47b.

28 “*wa laqad fāraqnā Dimashq wa as ‘āruhā ghāliyya*”, *al-Rihla*, 8a.

29 See Muhammad Amīn al-Muhibbī, *Khulāsa al-athar fī a’yān al-qarn al-hādī ashār*, (s.n, n.d), 2/209; *al-Rihla*,

provides an emotional picture of his parting moment from his seven year-old son Muhammad and Su'ūdī's farewell to his son 'Alī.<sup>30</sup> He would avail himself of every opportunity to correspond with his family through the travelers to and from Damascus during the journey.<sup>31</sup>

The distance to the Ottoman capital was another factor that made the journey unappealing. Moreover, it was still cold, and this would make the journey harder. It took Najm al-Dīn and his companions nearly fifty days (from 4 March until 24 April) to arrive at Istanbul. They had to spend more than one night at several stations along their route due to bad weather conditions.<sup>32</sup> Najm al-Dīn called the weather in Anatolia freezing cold (*zamharīr*), and even composed poetry comparing the winters of Anatolia and Damascus.<sup>33</sup> People he met in Anatolian towns told him that it would have been better if he had delayed his travel to spring as winter in the lands of Rūm lasted longer than in Syria.<sup>34</sup>

However, Najm al-Dīn apparently had no time to wait until the coming of spring. Within a few weeks, if not days, of losing his madrasa to al-Maydānī, he had decided to travel to Istanbul.<sup>35</sup> He would need support for his endeavors in Istanbul. Thus, he consulted with the Ottoman authorities in Damascus about his travel plan and requested reference letters backing his case. His first visit was to Mustafa Pasha, the governor of the province of Damascus, “with whose rule Damascenes felt comfortable unlike the previous governors.”<sup>36</sup> The pasha gave Najm al-Dīn supporting letters (*an'ama bi-l-makātīb wa-l-'urūd*). Najm al-Dīn then met the treasurer of the province, as well as Abdullah Efendi b. Mahmud (d. 1042/1633), the retired judge of Cairo, and Çavuşzade İbrahim Efendi (d. 1050/1641), the incumbent judge of Damascus.<sup>37</sup> Finally, he visited Abdurrahman Efendi (d. 1051/1641), the state appointed Ottoman Hanafī mufti of the city.<sup>38</sup> According to Najm al-Dīn's account, all these officials – including Çavuşzade who already regretted his initial approval of al-Maydānī's transfer to the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya– supported his decision to travel and wrote reference letters for him.<sup>39</sup>

94b, 102a.

30 *al-Rihla*, 5a, 6a. For Su'ūdī's biography, see al-Muhibbī, *Khulāsa al-athar*, 2/309.

31 *al-Rihla*, 25b, 27a-b, 131b.

32 For example, see their journey in Hama, Antioch, Adana, and Konya in *al-Rihla*, 14b, 21a, 22a, 36b, 42b.

33 *al-Rihla*, 28b.

34 *al-Rihla*, 62a.

35 Najm al-Dīn writes in his *Lutf al-samar* that al-Maydānī received an appointment warrant to his Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa in hijrī 1032 (without specifying the exact date) and the incumbent judge of Damascus Çavuşzade İbrahim Efendi gave the professorship to him. *Lutf al-samar*, 177-178. The Ottoman biographer Şeyhi informs that Çavuşzade started serving in Damascus in Rabī' I 1032. See Çavuşzade's biography in Şeyhi Mehmed Efendi, *Vekāyi' u l-fuzalā: Şeyhi'nin Şakā'ik Zeyli* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2018), 423-424. Considering that Najm al-Dīn departed from Damascus in 3 Jumādā II 1032, we can say that he lost no time to travel following his dismissal from his madrasa.

36 “*al-nās minhu fi hulw bāl li-khilāf ghayrihī min al-hukkām*”, *al-Rihla*, 3a.

37 For Abdullah b. Mahmud's biography, see Nev'izade Atayī, *Hadā'iku l-hakā'ik fi tekmeleti'ş-Şakā'ik: Nev'izāde Atāyi'nin Şakā'ik Zeyli* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu, 2017), 1837-38.

38 For Abdurrahman Efendi's biography, see Abū al-Fadl al-Murādī, *Arf al-bashām fi man waliya fatwā Dimashq al-Shām*, ed. Muhammad Mutī' al-Hāfiz - Riyād Abd al-Hamīd Murād (Damascus-Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1988), 66-72.

39 “*kulluhum kataba lanā al-makātīb wa-l-rasā'il wa-l-i'timād 'alallāh fi amrinā ba'd naf' al-wasā'il*”, *al-Rihla*, 3b. For Çavuşzade's changing attitude, see *al-Rihla*, 2a, 3a-b; al-Ghazzī, *Lutf al-samar*, 178.

## Seventeenth Century Anatolia from the Eyes of a Provincial Scholar

Despite his hurry, Najm al-Dīn appears to have been well-prepared for his journey. He had read his father's Istanbul travelogue beforehand, and most probably brought his own copy of the work along to read it again during the journey. In his travelogue, he gives several references to his father's observations on Anatolian stations and quotes from his work.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the aforementioned Arab travelers, al-Nahrawālī and al-Hamawī, who had visited Istanbul respectively in 1558 and 1573, were in Najm al-Dīn's close circle—the former was his father's friend and the latter was his teacher—thus, Najm al-Dīn most likely knew their travel accounts as well.<sup>41</sup>

Apart from the written sources, there were also oral accounts given by many people traveling between Damascus and the Ottoman center. Since the second half of the sixteenth century, Damascus had been a highly integrated province. Its governor was appointed from among the Ottoman pashas in the center, and its judge was one of the high-ranking Ottoman dignitary scholars (*mawālī*) coming from Istanbul.<sup>42</sup> The city hosted hundreds of janissary soldiers as well as many Ottoman bureaucrats.<sup>43</sup> Many Damascene scholars traveled to Istanbul and some even learned Turkish.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, located at the intersection of the pilgrimage roads, the city was an important station where thousands of pilgrims arriving from the core Ottoman lands met annually before departing for Mecca.<sup>45</sup>

These written and oral sources seem to have shaped Najm al-Dīn's vision of the cultural and administrative geography of the main Ottoman lands he visited for the first time. For him, as for his contemporaries, today's Anatolian territories were part of *bilād al-Rūm*, a term denoting

40 For example, he writes in Mopsuestia (in today's Adana) that he looked for the monumental tree under which his father had taken shade when he arrived there. Then, he quotes his father's verses about this tree from *al-Matāli*'. See *al-Rihla*, 27b-28a; al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli*', 89-90. In Akşehir, he notes the exact date of his father's arrival at this town and calculates that 95 years 7 months and 19 days had passed since then. *al-Rihla*, 51b. For other references to and quotations from *al-Matāli*', see 127b-128a.

41 Najm al-Dīn penned long biographical entries for both al-Nahrawālī (d. 1582) and al-Hamawī (d. 1610) and mentioned their Istanbul journey in these entries. See, al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, 3/40-43; al-Ghazzī, *Lutf al-samar*, 114-123.

42 M. Adnan Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus in the Sixteenth Century* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1982); Enver Çakar, "XVI. Yüzyılda Şam Beylerbeyiliğinin İdarî Taksimati", *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 13/1 (2003), 351-74; Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans*, 200-211.

43 Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus*, 91-115; Linda T. Darling, *The Janissaries of Damascus in the Sixteenth Century, or, How Conquering a Province Changed the Ottoman Empire*, (Otto Spies Memorial Lecture 6, eds. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen) (EBVerlag, 2019). One of the well-known Ottoman bureaucrats who spent years in Damascus was Mustafa Āli (d. 1600), see Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Āli (1541-1600)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 82-85.

44 For some examples, see al-Ghazzī, *Lutf al-samar*, 30-41, 41-42, 139-141, 216-221, 251-252, 274-275, 343-346, 475, 480-481, 543, 547-550.

45 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans: The Hajj under the Ottomans 1517-1683* (Tauris, 1994); Nir Shafir, "In an Ottoman Holy Land: The Hajj and the Road from Damascus, 1500-1800", *History of Religions* 60/1 (2020), 1-36.

the cultural sphere formed mainly in the Balkan-Anatolian lands.<sup>46</sup> Thus, he calls even the Mediterranean he saw in Payas (in today's Antioch) the sea of Rūm (*bahr al-Rūm*).<sup>47</sup> Yet he is also aware of different administrative categories within the Rūmī domain. For example, in Akköprü (in today's Osmaniye), he writes “this is the last territory the Circassians had ruled over, and the Karamanid lands extended beyond.”<sup>48</sup> In Konya and the surrounding towns, he says “these are part of the Karamanid lands.”<sup>49</sup> Apparently, Najm al-Dīn had in mind a hierarchy of geographical places as regions versus sub-regions, and categories as cultural versus administrative.

Frenkel's study suggests that these historical references were not peculiar to Najm al-Dīn but rather a shared feature of the historical imagination and discourse of the contemporary educated Arab elite—the pre-Ottoman era was still alive in their collective memory.<sup>50</sup> Yet one should not overlook the fact that Najm al-Dīn endeavored to conform to the increasingly established writing standards of the subgenre of “Istanbul travelogue in Arabic” as well. The written travel accounts of Arab educated elite who visited Istanbul after the Ottoman conquest of the Mamluk territories, primarily for motives such as patronage and appointment, formed this subgenre in the course of the sixteenth century. It sufficiently matured in the seventeenth century, prompting some contemporary Arab travelers to present their Istanbul travelogues as a gift to the Ottoman ruling elite.<sup>51</sup> Najm al-Dīn does not explicitly state whether he planned to devote his work to an Ottoman patron, yet he composed it within the framework of this literary context by imitating earlier travel accounts. It is not surprising, therefore, to see that Najm al-Dīn's father employs the same historical-administrative references in the abovementioned Akköprü and Konya in his *al-Matāli'* almost a century earlier.<sup>52</sup> Unlike his father who was born and educated in the Mamluk era, Najm al-Dīn never witnessed the Mamluk rule in Syria. Nevertheless, he borrows his father's references to the Circassian rule in *al-Matāli'* while following the conventions formed around *al-Matāli'* and subsequent travelogues.

As previously stated, there was high mobility between Syria and the Ottoman capital in the early seventeenth century. The prerequisite of this mobility was no doubt the safety and convenience of travelers on roads. While passing through many Anatolian cities on his journey Najm al-Dīn mentions the various places that had an imperial complex containing

46 For the multi-layered means of the term *Rūm*, see Cemal Kafadar, “A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rūm”, *Muqarnas* 24 (2007), 7–25; Salih Özbaran, *Bir Osmanlı Kimliği 14.–17. Yüzyıllarda Rūm/Rūmī Aidiyet ve İmgeleri* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004).

47 *al-Rihla*, 25a, 27a. For his other usages see 2b (*ard al-Rūm*), 39b (*khutba 'alā tariqa al-Rūm bi-l-alhān*), 52b (*ahl al-Rūm*), 62a (*bard al-Rūm*), 63a and 149b (*lugha al-Rūm* and *Rūmiyya*, meaning Turkish).

48 “*kāna yantahī hukm al-Dawla al-Jarkasiyya wa minhu ibtidāan al-Bilād al-Qaramāniyya*”, *al-Rihla*, 37b.

49 “*wa hiya min bilād al-Karaman*”, *al-Rihla*, 41b.

50 Frenkel, “The Ottomans and the Mamluks through the Eyes of Arab Travelers (in 16th–17th Centuries)”.

51 For example, the aforementioned Kibrūt and Fadl Allāh Muhibbī, who visited Istanbul after Najm al-Dīn in the first half of the seventeenth century, devoted their travelogues to the Ottoman chief jurist. See Shafir, “The Road from Damascus”, 243, 255–56, 269; al-Muhibbī, *Khulāsa al-athar*, 3/278, 286.

52 al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 99 and 102.

accommodation facilities for travelers. The Sokollu Mehmed Pasha Complex in Payas,<sup>53</sup> Piri Pasha Khān in Adana,<sup>54</sup> Murteza Pasha Khān in Akköprü,<sup>55</sup> Mehmed Pasha Khān in Erkilet,<sup>56</sup> and the Sultan Selim Complex in Karapınar<sup>57</sup> are some of the buildings constructed by the Ottoman imperial figures. The services offered by these complexes facilitated Najm al-Dīn's journey from Syria to Istanbul.<sup>58</sup> Some of these buildings were rather new—for example, Mehmed Pasha's khān in Erkilet was only six years old. Some others were endowed by figures who had a connection to Syria—for example, Murteza Pasha was one of the former governors of Damascus.<sup>59</sup>

These constructions at travel stations no doubt made Anatolian roads more secure and comfortable for travelers. Yet this security was undermined by the Jalālī revolts, which had posed a serious threat to both travelers and inhabitants in Anatolian towns since the late sixteenth century. In the early seventeenth century, the Ottomans witnessed a huge wave of peasant escape from Anatolian villages, driven by concerns for security, referred to as the *büyük kacgun* in historical literature. Fortunately, Najm al-Dīn's journey coincided with a period in which the Jalālī revolts had slackened. Kuyucu Murad Pasha's (d. 1020/1611) harsh measures against the Jalālīs in 1015-1019/1606-1610 had broken their power significantly.<sup>60</sup> Despite this, Najm al-Dīn observed the destruction inflicted by the Jalālīs in Anatolia. For example, in the vicinity of Konya he writes, “we arrived at a village called Şarkmar on the left side of the road; it was a big village, however, much of it had been destroyed, and owls and crows had nestled in its ruins.”<sup>61</sup> After a few stops, they passed through another village where the majority of the young dwellers had abandoned their lands due to the threat posed by the Jalālīs.<sup>62</sup> In Bolvadin, he writes:

*11 Jumādī II Thursday. We prayed before sunrise near the Sinan Pasha village. Then, we kept moving until a muddy field. We were informed that an armed conflict between Nasif Pasha's men and the Jalālīs took place in this field, and Nasif Pasha could not advance further because of mud and was forced to retreat to the bridge on the river, which flowed into Akşehir lake.<sup>63</sup>*

53 *al-Rihla*, 25a.

54 *al-Rihla*, 35b.

55 *al-Rihla*, 36b.

56 *al-Rihla*, 39a.

57 *al-Rihla*, 40b.

58 For other buildings, see *al-Rihla*, 44a, 46a, 60b, 63b, 77b.

59 See Najm al-Dīn's verses praising Murteza Pasha when he was the Governor of Damascus on 15 Ramadan 1031/24 July 1622, *al-Rihla*, 37b.

60 Mustafa Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlük ve Düzenlik Kavgaı “Celalî İsyancıları”* (Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1995), 455-501; Müteba İlgürel, “Celalî İsyancıları”, *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Accessed 10 December 2022).

61 “*wa akhaznā fi al-tarīq (...) hattā nazalnā ākhir ilā nahār ilā qarya yuqālu lahā Sharqmār wa hiya ‘an al-tarīq min nāhiya al-yasār fa-idhā hiya qarya kabīra illā anna aktharahā kharāb ya ‘wī ilayhā al-būm wa-l-ghurāb’*”, *al-Rihla*, 45a.

62 “*kānat fıya ahl tilka al-bilād tanqusu min al-jalāliyya wa ahl al-fasād*”, *al-Rihla*, 51a.

63 “*(...) yawm al-thulathā hādī ashara jumādī al-thānī wa sallaynā al-subh wa qad qāraba al-isfār bi-l-qurb min qarya Sinān Pasha (...) thumma sirnā hattā ataynā ‘alā ard malaq (...) wa qad akhbaranā annahū kāna ‘inda hādihā al-jisr waq’ a bayn Nāsif Pasha wa bayn al-Jalāliyya. Wa anna Nāsif Pasha lam yantasif bihā li-annahū*

Nasif Pasha (also known as Nasuh Pasha) (d. 1023/1614) had been the governor of the province of Aleppo in 1012/1603, some twenty years earlier.<sup>64</sup> The Ottoman central government sent him to Bolvadin to suppress the Jalālī leader Taviḥ Halil in 1015/1605 but his troops were defeated around the bridge Najm al-Dīn mentions above. Taviḥ Halil's victory over the Ottoman pasha encouraged him to attack and plunder the surrounding villages.<sup>65</sup> It seems that the memory of Nasif Pasha's confrontation with Taviḥ Halil's men about two decades previously was still remembered in the region so much so that the locals gave Najm al-Dīn a vivid description of the clash that took place near the bridge.

The growing mobility between the Ottoman capital and the Arab provinces led to a corresponding increase in cultural exchange on both sides. Unlike previous generations of Arab travelers, Najm al-Dīn had a deeper knowledge of some Anatolian saints. For instance, his father, who visited Konya in 1530, writes, "here is the tomb of a famous saint called Molla Khunkār,"<sup>66</sup> probably learning about the famous mystic Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī (d. 672/1273) for the first time. Najm al-Dīn, on the other hand, mentions him without feeling the need to introduce him:

*We visited Molla Khunkār's tomb and prayed secretly and openly. Then, we met Mawlawī Shaykh Ebu Bekir Çelebi, who was from Khunkār's progeny. (...) I said:*

*In the city of Konya we took a break,*

*And visited the Exalted the Great.*

*He is the Khunkār; Monla of the folk*

*Blessed with their wise, elegant saint.*

*(...) We attended a samā' gathering. It is a known practice that the dervishes perform whirling accompanied by tambourine and flute.<sup>67</sup>*

Like several members of his family from earlier generations, Najm al-Dīn was a Sufi-scholar. His grandfather was affiliated to the Qādirī order. His father and elder brother were frequent attendees of Samādī and Mahya gatherings, two unique Sufi communities in Damascus that performed their dhikr with the accompaniment of drums and lanterns.<sup>68</sup> Thus, he was familiar with Sufi practices. His tolerance, however, had limits. When he attended another Mawlawī gathering in Konya on his way back to Damascus—for which he provides a vivid description on an entire page—he observed that the dervishes bowed in front of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī's tomb adorned with silver and gold. He disapproved of this practice, writing:

*wajada al-ard bi-l-mā' muḡhatta wa lam yajid illā al-jisr muḡaddāh. Wa hādhā al-mā' yantahī ilā birke Akṣehir", al-Rihla, 56b.*

64 al-Ghazzī, *Lutf al-samar*, 679-689. Ömer İşbilir, "Nasuh Paşa", *TDV İslām Ansiklopedisi* (Accessed 4 December 2022).

65 Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası*, 471, 484, 486.

66 "maqām rajul mashhūr bi-l-wilāya yuqāl lahū Molla Khunkār", al-Ghazzī, *al-Matāli'*, 102.

67 "(...) wa zurnā darīh Molla Khunkār wa da'wnā Allah 'indahū bi-l-sirr wa-l-ijhār thumma zurnā Ebu Bekir Çelebi ustādīh al-Mawlawiyya wa huwa min sulāla al-Khunkāriyya (...) Wa qultu: Bi-Kūniyyata al-madīna qad nazalnā / Fa-zurnā sahib al-qadri al-'alī / huwa-l-Khunkār Monla al-qawm an'im / bihī min ārif nadb walī (...) Wa hadarnā bi-majlis al-samā' wa ādatuhum ma'rūfa min darb al-daf wa-l-yurā' wa dawarān kull min al-fuqarā'", al-Rihla, 42b-43a.

68 al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, 2/30-31, 214-217.

(...) then, they started whirling after bowing towards Molla's tomb, as though their feet were drop-spindles and they were revolving around it in harmony. This took away [pleasure from us] except the dhikr in heart because this practice is contradictory to the Sharī'a. They worship him and ask him favor and even more.<sup>69</sup>

Apart from al-Rūmī, Najm al-Dīn mentions other Sufi figures and saints in Anatolian towns such as Seyyit Gazi (d. 122/740[?]) and Habīb al-Najjār.<sup>70</sup> He was in close interaction both with the elite and with common people in these towns as well. For example, he met the aforementioned Mawlawī shaykh and his two sons as well as the judge of the city in Konya.<sup>71</sup> Some of the locals (*ba'd qātinīn*) in Karapınar sought his fatwa on a legal issue.<sup>72</sup> In Bardaklı village, the common people offered him and his companions bread and milk.<sup>73</sup> In Eskişehir, the inhabitants of the city complained to them about the lack of rain for the past three months, and Najm al-Dīn explained to them the way Damascenes prayed for rain. To commemorate this, he even composed some verses about this event.<sup>74</sup>

### Istanbul in a Chaotic Period

Najm al-Dīn arrived in Üsküdar on 22 Jumādī al-Thānī/23 April.<sup>75</sup> Üsküdar was already a bustling commercial hub adorned with grand imperial buildings in the early seventeenth century. It was the last stop for caravans coming from Iran and Syria through Anatolia before they reached the Ottoman capital.<sup>76</sup> The first buildings which attracted Najm al-Dīn's attention in Üsküdar were the Valide Sultan (also known as Atik Valide) and Mihrimah Sultan complexes near the seashore, two relatively new monumental structures constructed by the female members of the Ottoman dynasty during the sixteenth century. The former complex provided accommodation for travelers—it contained a *khanqāh* and caravanserai alongside a Friday mosque, madrasa and primary school.<sup>77</sup> Najm al-Dīn writes that they rested at the "*takiyya al-Wālida*," most probably referring to the abovementioned *khanqāh* of the complex.<sup>78</sup>

Najm al-Dīn needed official permission to enter the imperial capital. Thus, he immediately sent a notice (*tadhkira*) to the Şeyhülislam Zekeriyazade Yahya Efendi (d. 1053/1644), whom he knew from his judgeship years in Damascus more than two decades previously, and requested

69 "(...) *thumma akhazū ba'd al-ruku' ilā jihat qabr al-Molla fi al-dawarān wa ka'anna rijl kulli rajul minhum falakiyya yudār 'alayhā 'alā qānūn wa mizān. Wa lam yabqa hunā illā al-azkār bi-l-qulūb li-anna al-shar' yunkiru hādhā al-madhab wa-l-ustūb wa hum ya'budūnahū 'ibāda wa yarjūna bihī al-husnā wa ziyāda*", *al-Rihla*, 150a.

70 See, *al-Rihla*, 20b-21a, 51a-54a, 63b-65a, 133a-137a.

71 *al-Rihla*, 42b.

72 *al-Rihla*, 40b.

73 *al-Rihla*, 62a.

74 *al-Rihla*, 70b.

75 *al-Rihla*, 79a.

76 Coşkun Çakır - Yakup Akkuş, "Trade in Ottoman Istanbul", *From Antiquity to the 21st Century History of Istanbul*. (Accessed 10 December 2022).

77 Mehmet Mermi Haskan, *Yüzyıllar Boyunca Üsküdar* (Istanbul: Üsküdar Belediyesi, 2001), 1/365-377.

78 *al-Rihla*, 79a.

an appointment.<sup>79</sup> Upon the chief jurist's warm welcome, he took a boat and crossed the sea for Istanbul the following day to visit the chief jurist in his mansion located in the Karaman neighborhood. Najm al-Dīn recited the panegyric he composed to praise Yahya Efendi at this first meeting.<sup>80</sup>

After receiving Yahya Efendi's promise to support his appointment to the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa, he left the chief jurist's mansion and visited Ahizade Hüseyin Efendi (d. 1043/1634), the Chief Judge of Rumelia, in his mansion in the same neighborhood. Apparently, this was the first face-to-face meeting between Najm al-Dīn and Ahizade since the latter had never served in Arab provinces before, and it was Najm al-Dīn's first visit to Istanbul.<sup>81</sup> Yet Najm al-Dīn had lots of friends and acquaintances in Istanbul connecting him to the chief judge. For example, he knew the retired judge of Istanbul, Azmizade Mustafa Efendi (d. 1040/1631), from his judgeship years in Damascus two decades earlier.<sup>82</sup> Among his other connections were a certain Katib Mustafa Efendi, whom he had met in Mecca years ago;<sup>83</sup> Muharrem Agha, a servant of the incumbent governor of Damascus Mustafa Pasha, who wrote supporting letters for Najm al-Dīn while he was leaving Damascus;<sup>84</sup> and Ebu Said Mehmed Efendi (d. 1072/1662), who was the previous judge of Damascus.<sup>85</sup> In addition to Ottoman officials, he knew several immigrant Arab scholars and Sufis who had settled in Istanbul. For example, in the Süleymaniye Mosque he met a Sufi sheikh named Ibrāhīm al-Qudsī, who knew Najm al-Dīn's deceased father and brother personally.<sup>86</sup> The preacher of the same mosque, Husayn b. 'Abd al-Nabī, was also an immigrant Damascene scholar.<sup>87</sup>

As is evident from the abovementioned examples, Najm al-Dīn already had a well-established network of connections in the Ottoman capital. His friends in Damascus had helped him find accommodation as well—he settled in a house near the Süleymaniye Mosque, the first mosque he prayed in after his entrance to Istanbul.<sup>88</sup>

At this point in the travelogue, Najm al-Dīn's narrative becomes thematic and, for a few pages, he starts giving information about the buildings and topography of the capital city. After informing his readers that Istanbul consists of seven hills and that the Süleymaniye Mosque is located on one of them, he narrates the construction of the mosque. Accordingly, Sultan Süleyman, who was both a sultan and saint, dreams about the Prophet one night and the latter

79 For Yahya Efendi's biography, see Şeyhi, *Vekāyi 'u 'l-fuzalā*, 1/440-55.

80 *al-Rihla*, 80b-81a.

81 See Ahizade Hüseyin Efendi's biography in Atayī, *Hadā'ik*, 1847-51.

82 *al-Rihla*, 91b, 101b. For Azmizade Mustafa's biography, see Atayī, *Hadā'ik*, 1810-19.

83 *al-Rihla*, 81b.

84 *al-Rihla*, 92b.

85 *al-Rihla*, 89a. For Ebussaid Mehmed Efendi's biography, see Şeyhi, *Vekāyi 'u 'l-fuzalā*, 850-855.

86 *al-Rihla*, 87a.

87 *al-Rihla*, 87a. Najm al-Dīn mentions Husayn b. 'Abd al-Nabī in his *Lutf al-samar* as well. See *Lutf al-samar*, 383.

88 *al-Rihla*, 82b.

orders him to construct a mosque.<sup>89</sup> Najm al-Dīn also describes for his readers the landscape of the capital city as viewed from the courtyard of the Süleymaniye, which was a picnic area visited by the inhabitants of the city (*finā' al-Sulaymāniyya mutanazzih tilka al-madīna*). The description includes the Bosphorus (*majma' al-bihār*), boats crossing to Üsküdar (*al-mu'adiyya ilā Üsküdar*), the city of Galata (*madīna al-Ghalata*), moving ships (*al-sufun al-jawāriya*), etc.<sup>90</sup> Najm al-Dīn visited many imperial mosques in Istanbul including the Ayasofya, Fatih, Yavuz Selim, Bayezid, Şehzade, and Sultanahmet mosques. He also paid several visits to the Eyüp Mosque outside the city walls.<sup>91</sup> However, in his opinion, the Süleymaniye mosque was the most beautiful in the city (*ahsanuhā wa ajmaluhā*).<sup>92</sup>

Najm al-Dīn's Istanbul travel coincided with a chaotic period in Ottoman history. The daily politics of the imperial capital was shaped by the actions of competing factions consisting of various dynamic power groups from the late sixteenth century, groups in and outside the Ottoman court such as the janissaries, high-ranking scholars, viziers, chief eunuchs, and mother queens. The rivalry reached its peak when Osman II (r. 1027-1031/1618-1622) was brutally killed at the hand of the janissaries about ten months before Najm al-Dīn's arrival in the city. Thereafter the murderers enthroned Mustafa, Osman's uncle, and forced the powerful chief jurist and Osman's father-in-law Esad Efendi (office in 1024-1031/1615-1622) to retire.<sup>93</sup>

Najm al-Dīn paid a visit to Esad Efendi, whom he knew through the channel of his son Ebusaid, who had served as the judge of Damascus.<sup>94</sup> However, the ex-chief jurist, who had been living in seclusion since his forced retirement, felt uncomfortable with Najm al-Dīn's visit, probably thinking that such unexpected visits could infuriate his enemies who were closely monitoring his political activity. He immediately expressed his disinterest in the daily politics of the city, and apologized for not being able to assist Najm al-Dīn, even before the latter uttered any word about his case.<sup>95</sup> In the related pages of the travelogue, Najm al-Dīn's description of Esad Efendi's mansion likens it to derelict ruins.<sup>96</sup>

Despite his numerous connections to high-ranking officials, Najm al-Dīn failed to make much progress in his application due to the imperial bureaucracy being preoccupied with

89 “*wa laqad ukhbiranā anna al-marhūm al-Sultān Sulaymān Khān wa huva al-mujamma' lahū bayn al-wilāya wa-l-saltana taḡhammadahū Allāh bi-l-ghufrān innahū banāhā bi-ishāra al-nabī 'alayhi al-salāt wa-l-salām fī ru'yā arāhā fī al-manām*”, *al-Rihla*, 82b.

90 *al-Rihla*, 83a.

91 For example, see *al-Rihla* 95a, 103a, 112a.

92 *al-Rihla*, 83a.

93 Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1993), 91-112; Günhan Börekçi, “İnkırâzın Eşiğinde Bir Hanedan: III. Mehmed, I. Ahmed, I. Mustafa ve 17. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Siyasî Krizi”, *Dîvân Dergisi* 14/26 (2009), 45-96; Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University, 2010).

94 *al-Rihla*, 89a. For the biographies of Esad Efendi and his son Ebusaid Mehmed Efendi (d. 1662), see respectively Atayî, *Hadâ'ik*, 1704-9; Şeyhi, *Vekâyi 'u'l-fuzalâ*, 850-855.

95 “*wa lammā dakhaltu ilayhī li-l-salām 'alayhī zanna annī istazartuhū fī sha'n fa-qāla lī innī lā ukhālitu al-umūr*”, *al-Rihla*, 88b-89a.

96 “*ka'annahū bāb kharāba lā ya'wī ilayhī qāsid wa lā yaridu ilayhī wārid*”, *al-Rihla*, 89b.

internal power struggles. Three weeks after his first meeting with Şeyhülislam Yahya Efendi, the latter summoned him again and informed him that his request had been conveyed to Bostanzade Yahya Efendi (d. 1049/1639), the Chief Judge of Anatolia, who was in charge of madrasa appointments in the Arab provinces.<sup>97</sup> A week later, he was able to arrange a meeting with Bostanzade, which turned out to be their first ever meeting even though they had several common acquaintances. For example, Bostanzade's deceased father had served in Damascus as a judge and had studied under Najm al-Dīn's father.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, Najm al-Dīn composed a panegyric for him.<sup>99</sup> Bostanzade's uncle had also occupied the post of the judge of Damascus a few decades previously.<sup>100</sup> Najm al-Dīn did not forget to highlight these previous connections when he met the chief judge.<sup>101</sup> After receiving the latter's promise regarding his appointment to the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa, Najm al-Dīn finally felt relieved.

Up until that point, Najm al-Dīn had spent a whole month in the Ottoman capital. His impatience and unrest, which are rather apparent in his poetry in these sections of the travelogue, suggest that he had not expected to wait such a long time to achieve his goal.<sup>102</sup> During his time waiting, Najm al-Dīn took the opportunity to observe and experience the daily life of the city. For example, he was invited to a banquet organized by an Ottoman official to celebrate his newly built mansion.<sup>103</sup> His friends also took him by boat to the Piyale Pasha picnic area in the Kasım Pasha district.<sup>104</sup> Such invitations and gatherings were a significant part of Ottoman elite sociability, where scholarly and cultural exchanges between the Muslim elites of the empire took place.<sup>105</sup> For example, Najm al-Dīn composed a few verses as a chronogram to date the completion of the mansion of his abovementioned host.<sup>106</sup>

On the 27th of Rajab/27th of May, Najm al-Dīn was summoned by Şeyhülislam Yahya Efendi one more time. The chief jurist offered him an appointment to two relatively modest professorships in Damascus, namely at the Nāsiriyya Jawwāniyya and Muqaddamiyya madrasas, on the condition that he give up his struggle for the position at the prestigious Shāmiyya Barrāniyya Madrasa. Najm al-Dīn, stunned by the unexpected offer, reluctantly accepted it.<sup>107</sup>

97 *al-Rihla*, 94b-95a. For Bostanzade Yahya Efendi's biography, see Şeyhi, *Vekāyi' u 'l-fuzalā* 286-87.

98 al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib*, 3/6.

99 al-Ghazzī, *Lutf al-samar*, 102-106.

100 *Lutf al-samar*, 659-660.

101 "*arrafnāhū bi-mā baynanā wa bayn wālidī wa 'ammihī min al-widād fa-'tarafa (...)*", *al-Rihla*, 101a.

102 For example, he says in a verse: "[Yā Rab!] *qad tamma fī al-Rūm shahr wa ana / muntazir minka tamām al-ni'am*" ([Oh God!] a month has passed in the lands of Rum / and I am still waiting for your grace), *al-Rihla*, 103a.

103 *al-Rihla*, 92a.

104 *al-Rihla*, 105b.

105 For the function of such elite gatherings with special reference to the encounter between the Turkish-speaking Ottoman elite and the Arabic-speaking elite of the former Mamluk lands during the sixteenth century, see Pfeifer, *Empire of Salons*.

106 *al-Rihla*, 92a.

107 *al-Rihla*, 107b. Nāsiriyya Jawwāniyya and Muqaddamiyya (Najm al-Dīn does not clarify whether it was Barrāniyya or Jawwāniyya) madrasas were also built by Ayyubid patrons. For brief information about them, see Yılmaz, *Ulema ve Medrese*, 89, 95.

He would soon realize why Yahya Efendi had changed his mind and withdrawn his previous promise of support.

After a few days, Najm al-Dīn learned that his rival al-Maydanī had sent successive letters to his patron Şerif Efendi (d. 1040/1631), the politically active ex-Chief Judge of Anatolia who had been forced into retirement by Osman II, and sought his support against Najm al-Dīn.<sup>108</sup> Şerif Efendi had been a rising figure since the enthronement of Mustafa I, and aspired to receive a promotion to the post of Chief Judge of Rumelia from the new government. However, Şeyhülislam Yahya Efendi, who was in harmony with the incumbent chief judges, was reluctant to support Şerif Efendi's promotion while being careful enough not to make him his enemy in the current politically unstable atmosphere. Thus, upon Şerif Efendi's personal request, he was obliged to consent to al-Maydanī's continuation as the professor of the Shāmiyya.<sup>109</sup>

The power balance among the Ottoman ruling elite in Istanbul brought Najm al-Dīn failure in his struggle for position. He received his appointment diplomas to the abovementioned Damascene madrasas from the chief judge of Anatolia a week later.<sup>110</sup> He then visited the chief jurist, two chief judges, and his friends for the last time, and left the imperial capital on June 3, i.e. after forty-three days after his arrival.<sup>111</sup>

### Back to Damascus

Najm al-Dīn was dissatisfied with the outcome of his exhausting journey. His disappointment is evident in his changing narrative after his meeting with the chief jurist. He shares with his readers a passage he allegedly came across during his reading of a book a few nights later. The passage goes, "Who is the person deserving mercy most? The wise under the rule of the ignorant."<sup>112</sup> After a few pages, he writes about the Istanbul and Ottoman elite, "it often lacks goodwill, and innovations are as prophetic practices there (...) whereas many reprehensible acts are considered beautiful (...) and they [the imperial elite] attached importance to posts not to virtues."<sup>113</sup> In a verse he composed after leaving Istanbul, he addressed his son saying "[I know] you did not like Istanbul, neither the city nor its people."<sup>114</sup>

Days after their departure, the imperial capital witnessed a new development referred in contemporary Ottoman sources as *cem'iyet-i cāmi' vak'ası* (the crowd of the mosque affair).<sup>115</sup> Accordingly, when the Grand Vizier Hüseyin Pasha (d. 1033/1624) punished a judge in his council, some of his scholar friends gathered in the courtyard of the Fatih Mosque to protest to

108 See Şerif Mehmed Efendi's biography in Atayi, *Hadā'ik*, 1821-24.

109 *al-Rihla*, 108a.

110 *al-Rihla*, 114a.

111 *al-Rihla*, 114a-115a.

112 "*man ahaqq al-nās bi-l-rahma? Qāla 'ālim yajūzu 'alayhī hukm al-jāhil*", *al-Rihla*, 108b.

113 "*wa hiya 'an husn al-niyya fī al-ghālib 'āriya al-bid'a fihā sunna wa al-sunan (...) wa kathīr min munkarāt al-shar' fihā hasan (...) yarawna al-taqaddum wa al-taqdīm bi-l-manāsib lā bi-l-fadā'ip*", *al-Rihla*, 112b.

114 "*wa lam tu 'jibnaka Islāmbül ardan wa lā nāsan*", *al-Rihla*, 118a.

115 For example, see Atayi, *Hadā'ik*, 1823.

the grand vizier. The protests intensified when the chief jurist, retired chief judges, the judge of Istanbul, and many dignitary professors joined the ranks of the protestors who wanted the grand vizier's dismissal. Although Hüseyin Pasha first attempted to soften the atmosphere by sending mediators, he then marched with his soldiers on the protestors to frighten them. However, an unexpected clash between two groups resulted in nineteen deaths.<sup>116</sup>

Najm al-Dīn received the news of the clash, which he calls *fitna*, when he arrived at Gavurköy after Gebze. He devotes half a page to this report. Najm al-Dīn's account, however, differs slightly from the mainstream narrative of the Ottoman sources. According to Najm al-Dīn, the Ottoman law and custom only allowed the chief judges to punish judges. Thus, when Hüseyin Pasha had a judge beaten in his council, other Ottoman judges raised complaints to the chief jurist, who then received the support of the high-ranking scholars (*mawālī*) and visited Sultan Mustafa to demand the grand vizier's dismissal. The sultan accepted this demand and appointed Çerkes Mehmed Pasha as his new grand vizier. However, the soldiers of Hüseyin Pasha who had been dismissed terrorized the streets of Istanbul the following day and killed a group of judges at the Fatih Mosque.<sup>117</sup> Since Najm al-Dīn received the news of this anarchy while traveling, he was apparently unable to verify the details. Nevertheless, he thanks God for having saved him from this *fitna*.

Najm al-Dīn entered Damascus on the 18th of Ramadān/16th of July, i.e. after a journey of forty-three days. To his surprise, he learned that a new appointment warrant issued after his departure from Istanbul for his life-long professorship at the Shāmiyya Barrāniyya had arrived in Damascus a while ago.<sup>118</sup> Najm al-Dīn does not give details about this unexpected development. Yet the contemporary sources inform us that after the abovementioned terror in Istanbul, Şerif Efendi, the powerful patron of Najm al-Dīn's rival al-Maydānī, was exiled to Bursa as a punishment and lost his previous influence on the daily politics of the capital city.<sup>119</sup> It seems that Najm al-Dīn's friends in Istanbul wasted no time in taking advantage of Şerif Efendi's absence and issued Najm al-Dīn with an appointment diploma to the Shāmiyya Madrasa. Thus, Najm al-Dīn unexpectedly reached the goal of his travel after leaving Istanbul.

The last pages of the travelogue present a brief account of the events that took place in the two years after the trip. Accordingly, another appointment diploma for al-Maydānī's Shāmiyya professorship arrived in Damascus in mid-October 1623.<sup>120</sup> Najm al-Dīn is again silent about the possible reasons for this unanticipated appointment after four months. Still, the new political developments that took place in Istanbul after Najm al-Dīn's return to Damascus allow us to speculate. Sultan Mustafa was dethroned on the 15th of Dhū al-Qa'da/10th of September, and

116 Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, "Hüseyin Paşa, Mer'e", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Accessed 10 December 2022); Feridun K. Emecen, "Mustafa I", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Accessed 10 December 2022).

117 *al-Rihla*, 121a-121b.

118 *al-Rihla*, 177b.

119 Atayi, *Hadâ'ik*, 1823.

120 *al-Rihla*, 180a.

the new sultan Murad IV dismissed Şeyhülislam Zekeriyazade Yahya Efendi, Najm al-Dīn's patron, a few weeks later.<sup>121</sup> Moreover, Sultan Murad forgave the abovementioned Şerif Efendi, who had been in exile in Bursa during the previous few months.<sup>122</sup> It seems that al-Maydānī's connections in Istanbul gained the upper hand again and were able to help him in his struggle for the Shamiyya professorship one more time.

The incumbent Ottoman judge of Damascus was about to deliver the Shāmiyya Madrasa to al-Maydānī after these developments. However, when he learned that Najm al-Dīn's appointment warrant would guarantee his life-long teaching at the madrasa, he decided to divide the professorship of the Shāmiyya into two halves between Najm al-Dīn and al-Maydānī. Najm al-Dīn held his share until his partner's death the following year; then, he assumed the entire post again.<sup>123</sup>

### Narrative Elements: Language, Poetry, and Dream and Fortune-Telling Anecdotes

Najm al-Dīn was aware that his Arab readers would need additional information and explanations to follow his travel account in a non-Arabic cultural sphere. Thus, he utilized methods including translation to make his work more accessible to his prospective readers. For example, he provided word-by-word translation of many place names in Anatolia—Akköprü as the White Bridge,<sup>124</sup> Karapınar as the Black Spring,<sup>125</sup> Akşehir as the White City,<sup>126</sup> Eskişehir as the Old City,<sup>127</sup> and Gavurköy as the Village of Christians.<sup>128</sup> Using this approach, he translated Üsküdar as the Old House (*al-dār al-qādīm*) assuming the original name to be Eski-dār,<sup>129</sup> as his contemporary Evliya Çelebi (d. 1095/1684[?]) had done.<sup>130</sup> He explained the meaning of some Turkish words in Arabic as well. For instance, he wrote that the Turkish word “*kar*” (meaning snow) contained two opposite meanings—*qār* in Arabic refers to black but it is used for snow, which is white.<sup>131</sup>

Following the conventions established by previous Istanbul travelogues, Najm al-Dīn uses rhythmed prose throughout his work, and devotes long pages to poetic composition (*nazm*). According to my count, his travelogue contains more than 3,300 verses—a huge number, which allows one to consider Najm al-Dīn's work as a personal poetry collection (*dīwān*). A few of these verses belong to others—some classical poets such as Abī Fīrās al-Hamadānī (d.

121 Şeyhi, *Vekāyi 'u l-fuzalā*, 442.

122 Atayī, *Hadā'ik*, 1823.

123 *al-Rihla*, 180a-180b.

124 “*al-jisr al-abyad*”, *al-Rihla*, 37b.

125 “*al-'ayn al-sawdā*”, *al-Rihla*, 40b.

126 “*al-madīna al-baydā*”, *al-Rihla*, 51a.

127 “*al-madīna al-qadīma*”, *al-Rihla*, 66a.

128 “*qarya al-Nasāra*”, *al-Rihla*, 76a.

129 *al-Rihla*, 80b.

130 Haskan, *Yüzyıllar Boyunca Üsküdar*, 1/20.

131 *al-Rihla*, 63a.

357/968),<sup>132</sup> Ibn al-Mu‘tazz (d. 296/908),<sup>133</sup> and Qays b. Mulawwah (d. 70/690[?]),<sup>134</sup> or Najm al-Dīn’s acquaintances such as his father and grandfather.<sup>135</sup> The majority are Najm al-Dīn’s own verses. Najm al-Dīn himself must also have realized that he devoted a considerable part of his work to poetry, as he tries to justify his action with the Prophetic hadith “there is wisdom in poetry.”<sup>136</sup>

The content of Najm al-Dīn’s verses suggest that they were daily products of his journey. A common theme is homesickness and longing for family. Beside this, Najm al-Dīn versifies almost every important event. For example, he wrote verses for almost every town he visited on his way to Istanbul.<sup>137</sup> When he was obliged to spend one more day in Ladik to change his horse, he put this into verses.<sup>138</sup> Or, when the dwellers of the Beyaz Village mentioned to him how their caravanserai had been burned by fire a few months after Çavuşzade İbrahim, the new judge of Damascus, had stayed there on his way to Damascus, Najm al-Dīn did not miss the opportunity to attribute the fire to the hex of the judge whom he disliked.<sup>139</sup> He also praised several local and imperial members of the elite with his verses.<sup>140</sup>

Another important component of Najm al-Dīn’s travel account is dream narratives. Dreams were considered as divine interventions in one’s life in the pre-modern periods. People sought dreams guiding them to take or abandon specific decisions, or bringing them visions of the future and even the Hereafter.<sup>141</sup> Moreover, authors often utilized dreams to empower their textual discourse especially when they wanted to convey a certain message to their readers in a roundabout way.<sup>142</sup> Most of Najm al-Dīn’s dreams are related to his struggle for position and they give clues as to his feelings of anxiety while in the heart of the Ottoman lands, i.e. outside his comfort zone. For instance, on his way to Istanbul, he dreamt that Beylerbeyi İbrahim was invited to a banquet in the vicinity of Damascus and wanted to visit *Maqām İbrāhīm* located nearby. Referring to the Quranic verse “We said: O fire! Be coolness and

132 *al-Rihla*, 7a.

133 *al-Rihla*, 72a-72b.

134 *al-Rihla*, 85b.

135 *al-Rihla*, 27b-28a, 43a.

136 “*fa lam innī wa in akthartu fī hādhihī al-rihla min al-shi’r fa-inna min al-shi’r la-hikma*”, *al-Rihla*, 60a.

137 For example, see his verses for Ra’s al-‘ayn (11b), Antakya (20b, 22b), Seyhan and Ceyhan rivers (28b), Karapınar (40b), İsmil (41a-b), Konya (42b, 43b), Ladik (44b), Şarkmar (45b), Sak (54b), Bolvadin (56b, 57a, 57b), Beyaz (58b), Bardaklı (61b), Seyyitgazi (65a), Lefke (74a), and Del (76b, 77a).

138 *al-Rihla*, 45a.

139 *al-Rihla*, 60b-61a.

140 For example, see his verses praising Yūnus b. Harfūsh, the amīr of Hums (9b), Murteza Pasha, the previous governor of Damascus (37b), Hasan Bey, his host in Istanbul (81b).

141 Dwight F. Reynolds, ed., *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, First edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 89-94; Cemal Kafadar, “Mütereddit Bir Mutasavvıf: Üsküplü Asiye Hatun’un Rüya Defteri 1641-1643” reproduced in Cemal Kafadar, *Kim Var İmiş Biz Burada Yoğ İken: Dört Osmanlı: Yeniçeri, Tüccar, Derviş ve Hatun* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2009), 123-91.

142 Aslı Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives in Ottoman Istanbul: A Seventeenth-Century Biographer’s Perspective* (Taylor & Francis, 2016).

peace upon Ibrāhīm,<sup>143</sup> Najm al-Dīn interprets his dream as an affirmative sign for his success in the Ottoman capital.<sup>144</sup> In another dream in Istanbul, the conflict he underwent due to his identity as an Arabic-speaking provincial Shāfiʿī mufti among Turkish-speaking Ottoman Hanafī scholars is rather obvious:

*The Friday night on 28 Jumāda al-Thānī [29 April] (...) I dreamt that I was waiting to perform the dawn prayer in a congregation. When the imam was late, people said to me 'Go ahead and lead us in praying as you are definitely better suited for this.' I said to them 'your imam is Hanafī but I am Shāfiʿī.' They responded 'Go ahead even if you are Shāfiʿī.' Then, I came ahead of the congregation after a brief moment of hesitation. I first decided to recite Basmala silently and Fatiha aloud [as Hanafīs do]. However, when I started praying I could not help but recite Basmala aloud and I said 'In the name of God the merciful and compassionate.' Then, I continued the recitation of Fatiha aloud. I interpreted this dream as a sign of good because the name of God never abandons me, and I love that it attracts benefits and drives away harms.<sup>145</sup>*

Najm al-Dīn shares many such dreams with his readers throughout his travelogue. He usually adds his own interpretation of the dream as well, and adorns his narration by several verses related to his dream.<sup>146</sup>

Najm al-Dīn's travel account also gives an idea about a Muslim scholar's approach to divination (*fa'īl*). In some pages, we see that he randomly opens some books to find a good omen about his future, a practice known as *tafā'ul*. Through encountered words on a randomly opened page *tafā'ul* was a widespread practice, and several books including the *Qur'ān*, *Mathnawī*, and *Dīwan-ı Hāfiz* were used for this purpose.<sup>147</sup> For instance, when the şeyhülislam's permission for his entrance to the city was late, Najm al-Dīn randomly opened *al-Qāmūs*, al-Firūzābādī's (d. 817/1415) famous Arabic lexicon, for divination. He writes:

*My heart sank that day because I had not been able to enter Istanbul nor do anything for my case yet. So, I opened al-Qāmūs for divination (tafā'ul), and I came across this idiom as a good omen: amra 'ta fa-nzil, meaning you have achieved what you needed.<sup>148</sup>*

143 "qulnā yā nār kūnī bardan wa salāman 'alā Ibrāhīm", al-Anbiya' 21/69.

144 al-Rihla, 57a.

145 "layla al-Jum'a thāmin 'ishrī Jumādī al-thānī (...) fa-ra 'aytu tilka al-layla fī al-manām ka'annī antaziru jamā'a al-subh fī aqwām wa qad ta'akhhara an al-hudūr al-imām. Fa-qīla lī taqaddim fa-salli binā imāman fa-innaka awlā an ta'ī bi-l-salā tamānan. Fa-qultu inna imāmakum Hanafī wa ana Shāfi'ī. Fa-qālu taqaddim wa in kunta Shāfi'īyyan. Fa-taqaddamtu ba'd an tawaqqaftu maliyyan. Wa qultu fī naḥsī asrī bi-l-basmala wa-btadī 'ī jahran bi-l-hamdala. Falammā ahramtu bi-l-salā lam atamālik an nataqtu bismillāh fa-qara 'tu jihāran bismillāh al-rahmān al-rahīm thumma ataytu bi-l-fātiha bi-l-tatmīm. Fa-ta 'awwaltu hādhih al-ru'yā li-khayr wa inna ism Allāh lā yufāriqunī bal huwa yu 'jibunī fī jalb naḥ' aw daf' dayr", al-Rihla, 86b.

146 For example, see his dreams in which he saw his children (46a), he meets his deceased father-in-law (71a), he ascends a thirty-step stair (88a), he was given a key (91a), and he was ordered to recite the Sūra al-Rahmān (99b).

147 For this and other types of divinations in Muslim history, see İlyas Çelebi, "Fal (İslam'da Fal)", *TDV İslām Ansiklopedisi* (Accessed 9 December 2022).

148 "wa hasala lī fī hādha al-yawm dīq sadr bi-sabab annī lam adkhul fihī ilā Islāmbül wa lam ashra' fihā lī min al-amr. Fa-fatahtu al-Qāmūs tafā'ulan fa-idhā bi-hādha al-mathal fa'lan li-l-mutamaththal: amra 'ta fa-nzil ay

Following these words, he adds a few verses to express his pleasure with this good sign.<sup>149</sup> On the 12th of Rajab/12th of May, more than a fortnight after his first meeting with the Ottoman chief jurist, he lost hope waiting for a response and resorted to *tafā'ul* again. This time, he opened a collection (*ba'd al-majāmi'*) and his eye caught a hadith which said, "whoever loves Hasan, Husayn, and their father and mother will be with me on the Day of Judgement." Najm al-Dīn took this hadith as a good sign trusting on his devotion to the Prophet's family.<sup>150</sup> Najm al-Dīn's fortune-telling through books are not limited to these examples.<sup>151</sup>

## Epilogue

This paper focused on a recently discovered manuscript source for the history of the early modern Ottoman Empire, namely Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī's Damascus-Istanbul travelogue dated 1032/1623. It provided a general outline of Najm al-Dīn's travel account with a particular emphasis on people, buildings, and significant socio-political events in Damascus, Anatolian towns, and Istanbul. It also dealt with narrative elements and themes in the travelogue, including word choice, use of poetry, and inclusion of dream and fortune-telling anecdotes.

Najm al-Dīn's travelogue is a significant source for many reasons. First, Najm al-Dīn was a fifty-three year-old eminent Shāfi'ī mufti-professor in Damascus, who had assumed important socio-political roles in the Syria of his day. His travel account thus presents a glimpse of contemporary Ottoman government and society from the perspective of an influential provincial scholar. His madhhab adherence, which distinguishes him from the Hanafi imperial elite even in his dreams, and his professional background, which largely differs from the careers of the Ottoman scholar-bureaucrats, make his perspective particularly valuable as it offers a close but outside view of the Ottoman learned establishment of the day.

Second, Najm al-Dīn's visit to Istanbul coincided with one of the most turbulent periods of early modern Ottoman history, that is, the immediate aftermath of Osman II's regicide. As a result, his interactions with the Ottoman ruling elite and observations of the domestic politics of the Ottoman capital give a lively portrait of a cross-section of the post-Osman-era power dynamics. Himself both a victim and beneficiary of this political factionalism, Najm al-Dīn's story opens new rooms for discussions by illustrating the far-reaching effects of imperial factionalism beyond the imperial capital in the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

Lastly, Najm al-Dīn's narrative is informative in multiple ways. Adhering to the conventions of earlier Istanbul travelogues in Arabic, Najm al-Dīn penned thousands of verses in his travelogue. Much of his poetry is contextual, that is, it provides accounts of the buildings,

*asabta hājataka fa-nzil'*, *al-Rihla*, 80a. For the phrase "*amra'ta fa-nzil'*", see Muhammad b. Ya'qūb al-Firūzābādī Majd al-Dīn, *al-Qāmūs al-Muhīt*, ed. Muhammad Nu'aym al-'Arqūsī (Beirut: Mu'assasa al-Risāla, 2005), 763.

149 "*Tafā'alna min al-Qāmūs yawman / bi-Üsküdar idh kunnā bi-manzil' / wa qulnā rabbānā bayyin li-khayr / fa-akhrāja fa'lunā amra'ta fa-nzil'*", *al-Rihla*, 80a.

150 *al-Rihla*, 93b.

151 For another example, see *al-Rihla*, 95b.

places, events, and people Najm al-Dīn encountered during his journey in verse form. In this regard, Najm al-Dīn's work, as its title implies, is a versified (*manzūm*) travelogue. The inclusion of his dreams and fortune-tellings add further depth to his account by providing insight into his psychology and mindset as an Arabic-speaking Muslim scholar outside his comfort zone.

By way of a concluding remark, I hope this article will provide Ottomanists with a preliminary understanding of the content of Najm al-Dīn's travelogue until a printed and edited version of it becomes available.

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