

Scholars and Mobility: A Preliminary Assessment from the Perspective of *al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu‘māniyya**

Ertuğrul Ökten**

- *What is your impression about Khwājazāde?*
- *He has no equivalents among the Persians or the people of Rūm.*
- *Nor among the Arabs*

Alimler ve Hareketlilik: eş-Şakāyiku'n-Nu‘māniyye Perspektifinden Bir Ön Değerlendirme

Öz ■ Osmanlı ilmiye dünyasının oluşumunda Osmanlı topraklarının dışından gelen veya Osmanlı ülkesini terk edip geri dönen alimler önemli bir rol oynamışlardır. Geri dönmeyip gittikleri yerlerde kaldıkları zaman bile İslâm dünyasının başka yerlerindeki ilmi düzenlere katkıda buldukları için (coğrafi) hareketlilikleri kayda değerdir. Alimlerin coğrafi hareketlilikleri İslâm dünyasının çeşitli bölgelerindeki ilmi düzenlerin oluşumlarıyla doğrudan ilgili olduğu halde bu konuya şu ana kadar layık olduğu dikkat verilmemiştir. Bu makale Taşköprülüzāde'nin (v. 968/1561)

* Taşköprülüzāde: *Al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu‘māniyya fī ‘Ulamā’ al-Dawlat al-‘Uthmāniyya*, Ahmed S. Furat (ed.), Istanbul: Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları 1985. *Al-Shaqāyiq* has been one of the texts that I have constantly revisited over the years without diminishing joy. I would like to thank the editor of this edition of *al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu‘māniyya*, A. Subhi Furat, although we have met only very briefly. I also thank Dr. Seyfi Kenan for giving me the opportunity to write this paper and for his patience. Without Dr. Cornell Fleischer's inspiring evaluation of an earlier version of the present study this paper would never come into existence. Dr. Abdurrahman Atçıl's generous comments on the issues examined here were eye-opening; If every lead he has suggested has not been followed it is only due to my shortcomings. I appreciate Wahid Amin's suggestions and encouragement through the process of writing this paper. I thank Dr. Matthew Melvin-Koushki for his feedback at critical junctures and unceasing support which kept me on track until the end of this project. Dr. Judith Pfeiffer's comments helped significantly in shaping its framework.

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eş-Şakāyiku'n-Nu'māniyye'sini inceleyerek ilk on Osmanlı hükümdarının saltanatları boyunca ulema hareketliliğinin bir resmini çizmeye çalışmaktadır. İki yüzyıldan biraz daha uzun bir zaman diliminde alimlerin hareketliliğindeki öne çıkan özellikler ve bunların nedenleri üzerine kısa bir tartışma sunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: 'Ālim, 'ulamā', (bölgelerarası) hareketlilik, Bilādü'l-'Acem, Bilādü'l-'Arab, Bilādü'l-Rûm, Osmanlı toprakları, Anatolia, Taşköprülüzâde, *eş-Şakāyiku'n-Nu'māniyye*

The above conversation between 'Alī Qushji and Mehmed II reflects the perception of major territorial/intellectual units in the fifteenth century, shared both by a scholar and ruler.¹ Mobility of scholars between regions, as well-illustrated by the case of 'Alī Qushji himself, was by no means an exception. An analysis of the movement of the 'ulamā' into/out of the Ottoman domains promises to shed light on the emergence and development of the Ottoman learned establishment, a comprehensive analysis of which is still due. The present study examines the mobility of the 'ulamā' coming into and departing from the Ottoman lands, i.e. Bilād al-Rûm, as depicted in Taşköprülüzâde's (d. 968/1561) *al-Shaqāyiyq al-Nu'māniyya*.² Thus, it covers the reigns of the first Ottoman ten rulers, 'Uthmān to Suleymān I.³ The world of values and ideas the 'ulamā' were situated in and individuals with double identities of Sufi and scholar with predominantly Sufi leanings do not constitute the main focus of the current study.⁴ In terms of geographical units I adopt Taşköprülüzâde's units such as Bilād al-Rûm, or Bilād al-'Ajam although the boundaries of these units could be quite fluid. This also means accepting Rûm, or Bilād al-Rûm, as the core Ottoman lands.⁵ This conception of externality defines the basic criterion of inward and outward mobility,

- 1 In this conversation between Mehmed II and 'Alī Qushji the former asked the latter about his opinion on Khwājazâde. A. Süheyl Ünver: *Istanbul Üniversitesi Tarihine Başlangıç: Fatih Külliyesi ve Zamanı İlim Hayatı*. İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları 1946, p. 188.
- 2 The question of mobility has to be studied from the angle of the internal mobility, too. Mobility between centers of scholarship such Bursa, Qonya, Qaysari, Tire, etc. is no less relevant, and it is likely to lead to a different set of problems and approaches.
- 3 Taşköprülüzâde was himself a member of the 'ulamā' class and for the most of his career he worked as a *mudarris*. He began writing *al-Shaqāyiyq al-Nu'māniyya* in 965/1558 and it was completed soon thereafter. *Al-Shaqāyiyq*, introduction, IV. He classified the entries according to the reigns of the first ten Ottoman sultans ending with the scholars of the reign of Suleymān I. It conveys biographical information about more than five hundred scholars and Sufi shaykhs.
- 4 Needless to say Sufi scholars also exhibited a high degree of geographical mobility.
- 5 A later Ottoman intellectual, Mustafa 'Ālī, also perceived Bilād al-Rûm as the core lands of the empire: for him the other regions, Bilād al-'Arab, and Bilād al-'Ajam, were

that is the mobility of the ‘ulamā’ from outside the Bilād al-Rūm into the Bilād al-Rūm, or vice versa.

The present discussion of trans-regional mobility brings into question what I call ‘the institutional approach’ in the studies of the Ottoman ‘ulamā’. By institutional approach I mean studying the ‘ulamā’ as a well-defined institution well-integrated with the Ottoman state. This approach does not necessarily pay attention to the question of how the Ottoman scholarly world came into being and how it interacted with the larger scholarly and political world outside the Ottoman territories. Examining the mobility of Ottoman scholars can be a first step in that direction.⁶ Before proceeding to the discussion of mobility it is

external to the Ottoman Empire. Cornell Fleischer: *Tarihçi Mustafa Ali Bir Osmanlı Aydın ve Bürokrati*. (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1996, pp. 263-4.

- 6 A classical text, Uzunçarşılı’s *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye Teşkilatı*, devotes most space to the description of the constituents of the institution such as madrasas, religious officials, and the working principles of this institution as well as the changes it went through. İsmail H. Uzunçarşılı: *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmîye Teşkilatı*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları 1965. Hans G. Majer reduces the state and the scholars to monolithic individual agents and interprets their relationship as a set of relations between the agents in a self-contained system. H.G. Majer: “Sozialgeschichtliche Probleme um ‘ulamā und Derwische im Osmanischen Reich”, *I. Milletler Arası Türkoloji Kongresi (Istanbul 15-20.X.1973) Tebliğler*. Istanbul: Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Enstitüsü 1979, pp. 218-233. Repp sees “superbly trained scholars of nearly uniform education and experience” as the main product of the scholarly establishment especially in the sixteenth century. Richard Repp: *The Mufti of Istanbul*. London: Ithaca Press 1986, p. 29. Sohrweide’s “Dichter and Gelehrte” is different from these works in the sense that it discusses the influx of cultural elite, scholars and artists into the Ottoman Empire from the East (Persia) within the context of the cultural rivalry between the Ottomans and the Safavids. Hanna Sohrweide: “Dichter und Gelehrte aus dem Osten im Osmanischen Reich (1453-1600) Ein Beitrag zur türkisch-persischen Kulturgeschichte”, *Der Islam* 46, (1970), pp. 263-302. In contrast to the institutional approach, prosopographical studies such as Majer’s *Vorstudien zur Geschichte der İlmîye* focus on the experiences of individuals and the social networks they were situated in. Hans G. Majer: *Vorstudien zur Geschichte der İlmîye im Osmanischen Reich: Zu Uşakîzade, seiner Familie, und seinem Zeyl-i Şakayik*. München: Rudolf Trufenik 1978. Among recent works Abdurrahman Atçıl’s study is noteworthy for examining the history of both the development of the scholarly establishment and Ottoman legal thought presenting the conquest of Constantinople as an event that shaped the (self-) perception of scholars. Abdurrahman Atçıl, “The Formation of the Ottoman Learned Class and Legal Scholarship (1300-1600)”. Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2010. As for works directly on Taşköprülüzâde/*al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu’māniya*, Furat’s brief introduction in Turkish is significant for drawing attention to the place of the work in

necessary to define what is intended by 'Ottoman 'ulam' here. In his inspiring study on the development of the scholarly establishment and legal thought in the Ottoman realm, A. Atçıl defines 'Ottoman religious scholar' as those "who were affiliated with the Ottoman enterprise, and identified themselves with it, as opposed any scholar who lived and died in the Ottoman dominion."⁷ Thus, an individual like Jamāl al-Din Aqsarayī (d. 791/1388-9) who taught in Aqsaray / Qaraman (annexed almost a century later in 871/1475) throughout his entire career without ever visiting the Ottoman realm, nor had any aspirations there is not an 'Ottoman'. This is a well-defined consistent approach yet, one cannot help but question whether Taşköprülüzâde's inclusion of Aqsarayī (and others) who did not fulfill the above criteria was a matter of convention only. It seems that living in the to-be-Ottoman (or Ottoman) territories coupled with training students and writing works that later exerted a certain degree of influence in the Ottoman intellectual life served as the test for inclusion among the 'Ottoman scholars' for Taşköprülüzâde.⁸ Who was identified as an 'Ottoman scholar' is therefore an interesting question in itself.

Furthermore, there is the issue of changing boundaries, either physically or in perception, of geographical units.⁹ Particularly, it is necessary to be careful about how to define the 'Ottoman' lands up until the consolidation of Ottoman

the larger Ottoman and Islamic cultural context without going into specific issues including mobility. *Al-Shaqāyīq*, pp. III-IX.

- 7 Atçıl, p. 5. Atçıl also gives one of the rare discussions of the issue of mobility of scholars, pp. 51-58, 109-118, 189-193. In his discussion of several scholars who came to or left Ottoman lands he also mentions the posts and patronage they received in the Ottoman lands. My discussion here starts from a similar point but I attempt to see whether there is a basic pattern in mobility without going into a discussion of career paths and patronage.
- 8 Thus, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Aqsarayī, or Qāḍī Burhān al-Dīn Aḥmad (d.800/1398), each get an entry in *al-Shaqāyīq* whereas scholars of even greater influence such as Taftāzānī or Jurjānī, despite the abundance of references to them, do not. These examples can be increased. It seems that it is the memory or perception of "Ottomanness" that is in operation here.
- 9 As an example, for the fluidity of the term "Ajam" see Ali Arslan: "Osmanlılar'da Coğrafi Terim Olarak "Acem" Kelimesinin Manası ve Osmanlı-Türkistan Bağlantısındaki Önemi (XV-XVIII. Yüzyıllar)", *Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi* 8, (1999), pp. 83-87. Arslan, quoting Taşköprülüzâde, states that the term "Bilād-i 'Ajam" or "Wilāyat-i 'Ajam" comprised Iran, Khurasan and Turkistan (Transoxiana) for the period between the fifteenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century. Diyār-i Rūm (Bilād al-Rūm) came to be used for the Ottoman lands especially in the fifteenth century, pp. 84, 86.

rule in Anatolia in the latter half of the fifteenth century. In the early years of the Ottoman state (e.g. the reign of Orkhān), when a scholar from Qaraman, Tire or Qastamonu, came to Iznik or Bursa this was coming ‘into the Ottoman lands’. Almost two and a half centuries later Taşköprülüzāde’s memory of the past conglomerated all these different geographical units as somehow parts of the ‘Ottoman domains’.

Below are tables of the scholars who came into the Ottoman realm and departed from it. Although the following discussion interprets quantitative data, it is necessary to state that this is by no means a statistical research; the sole reason for presenting data in this manner is to attain clarity. Also, mobility is a complex phenomenon: Particularly attractive centers, itineraries, time spent in each location, and motives are only some of the factors that should be taken into consideration. An analysis of these factors, and possibly others, is due, though not all of these can be examined within the scope of this paper. Instead, the tables below are merely rudimentary sketches. In the first table on the scholars coming to the Ottoman lands, the ‘origin’ column denotes the last locality where the individual in question received a significant scholarly training/influence before moving to/returning back to the Ottoman domains. It does not necessarily denote an ethnic affiliation, although with quite a few of the scholars this was the case. Also, a trip as student for (further) study is counted as mobility of scholars. The next table focuses on the scholars departing from the Ottoman lands. When a scholar visited more than one region I counted only the region which seemed to be most determining for one’s career. If no distinction could be made between the regions visited then I took the first destination and ignored the consecutive ones. Also, I did not take into account appointment based mobility when it was clear that one had to move because of his appointment to a post. On the other hand, when Taşköprülüzāde’s narrative showed that one arrived in a new region and consequently found employment I counted it as a case of mobility.

Table 1. 'Ulamā' Coming to the Ottoman Lands¹⁰

Origin	'Uthmān I (d. 726/1326)	Orḡhān (d. 763/1362)	Murād I (d. 791/1389)	Bayazid I (d. 805/1403)	Mehmed I (d. 824/1421)	Murād II (d. 855/1451)	Mehmed II (d. 886/1481)	Bayazid II (d. 918/1512)	Selīm I (d. 926/1520)	Suleymān I (d. 974/1566)
Bilād al-ʿAjam (including Khurasan, Transoxiana)		1 9		6 29, 36, 43, 44, 48, 51	2 59, 60	4 83, 97, 99, 101, 105	5 159, 163, 219, 221-1	4 304, 314, 329, 330		10 449, 455-6-7-9-9, 469, 488, 523, 524 (5 From Tabriz)
Bilād al-ʿArab (including Egypt, Hijaz)		1 7		⁷ 22, 23, 36, 40, 46, 48, 49-51, 52 (6 from Egypt)	1 64	2 84, 95	2 42, 225		2 411, 414	
Al-Bilād al-Shāmīya	2 4, 5	1 11	1 20				3 150, 168, 226		1 414	1 499
Al-Maġrib (including Tunis)								1 352		1 451
Qırım						2 81, 82				
Anatolia (pre-conquest / recently conquered)	1 5			3 29, 31, 45	2 61, 63	1 79				
Unknown (to Bilād al-Rūm)						1 81		⁷ 292, 304, 305, 314, 329, 340, 330	5 381, 402, 411, 414, 420	
Total # of 'ulamā'	3	5	4	25	6	31	63	68	51	113
# of mobile 'ulamā' (%)	3 100%	3 60%	1 25%	16 64%	5 83%	10 32%	10 16%	12 18%	8 16%	12 11%

¹⁰ Numbers in smaller fonts refer to death dates of the rulers and page numbers in *al-Shaqāyiq*.

Table 2. ‘Ulamā’ Leaving the Ottoman Lands

Destination	‘Urhānā I	Orkhān	Murād I	Bāyazād I	Mehmed I	Murād II	Mehmed II	Bāyazād II	Selīm I	Suleymān I
Bilād al-‘Ajam (including Khurasan, Transoxiana)			1 15	2 37, 47		5 99, 104, 105, 107, 107	3 181, 216, 217	1 292	4 392, 402, 414, 420	2 472, 491
Bilād al-‘Arab (including Egypt, Hijaz)		2 7, 9		5 22, 43, 48, 50, 52	2 64, 73	3 79, 84, 95		1 334	3 380, 413, 425	4 453, 476, 487, 499
Al-Bilād al-Shāmīyya	2 4, 5	1 11	1 20		1 63					
Anatolia (pre-conquest / recently conquered)				1 32						
Unknown				1 30						
Total # of ‘ulamā’	3	5	4	25	6	31	63	68	51	113
# of mobile ‘ulamā’ (%)	2 67%	3 %60	2 50%	9 36%	3 50%	8 26%	3 5%	2 6%	7 14%	6 8%

Evaluation of mobility

First, I will focus on the scholars who came into the Ottoman lands (table 1). Then I will discuss the scholars who left the Ottoman realm (table 2). There are a number of conclusions that can be derived from table 1:

1. The proportion of the 'ulamā' coming to the core Ottoman lands in the reigns of the first six rulers ('Uthmān to Murād II) seems to be significantly higher than those who came during the reigns of the latter four rulers (Mehmed II to Suleymān I). For convenience I will refer to the reigns of the first six rulers as the 'early period' and the reigns of the last four as the 'later period.' Data size is of course an issue to consider, and Taşköprülüzāde probably had more information on the scholars of the later period, but still, it seems feasible to acknowledge a significant difference between the two periods.

This picture conforms to the conventional account of the history of the Ottoman scholarly establishment according to which the Ottoman scholarly establishment kept receiving scholars from outside in its formative stage. As a result of the increase in the sheer quantity of madrasas, gradual institutionalization of their administration and curriculum, and emergence of well-defined career paths for scholars the establishment was eventually able to produce a sufficient supply of scholars but at the same time it turned into a relatively closed/exclusive institution. In this form the conventional account is an account of institutionalization and bureaucratization. To reinforce this picture a political factor is added, that is, the rise of the Safavids as the cause of the rupture between the western and eastern parts of the Islamic world. Even if there are no compelling reasons to revise this account at the moment it is still necessary to ask why and how it happened.

2. Among the recent studies Atçıl's work suggests an answer to this question by proposing the conquest of Constantinople as a decisive event that brought about a perception of change in the Ottoman scholarly world (and its extension in the political system).¹¹ The results of the above table may also suggest an insight in answering this question. Could the reign of Murād II be a significant period of transformation that separated the early and the later period? With a rate of 32% it stands between the periods; for the earlier period the rate fluctuated between approximately 60% and 80% (100% being somehow an exception), and for the later period between 11% and 18%. It seems that the reign of Murād II was a significant period of development for the Ottoman scholarly establishment. Ottoman intellectual life showed great progress during his reign especially due the coming of the students of Taftāzānī and Jurjānī to the Ottoman lands giving a boost to

¹¹ Atçıl, pp. 3, 4, 67-70.

scholarly discussions.¹² More significantly perhaps the distribution of the number of madrasas according to the reigns of rulers shows that whereas the total number of madrasas prior to Murād II's reign amounted to forty-seven, Murād II's reign just by itself almost matched that amount with thirty-eight madrasas.¹³

A thorough analysis of the intellectual and political roots of these developments definitely deserve exploration. At this stage what I would like to draw attention to is the following question: the transformationary character of Murād II's reign not contested, was a scholarly establishment rich in intellectual debate and employment opportunities conducive to inward mobility or not? If yes, how can one explain the decline in mobility, especially after the reign of Murād II? This does not lend itself to interpretation very easily, nevertheless, even if in a somehow speculative fashion, one can speculate that the 'uniformization' of knowledge that was witnessed in Iran and Central Asia in the first half of the fifteenth century, especially in the period after 1420's, was in fact a wider phenomenon operating in the Ottoman realm too, making travel for knowledge less attractive.¹⁴

3. The overall picture that emerges is that the mobility of the scholars decreased constantly from the beginning until the reign of Suleymān I. This makes one question the argument that the rise of the Safavids caused a rupture between the eastern and western halves of the Islamic world disturbing the traffic of scholars in between. A more *longue durée* factor may have been in play rather than momentary political developments. If proven to be right this can support the above suggestion: Perhaps it was not the political developments that brought a halt to the traffic of scholars but a development in the intellectual world, a

12 Halil İnalçık: "Murad II", *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı.

13 Ahmed Ulusoy: "Kuruluşundan 17. Yüzyıla Kadar Osmanlı Medreselerinde Eğitim-Öğretim Faaliyetleri". M.A. thesis, Selçuk University, 2007. I thank Dr. A. Atçıl for alerting me to this fact.

14 As stated above, 'uniformization' of knowledge is a speculative notion at the moment that needs to be substantiated. I have two processes in mind that might have sub-currents among others that could bring about the result of uniformization. One is the emergence of a certain type of dominant Sunni intellectualism in the Timurid realm, primarily in Herat. See Ertuğrul Ökten: "Jāmī (817-898/1414-1492): His Biography and Intellectual Influence in Herat". Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2007, pp. 390, 391 for a preliminary attempt to arrive at this notion. Karabela's analysis of the development of the method of discussion (*adāb al-baḥṭh*) also suggests that a widely shared agreement on what scholarly discourse was and how it was to be dealt with was in the process of emerging. Mehmet Kadri Karabela: "The Development of Dialectic and Argumentation Theory in Post-classical Islamic Intellectual History". Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2010.

growing uniformity and diminishing divergence of knowledge offered in different regions making travel obsolete.¹⁵

4. For the later period, should one see a decrease in mobility, that is, from 16% during Mehmed II's reign to 11% during the reign of Suleymān I, or is a different kind of interpretation is possible? Although the decrease in Suleymān I's reign does not look striking at first, one has to consider if it were not for the Safavid policy of persecution against the Sunni 'ulamā' the actual number of scholars coming to the Ottoman lands could be much lower. If one takes the scholars from Tabriz out of the picture, the ratio of the mobile the scholar's coming into the Ottoman lands in the reign of the Suleymān I would be 7% (8/113) which may be seen as a significant decrease. Was there a serious drop in mobility by the time of Suleymān I which was compensated by the repercussions of the Safavid enterprise?¹⁶ Ultimately, this line of argument deemphasizes the role of the rise of the Safavids as a factor negatively affecting the traffic of scholars, and it has to be tested for the rest of the sixteenth and later centuries which is beyond the focus of *al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu'māniyya*. Nevertheless, it is in parallel with the conventional institutional history of the Ottoman 'ulamā' that states that it came to be a self-sufficient, self-reproducing, and closed social class with less reluctance in admitting scholars from outside combined with a declining interest in going abroad for education related purposes.¹⁷

5. By the reign of Suleymān I, Bilād al-'Arab (including Aleppo, Damascus, and Cairo) had become a part of the Ottoman domains, and the incorporation of these regions should not necessarily influence negatively the mobility of the 'ulam'. Yet, one may still recognize a downward trend in the mobility of the 'ulam' coming from those regions. Either uniformization of knowledge or the institutionalization of the scholarly establishment may explain this situation without necessarily seeing a political factor leading to that result.

6. As for the scholars who left the Ottoman domains (table 2) the above-defined categories of 'earlier' and 'later' periods seem to hold. While the proportion of the departing scholars to the entire scholar population generally fluctuated between 50% and 67% for the earlier period (the reign of Bāyazīd I turns out to

15 Why does not one see scholarly figures like al-Aqsarayī, Taftāzānī, or Jurjānī in the second half of the fifteenth century whose scholarly fame would attract student from hundreds or thousands of miles away? To my knowledge, this question has not been answered until now and uniformization of (the establishment?!) knowledge may explain it.

16 Madeline Zilfi: *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman 'Ulamā in the Post Classical Age (1600-1800)*. Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica 1988, pp. 318-323. Atçıl, p. 190.

17 Atçıl, p. 190.

be somehow out of range but perhaps not too far off), in the later period it was less than 10% most of the time. Significantly, it is again the reign of Murād II that separates these two periods.

7. There seems to be an increase in the proportion of the departing scholars during the reign of Selīm I, and it is tempting to explain it through his conquest of Syria and Egypt: One may argue that a larger territory became relatively more accessible, or even that Taşköprülüzāde looked at the Arab lands more attentively because of Selīm I's conquests. Yet, it turns out that quite a significant amount of the scholars went to Bilād al-ʿAjam. This is a curious development that deserves further research.

8. In general one can say that the proportion of incoming scholars was higher than the scholars departing the Ottoman lands. This indicates that the Ottoman lands attracted scholars rather than repelling them, again a phenomenon that can be explained by increasing institutionalization, but it is necessary to recognize that this may also be the bias of Taşköprülüzāde who wrote from the center. Nevertheless, the proportion of incoming and departing scholars converge significantly during the reigns of Selīm I and Suleymān I, the last two reigns in *al-Shaqāyiq*. Whether this meant reaching an equilibrium between the incoming and the departing scholars is an interesting question whose answer has to be found in sources later than *al-Shaqāyiq*.

Apart from the interpretation of the above tables, there are also issues pertaining to mobility that need to be addressed. One of these is the issue of the degree of mobility. If Mufrad Shujāʿ, a scholar from the reign of Murād II who taught in Ishāqiyya Madrasa in Uskub for forty years sets an example for extreme immobility, the case of Shaykh Badr al-Dīn is an example of extreme mobility.¹⁸ Coming from Simavna, which was only annexed in 1361 by the Ottomans from Byzantium, Badr al-Dīn travelled to Egypt and then to Qonya pursuing knowledge. In Tabriz he met Tīmūr from whom he fled away. He visited Bitlis, Cairo, Aleppo, Qonya, Tire, Saqiz Island, and finally Edirne just before he was confined to Iznik by Mehmed I, the beginning of the path leading to his execution.¹⁹ The ease with which he moved is an indication of multiple realities at play at the same time. The volatility of political situation, ample opportunities for scholars prob-

¹⁸ *Al-Shaqāyiq*, p. 108.

¹⁹ *Al-Shaqāyiq*, pp. 50, 51. Hans J. Kissling: "Badr al-Dīn b. Kādī Samāwnā", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition. Brill Online, 2012. Oxford University libraries. 16 October 2012. <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/badr-al-din-b-kadi-samawna-SIM_1017>

ably somehow enhanced by that volatility, and a high degree of permeability of borders (or their inexistence?) are only some of them.

Is it far-fetched to assume that several other scholars had comparable experiences but one does not get to hear about them because historical records do not do justice to their adventures? According to Faroqhi, the mobility among the lower Ottoman 'ulamā' was higher than the mobility of the higher 'ulamā'.²⁰ Since the 'ulamā' whose biographies are given by Taşköprülüzade belong to the higher echelons of their class, one may think that the actual rate of mobility was in fact higher. In that regard, after conceding that the above tables are at best preliminary sketches the need for examining individual cases more closely and systematically becomes even more apparent.

It is also plausible to recognize different levels of integration rather than a black and white decision about a particular scholar's membership in the scholarly establishment. One can examine the example of Faṭḥ Allāh al-Shirwānī: he studied in the Madrasa of Ulugh Beg in Samarqand, then travelled to Transoxiana possibly with the intention of continuing his career in the Ottoman domains. He did find himself a niche in the Ottoman scholarly environment, yet soon he lost his patron which brought about another period of travel for several years. Following his pilgrimage in 871/1467 he was able to return to the Ottoman lands, but it seems that the Ottoman scholarly environment did not appropriate him fully, and he passed away in Shirvan. His influence in Ottoman scholarship continued through his students: the uncle of Taşköprülüzade's father, Muhammad al-Niksārī, studied the *Ashkāl al-Tāsis* and *Sharḥ al-Chaghmīnī*, both works of Qāḍīzāde-yi Rūmī, with al-Shirwānī, and then he taught these texts to Taşköprülüzade's father who later taught them to Taşköprülüzade. These texts are particularly significant as Faṭḥ Allāh Shirwānī is known as the former of the two scholars who were instrumental in transmitting the intellectual accumulation of Ulugh Beg's Samarqand school, well-known for its prominence in speculative theology / 'rational' sciences, to the Ottoman world. The latter was 'Alī Qushji who came to the Ottoman domains in early 1470s.²¹

20 Suraiya Faroqhi: "Social Mobility in the Late Sixteenth Century", *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 4, (1973), pp. 204-218, p. 205.

21 Al-Niksārī's transmission chain also included *al-Talwīḥ* and *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* by Jurjānī under Faṭḥ Allāh al-Shirwānī, and it is feasible to think that he was instrumental in conveying these texts to the Ottoman world. *Al-Shaqāyiq*, p. 107. Cemil Akpınar: "Fethullah eṣ-Şirvani", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. This article implies that al-Niksārī studied with al-Shirwānī in Anatolia, yet, Taşköprülüzade explicitly states al-Niksārī studied with him in Samarqand. Another example of non-integrated yet 'Ottoman' scholar is Qāḍī Burhān al-Dīn Ahmad, the governor of

An issue closely related to the issue of the level of integration is career paths scholars followed. *Al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu'mānīyya* supplies one with sufficient information to undertake research on this issue but there is at least one prerequisite before this task: Writing a chronologically sound, comprehensive history of madrasas (pre-Ottoman and Ottoman) in the Ottoman domains and bringing this history together with an account of the foundation/development of other 'ulamā' employing administrative and social mechanisms. The current state of literature does permit one to undertake this line of research.

Taşköprülüzâde is relatively less consistent in giving the reasons of mobility, again a topic that should be treated rigorously in an analysis of mobility. At this stage the most one can say about the itinerary of scholars is that it was determined by a combination of an urge to follow opportunities provided by patrons and their institutions, and the desire of scholars to access knowledge, in addition to the political developments in one's locality that made relocation a necessity.

Research topics pertaining to the issue of mobility are by no means restricted to the above and a series of further questions await the researcher: How did mobility affect access to knowledge? What was the relationship between scholarly networks and travel? What effect did mobility have on student circles around scholars?²² Was there a correlation between mobility and production of works? What was the role of patronage in mobility of scholars?²³ Was there a relationship between mobility of scholars and policies of their patrons?

As one of the most engaging and informative texts on the Ottoman 'ulamā' *al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu'mānīyya* offers answers to these question and similar ones. As research based on *al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu'mānīyya* continues an attempt to put the work itself into perspective may not be without benefit. Every *tabaqāt* work is a selection, and also a classification. When read closely it is easy to see that Taşköprülüzâde wrote with a certain agenda.²⁴ In the confrontation between

Erzinjan. *Al-Shaqāyiq*, pp. 19, 20. As an interesting case of non-integration see the case of Taşköprülüzâde's grand father Khayr al-Dīn Khalīl despite Mehmed II's efforts to the contrary. Atçıl, pp. 75-76.

22 One way is to look at individuals as nodes who attracted students. Jamāl al-Dīn Aqsarāyī's organization of his 'classes' is illustrative: three tier teaching system proves the existence of not only a hierarchy of students but also possibly a high demand. The fact that Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī came to Anatolia to learn from him indicates that this demand was not only local but interregional. *Al-Shaqāyiq*, p. 18. 'Alī al-Ṭūsī also seems to be relevant in that respect.

23 See 'Alī al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Shaqāyiq*, pp. 97-99.

24 The question of how to read *al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu'mānīyya* is recently asked by Ali Anooshahr in his "Writing, Speech and history for an Ottoman Biographer", *Journal*

a certain scholar with expertise in secret sciences and Hıdır Beg the name of the scholar was not even mentioned by Taşköprülüzâde.²⁵ When he wanted to praise Shaykh Badr al-Dīn, one of the ways he resorted to was stating his virtue through the mouth of Jurjānī.²⁶ An examination of the intellectual and political framework(s) that determined Taşköprülüzâde's choices could be a fascinating task with a great potential to shed light on the dynamics of Ottoman intellectual life and its development until the mid-sixteenth century.

Finally, one can ask how important mobility was for spreading of ideas. Taftāzānī's violation of an administrative order of Tīmūr is suggestive of the problem: Tīmūr declared that while he would not have hesitated to kill his own son Shāhrukh for disobeying this order, he could not punish Taftāzānī, for the scholar's works had conquered regions to which his sword had never reached.²⁷ One may assume a direct relationship between the spread of ideas and mobility, yet, was it scholars or works in circulation that was more influential in spreading ideas?²⁸

Scholars and Mobility: A preliminary assessment from the perspective of al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu'māniyya

Abstract ■ In the formation of the Ottoman learned establishment scholars who came from outside of Ottoman territories played an important role. Scholars who left the Ottoman territories also had a share in this if they came back, and even when they did not their mobility was significant since they contributed to the learned cultures in other parts of the Islamic world. Although mobility of scholars is directly related with formation of learned cultures in various parts of the Islamic world this subject has not been given due attention until now. This paper attempts to draw a sketch of the scholarly mobility issue in the reigns of first ten Ottoman rulers through an analysis of Tashköprülüzâde's (d. 968/1561) *al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu'māniyya*. It points at the main trends in the mobility of scholars over a period of more than two hundred years and gives brief a discussion of the possible reasons explaining these trends.

Key words: Scholar, alim, ulema, (interregional) mobility, Bilād al-'Ajam, Bilād al-'Arab, Bilād al-Rūm, Ottoman domains, Anadolu, Tashköprülüzâde, *al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu'māniyya*

of Near Eastern Studies 69/1, (2010), pp. 43-62. Underlining Taşköprülüzâde's engagement in the fifteenth century controversies about the nature of the Ottoman state, Anooshahr argues that *al-Shaqāyiq al-Nu'māniyya* is an alternative, 'ulamā' version of Ottoman history, pp. 44.

25 *Al-Shaqāyiq*, pp. 91, 92.

26 *Al-Shaqāyiq*, p. 52.

27 *Al-Shaqāyiq*, pp. 88, 89.

28 Scholars could sometimes send their own works to far away locations as in the case of Molla Gürānī who sent his work(s) to Mecca. *Al-Shaqāyiq*, p. 89.

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