

International Symposium on Mullā Khusraw, 18-20 November 2011, organized by the Faculty of Theology, Uludağ University & Bursa Metropolitan Municipality, Bursa-Turkey

Mullā Khusraw (d. 885/1480), one of the earliest prominent Ottoman scholars, was the theme of the international symposium held in Bursa, Turkey, on 18-20 November 2011. In addition to thirty five Turkish participants from different Turkish universities, five foreign researchers represented Hungary, Italy, the United States and Canada. The purpose of the twenty two papers presented at the conference was to bespeak attention to the personality, the works, and the influence of Mullā Khusraw. It is regrettable that neither the *Index Islamicus* nor the *Arabic Union Catalogue* contains a single publication on Mullā Khusraw. To provide an accessible scholarly work on his scholarship, the organizers intend to publish the proceedings during the year. In particular, Ottomanists and Islamicists would welcome this publication.

The scope of the conference was introductory, holistic and descriptive. The reason of such an approach is justified, on the one side, by the scarcity of scholarly insights in Mullā Khusraw's writings. On the other, most of his works are still unedited. As a starting point, the papers of this conference will be a necessary reference for any research on Mullā Khusraw as well as on early Ottoman intellectual history. At any rate, the conference claims legitimately an impact on how the role of Mullā Khusraw was perceived in the formative period of Ottoman culture.

The scholarly presentations covered five major topics: the biography of Mullā Khusraw, his contributions to science, law, spirituality, and literature. The first topic was addressed by four speakers. A general outlook of the Ottoman culture and society was presented by Remzi Demir. Vejdi Bilgin tackled the issue of *fāsād al-zamān* (corruption of time) as a recurrent motif in Sunnī beliefs and traditions whereas Tevfik Yücedođru offered an insight on the meaning of *Abl al-sunna* in the interpretation of Mullā Khusraw. A great deal of information on Mullā Khusraw himself was provided by Ferhat Koca while Mefail Hızlı elucidated Mullā Khusraw's teaching activity at the *madrassa* of Bursa.

The impact of Mullā Khusraw on the Ottoman scientific thought in his time is evident. In this regard, Mullā Khusraw's *Risāla fī l-mushkilāt al-mashbūra fī 'ilm al-bay'a* on astronomy was assessed by İhsan Fazlıoğlu. As for his famous treatise *al-Muḥākamāt*, which reveals his keen propensity for argument, it was examined from different perspectives by three speakers. İbrahim Halil Üçer discussed some logical problems of definition in relation to metaphysics as seen by Mullā Khusraw. The realistic argumentation of Mullā Khusraw was emphasized by Jonathan A. C. Brown. Further, A. Belhaj explored the dialectical structure of Mullā Khusraw's book, which combines logical coherence and ethical concerns.

Mullā Khusraw's contribution to law was by far the most important field discussed in the conference. Indeed, twelve presentations addressed Mullā Khusraw's legal scholarship. Most presentations disclosed theoretical questions of *uṣūl al-fiqh* as seen by Mullā Khusraw. Recep Cici inspected his place in Ottoman legal thought. The theory of *ijtibād* according to Mullā Khusraw was framed by H. Yunus Apaydın. Aisha Y. Musa canvassed the relationship of reason and transmission in Mullā Khusraw's conception of *Sunna*. Abdurrahim Kozalı examined Mullā Khusraw's *Sharḥ uṣūl al-Bazdawī*. M. Salih Kumaş reiterated the meaning of *ijtibād*, *taqlid*, and *madbbab* bigotry in Mullā Khusraw's writings. *Fiqh* matters provided opportunities to observe Mullā Khusraw's work as a mufti. In this respect, Nicola Melis studied *Kitāb al-jihād* from Mullā Khusraw's *Durar wa-Ghurar*. The legal opinion of Mullā Khusraw on the issue of patronage, *walā'* was analyzed by Şükrü Özen. Finally, Eugenia Kermeli inquired into Mullā Khusraw's view of the legal status of non-Muslims.

In addition to Ḥanafī law, an Ottoman scholar would be required to have predilection for Sufism and kalām. It is of importance then to show Mullā Khusraw's Sufi connections. This task was carried out by Abdurrezak Tek. Conversely, kalām seems to be neglected by Mullā Khusraw. However, Orhan Şener Koloğlu investigated an aspect of his theology through the study of his understanding of *ḥusn-qubḥ* problem, which is closely related to legal theory as well. Walid A. Saleh displayed Mullā Khusraw's craft as a commentator on the Qur'ān while his gloss on *al-Muṭawwal* was shown by Musa Alak to be a noteworthy work in Arabic rhetoric. İsmail Güler demonstrated the literary skill of Mullā Khusraw through a "parallel" poem (*naẓīra*). Be that as it may, none of the speakers claimed Mullā

Khusraw to have transformed the mentioned disciplines. Yet it is instructive and interesting that they highlighted the interdisciplinary of Mullā Khusraw's scholarship, his interest in the culture of his time and his open-mindedness.

Research results were sometimes fascinating as several participants provided cases where Mullā Khusraw was practicing *ijtibād*. Nevertheless, most speakers agreed that he did not try to go beyond the Ottoman cultural system. As Tevfik Yücedođru puts it, since there was no fire in the Ottoman system at the moment, Mullā Khusraw did not proceed to extinguish it. Probably, what the Ottomans needed most was an effective legal apparatus. Therefore, Mullā Khusraw directed his efforts to legal scholarship. With this in mind, the conference was informative inasmuch as it introduces us to the Ottoman intellectual processes in the 15th century.

Several speakers suggested continuing further reflection and study of Mullā Khusraw. On the one hand, a pressing necessity to edit his manuscripts was frequently expressed. Sometimes speakers were limited in their conclusions in the lack of an established corpus of Mullā Khusraw. On the other, the research trend shows that law was at the heart of the Ottoman society and its culture. For that reason, a more comprehensive study of practical questions of *fiqh* is anticipated to be of utmost significance.

Finally, refreshing ideas were emerged at the conference, mainly the idea of a co-inclusive study of religious and historical aspects of Ottoman culture. Thus, the conference itself was a successful example of the probing of a decisive period in the Ottoman intellectual history. A close reading of religious and literary texts of Mullā Khusraw is likely to help historians understand better the perception of Ottoman realities by an outstanding member of the Ottoman intellectual elite.

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